



# The 2009 Humanitarian Accountability Report

**HAP** Humanitarian  
Accountability  
Partnership

**Front cover:**

Women who fled fighting in eastern Chad gather in a camp for internally displaced people near Gos Beida June 6, 2009. Refugees from conflict in Sudan's Darfur and Chad appealed for more international protection so they can return to their homes.

**Photo:** © REUTERS/ Finbarr O'Rielly

# **The 2009 Humanitarian Accountability Report**

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# Summary

The 2009 Humanitarian Accountability Report contains four chapters, as follows:

**Chapter 1: An Overview of Humanitarian Accountability in 2009.** The opening chapter provides an overview of the principal developments and apparent trends in relation to accountability in the humanitarian system. The purpose of the annual humanitarian accountability review is to offer an informed and independent view of progress made by the humanitarian system towards meeting HAP's strategic vision of "*a humanitarian sector with a trusted and widely accepted accountability framework, which is transparent and accessible to all relevant parties*". John Borton, a distinguished independent consultant, undertook the review in 2008 and 2009.

From the materials reviewed in this chapter, the impression of the author is one of continuing progress in the process of widening and deepening of accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities within the humanitarian system. The chapter highlights a series of steps and developments that represent real progress in improving the quality and accountability of the humanitarian system, concluding that, "HAP and its members can be proud of their contribution to such progress."

**Chapter 2: Survey of Perceptions of Humanitarian Accountability.** This chapter reports on the fifth annual survey of perceptions of humanitarian accountability. Based on perceptions of 377 respondents, the 2009 Survey supports the trends that have emerged over the past five years; while there is growing optimism about progress being made in accountability across the aid sector, the results also highlight the gap in accountability to different stakeholders, particularly so to intended beneficiaries and host governments.

**Chapter 3: Voices of Disaster Survivors in Southern Sudan.** Since 2007, the Humanitarian Accountability Report has presented the views of people with first hand experience of receiving aid, using quotes that typified the sentiments most often expressed to HAP staff during programme-site activities in different countries. The 2009 Report includes a more detailed overview based on focus

groups and semi-structured interviews held with 539 disaster-survivors and aid recipients in Southern Sudan. While the chapter does not claim to represent the range of perspectives of aid recipients in Southern Sudan, it shares some of the issues that were consistently raised by persons from different states and diverse communities and highlights some overall themes and trends on the aid efforts in 2009, with particular focus on accountability.

**Chapter 4: HAP Members' Accountability Workplan Implementation Reports.** In previous years, the Humanitarian Accountability Report presented HAP members' annual reports exactly as they were submitted to the HAP Secretariat. This year, full copies of the reports are being placed on the HAP website, while this chapter provides a summary of the main activities undertaken by members as they reported them to the HAP Secretariat. John Borton prepared this chapter.

Based on a review of Accountability Workplan implementation reports submitted by 28 members and covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2009, the author concludes that "it is striking and impressive to see the effort and commitment of HAP members (supported in a variety of ways by the HAP Secretariat) focussed on improving accountability to beneficiaries and disaster-affected communities."





# CHAPTER 1

## An Overview of Humanitarian Accountability in 2009

### 1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide an overview of the principal developments and apparent trends in relation to accountability in “the humanitarian system” in 2009.

Whilst the focus is on accountability in relation to humanitarian activities, it is also necessary to look at what is happening beyond the humanitarian system for two reasons. First, it is a reality that many “humanitarian” agencies are “multi-mandated” and work on development, advocacy and possibly other activities in addition to responding to the humanitarian needs created by disasters and conflicts. Second, national regulatory mechanisms (whether state-sponsored or those arising from self-regulatory initiatives by NGOs) also have the potential to impact on the accountability requirements of national as well as international agencies undertaking humanitarian work within the national boundaries of those countries. For these reasons the chapter therefore also refers to a number of initiatives and developments that, strictly speaking, lie outside “the humanitarian system”.

The chapter is based on a desk review of publications, document sources and information on relevant developments during 2009 supplemented by a dozen interviews.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was written by John Borton, an independent consultant and researcher focussing on humanitarian emergencies and the operations of the humanitarian system, and the lead author of Study 3 of the seminal 1996 evaluation report; *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide, Humanitarian Aid and Effects*. The chapter does not purport to represent the views of the HAP Secretariat or the HAP membership.

Evaluation continues to play an important role in accountability and learning within the humanitarian system and a total of 23 evaluations published during 2009<sup>2</sup> were reviewed in terms of the extent to which they had sought the views of beneficiaries and affected populations on the assistance provided and the extent to which issues of accountability had featured in the evaluation.

The chapter is structured as follows:

Section 2 provides a reminder of the principal humanitarian operations that took place or continued throughout 2009, together with some available facts about the impacts and caseload.

Section 3 provides a follow up in relation to important studies published in 2008 and reviewed in last year's report.

Sections 4-8 describe the principal developments in relation to accountability within:

1. the NGO community
2. the Red Cross/Red Crescent family
3. UN and multilateral organisations
4. the donor community
5. cross-sector networks

Section 9 reflects on particular issues and challenges selected from the previous sections that struck the reviewer as significant. The themes considered include

6. Other third party certification schemes within the field of NGO self-regulatory initiatives
7. Challenges and good practice cases in relation to evaluation, UN agencies and Clusters

Section 10 draws overall conclusions from the review.

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<sup>2</sup> One evaluation published in December 2008 which had not been available during the preparation of 2008 Humanitarian Accountability Report was included in this set.

## 1.2. The Year in Question

2009 began with the optimism of Barack Obama's January inauguration as the USA's first African-American President and ended with the disappointments and frustrations of the December Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. However, it will probably be remembered more for being the year of the worst downturn in the global economy since the 1930s. The banking crisis of 2008 fed into the global economy to produce what the IMF termed a "deep global recession" with a 1.1% fall in world economic output<sup>3</sup>. The recession resulted in sharp increases in levels of under and un-employment, reductions in government spending (including many aid budgets<sup>4</sup>) and reductions in remittance flows.<sup>5</sup> Speaking in June 2009 John Holmes the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator stated: "It is clear that the global recession puts pressure on the aid budgets of all donor governments, but of course it puts immeasurably more pressure on crises-stricken people in poor countries"<sup>6</sup>.

From a humanitarian perspective the year began with the three week assault in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Defence Forces and ended with population displacements in north Yemen resulting from the intensified conflict between government forces and Houthi-led rebels, and WFP's suspension of food aid distributions in southern Somalia citing threats by the Al-Shabaab militia. The contrast between the intense world media coverage of the events in Gaza in January and those at the end of the year in Yemen and Somalia was stark.

The year saw substantial humanitarian operations in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Sudan (Darfur and South Sudan), Chad, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Afghanistan, Western Sumatra (Indonesia), the Philippines and Vietnam. Whilst recovery and reconstruction operations continued in China, Myanmar and Bangladesh following the earthquakes and cyclones of 2007/8, some of the main humanitarian crises and operations were either new or had a higher profile in 2009 – notably Western Sumatra, and the Philippines as a result of natural disasters; Yemen as the result of an escalation of the civil war; Pakistan as a result of offensives by the Pakistan

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<sup>3</sup> *World Economic Outlook (WEO) "Sustaining the Recovery" October 2009, International Monetary Fund Washington.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Irish aid budget was particularly hard hit; in the first four months of 2009 aid spending was cut by €195 million, or 21.8% of the projected total for 2009. "European NGOs condemn Irish aid budget cut" CONCORD/Aidwatch 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009.*

<sup>5</sup> *The World Bank predicted that the level of global remittances would fall from \$305 billion in 2008 to \$290 billion in 2009 "World Bank Lowers Remittances Forecast for 2009 as Financial Crisis Deepens" World Bank News and Broadcast 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009.*

<sup>6</sup> *"UN short nearly \$5bn for aid projects as global recession hits donations" Guardian 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009 Heather Stewart guardian.co.uk.*

army against armed opposition groups first in the Swat Valley and then in South Waziristan; and Sri Lanka as its long-running civil war reached a bloody conclusion. In Darfur the expulsion of 13 international NGOs and the closure of three national NGOs in March following the ICC issuance of an arrest warrant for President al-Bashir demonstrated the ability of governments to terminate and restrict operations by humanitarian agencies – a feature that was also very apparent in several other contexts. Summary information on these and other operations during 2009 are provided in Box 1.

The operating environment for humanitarian personnel continued to be dangerous with at least 28 UN civilian staff members being killed.<sup>7</sup> Research published in 2009 indicated that in 2008, 260 humanitarian aid workers had been killed, kidnapped or seriously injured in violent attacks; the highest toll since the survey began in 1997. Analysis of the apparent motives indicate that “attacks on aid workers in the most insecure contexts were increasingly politically motivated, reflecting a broad targeting of the aid enterprise as a whole” (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009 p.1).

→ **Box 1. Principal emergencies and humanitarian operations during the year**

- **Afghanistan:** Ongoing conflict/insecurity between Government/NATO forces and Taliban insurgents. Severely limited humanitarian access in south and east of country. 2,412 civilians killed in 2009 (UNAMA), over 250,000 IDPs (IDMC) and 1.9 million refugees outside the country (UNHCR)
- **Bangladesh:** Cyclone Alia (25<sup>th</sup> May) 190 people killed; 5 million affected; over 0.5 million homes damaged/destroyed.
- **Central African Republic:** Conflict/insecurity in north (with links to conflicts in Sudan and Chad), and attacks on civilians by LRA from Uganda 162,000 IDPs and another 100,000 as refugees in Chad and Cameroon.
- **Chad:** Ongoing conflict and insecurity causing displacements and impeding humanitarian access. 168,000 IDPs and 253,000 Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad and 67,000 CAR refugees.
- **Colombia:** Protracted internal armed conflict between Government and FARC, ELN and other armed groups. Estimates of the numbers of displaced range from almost 3.1 million people according to the government to over 4.6 million people according to a re-liable NGO. The rate of new displacement increased in 2008-09. Internal displacement affects 6 to 10% of the national population.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** Conflict between Government/MONUC and FDLR, attacks on civilians by LRA and localised clashes between armed groups. Total of 2.1 million IDPs.

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<sup>7</sup> “At least 28 UN staff members killed in violent attacks worldwide in 2009” UN News Center 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

- **Ethiopia:** Low food production and high food prices. 4.8 million people requiring emergency food assistance
- **Gaza/Occupied Palestinian Territories:** Three week Israeli Offensive against Hamas in December 2008 and January 2009. Estimates of number of Palestinians killed range from 1,116 to 1,444. Three Israeli civilians and ten soldiers killed (UN Fact Finding Mission “the Goldstone report”).
- **Haiti:** continuation of recovery operations following hurricanes and tropical storms in 2008.
- **Indonesia:** 30<sup>th</sup> September earthquake in western Sumatra registering 7.6 on the Richter scale with aftershock of 6.6 a day later. 1,110 people killed, 1.2 million affected.
- **Iraq:** Despite political progress and start of withdrawal of US and British forces, insecurity and bombing attacks on civilians continue. ICRC estimates a monthly average of 500 civilian deaths and 2,000 wounded; 2.8 million IDPs at end of 2008 (IDMC); 1.8 million refugees outside the country (UNHCR).
- **Kenya:** Low food production and high food prices. 3.8 people requiring emergency food assistance
- **Myanmar:** continuation of recovery operations in areas affected by Cyclone Nargis (May 2008)
- **Philippines:** Conflict in Mindanao between Government and MILF. Estimated 750,000 people displaced. Ceasefire agreed in July. Two typhoons (especially Ketsana) and a tropical storm during September and October. 990 people killed, 10 million affected, 4.2 million requiring assistance, 103,000 displaced.
- **Somalia:** Continuing conflict between the UN-backed Transitional Federal Government and armed opposition groups, including the Al-Shabaab militia in southern areas. Over 1 million displaced with more than 100,000 newly displaced in the south since middle of the year, 3.7 million in need of humanitarian assistance. 530,000 Somali refugees in East and Central Africa.
- **Sri Lanka:** Crushing military defeat of LTTE by Government forces in May. Numbers killed unclear; 300,000 people displaced of which 160,000 held in closed camps from May. Humanitarian access very limited.
- **Sudan** Darfur: ongoing conflict and insecurity; 4.7 m people affected; 2.7 million IDPs; estimated excess mortality of 300,000 since 2004. South Sudan - 250,000 people displaced during 2009 by inter-tribal violence in which more than 2,000 people have been killed.
- **Uganda:** Since the 2006 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government and the LRA, two thirds of the 1.8 million IDPs have returned to their areas of origin.
- **Vietnam:** Typhoon Ketsana 29<sup>th</sup> September: 370,000 people evacuated in advance of landfall; 100 people killed; 3 million people affected.
- **Yemen:** Conflict between Government and al-Houthi opposition groups in the north of the country. Total of 150,000 IDPs.
- **Zimbabwe:** Political, economic and humanitarian crisis. Situation eased by formation of coalition government in February and introduction of multiple currencies. Cholera outbreak officially ended in July. 2.8 million people estimated to be in need of food assistance (down from 5 million during 2008). Tentative recovery underway.

Information drawn from a variety of sources, including US Government Factsheets, UN agencies and missions, and the International Displacement Monitoring Centre.

### → Box 2. Global Data on the Humanitarian System

Overall statistics on the numbers of people receiving assistance through the international humanitarian system are not readily available. However, statistics are available for internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees, though these relate to 2008 rather than 2009. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimated the total number of people internally displaced by conflict, generalised violence or human rights violations at the end of 2008 as being 26 million, at the same level as at the end of 2007. UNHCR estimated the total number of refugees at the end of 2008 as being 11.4 million (of which it was assisting or protecting 10.5 million) with an additional 4.6 million refugees falling under the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) mandate.

Data on global humanitarian assistance flows for 2009 are not yet available so it remains to be seen whether and how the global recession impacted the resources available for operations. The 'guesstimate' published in July by Development Initiatives in its Global Humanitarian Assistance 2009 suggested that global humanitarian assistance went up quite significantly from US\$15 billion in 2007 to US\$18 billion in 2008 with the bulk of this change being driven by members of the members of OECD's Development Assistance Committee. (Development Initiatives 2009).

## 1.3. Follow-up to the studies highlighted in HAR 2008

Chapter 1 of last year's Humanitarian Accountability Report summarised the results of several important studies that in their own ways provided strong evidence of the need for improved accountability whilst also pointing to the steps required to achieve it. It would appear that 2009 did not yield a similar crop of rich and pertinent studies. This section therefore provides information on the way in which the studies published in 2008 have been followed up in 2009.

The reasons for this are varied. For instance, **One World Trust** did not publish a Global Accountability Report (GAR) in 2009 as it had done for the previous three years. Instead the effort of the GAR team was focussed on reviewing the series and its underlying assessment framework<sup>8</sup>.

**The Listening Project** of the Collaborative for Development Action concentrated its efforts on:

1. completing its field research undertaking a final set of Listening Exercises in Afghanistan; Myanmar; Lebanon; Mindanao (Philippines); and the Solomon Islands, bringing the total number of completed studies to 19
2. undertaking consultations on the findings of the first set of Issues Papers in various national capitals

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<sup>8</sup> *Briefing Papers published by One World Trust on Civil Society Self-Regulation and NGO Development Effectiveness Initiatives are reviewed later in this chapter.*

3. preparing a second set of Issues Papers to be published in early 2010 on: "Relationships in the Aid System"; "Expectations of International Assistance" and Listening in the "Aid System".

As well as publishing the additional Issues Papers in 2010, the Listening Project is also planning to publish a book synthesising the results of the Listening Exercises, Issues Papers and consultations. It is planned to review these publications in HAR 2010.

Following the publication of the final research outputs on Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance in 2008, Transparency International concentrated its efforts during 2009 on the preparation, in collaboration with five NGOs<sup>9</sup>, of a **Handbook of Good Practices on Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations** that was launched in Geneva at the beginning of February 2010.

During 2008 HAP and Save the Children UK had published two studies of humanitarian operations in six different countries, which provided powerful evidence of continuing sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers and/or peacekeepers.<sup>10</sup> To follow through on these studies, HAP and Save the Children UK have established a **Global Inspectorate Project** for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse "to provide accessible support to all agencies and to ensure that children and women who are abused by humanitarian staff will have someone to turn to and complain knowing that abuse will not be tolerated and will be acted upon". The specific objectives of the Global Inspectorate Project are to:

- Consult with communities, agencies and other relevant stakeholders to build consensus on what constitutes good practice and develop verifiable indicators through which agencies and HAP are able to measure, validate and improve their prevention of and response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by staff. These indicators will be included in the improved HAP Standard.
- Increase the number of agencies that report externally on number and type of complaints and how they address allegations of sexual abuse.

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<sup>9</sup> ActionAid; CARE International; Catholic Relief Services; Islamic Relief Worldwide; Lutheran World Federation; Save the Children; and World Vision International.

<sup>10</sup> *To complain or not to complain: Still the question* Kirsti Lattu et al. 2008; and *No One to Turn To: The under-reporting of child sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers and peacekeepers* Corinne Csáky et al. 2008.

- Improve agency complaints handling and response systems and promote the use of HAP's Complaints Advisory Service to address under-complaining.<sup>11</sup>

Partly as a result of the evidence presented in the 2008 reports by HAP and Save the Children UK, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiated an **Inter-Agency Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Review** of the extent to which UN organisations, inter-governmental organisations and NGOs have implemented policies requiring organisations to address sexual exploitation and abuse by their personnel. The ToR for the study were developed by the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force (usually referred to as the "PSEA Task Force").<sup>12</sup>

The main objectives of the PSEA Review are:

1. To promote accountability by providing a transparent baseline assessment of the extent to which PSEA obligations have been implemented and recommending how to strengthen accountability for implementation of such obligations in the future.
2. To promote learning by identifying key challenges/gaps/needs within and across agencies and developing recommendations on how to overcome them.
3. To develop benchmarks that can be used to assist organisations to track individual and collective progress in the future.
4. To assess how well the system as a whole (including the UN, NGOs, IGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and so forth) is addressing PSEA and provide recommendations for improvement.

The report is planned for completion in April 2010 and for consideration by the IASC in mid-2010.

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<sup>11</sup> "Someone to complain to": *Enhancing Global Accountability in Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation* Project Note, November 2009, HAP/Save the Children, Geneva/London.

<sup>12</sup> The full title of the PSEA Task Force is the Executive Committees on Humanitarian Affairs and Peace and Security (ECHA/ECPS) United Nations and Nongovernmental Organization Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The Task Force previously met as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force, which was the first interagency body to establish guiding principles for addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse following the 2002 Save the Children/UNHCR report on abuse in West Africa. <http://www.un.org/en/pseatastaskforce/>



During the year the Keeping Children Safe (KCS) Coalition<sup>13</sup> rolled out more child protection training based on the “Keeping Children Safe Toolkit for Child Protection” which includes the jointly developed “Standards for Child Protection”. The training was provided in selected countries in West Africa. The toolkit has been widely disseminated and is being used in many different countries, for instance UNICEF’s 31 partner organisations in Zimbabwe are reported to have used the materials to establish child-safeguarding policies where previously no such protective mechanisms existed. An evaluation of the training and use of the Toolkit was undertaken in 2009.<sup>14</sup> Starting in 2010 the KCS Coalition will move towards establishing itself as an independent entity.

→ **Box 3. Consideration of accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities in the evaluations reviewed**

A set of twenty three evaluations published in the 13 month period from December 2008 to December 2009 were reviewed.<sup>15</sup> The evaluations were of a range of humanitarian and recovery programmes, policies and partnerships. Thirteen of the evaluations (57% of the set) were commissioned by UN agencies (WFP 7, UNHCR 4, FAO 1, IASC/GenCap 1); two (9% of the set) were commissioned by NGOs (CARE and Save the Children); one (4% of the set) was commissioned by the Red Cross (an IFRC review of the Shelter Cluster); and seven (30% of the set) were commissioned by donors (ECHO 4, Norad 1, and the SIDA-led multi-agency Tsunami LRRD consortium). The full list of evaluations included in the set is provided at the end of this chapter.

The 23 reports were reviewed from three perspectives:

1. The proportion that had interviewed beneficiaries as part of the evaluation process
2. The proportion that had “explicitly considered accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities”, and
3. The proportion that had “systematically assessed accountability to beneficiaries”. This last category has been selected as a key performance indicator for monitoring HAP’s Workplan for 2010 to 2011 and challenging targets have been selected for this performance indicator.

<sup>13</sup> The KCS Coalition was formed in 2001 and is currently made up of 17 agencies committed to creating a safer world for children. Coalition members “recognise that all organisations coming into contact with children have a fundamental duty of care towards them, and we acknowledge our responsibilities to keep children safe in both relief and development interventions”. [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

<sup>14</sup> Richard Powell, KCS Update, “The Fourth Phase” January 2010.

<sup>15</sup> 22 of the evaluations were published during 2009. An evaluation of CARE Myanmar’s Cyclone Nargis Response (Temstrom et al 2008) that had been published in December 2008 was also included a) because it had not been available during the preparation of HAR 2008 and b) to bolster the (remarkably small) number of evaluations of NGO programmes that appear to have been published during 2009. Whereas all the evaluations reviewed for HAR 2008 had been obtained from the ALNAP Evaluative Resources Database, this year only 15 of the reviewed evaluations were obtained from this source (searched on 2/1/10). The 7 other evaluations included in the set reviewed here were obtained by searching for published evaluations of humanitarian programmes on a variety of donor UN, Red Cross and NGO websites.

### Proportion interviewing beneficiaries as part of the evaluation process

Seventeen evaluations (74%) had interviewed beneficiaries as part of the evaluation process. Two of the evaluation reports (9%) claimed to have interviewed beneficiaries but provided no evidence to support their claim or any details on the location and composition of those claimed to have been interviewed. Four evaluations (17%) had not interviewed beneficiaries. In one case this was due to the evaluation team not being allowed to access to the disaster affected areas by the national authorities. In the other three cases, the nature and focus of the programmes being evaluated limited a) the feasibility of actually identifying the “beneficiaries” of the programmes and b) the benefit to the evaluation of attempting to interview any beneficiaries.

Though comparisons between these results and those for the previous year should be treated with caution (due to the limited number of evaluations in the set reviewed and differences in the composition of the set), the results for 2009 suggest a slight improvement on the results for 2008 for which the comparable figures were 68%, 9% and 23% respectively.

### Proportion explicitly considering accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities

Only three evaluations (13%) were judged to have explicitly considered accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities. Two of these were the evaluations commissioned by Save the Children and CARE (both HAP members) of their responses to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar (Featherstone et al. 2009; Ternstrom et al. 2008); the third was the evaluation commissioned by WFP of its Livelihood Recovery Interventions (Harvey et al. 2009). The remaining 20 evaluations (87%) were judged not to have explicitly considered accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities.

What factors may account for such disappointing results? Whilst the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluations invariably cited “accountability” as an objective of the evaluation, several did not give any consideration to issues of “accountability” and where they did accountability was invariably considered in relation to donors, head offices and stakeholders such as ministries of the host government, rather than in relation to intended beneficiaries. Despite the fact that many of the evaluation teams had actually interviewed beneficiaries and held discussions with affected communities, the majority of the evaluations made little explicit use of the information, tending to use it implicitly in statements such as “the activities were found to be appropriate to the needs”.

Whilst the evaluation community seems to have taken on board that interviewing beneficiaries represents ‘good practice’ in undertaking evaluation of humanitarian assistance, it is proving very slow to recognise the accountabilities that humanitarian agencies and their programmes have towards their beneficiaries. What factors might be contributing to this?

- There are still examples of evaluation ToR that list the various stakeholders of the evaluation but fail to mention the beneficiaries of the programmes to be evaluated!
- Whilst evaluation ToR invariably cite “accountability” as an objective of the evaluation, the criteria that are specified for use in assessing the programmes invariably draw on the DAC Evaluation Criteria (Relevance/Appropriateness; Connectedness; Coherence; Coverage; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Impact) which do not explicitly identify accountability as a criteria. This is significant as many evaluation reports are structured around the specified criteria and potential points about accountability may either be dotted around the report under headings of “appropriateness”, “effectiveness” and “impact”, or may even be left out of the report altogether because they do not fit easily into reports structured around these headings. Significantly the only evaluation that explicitly used “accountability” as one of the evaluation criteria was the only one judged to have systematically assessed accountability to intended beneficiaries (see below).
- A limited understanding of what accountability to beneficiaries involves by evaluation managers and evaluators. Whilst some reports discussed “beneficiary involvement” or “beneficiary participation” they failed to consider these as an issue of accountability.

### **Proportion systematically assessing accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities**

Whereas none of the evaluations reviewed from 2008 were judged to have systematically assessed the accountability systems in place for assuring accountability to intended beneficiaries, there was one report from this year's set that clearly met this criteria. This was the "Evaluation of the Save the Children Response to Cyclone Nargis" (Featherstone et al. 2009). The evaluation criteria used for this study were: Effectiveness; Timeliness; Coverage; Relevance; Connectedness; Technical Merit; and Accountability. The team was made up of consultants and personnel from other agencies as well as from Save the Children and included an Accountability Specialist and a Child Participation Specialist. One of the four case studies prepared as part of the evaluation was an "Evaluation against the HAP Accountability Principles". Whereas the word "accountability" did not appear once in some of the evaluations reviewed, it appeared 30 times in this study.

Some suggestions are offered in Section 9 as to how to increase the number of evaluations assessing accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities.

## **1.4. Principal developments in relation to NGOs**

### **1.4.1 Introduction: the significance of the role played by NGOs**

The major role played by NGOs as humanitarian actors was highlighted by "Global Humanitarian Aid 2009" published by Development Initiatives. An analysis of data for 2007 revealed that NGOs accounted for US\$ 4.9 billion of humanitarian assistance spending (one-third of the total humanitarian assistance expenditures) of which US\$2.6 billion came from the public or corporate donations, with the remaining US\$2.3 billion funded by multilaterals and DAC donors.

*To give a sense of scale, the public's contributions to NGOs in 2007 were more than three times the total expenditure of the CERF and country-level pooled funds. NGOs are also major players in terms of volume of aid. Caritas and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported the highest levels of humanitarian assistance in 2007; both international groups made up of individual agencies in different countries and both exercising decisions on funds far above that of many nation states. For example, MSF's humanitarian expenditure outstripped that of all DAC donors except the EC and the United States, whilst World Vision and Caritas provided more than all but four DAC donors. (Development Initiatives 2009 p.14).*

Because of the number and scope of the developments to report in relation to NGOs, this section distinguishes between organisations and initiatives working to improve accountability through approaches including third party

compliance verification and certification (Section 4.2) and those that do not involve third party compliance and verification (Section 4.3).

## **1.4.2 Organisations and initiatives working to improve accountability through approaches including third party compliance verification and certification**

### **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International**

During the year HAP membership grew by 17 with 14 organisations joining as Full Members and three as Associate Members. This brought the total number of Full Members to 40 and of Associate Members to 10 by the end of the year.

New Full Members joining in 2009 were:

- International Aid Services (IAS), Sweden
- YAKKUM Emergency Unit (Yayasan Kristen untuk Kesehatan Umum/ Christian Foundation for Public Health), Indonesia
- KinderUSA
- SEEDS, India
- PMU InterLife, Sweden
- Norwegian Church Aid, Norway
- Association Najdeh, Lebanon
- Amel Association, Lebanon
- Society for Safe Environment & Welfare of Agrarian's in Pakistan (SSEWA-Pak)
- Community and Family Services International (CFSI), Philippines
- Community Development Centre (CODEC), Bangladesh
- Women's Rights Association (WRA), Multan Pakistan
- Focus Humanitarian Assistance (the humanitarian arm and affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network)
- Diakonia, Sweden

New Associate Members joining in 2009:

- African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Liberia

- Kohsar Welfare & Educational Society (KWES), Pakistan
- Transparency International

During the year CAFOD and Christian Aid both achieved HAP Certification bringing the total number of certified members to seven. A further 18 members are enrolled in the HAP certification scheme and of these 14 have completed their baseline analyses against the HAP Standard. The summary of HAP members' Accountability Workplans (Chapter 4) reveals the impressive level and range of accountability improvement activities undertaken during 2009.

Though not a HAP member, UNHCR completed a programme site baseline analysis in Georgia as a follow-up to the Head Office analysis carried out in 2008.

#### → Box 4. HAP Standard Baseline Analysis

A baseline analysis against the HAP Standard seeks to establish where an agency currently stands in relation to the HAP Standard and its level of compliance with each of the requirements. By helping the agency to affirm existing good practice, identify gaps and decide areas for improvement, a baseline analysis helps agencies in preparing for certification.

A baseline analysis includes two components - a head office baseline which normally takes place before a programme site baseline. Both involve a HAP facilitator reviewing documents, interviewing people and observing practice.

The head office analysis gathers information on the agency as a whole – its governance and management systems, agency-wide policies, systems, decision-making processes and experience of practice in different programmes and countries. It provides an overview of the existing quality management systems and the agency intent and plans with respect to accountability and quality management.

The programme site analysis verifies how the agency's policies, systems and procedures actually work on the ground: what is known and adhered to; how projects are managed and delivered and how the agency's work is experienced by people receiving humanitarian assistance, affected communities and other stakeholders. It involves on-site work in the country office and one or more project visits where the facilitator speaks with local partners, beneficiaries and other people of concern.

Where an agency conducts all or the vast majority of its operations in one country, the head office and programme site analyses may be undertaken consecutively during one visit.

Separate reports are written for the head office baseline and the programme site baseline and provide the agency with a basis for planning and decision making to improve accountability and quality management and identify the specific improvements against the HAP Standard that would be needed to undertake a successful certification audit.

Source: Summarised from the HAP Services List 2010

The process of reviewing the HAP 2007 Standard and its accompanying *Guide to the HAP Standard* made good progress during the year. The purpose of the review is to capture learning from the application of the Standard over the

past two years and to incorporate emerging good practice on accountability and quality management. As part of the review process, ways in which the Standard could be made more explicitly applicable to multi-mandated agencies are being explored and working groups have been established for two areas requiring specific attention during the review process – Partnership Working Group and a Working Group on Handling Complaints of Exploitation and Abuse. Seventeen Standard Review consultation workshops and focus group discussions were held involving aid workers and beneficiaries and over 100 organisations contributed to the process online. It is planned to complete the process and, once approved, publish the 2010 Standard by the end of 2010.

As part of efforts to improve the evidence base for the positive benefits to be gained from improved accountability to beneficiaries and affected populations, links were strengthened with a number of academic and research institutions. These included the signing of a Letter of Agreements with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and initial work to develop and trial an analytic tool to measure the impact of the HAP Standard.

Under the New Emergencies Policy (NEP), HAP's Roving Team was deployed to Sri Lanka between July and October 2009 to support members and other organisations responding to the humanitarian crisis in the north of the country. Working in Colombo and Vavuniya District (where 250,000 IDP were interned at Menik Farm) the team engaged with:

- 17 HAP Members and/or their implementing partners
- over 140 agency staff,
- 9 non-HAP agencies, and
- held discussions with key humanitarian actors.

In the words of the report on the deployment “The complex and restrictive operational context in Sri Lanka hindered the safeguarding of protection rights, consultation with beneficiaries, their participation in the design and implementation of projects, and the provision of safe avenues for registering complaints” (Kiani, Rogers and Wigley, 2010). Partly due to the operational context it did not prove possible to establish an accountability working group as had been planned.

Nevertheless, the team was able to run inter-agency workshop and provide guided self-assessment processes for nine agencies<sup>16</sup> and provide tailored

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<sup>16</sup> ACTED, Christian Aid, DanChurchAid partner OfERR, Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka, Mercy Malaysia, Save the Children in Sri Lanka, and World Vision in Sri Lanka.

support to three others<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the HAP 2007 Standard was translated into local languages by Lutheran World Relief Sri Lanka and case studies and tools were shared.

An externally facilitated After-Action-Review in October identified numerous ways in which agencies felt they had benefited from the deployment including:

- providing staff with the opportunity to gauge their accountability practices
- opening up space for the consideration of accountability to beneficiaries
- modifying approaches to monitoring and evaluation and the tool and techniques used by taking into account the HAP Standard
- making field staff aware of their own agency's commitment to HAP.

The deployment report concluded:

*The positive response of agencies to the deployment and the level of participation in its activities amidst a challenging context is indicative of a high level of commitment to strengthen beneficiary accountability when and where it is needed most. (Kiani, Rogers and Wigley, 2010 p.5)*

In addition to this service HAP continued its provision of capacity development and organisational development services through the year, working with members and non-member agencies.

The joint "Quality and Accountability Initiative" deployment by Sphere and HAP in Myanmar was completed during 2009. It was evaluated by a consultant and a debriefing workshop held in London in June with the evaluator, the Coordinator of the Quality and Accountability Initiative and representatives of the eight HAP member agencies that received one to one support from the Initiative and other agencies that had operations in Myanmar. Among the outcomes from the meeting was a clear message that "providing staff training was not enough; there needed to be senior management buy-in, which enables the agency staff to move forward in their efforts to strengthen quality and accountability"<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> CARE Sri Lanka, Christian Aid and ACTED.

<sup>18</sup> "HAP and Sphere deploy a joint mission in response to Cyclone Nargis Latest Update November 2009" <http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/field/hap-in-myanmar.aspx>

The evaluation concluded that the initiative had added value to the response to Cyclone Nargis but that whilst it

*[m]ight not have created joint practices of collaboration amongst Sphere and HAP it did show that such possibilities exist ... Was it worth doing? All respondents said, strongly, yes. There are many barriers in the sector to quality and accountability work, but also a lot of goodwill that this initiative has helped to support. (Ferretti, 2009)*

Also in 2009 an independent evaluation of HAP was undertaken by an external evaluator (Salkeld, 2009). Whilst applauding HAP on its high level of achievement and its significant role in promoting the cause of humanitarian accountability, the report questioned the strong focus placed on the certification process versus other approaches and was critical of the HAP Board for not providing the Secretariat with a clearer strategic vision. Despite not agreeing fully with its contents and noting misunderstandings and misrepresentations in the report, the Board agreed to the publication of the evaluation.

A fuller report on HAP's activities during 2009 is available in the HAP Secretariat Report, which this year is being published separately.

### **People In Aid**

During 2009, Save the Children UK and World Vision UK were verified compliant with the People In Aid Code and awarded People In Aid Quality Mark 2 certificates. RedR and Mission East were re-awarded their Quality Mark 2 certificates for a further three years. In addition, People In Aid itself went through the verification process and attained Quality Mark 2. The number of members that have achieved Quality Mark 2 "Verified" now stand at 12 and the number achieving Quality Mark 1 "Committed" stands at 13.

The collaborative relationship between People In Aid and HAP was strengthened during the year and confirmed by a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the two organisations in November. One of the principles agreed was that "complementarities between our organisations (membership, certification, support to NGOs) allow us to undertake joint work to enhance our separate missions".

Following the 2008 agreement to explore undertaking joint audits of agencies sharing membership of HAP and People In Aid, a joint baseline analysis of Merlin and a joint audit of Christian Aid were completed. A joint HAP/ People In Aid audit of Mercy Malaysia is planned.



## SGS Benchmarking of NGOs

Société Générale de Surveillance's (SGS)<sup>19</sup> third-party benchmarking service for NGOs awarded new or repeat NGO Benchmarking certificates to 21 organisations or national members of a federation during 2009. This brought the total of new/repeat certificate awards since the service was launched in 2004 to 71, covering 33 separate organisations/federations. During 2009 SGS introduced a revised version of its benchmarking tool (version 2.2.2) using 101 indicators (down slightly from the previous 108 indicators) of organisational and systems performance measures.

## Global Reporting Initiative

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a network-based organisation that developed and works to improve and disseminate, the "G3 Guidelines" – a self-assessment and reporting tool. Participating organisations submit their completed reports for auditing and the resulting scores measure the degree to which the framework has been implemented. The framework sets out the principles and indicators that organisations can use to measure and report their economic, environmental, and social performance. In the G3 Guidelines, sustainability reporting is defined as "the practice of measuring, disclosing, and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders for organizational performance towards the goal of sustainable development."<sup>20</sup> (GRI 2006).

In 2009 GRI published its "Amsterdam Declaration on Transparency and Reporting", calling on governments to require Environmental Social and Governance disclosure from companies.

### → Box 5. Does GRI have any relevance for agencies involved in humanitarian work?

Whilst the GRI and its G3 Guidelines represent an impressive body of work and may well be of direct interest to large organisations working in the fields of environment and development, their relevance to humanitarian work *per se* is quite limited. The economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability are described in the following way in the G3 Guidelines:

**Economic:** The economic dimension of sustainability concerns the organisation's impacts on the economic conditions of its stakeholders and on economic systems at local, national, and global levels. The Economic Indicators illustrate:

- Flow of capital among different stakeholders; and
- Main economic impacts of the organisation throughout society (GRI 2006 p.25)

<sup>19</sup> Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) is a global corporation with more than 55000 employees and 1,000 offices and laboratories worldwide that provides inspection, verification, testing and certification services.

<sup>20</sup> The goal of sustainable development is described as being to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

**Environmental:** The environmental dimension of sustainability concerns an organisation's impacts on living and non-living natural systems, including ecosystems, land, air, and water. Environmental Indicators cover performance related to inputs (e.g., material, energy, water) and outputs (e.g., emissions, effluents, waste). In addition, they cover performance related to biodiversity, environmental compliance, and other relevant information such as environmental expenditure and the impacts of products and services. (GRI 2006 p.27)

**Social:** The social dimension of sustainability concerns the impacts an organisation has on the social systems within which it operates. The GRI Social Performance Indicators identify key Performance Aspects surrounding labour practices, human rights, society, and product responsibility. (GRI 2006 p.29)

### → Box 6. National bodies/structures

#### **Cambodia: Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)**

The Voluntary Certification system launched in June 2007 continued to attract applications and award certificates to successful applicant organisations. By August 2009 there had been 46 applications from 40 applicant NGOs (6 were reapplications) and of these 16 have been certified against the NGO code (an increase of 8 from the end of 2008) and are recognized as role model NGOs in Cambodia.

#### **Canada: Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)**

In 2009, CCIC updated and renamed its Code of Ethics to become the Code of Ethics and Operational Standards. New members of CCIC are required to complete a self-assessment form indicating current status of compliance within one year of membership. Within three years of membership acceptance members have to submit certification from their governing body indicating full compliance or explanation of non-compliance. Any indication of non-compliance with any standard prompts a review and a decision by CCIC. All members are required to submit a renewal of compliance every three years. Complaints about members that are not responded to satisfactorily by members are referred to the CCIC Ethics Review Committee.

#### **India: Credibility Alliance**

Credibility Alliance is a consortium of voluntary organisations committed to enhancing accountability and transparency in the Indian voluntary sector through good governance. By the end of 2009, 52 members had successfully completed the Alliance's accreditation process (up by 31 accredited members from March 2009). An "Accreditation Drive" is being launched in 2010 with support from the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) that involves a waiver of Alliance membership fees for small and medium-sized organisations successfully completing the accreditation process.

#### **Palestine: AMAN – Coalition for Accountability and Integrity**

AMAN is a membership organisation focusing on good governance, combating corruption and enhancing transparency and forms the national chapter of Transparency International. Under the NAZAHA Project implemented by AMAN in cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Foundation and funded by the European Commission, three Palestinian NGOs were awarded Good Governance Certificates in 2008. Key publications by AMAN during the year were the Annual Corruption Report 2008 and a National Integrity System Study: Palestine 2009.

### **Pakistan: Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy**

During the first ten months of 2009 PCP received 25 applications for certification under the PCP certification process that involves the evaluation by PCP staff of the governance, financial management and programme delivery of the applicant organisations. Of the 25 applications, 18 were certified and received the "PCP Seal of NPO<sup>21</sup> Good Practice". In all 175 organisations have now been certified and are able to obtain not-for-profit, tax exempt status for the Pakistan Central Board of Revenue.

During the year PCP was successful in its bid to the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC) to develop an online database of diaspora networks worldwide and the extent of their funding of projects implemented by NPOs in Pakistan. The need for such a database had been highlighted by an APPC Conference held in Hanoi in 2008 titled: "Diaspora Giving: An Agent of Change in Asia Pacific Communities?"

### **Philippines: Philippine Council for NGO Certification**

The PCNC certification process involves the review of audited financial reports, proof of compliance with government rules and regulations and field visits to the programmes of applicant NGOs which are undertaken by trained volunteers. Certified NGOs are in effect awarded a "Seal of Good Housekeeping" and join the membership of the PCNC and thereby qualify as a "donee" institution for which charitable donations are tax deductible. PCNC celebrated its tenth anniversary in May 2009. A comprehensive literature review of NGO accountability practices and options paper for PCNC was prepared by a consultant (Songco 2009).

### **Switzerland: Swiss NPO-Code**

The Swiss NPO-Code "Corporate Governance Guidelines for Non-Profit Organisations in Switzerland" was developed through a participatory process between 2003-2005 by the Conference of the Presidents of Large Humanitarian and Relief Organisations of Switzerland (Konferenz der Präsidentinnen und Präsidenten grosser Hilfswerke – KPGH) and was adopted by KPGH in March 2006. The Swiss NPO Code sets the principles and standards for the responsible and transparent corporate governance of foundations or associations providing humanitarian assistance. The code therefore focuses primarily on: governance and management (roles, separation of the duties, resolution of conflicts of interest, compensation of board members, etc.); financial management and reporting standards; and the requirements of an annual report. Organisations are required to comply with the Code or to "publically and clearly justify" why they are unable to comply. In March 2008 the Swiss NPO-Code-Association was established for the purpose of managing the Code.

### **UK: Charities Evaluation Service (CES)**

The first PQASSO Quality Mark was awarded to a children's charity operating in the north west of England. By the end of the year 11 organisations (including CES itself) had been awarded the Quality Mark.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> NPO – New Philanthropic Organisation

<sup>22</sup> The process followed by the PQASSO Quality Mark commences with a self-assessment by the organisation against PQASSO and its application to the Quality Mark process. A peer reviewer is then appointed who undertakes a desk review and site visits and submits a report, which is then reviewed to determine whether the requirements for the award of a Quality Mark have been met. [www.ces-vol.org.uk](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk)

### **USA: InterAction**

InterAction, the largest coalition of U.S.-based international NGOs with more than 190 members, published a revised version of its Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) Standards in November. The revised version updated the text to take account of initial work of the newly formed Gifts-in-Kind (GIK) Working Group. During 2010 it is planned to establish an InterAction working group to review the entire InterAction standards, as well as reformatting the Self-Certification Plus reporting process in order to align reporting with other standards reporting systems to which InterAction's members respond.<sup>23</sup>

## **1.4.3 Organisations and initiatives working to improve accountability through approaches other than third-party compliance verification and certification**

### **Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)**

The UK DEC's Accountability Framework introduced in mid-2008 began demonstrating its value during 2009 as well as revealing improvements in the performance of member agencies against the requirements of the Framework. The results of the second annual round of self-assessments by the 13 member agencies (ten of which are HAP members) were validated and reported on by Ernst and Young, the international professional services firm. A brief summary of the results were published in the DEC's Annual Trustees' Report and Accounts 2008/09.

Improvements were revealed in relation to each of the five Priority Areas:

- We use funds as stated
- We aspire to fulfil agreed humanitarian principles, standards and behaviours
- We achieve intended objectives and outcomes
- We are accountable to beneficiaries
- We learn from our experience.

The summary pointed to the Priority Areas of "accountability to beneficiaries" and "learning from our experience" as being the two most challenging areas for the members.

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<sup>23</sup> *Taina Alexander, Programme Manager, InterAction 19/1/10, personal communication.*

*We are accountable to beneficiaries ... remains one of the weaker areas of the framework although good progress was made against a significant number of Improvement Commitments.*

*The majority of DEC Agencies confirmed that they have guidance and templates addressing beneficiary accountability, but for some these are relatively new. There were also improvements in the publication of entitlements to beneficiaries and in capturing and using beneficiary feedback. These include:*

- *systematic use of new guidance for community consultation and complaints mechanisms*
- *a new requirement that programme monitoring plans must feature how beneficiary feedback will be collected and processed (DEC 2009 p.11).*

The summary also noted that during the year one DEC Agency [CAFOD] had been certified by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, “which is recognised by the framework as providing sufficient evidence of accountability to beneficiaries”. (DEC 2009 p.11)

With regard to the Priority Area “we learn from our experience” the summary noted:

*This remains the most challenging area of the framework. DEC Agencies confirmed that controls around learning from experience are more difficult to systematically apply and assure compared to financial and programme management areas. ... However, the majority of Improvement Commitments were met as planned and most DEC Agencies now have policies and processes in place to effectively capture key learning from a range of sources and to evaluate this learning. Improvements were also made in incorporating learning into processes and future programmes and effectively communicating learning to staff and partners. (DEC 2009 p.11)*

Once the members’ assessments for 2009-2010 have been completed and reported on by Ernst and Young, a review of the Accountability Framework over its first three years is planned for late 2010.

In response to criticism at its 2008 decision to end the use of independent evaluation, the DEC agreed to a partial reintroduction of published, independent evaluations. Under a new evaluation policy introduced at the beginning of 2009 “at least four [DEC Members] will be asked by the Secretariat to commission

and publish an independent evaluation of their response within one year of the DEC appeal being launched.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB)<sup>25</sup>**

Phase II of the ECB was approved in 2008 and will run to 2013. Phase II comprises three Objective areas and three Cross-cutting Themes.

Objective 1 is focussed on improving emergency preparedness and response capabilities at the field level in: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Horn of Africa, Indonesia, and Niger. To achieve this, consortia have been formed of ECB members in each country<sup>26</sup> together with selected other NGOs, UN agencies, local partners, communities, and government actors which are committed to working together. Consortia Engagement Plans (CEPs) have been developed in each country together with Agency Performance Improvement Plans (APIPs). The lead agencies within each consortium are:

- Bangladesh: Save the Children
- Bolivia: Oxfam GB
- Horn of Africa region: World Vision International
- Indonesia: CRS
- Niger: CARE International

The West Sumatra earthquake in September provided an early test for the CRS-led consortium in Indonesia and a Joint Needs Assessment Tool that had been under development was used by the ECB members.

Objective 2 focuses on improving the speed, quality, and effectiveness of emergency preparedness and response mechanisms within and across the ECB agencies.

Objective 3 aims to contribute to and improve upon the emergency preparedness and response of the humanitarian sector as a whole through collective dialogue, knowledge sharing, learning, and collaborative work with other partners and organisations.

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<sup>24</sup> “Evaluation Policy for the Use of Appeal Funds by Member Agencies” February 2009 <http://www.dec.org.uk/item/356>

<sup>25</sup> *Members of the ECB are CARE International, CRS, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision.*

<sup>26</sup> *Formally the ECB agencies at the country level are known as IWG members (Inter-Agency Working Group).*

The three cross-cutting themes of Phase II are:

**DRR:** to help communities reduce their vulnerability to disasters and to support cohesion within and beyond the IWG agencies on risk reduction issues

**Staff Capacity:** to respond faster in emergencies and raise the quality of response with better trained and more rapidly deployed staff

**Accountability:** to improve accountability to people affected by emergencies and to improve the measurement of impact

In October the ECB Bangladesh Consortium undertook a joint review of their response to Cyclone Alia and also hosted the first joint HAP/Sphere consultation as part of the ongoing revision process for the two standards (see HAP and Sphere sections in this chapter).

### **Sphere Project**

The revision process of the Sphere Handbook (2004 edition) began during 2009 with a 'kick off' workshop in Geneva in May.

The purpose of the revision process is described as being

*[...] not to change the qualitative standards, nor to overhaul the Handbook. Rather, it is to update the qualitative and quantitative indicators and guidance notes as needed, enhance linkages between sectors, iron out inconsistencies, faults and important omissions from the 2004 edition. Latest developments in the sector are also to be taken into consideration, such as issues around climate change, disaster risk reduction, protection, the Humanitarian Reform process and the cluster approach, among others. (Sphere Newsletter 2/6/09)*

The revision process involves parallel processes of consultations and the review of draft revision being undertaken by sub-groups focussing on the eight principle sections of the Handbook and on cross-cutting issues. The process of revising each section/cross-cutting issue is being managed by Focal Points who are ensuring wide consultations within their specialist technical areas/communities. In addition to the consultations within the specialist technical areas/communities a series of national and regional consultations have also been held at a number of locations in including Australia, Bangladesh and Kenya.

As well as the Handbook revision process Sphere continued its usual training and dissemination activities during 2009. Training of Trainers courses were

held in Thailand, Tunisia (in Arabic) and Sri Lanka. The first Spanish ToT course will be provided in Spain in March 2010.

In July 2009 the Sphere Project published “Taking the Initiative: Exploring quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector: an introduction to eight initiatives”<sup>27</sup> which was jointly funded by People In Aid. The intention of the document was to provide a background paper for use by Sphere in Sphere training workshops and for use by others in their own training programmes that would address the

*dearth of materials that introduce the initiatives in an integrated manner, describing how they differ from one another, how they can be used together, and/or how they overlap ... [which] ... has contributed, particularly at field level, to some confusion about when, how and what to use, and the perception of duplication. (Sphere 2009 p.3)*

The joint “Quality and Accountability Initiative” deployment by Sphere and HAP in Myanmar was completed during 2009 and was evaluated by a DFID consultant (Ferretti, 2009) (see the HAP section above for a summary of the principal findings).

### **Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)**

The SCHR is an alliance of nine major international humanitarian organisations and networks<sup>28</sup> that provides a forum for the exchange of experience and addressing issues of common concern.

During 2009 SCHR members completed the Peer Review of Accountability to Disaster Affected Populations that had commenced in 2008. The process involved three groups of three organisation working through a process of self-assessments followed by field visits (to two selected countries), headquarters visits and peer reviews among chief executives. Five of the nine participating agencies are HAP members. In a change with precedent UNHCR participated in the Peer Review process following acceptance by the High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres of an invitation from SCHR.

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<sup>27</sup> The eight initiatives reviewed were: ECB; Synergie Qualité; HAP; INEE; Quality COMPAS; the Sphere Project; ALNAP; and People In Aid.

<sup>28</sup> Action by Churches Together (ACT), Care International, Caritas Internationalis, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Oxfam, the International Save the Children Alliance and World Vision International (WVI). WVI joined the SCHR after the peer review commenced and did not participate in the peer review process).



<b>Group 1:</b> March 08 – June 08	<b>Group 2:</b> Sept 08 – Jan 09	<b>Group 3:</b> Feb 09 – Jun 09
ICRC	Oxfam	ACT
CARE	LWF	IFRC
Save the Children	UNHCR	Caritas

An overview paper of lessons learned from the process was published in January 2010 (SCHR 2010). Some of the key lessons highlighted were: the importance of commitment from leadership; the need to value and reward accountable approaches at the programme and individual level; the need to change the relationship with affected groups and the need to seeking out feedback and complaints. It is understood that this will be the only material from the process to be placed in the public domain; participating agencies have a confidentiality agreement so as to maximise their openness during the peer review process.

#### **1.4.4 Other developments in relation to NGOs**

##### **One World Trust CSO Project and Online Database**

The One World Trust (OWT) is an independent think tank that conducts research, develops recommendations and advocates for reform to make policy and decision-making processes in global governance more accountable to the people they affect now and in the future, and to ensure that international laws are strengthened and applied equally to all.

In July OWT launched a portal on Civil Society Self Regulation which includes an online database of over 320 CSO Self-Regulatory Initiatives. It also published two Briefing Papers – one providing a global picture of CSO self-regulation drawing on an analysis of the database (Warren and Lloyd, 2009) and another on NGO Development Effectiveness Initiatives prepared in conjunction with World Vision (Lingán et al 2009).

##### **Inter Agency Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC)**

In March a meeting on “Improving Humanitarian Information for Affected Populations” was held in New York and this was followed in April by a similar meeting in London hosted by the British Red Cross and Save the Children UK. Six of the agencies participating in these meetings formed a Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC). A consultancy was undertaken towards the end of the year to develop a proposed strategy for CDAC and this was discussed at a second meeting in London in December hosted by Save the Children.

Current and imminently available technology for mobile phones offers agencies the possibility (where the mobile networks are functioning effectively) to communicate early warning messages of Tsunamis or Cyclones to mobile phones or to transfer cashable credits to the mobile phone accounts of their beneficiaries (e.g. Coyle and Meier 2009). Whilst these are exciting possibilities, the technology also offers improvements in participation by beneficiaries and disaster affected communities in the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and for the handling of complaints. As CDAC develops, it will be important to ensure that the possibilities for improved participation and accountability are given appropriate attention and that the agenda is not 'crowded-out' by other agendas within agencies or by commercial agendas. HAP was invited to participate in the second London meeting and signalled its intention to continue participation in order to encourage a sustained focus on participation and accountability in the development of communication methods between agencies and affected communities.

#### **1.4.5 Professionalisation-related activities**

A notable feature of 2009 was the significantly increased level of attention to issues of professionalisation of agency personnel and to issues of leadership development. This was a welcome development as they relate directly to the HAP Standard Benchmark on Staff Competencies (Benchmark 4).<sup>29</sup>

##### **Professionalisation**

In September, Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA - a collaborative network supporting partnerships between UK-based Higher Education institutions and humanitarian organisations and partners around the world), commissioned a scoping study on humanitarian professionalisation to be prepared jointly by the Feinstein International Center, Tufts University and RedR-UK. The ultimate aim of the work is to "identify the ideal scope and structure of a framework through which the transformation to a professionally recognised and regulated sector could be achieved"<sup>30</sup>. Using focus group interviews, structured individual key informant interviews, electronic web-based surveys, and consultations with humanitarian organisations, host governments, donor governments and those communities who have had frequent and sustained contact with humanitarian agency services the study aims to:

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<sup>29</sup> "The agency shall determine the competencies, attitudes and development needs of staff required to implement its humanitarian quality management system" Benchmark 4, the HAP 2007 Standard.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.elrha.org/professionalisation> viewed 19/1/10

- Identify an agreed set of core competencies for the humanitarian worker.
- Develop a certification system which will create a scale of recognised professional qualifications from entry level through skills certificates to professional Masters applicable in the UK but sufficiently generic that it can be adapted and adopted by other countries.
- Explore the potential for additional professional structures.
- Provide a road map whereby the above three issues might be carried forward in the UK and internationally.

Beginning in January 2009, under a new partnership between RedR and Oxford Brookes University in the UK, participants achieving passes on RedR courses (Managing People in Emergencies, Managing Projects in Emergencies, Certificate in Security Management), are now able to transfer the credits they earn, towards gaining the post-graduate Development and Emergency Practice degree offered by Oxford Brookes or towards another similar postgraduate qualification.

Also during 2009, PM4NGOs (Project Management for Non-Governmental Organisations) was established offering a three-level certification sequence (PMD-Pro) for project managers working in the international development sector.<sup>31</sup> The objective of Project Management in Development (PMD-Pro) is to:

- confer a professional certification status for project managers in the sector
- provide certification and learning resources that are comprehensive, accessible and appropriate to professionals working in the sector
- integrate content that is contextualized to the international development sector with other internationally-recognised certifications.<sup>32</sup>

## Leadership

In July 2009 Tulane University in New Orleans launched the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy (DRLA) which offers disaster management and leadership training through to the doctoral level. The mission of the DRLA is described as “to meet the needs of vulnerable populations affected by natural and man-made disasters by strengthening leadership for global humanitarian assistance and disaster management”.<sup>33</sup> In September DRLA, ALNAP and

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<sup>31</sup> PM4NGOs is collaboration between the Project Management Institute (PMI) Educational Foundation, Learning for International NGOs (LINGOs), a group of NGOs and other partners.

<sup>32</sup> <http://ngolearning.org/pm4ngos/default.aspx>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.drlatulane.org/>

the Humanitarian Futures Programme announced a collaborative research programme on humanitarian leadership with the objective of “strengthened leadership of humanitarian and disaster management interventions.”<sup>34</sup>

In the UK, ELRHA funded a study “Engaging Tomorrow’s Global humanitarian Leaders, Today” which “aims to investigate the current gaps in knowledge and practice surrounding humanitarian leadership development and management”. The study is being undertaken by Cranfield University and People In Aid.<sup>35</sup>

With many humanitarian and development NGOs now providing leadership development programmes for their staff, RedR hosted a series of meetings in the UK with the objective of enabling them to share their experience and develop a shared agenda.

## **1.5. Principal developments in relation to the Red Cross family**

### **ICRC**

During 2009 ICRC drafted an accountability framework for the organisation that will be discussed at directorate level in the first quarter of 2010. It is hoped to make the framework publically available before the middle of 2010. In October ICRC published “Professional Standards for Protection Work”, which is the result of an extensive process of consultation with humanitarian and human rights organisations to develop a set of commonly agreed standards and guidelines that can be applied by humanitarian and human rights actors doing protection work in conflict and other situations of violence.

### **IFRC**

In November 2009, the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies adopted “Strategy 2020: Saving Lives, Changing Minds”, a new ten-year strategy to guide the work of the 186 National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat<sup>36</sup>. Strategy 2020 states that, “[o]ur accountability principles include commitments to explicit standard setting, openness in monitoring and reporting, transparent information-sharing, meaningful beneficiary participation, effective and efficient resource use, and systems for lesson learning and responding to concerns and complaints” (p.31)

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<sup>34</sup> “Humanitarian and Disaster Management Leadership: A collaborative research and development initiative <http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/leadership-concept-note.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.elrha.org/?q=node/76>

<sup>36</sup> “Strategy 2020” [http://www.ifrc.org/who/strategy2020.asp?navid=03\\_03](http://www.ifrc.org/who/strategy2020.asp?navid=03_03)

and refers to a national societies subscribing “to an independently validated, Federation-wide peer review mechanism to accredit well-functioning National Societies.” (p.23). It is understood that the precise nature of the peer review mechanism is yet to be developed.<sup>37</sup>

### **National Societies**

It is understood that a number of national societies have developed, or are in the process of developing, their own approaches towards improved accountability. For instance the British Red Cross Society has developed an “Accountability to Beneficiaries Framework”, a process that has involved the development and testing of guidance for BRC Emergency Response Units that was subsequently piloted by the Federation in a training for ERU members held in New Zealand. The Framework incorporates elements of the accountability frameworks and benchmarks developed by One World Trust, Action Aid and HAP.<sup>38</sup>

## **1.6. Principal developments in relation to UN and multilateral organisations**

### **1.6.1 The Humanitarian Reform Process**

Roll out of the three principal pillars of the humanitarian reform process continued during 2009.

#### **→ Box 7. The three principal pillars of the humanitarian reform process**

- Better coordination of humanitarian action (through the cluster approach);
- Faster, more predictable and equitable humanitarian funding;
- Improved humanitarian leadership (through Humanitarian Coordinators).

In 2007 a fourth element (more effective partnerships) was added following the adoption of the Principles of Partnership by the Global Humanitarian Platform in July 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Personal communication: Josse Gillijns, Head, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Department, IFRC 28/1/10

<sup>38</sup> Personal communication: Jutta Tiegler, Quality and Accountability Advisor, BRCS. 27/11/09.

## The Cluster Approach

The cluster approach was formally adopted in the occupied Palestinian territories and Timor Leste during the year bringing the total number of countries to 25.<sup>39</sup> Despite the impression of momentum conveyed by such numbers, a sceptical view of what it means for the cluster approach to be “formally adopted” was provided by the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project in a Synthesis report and five country case studies in October 2009.<sup>40</sup>

*The rosy picture of adoption of the cluster approach in all of the study countries is misleading. The mapping studies make clear that, in many cases, the introduction of the cluster approach was a semantic exercise, without any real change in the way in which coordination was run. In Sudan, the Humanitarian Country Team only agreed to the introduction of the cluster approach on the basis that it was just a change of name without any other changes. (Synthesis Report p.24)*

Accountability was on the agenda of the Clusters during 2009: the theme of the Global Cluster Leads Retreat held in March was “Improving cluster accountability and performance at both global and country levels” and in April a Global Clusters-Donor Meeting focussed on “Accountability with the Cluster System”. The stated objective of the April meeting was to reach agreement on next steps to improve accountability within the humanitarian system (from the country to the global level, with a focus on clusters) with the ultimate aim of improving collective accountability to beneficiaries. Despite the mention of “beneficiaries” in the objective, the focus of the meeting was largely on the clarification on roles and accountabilities within the cluster system and upward accountability to donors; in the summary record of the meeting the terms “affected people” and “beneficiaries” only appeared in the presentation

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<sup>39</sup> The 25 countries formally implementing the cluster approach are: Afghanistan; Burundi; Central African Republic [CAR]; Chad; Colombia; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]; Ethiopia; Georgia; Guinea; Haiti; Indonesia; Iraq; Kenya; Liberia; Myanmar; Nepal; occupied Palestinian territories [oPt]; Pakistan; Somalia; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Timor-Leste; Uganda; Zimbabwe. Whilst Niger and Eritrea have Humanitarian Coordinators they have not yet formally adopted the cluster approach. There were no instances during 2009 of the cluster approach being adopted in a country team led by a Resident Coordinator (as had happened for instance in Bangladesh in 2007-08 during the response to Cyclone Sidr).

<sup>40</sup> The NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project is a consortium of six NGOs (ActionAid, CAFOD, CARE, IRC, Oxfam, Save the Children) and ICVA undertaking a three year project (November 2008 to October 2011) funded by the UK DFID. The outputs of the study published in October comprised a Synthesis Report “Review of the engagement of NGOs with the humanitarian reform process” and five country studies: Afghanistan; DRC; Ethiopia; Sudan; Zimbabwe.

by ALNAP and ICVA's presentation on the preliminary results of the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform study.<sup>41</sup>

When it was published, in October 2009, the study by the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project was critical of the very limited attention so far given to accountability to crisis-affected communities within the humanitarian reform process.

*Although the Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster Leads at the Country Level calls on clusters to ensure that participatory and community-based approaches are used, there has been little focus on monitoring and improving downward accountability mechanisms within the framework of the humanitarian reforms. Whilst individual agencies within clusters emphasise adherence to specific standards and codes to differing degrees, the individual clusters need to find ways of strengthening accountability and fostering a shared commitment to accountability. (Synthesis report p.33)*

*One of the biggest challenges for humanitarian reform in the coming years will be to focus on accountability to affected populations. (Synthesis report p.30)*

Noting the number of inter-agency quality and accountability initiatives that had been established before 2005 when the humanitarian reform process commenced, the synthesis study notes that “[i]t remains unclear why so little attention was paid to these initiatives at the time of the roll-out of the humanitarian reform process.” (Synthesis report p.31)

The report makes a cogent summary of the case for improved accountability to affected populations:

*Empirical evidence in favour of strengthening downward accountability is compelling: it enhances the effectiveness of response, mitigates the risk of corruption and positively impacts on people's lives. It is also argued that accountability is not solely about improving impact (a means to an end), but is also a matter of principle (an end in itself). From a rights-based perspective, the exercise of power without responsibility and accountability is an abuse of that power. By the same token, good downward accountability has outcomes for the beneficiaries (such as being able to engage in decision-making processes, having voice and agency, having access to information and respectful and*

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<sup>41</sup> “Accountability within the Cluster System” Co-Chairs Summary of the Global Clusters-Donor Meeting. Permanent Mission of Canada 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009, Geneva.

*trusting relationships) which help to fulfil their right to life with dignity – a fundamental human right at the heart of the international legal framework.*

The report noted that the WASH cluster was often cited as ‘the most effective cluster’ – a status that it attributes to the resources invested in the role and the strong support provided by NGOs at the global, national and local levels. Significantly, it is the WASH Cluster that appears to be playing a pioneering role among the clusters on accountability to affected populations. One of the 15 projects being implemented by the global WASH Cluster is the WASH Cluster Accountability Project, which was led by a Steering Group comprising representatives of CARE, IRC, Oxfam and Tearfund (three of which are HAP members and through which the HAP Secretariat was able to provide advice and comments on the tools). One of the outputs of the project was the report “Accountability in the WASH Cluster” (Ferron 2009).

The report noted that:

*The Performance Review Framework produced by the Global WASH Learning Project has so far only identified measures to assess upward accountability to the humanitarian co-ordinator but has recognised the need to be more accountable to beneficiaries. (Ferron 2009 p.6)*

The report had attempted to learn about accountability initiatives in other clusters but,

*Efforts to obtain information about the plans of other clusters in relation to accountability were met with limited success. The health and education clusters had discussed the issue but had no firm plans for specific work on accountability. The CCCM Cluster had previously circulated draft standards that included beneficiary satisfaction but this was later rejected. (Ferron 2009 p.10)*

The report concluded that:

*Although many agencies have started to introduce accountability mechanisms and frameworks into their response, it is clear that there is still a huge gap between theory and practice. The majority of WASH actors consulted at field level were unclear about what constituted accountable ways of working – even when their agencies stated this as a key value. Much more needs to be done to provide training and support to these front line staff. Strong leadership is also required to ensure that accountability is made more of a priority by those agencies that have not yet introduced such concepts and frameworks. Ferron 2009 p.13)*



Noting that “A very practical way to ensure that the voices of those affected are heard is to incorporate feedback and complaints mechanisms into every emergency response”, the report proposed the introduction and piloting of a feedback and/or complaints mechanism as part of a dynamic and practical approach to learning.

In addition to the report, the WASH Cluster Accountability Project also developed practical tools including:

1. WASH Accountability Checklist (aimed at fieldworkers)
2. Template Community Leaflets (providing information to communities on what they can expect from WASH programmes)
3. A collection of WASH Accountability Resources (e.g. examples of WASH good practice, Focus Group Discussion checklists, Training Ideas, Community MoU etc.)

→ **Box 8. A personal view on accountability within the Health Cluster**

“For Dr Eric Laroche, assistant director-general of Health Action in Crisis at the World Health Organization (WHO) and its representative on the UN’s Inter-Agency Standing Committee, health clusters mark a major step forward from the previous looser efforts at sectoral coordination, which depended largely on the willingness of partners to share information. Most importantly, for Laroche, the approach makes the lead agency, or co-lead agencies, accountable for the performance of their cluster by clearly stipulating their responsibility to ensure adequate coordination of activities by partners involved in its specified area. “Ten years ago accountability was shared among all the actors, now for health it falls on WHO,” says Laroche. “When people see an epidemic spreading, they turn to us and say: ‘What are you going to do?’ That’s quite new.” Second, the cluster system aims to push beyond unstructured information exchanges “to have a common analysis and a commonly agreed strategy,” says Laroche, adding that this was not always the case with the sector coordination of the past.”

Extract from “WHO takes lead on health as UN tackles crises” Bulletin of the World Health Organ 2009; pages 250–251.

## **Improved Humanitarian Financing**

During 2009 CERF allocated just under US\$400 million in support of rapid responses (42 countries and the occupied Palestinian territory) and \$129 million in support of underfunded emergencies (19 countries and the oPt).

The CERF Secretariat, having sought advice from the HAP Secretariat and with the support of a consultant, developed a draft performance and accountability framework in 2009. In reviewing the draft in November the Advisory Group of the CERF recommended that:

1. The framework should be more clearly linked to the three objectives of the Fund namely
  - promoting early action and response to save lives;
  - enhancing response to time-critical requirements based on demonstrable needs;
  - strengthening core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises.
2. The framework should focus on measuring the Fund's added value and its impact on the overall humanitarian response to the overall humanitarian situation in a country.
3. Annual reports by Humanitarian Coordinators should be complemented by independent evaluations in a small number of selected countries to measure the Fund's impact.<sup>42</sup>

It is expected that a final version of the performance and accountability framework will be approved in early 2010.

### **Improved Humanitarian Leadership**

2009 saw increased appreciation of the critical importance of effective leadership within the humanitarian system. Whilst much of the attention was focussed on the role of Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs), the trend was also reflected in growth of leadership development programmes and studies on leadership noted earlier in Section 4.

The NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project was particularly critical of the 'Improved Leadership' pillar of the humanitarian reform process stating that, "[i]n four out of the five study countries, strong and experienced humanitarian leadership has been lacking"<sup>43</sup>. Acknowledging the level of dissatisfaction a paper prepared by OCHA and presented to the annual retreat of Humanitarian Coordinators held in Montreaux in May (OCHA, 2009) noted that:

*Dissatisfaction has never been properly measured .... Rather, the performance of humanitarian coordination functions by Coordinators has been gauged against idiosyncratic and largely subjective benchmarks, differing from one stakeholder to the other. Nor has*

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<sup>42</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Group of the Central Emergency Response Fund 2-3 November 2009 <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/64/558>

<sup>43</sup> DRC was the only one of the five case studies judged to have a strong and experienced Humanitarian Coordinator. The other case studies were Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

*performance been appraised through a transparent and fair process, which would allow Coordinators eventually to rebut criticism. In short, Coordinators have been and continue to be judged by the “tribunal of public opinion”. (OCHA 2009 p.1).*

The paper assessed the contribution to HC performance of three types of inter-related variables (individual; management and institutional), and concluded:

*As countless evaluations have shown, the impact that Coordinators have on the effectiveness of humanitarian action is incalculable. Yet the human, financial and — most importantly — political resources that have been invested up to now by the humanitarian community in this agenda have been exceedingly modest, if compared to those invested in response. What is more, efforts have mostly focused on individual-level variables. These efforts will not bear fruit if they are not coupled with a concerted and sustained effort to address management- and institutional-level variables. (OCHA 2009 p.8)*

During the year the Terms of Reference for Humanitarian Coordinators were revised; a matrix of roles and responsibilities within the humanitarian architecture at the country level was developed; and the pool of potential Humanitarian Coordinators available for deployment was expanded with an increase in the share of individuals with humanitarian experience, women, individuals from developing countries, and individuals from outside the UN. The total number of countries with Humanitarian Coordinators now stands at 27.<sup>44</sup>

## **1.6.2 Principal developments in relation to individual agencies**

### **UNHCR**

In 2009, UNHCR revised its Global Strategic Priorities following a consultative process within HQ and the Field.

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=71>

### → Box 9. UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities

- Promote a favourable protection environment for all populations of concern to UNHCR
- Ensure persons of concern are treated fairly, efficiently and without discrimination when seeking protection and that they receive adequate documentation
- Intensify efforts to ensure a safe and secure environment for people of concern, including protection from violence and exploitation
- Ensure provision of basic needs and essential services for persons of concern without discrimination
- Promote community participation and self-reliance to help people of concern live constructive lives
- Intensify efforts and gain sustained international support to find durable solutions for people of concern
- Ensure the Office maintain a leadership role in international protection and that field operations are supported to provide the fullest possible coverage of the needs of people of concern.

UNHCR Global Appeal 2010-2011 – Global strategic priorities

One of the objectives of the revision of the global strategic priorities was to strengthen the ongoing development of results-based management within the organisation.<sup>45</sup> A Global Management Accountability Framework (GMAF) was also developed. Although largely a consolidation of current UNHCR and UN policies, rules and procedures, it is presented in a format that maps accountabilities, responsibilities and authorities (ARAs) across the organisation. The format is now being used to update job descriptions and ToRs in order to align the ARA's with the Performance Appraisal and Management System.

The second annual review was undertaken of progress towards compliance with the Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming introduced during 2007. The second year of results enabled a comparison with the results for the 2007-2008 baseline. For the first time UNHCR's Regional Offices and national offices undertaking 'advocacy based operations' were included in the findings.<sup>46</sup> (Groves and Landouzy-Sanders 2009)

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<sup>45</sup> Oral update on UNHCR's Structural and Management Change Process 46<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee 15-16 September 2009.

<sup>46</sup> 'Advocacy based operations' are countries in which UNCHR does not engage in day to day direct support of persons of concern and in which activities consist mainly of lobbying government, influencing policy, fundraising and awareness raising government. Basically this includes the Regional Offices in Canberra, Washington, Riyadh, Brussels, Berlin, Budapest, Rome and Stockholm together with national offices in countries Europe, North America, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

The headlines of the 2008-2009 review were that:

*Just under half of the twenty accountability actions were reported to be 'fully' complied with in this second year of monitoring accountability. Only 3% of actions were not complied with at all. ... Comparison between compliance rates in 2007-2008 and 2008 provides a mixed picture. Overall, there has been significant improvement in completion of accountability actions on SGBV. There has been an overall reduction in full compliance with accountability actions for AGDM. (Groves and Landouzy-Sanders 2009 p.3)*

The agency went through a HAP Standard baseline analysis in Georgia in 2009, following on the Head Office baseline analysis in 2008. UNHCR was also one of the three agencies (together with Oxfam GB and LWF) participating in Group 2 of the SCHR Peer Review of Accountability to Disaster-Affected Populations. An information note on the agency's participation in the process provided an account of the process (see Box 10) and highlighted the importance of the following factors:

- participation through the whole project cycle
- respectful staff behaviour and attitudes towards the populations they serve
- effective mechanisms for information-sharing and exchange
- integrity or 'doing what we said we would do'
- working in an accountable manner to ensure the effective use of resources.

**→ Box 10. UNHCR's participation in the SCHR Peer Review on accountability to disaster-affected populations**

The first stage of the process was preparing the self-assessments. In conducting its HQ self-assessment UNHCR was assisted by HAP. This was followed by a self-assessment at the two sites selected for the field visits: Kakuma Camp in Kenya and eastern Nepal. The self-assessments were shared with Oxfam GB and LWF and with the SCHR consultant.

The two country visits were carried out in September and October 2008 by review teams consisting of one staff member from UNHCR, Oxfam GB and LWF, and an SCHR consultant. These "provided an opportunity to probe and examine more fully the contents of the self-assessments, and to obtain insights from each other's operations and ways of working with the affected populations" Before leaving the country, the review teams presented their key findings and preliminary recommendations to the country teams of each agency." (UNHCR 2009)

The HQ visits were conducted in January and February 2009 with three days being spent with each agency. "The HQ visits provided an opportunity to put the country-level learning within a wider institutional context. Again, the review team presented their preliminary findings and recommendations to the respective Headquarters senior management teams before departure."

The final stage involved a meeting of the CEOs of all 9 participating agencies in June 2009 to discuss the findings, learning and recommendations for the three Group 2 agencies. Each agency responded to its report and the discussion amongst the peers concluded with a set of priorities for each agency to follow up.

This account is based on UNHCR (2009) "Information note on UNHCR's participation in the SCHR peer review process" PDES/UNHCR

*Perhaps the key lesson ... is that creating a "culture of accountability" within a humanitarian organization is a process, not an end-state. For this reason, a recommendation common to all agencies is to formulate a corporate "statement of accountability" to those they serve, setting out institutional aspirations and commitments. ... For all agencies, a "statement of accountability" would provide a basis for internal communications, briefings and trainings, as well as for dialogue with external stakeholders, especially partners and government counterparts.<sup>47</sup> (UNHCR 2009 p.5)*

The information note concluded:

*With protection being its primary concern, UNHCR's management system is already rooted in a rights-based approach and has a strong orientation towards 'accountability to persons of concern'. The peer review has confirmed that UNHCR has indeed made progress in recent years in embedding accountability within its programming practices and human resource management. (UNHCR 2009 p.5)*

Ongoing reforms within the organisation such as results-based management (RBM) and the Global Management Accountability Framework (GMAF) are seen as providing a "methodology and tools for UNCHR to achieve the right results for persons of concern in the most efficient and effective manner". (UNHCR 2009 p.6).

## **WFP**

Arguably WFP ranks as the UN agency assisting the largest number of beneficiaries. In 2008 the agency provided assistance to 102 million beneficiaries in 78 countries<sup>48</sup>. Of these 102 million, 25 million were beneficiaries of emergency operations (EMOPs) and 59 million were beneficiaries of

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<sup>47</sup> This point is in agreement with HAP Standard Benchmark 1 on a statement of commitment (accountability framework).

<sup>48</sup> Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan together accounted for 45 percent of programme expenses; the Sudan was the largest single WFP operation, accounting for 16 percent.

protracted relief and recovery operations PRROs. The agency therefore plays a major role within the international humanitarian system and its approach towards accountability to affected populations is of particular interest.

2009 represented the first full year of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011 with its theme of transforming WFP from a **food aid** agency to a **food assistance** agency. A symbolic reflection of the start of this transformation was the launch of WFP's first food voucher operation in Africa in February 2009 – targeting 120,000 people suffering from the impact of high food prices in urban areas of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.<sup>49</sup> To enable the agency to monitor and demonstrate its contributions to achieving the goals of the new Strategic Plan, a new Strategic Results Framework was approved by the Executive Board at the beginning of 2009 and strategic, operational and reporting frameworks of the agency were reoriented.<sup>50</sup>

→ **Box 11. Accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities in WFP**

For an agency assisting such massive numbers of beneficiaries, the perspectives of beneficiaries and affected populations (as opposed to data on the numbers of beneficiaries) or evidence of accountability to those beneficiaries and affected populations are hard to find in much of WFP's documentation. WFP's accountabilities to its 100+ million beneficiaries are not mentioned once in its "Annual Performance Report 2008", which is described as "the main accountability and learning tool and primary oversight mechanism for the Board and donors" of the agency.

The lack of attention to accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities is also evident in many of the seven WFP evaluations reviewed in preparing this chapter. In only two of the seven evaluations reviewed was the term "accountability" used in relation to beneficiaries<sup>51</sup>. The Zimbabwe case study prepared for the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project looked at WFP's

<sup>49</sup> Reliefweb 13 February 2009

<sup>50</sup> Under the new Strategic Results Framework WFP's five Strategic Objectives are: 1. Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies; 2. Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures; 3. Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post disaster or transition situations; 4. Reduce chronic hunger and under-nutrition; 5. Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through handover strategies and local purchase.

<sup>51</sup> Harvey, Paul et al (2009) "Strategic Evaluation of the Effectiveness of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions" devotes three pages to issues of beneficiary participation, feedback and accountability in two of the case study countries, though curiously this is located in the Cross-Cutting Issues section. HAP is mentioned as possible source for WFP to "enhance its responsiveness to beneficiary views and priorities". (Harvey et al. 2009 p.44) Manfred Metz et al. (2009) "Evaluation of Afghanistan PRRO 10427.0 Post Conflict Relief and Rehabilitation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" gives only limited consideration to humanitarian accountability but in footnote 91 p.46 makes the following observation "Accountability is not a burden but holds opportunity to improve effectiveness through informed feedback and reactions on WFP plans. Systematic feedback mechanisms allow WFP to report on relief/recovery evolution, the change that results from food assistance. Beneficiaries can explain the degree to which projects meet their needs (outcome) and how they have changed their lives (livelihood, impact). Donors, Government and Country Programmes need [such] information to elicit support."

Vulnerable Group Feeding programme which operates during the lean period for 5 months from October to February and made the following comment on WFP's relationship with beneficiaries in the programme:

*There is no participatory process at the design phase of the project. WFP decides centrally about four groups of beneficiaries (Categories A-D) and the type and quantity of commodities. The beneficiaries themselves do the assessment in their communities to determine which households fall under category A, B, C or D. The implementing agencies only do selected control checks to see if the aim of targeting the vulnerable is achieved. Some field workers of the implementing agencies expressed how difficult it is for them to work with this centralised and un-flexible approach. It is up to them to explain the system to the communities, to explain whenever changes happen and to make excuses when there are delays or cuts in rations. (Otto 2009 p.29)*

The limited attention given to accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities in some of WFP principal accountability tools may be explained (but is not excused) by the fact that the final delivery and distribution of WFP assistance is mostly undertaken by implementing partners and it is these organisations which interact directly with the affected communities and beneficiaries.

According to the 2008 Annual Performance Report, WFP collaborated with a total of 2,838 NGOs, though a small number of international NGOs and alliances/networks accounted for much of the assistance handled.

*World Vision International (WVI) remained WFP's main NGO partner, collaborating in 49 projects in 28 countries. Other major NGO partners were: the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International – 34 projects in 25 countries; Catholic Relief Services (CRS) – 18 projects in 14 countries; Plan International – 16 projects in 13 countries; and Action contre la faim – 14 projects in 13 countries. (WFP 2009 p.56)*

The critical role played by WFP's implementing partners places a very heavy responsibility on them for providing accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities for the assistance that they, and WFP, provide. How effectively they are able to perform this role is open to question as WFP's Executive Board is made up of representatives of states and the voice of NGO implementing partners in the governance structure is at best indirect. It is possible also that the funding relationship between WFP and the implementing partners – the bulk of whose costs in undertaking the distributions are met by WFP – may also constrain their ability to effectively represent the interests of beneficiaries and affected communities.

## **UNICEF**

The process of developing an accountability framework and clarifying the oversight system within UNICEF was completed in early 2009 and the resulting document approved by the Executive Board at its Annual meeting in June.

Claiming that “UNICEF understands accountability in the same way as other United Nations agencies, most notably UNDP and UNFPA” (p.1), the document defines accountability as



*[t]he obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards and that performance results have been reported fairly and accurately. (UNICEF 2009 p.2)<sup>52</sup>*

→ **Box 12. The Guiding principles, functional elements and main dimensions of accountability within UNICEF**

Guiding principles of accountability in UNICEF

- Mutual accountability and clarity of organisational responsibility
- Alignment with corporate goals and accountability
- Formal and consistent delegation of authority
- Risk and cost-benefit considerations in decision-making
- Reliable and verifiable performance monitoring and reporting
- Highest standards of personal integrity (self-attestation and ethical conduct)
- Transparency

Elements of UNICEF's accountability framework

- a) Strategic leadership, direction and guidance
- b) Dynamic policy development, planning and programming
- c) Representation and advocacy
- d) Technical leadership for children
- e) Performance, monitoring, management and oversight
- f) Quality assurance
- g) Talent and leadership development
- h) Collaborative relationships and partnerships
- i) Knowledge leadership for children
- j) Risk management
- k) Organisational improvement
- l) Ethical conduct and personal integrity

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<sup>52</sup> *It is worth comparing this definition with HAP's own definition of accountability: "Accountability is about using power responsibly. HAP's definition of accountability goes beyond an exclusive focus on the process or duty to report. It involves taking account of the needs, concerns, capacities and disposition of affected parties, and explaining the meaning of, and reasons for, actions and decisions. Accountability is therefore also about the right to be heard and the duty to respond. The HAP definition of accountability thus involves three process domains: Processes through which individuals, organizations and states determine their decisions and actions; Processes by which individuals, organizations and states report upon and explain their decisions and actions; Processes through which individuals, organisations and states may safely report concerns arising from the decisions and actions of others, and gain redress as and where appropriate" <http://www.hapinternational.org/other/faq.aspx#1>*

The three main dimensions of accountability in UNICEF:

- organisational accountability;
- programmatic accountability; and
- staff accountability.

Summarised from: "Report on the accountability system of UNICEF" UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session 2009 8-10 June

The text relating to the quality assurance element is as follows:

*Senior managers are responsible for ensuring that the programme and operational strategies of individual offices are relevant to and focused on the achievement of national development priorities, MTSP [medium term strategic plans] targets, the CCCs [core commitments for children] and the organization's overall commitment to protecting the rights of the child. Senior managers also assure that demonstrated managerial competencies are in place to ensure the achievement of results for children and women. Through quality assurance, UNICEF fosters a genuine culture of excellence and accountability whereby staff at all levels perform their duties with integrity and the interest of the organization in mind.(UNICEF 2009 p.7)*

A striking feature of the document is the way accountability is described only in relation to 'achieving results for' children and women. Accountability **to** children and women as rights holders does not appear to have been given explicit consideration in the document. Whilst this conceptualisation of accountability is likely to have been influenced by UNICEF's adoption and integration of Results Based Management, it is unclear why UNHCR has been able to retain a clear accountability to 'persons of concern' following its adoption and integration of Results Based Management, whilst UNICEF appears to have lost, or at least diffused, a clear accountability to children and women.

## **1.7. Principal developments in relation to donor organisations**

### **Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)**

The European Commission and the Netherlands served as GHD co-chairs from July 2008 to July 2009 when they were succeeded by Ireland and Estonia who will serve as co-chairs until July 2010. During 2009 the Republic of Korea became the GHD's 36<sup>th</sup> member.

The “GHD Indicators 2009” report on the collective and individual performance of GHD members prepared by Development Initiatives was reviewed (Development Initiatives, 2009). The analysis suggests improvement in the timeliness of general funding but a reduction in the timeliness of funding provided in response to rapid-onset disasters. Though the GHD Indicators work is felt to be useful, Development Initiatives caution that the indicators “do not fully meet the needs of the exercise” (Development Initiatives 2009 p.2).

Other work carried out during the year included:

- a mapping study of donor coordination of humanitarian aid at the field level (Spaak and Otto 2009) commissioned by ECHO on behalf of the GHD group
- a study on the relevance and applicability of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in Humanitarian Assistance (commissioned by Norway on behalf of the GHD group)
- an exploration of partnerships and humanitarian financing at the Montreaux IX retreat on the CAP and Humanitarian Financing in March 2009
- a joint meeting with representatives of the IASC which focused on the IASC’s “Principles of Partnership”
- leadership by the Netherlands on the application of the GHD principles in the occupied Palestinian territories
- participation by several GHD members in the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force<sup>53</sup>.

In terms of mainstreaming GHD into the work of individual donors, Spain, UK and Luxembourg reported updating their Humanitarian Policy Action Plan during the year, whilst the USA supplemented its policy with internal guidance papers. The EC, Sweden and the Netherlands are in the process of updating their implementation plans. Denmark is in the process of updating its humanitarian policy (originally published in 2002); Australia is in the process of reviewing its Humanitarian Aid Action Policy and Sweden is in the process of revising its humanitarian aid policy – a process that is scheduled to be completed by mid 2010.

A study of the humanitarian response to the 2008 conflict in Georgia was critical of the behaviour of donors and the lack of adherence to GHD Principles:

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<sup>53</sup> *The ToR for the NATF were finalised in June. The purpose of NATF is “to harmonise and promote cross-sector needs assessment initiatives for consistent, reliable and timely data on humanitarian needs in sudden-onset crises to strengthen informed decision making and improve humanitarian response.”*

*The humanitarian response was demonstrably more political than humanitarian. Although operational agencies delivered a timely and effective response and averted large-scale loss of life, the behaviour of donors in response to the August 2008 war was, by their own accounts, generally inconsistent with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship. Needs emerging from the 2008 war, including humanitarian needs, were ultimately oversubscribed by western donors, most of whom took the Georgian side in the conflict. (Hansen 2009 p.7)*

→ **Box 13. Key Findings of the Humanitarian Response Index 2009**

The top three ranked donors in HRI 2009 were Norway, Sweden and Ireland whilst the bottom three were Italy, Greece and Portugal.

The key findings of HRI 2009 related to

- Gaps in understanding and applying good donor practice
- Barriers to access populations in need of humanitarian assistance
- Failures in protection of populations at risk
- Continued neglect of prevention and preparedness

The Humanitarian Response Index, 2009 Whose Crisis? Clarifying Donor's Priorities, DARA Palgrave Macmillan.

## **AusAID**

By November 2009, 32 NGOs had achieved "Full Accreditation" and 9 had achieved "Base Accreditation" within AusAID's Accreditation System.

→ **Box 14. AusAID's Accreditation System**

The accreditation process aims to provide AusAID, and the Australian public, with confidence that public funds are being well managed and professionally used. The process is similar to the "framework" or "pre-funding qualification" approaches used by other bilateral donors and is viewed as a "front-end" risk management process to ensure accountable use of funding but with a minimal overview of activities by AusAID.

NGOs can gain accreditation at two different levels, Base or Full. There are distinct criteria tables for accreditation at each level and eligibility for AusAID funding is different at each level. Accreditation is undertaken by a three member Review Team, comprising two independent development consultants and a Financial Systems Assessor contracted by AusAID. The role of the review team is to assess the NGO against the agreed Accreditation Criteria. The criteria tables used in the process were revised in 2008.

Source: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/ngos/accreditation.cfm>

## DFID

In 2009, DFID played an active role in a number of accountability-related processes and initiatives that are described elsewhere in this chapter. These included aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of the Paris Declaration; the Joint Evaluation of Citizens Voice and Accountability and the funding of the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project.

DFID issued an invitation to UK NGOs to apply for funding to strengthen their ability to deliver a higher quality and more effective humanitarian response. This prompted the formation of a consortium of 15 UK-based agencies – the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) – for which funding was approved. The Consortium formally commenced in March 2010 and plans to focus on four areas of work, namely: rapid response funding for members; capacity building internationally and locally; support to surge capacity; and improvements to logistics systems through the use of software developed by the Helios Project.<sup>54</sup>

## USA

Following the inauguration of President Obama in January 2009 there was a succession of initiatives, studies and legislative processes which were seen, by the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, as being aimed at “elevating development as a core pillar of US foreign policy and making US foreign assistance more effective and accountable through reform”. (MFAN 2009) (see Box 15)

### → Box 15. US Foreign Assistance Reform: Key developments during 2009

**January:** Senator Hilary Clinton confirmed as Secretary of State

**April:** Introduction of an initial Aid Reform Bill in the House of Representatives requiring the President to develop a National Strategy for Global Development and strengthen foreign assistance accountability and transparency

**May:** President Obama launches \$63 billion Global Health Initiative

**July:** Announcement by Hilary Clinton of a Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) to guide and coordinate policy development and resource allocation at the State Department and USAID. (A draft report is due in March 2010 and a final report in June 2010)

**July:** The introduction of an initial Aid Reform Bill to Strengthen USAID in the Senate. One of its sponsors Senator Lugar states “The U.S. has increased development funding and elevated its priority. Yet USAID has been allowed to atrophy. Our bill seeks to better evaluate programs, improve coordination among agencies and enhance staff development and training.”

<sup>54</sup> Mike Noyes CAFOD personal communication 4/3/10

**August:** President Obama signs a Presidential Study Directive (PSD) authorizing National Security Advisor and the National Economic Council Director to lead a first-ever cross-government review of development policy, with results expected in early 2010.

**December:** Congress approves additional resources to rebuild the capacity of the State Department and USAID.

**December:** After newly a whole year without an Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah is confirmed by the Senate as the new Administrator for USAID.

Source: "Foreign Assistance Reform in 2009: Progress to Build Upon" Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network [www.modernizingforeignassistance.net/timeline](http://www.modernizingforeignassistance.net/timeline)

## **The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action**

An integral part of the Paris Declaration was a monitoring and evaluation process. The OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation is responsible for coordinating the evaluation process which is being carried out in two phases. The synthesis report from the first phase was presented to the High Level Forum (HLF) in Accra in 2008 (Wood et al. 2008). Work on the design and commissioning of the second phase of the evaluation began in 2009. The purpose of the second phase is to assess the Declaration's contribution to aid effectiveness and development results. Twenty country level studies are planned. The synthesis of the second phase is scheduled for completion by May 2011 in time for consideration by the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in either September or October 2011.

### **→ Box 16. The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action**

The Paris Declaration of March 2005 was an international agreement by over 100 countries and organisations to improve aid effectiveness through improvements under the headings of 'Ownership'; 'Alignment'; 'Harmonisation'; 'Results' and 'Mutual Accountability'. The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) was drawn up in 2008 and builds on the commitments agreed in the Paris Declaration under the headings of 'Predictability'; 'Country systems'; 'Conditionality' and 'Untying'.

Source : [http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_3236398\\_35401554\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html)

One of the elements of the Accra Agenda for Action was the monitoring of the implementation of the 2007 "DAC Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations." During 2009 a series of studies

on aid in Fragile States was undertaken by several donors during 2009.<sup>55</sup> The OECD-DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) proposed arrangements for monitoring of the Principles and established a new website to facilitate this process.<sup>56</sup>

### The Joint Evaluation of Citizens Voice and Accountability

In February 2009 ODI published a Briefing Paper “Citizens Voice and Accountability: Understanding what works and what doesn’t work in donor approaches” (Rocha and Sharma 2009) synthesizing the findings of a major evaluation commissioned jointly by seven bilateral donors and undertaken between 2006 and 2008.

#### → Box 17. Defining ‘Citizens Voice and Accountability’

The Synthesis Report of the evaluation (Rocha and Sharma 2008) acknowledged that “defining citizens’ voice and accountability has been a contentious issue throughout this evaluation, partly due to the fact that the terms are used in a number of disciplines (which all carry their own intellectual baggage; and partly due to the fact that most ECG [Evaluation Core Group] donors do not use the term ‘citizens’ voice and accountability together to describe much of the work they do in this sector”. (Rocha and Sharma 2008 p.5) After a lengthy account of the meaning of ‘voice’ and ‘accountability’ the object of the evaluation is described as “the dynamic relationship between the citizen and the state: how and under what circumstances an increase in voice can lead to an increase in state responsiveness.” ‘Participation’, ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Transparency’ are identified as some of the core principles underpinning citizens voice and accountability in the ODI Briefing Paper

Conclusions of the evaluation that are likely to be of particular interest to a humanitarian audience included:

*In this evaluation we have seen a greater focus on voice interventions than on accountability ones, partly in response to context. In some cases donors are unable or unwilling to work on accountability related issues that are based on direct engagement with the state (e.g. Nepal). For instance, some relatively strong and non-aid dependent states, such as Indonesia, have been reluctant to work on accountability issues with*

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<sup>55</sup> For instance, the UK DFID commissioned several studies on Fragile States including OPM/IDL (2008) “Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration: Thematic Study - The applicability of the Paris Declaration in fragile and conflict-affected situations” Cox, Marcus and Nigel Thornton (2009) DFID Engagement in Fragile Situations Evaluation Report A Portfolio Review Synthesis Report EV700, January

<sup>56</sup> Monitoring Implementation of the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations [www.oecd.org/fsprinciples](http://www.oecd.org/fsprinciples)

*donors. In other contexts, as in the DRC, the almost complete failure of the state to provide basic services has led to increased donor reliance on civil society actors. Moreover, there has been a mushrooming of civil society organisations and other forms of societal mobilisation over the past 15+ years, enabling donors to identify non-state partners to work with. ... Such a strategy can be problematic, however, without a parallel effort to build the effectiveness and capacity of state institutions to address growing demands and expectations. It also skirts the issue of the need to engage with both government institutions and civil society organisations in order to create the channels for voice that can lead to greater accountability. (Rocha and Sharma 2009 p.3)*

*There is a tension between the long-term processes of transforming state-society relations and donors' needs or desire to produce quick results. Donors need to be more realistic about what can be achieved in the shorter term. (Rocha and Sharma 2009 p.4)*

*There is a growing pressure for donors to disburse greater funds with less staff. This means that large amounts of funding are going into interventions in ways that may often be beyond the absorptive capacity of the implementing organisations. CSOs are responding to donor objectives and agendas by transforming their organisations beyond their core competencies, and their quality and effectiveness is being undermined as a result. (Rocha and Sharma 2009 p.4)*

## **World Bank**

After several years of quite extensive piloting of social accountability approaches, the World Bank is in the process of scaling-up such approaches in its corporate and sectoral strategies and in lending and country programs. An overview paper prepared by the Bank's Social Development Department found that "social accountability is a powerful instrument for civic engagement and better services", though it should be approached as a "long term process ... requiring patience commitment and resources." High level support for social accountability now exists "thanks to a combination of positive pilot experiences and the ascendancy of the governance and anti-corruption agenda." (Agarwal et al 2009 p.11)

The paper commented that:

*The current project-based development approach with its emphasis on maintaining project disbursements on track is not conducive to time-consuming, consensus-generating approaches such as participation, consultation, feedback collection, and transparency promotion.*



*[T]he number of experienced staff with skills and specific experience in guiding operations and analytical work on social accountability is rather limited and unevenly distributed across Bank regions. (Agarwal et al 2009 p.12)*

## **1.8. Principal developments in relation to Cross Sector Networks**

### **Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)**

During 2009 ALNAP commissioned work on a pilot study to assess the performance of, and progress in improving the performance of, the international humanitarian system. The report published in February 2010 reviewed over 100 evaluations, received 500 responses to a web-survey instrument and interviewed 89 people. The section on Accountability and Participation included the following points:

*Respondents to the survey carried out for this report felt that beneficiaries had less than adequate participation in programming (i.e. planning, design and evaluation of projects). Interestingly, however, beneficiary populations' access to information about aid operations and their ability to complain and seek redress were seen to have increased overall, in all regions except the Middle East. NGO respondents interviewed largely identified progress and improvement in agency practice in relation to accountability over the past three to five years. They did, however, note that improvements in practice remained patchy and that the challenge is to be more consistent across the board. (Harvey et al 2010 p.41)*

*HAP has developed the HAP standard and started a process of certification for member organisations. The certification process was identified as useful by several interviewees from agencies currently going through it, who saw the process as prompting change within country programmes and encouraging a more systematic look at what practical measures can be taken to improve participation. The deployment of HAP staff to new emergencies has also received widespread positive feedback from members. (Harvey et al 2010 p.41)*

The overall conclusion drawn in relation to accountability and participation was:

*There is clear momentum around the need for greater downward accountability and participation, and investments in feedback and complaint mechanisms and greater transparency are becoming more commonplace, which benefits programmes.* (Harvey et al 2010 p.11)

ALNAP's 8<sup>th</sup> Review of Humanitarian Action (ALNAP 2009) comprised three substantive chapters on:

- Performance and effectiveness in the humanitarian sector
- Improving humanitarian impact assessment
- Innovation in international humanitarian action.

Each theme is being carried forward through various follow-up studies and related initiatives. For instance, as part of the Humanitarian Performance theme a community of interest was established on Humanitarian Performance Indicators which it is hoped will help inform the methodology of future State of the Humanitarian System reports. As part of follow-up work on humanitarian impact assessment, ALNAP launched an Impact Portal on its website and has been supporting an OCHA-led process to explore the feasibility of undertaking joint, country-level impact evaluations of the humanitarian systems at the country level (Beck 2009). Consultations on what is now titled "Joint Humanitarian Impact Assessment" are scheduled for the first half of 2010 and it is planned to consult with the affected population in two countries concerning their views on joint impact evaluation.

### **Quality and Accountability (Q&A) Initiatives Group**

The Q&A Group met twice in 2009; the addition of INEE and RedR brought the number of participating initiatives to 11.<sup>57</sup> The Sphere Project and People In Aid funded the production of the report "Taking the Initiative: Exploring quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector: an introduction to eight initiatives" (Sphere 2009) to which several initiatives contributed. Discussions were underway to establish a global community of practice and provide an integrated platform for sharing information, learning and obtaining resources and advice "which is currently scattered around the Initiatives".<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> HAP, ALNAP, People In Aid, Sphere, Groupe URD, Coordination Sud, ECB, Listening Project, INEE, RedR.

<sup>58</sup> *Quality and Accountability Initiatives. Minutes of telephone meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009.*

## **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Partnership**

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Partnership<sup>59</sup>, the first multi-agency attempt to standardise the classification of levels of food insecurity, commissioned a study of the potential links and relationships that the IPC might develop (Shoham and Borton, 2009). The study included consideration of the links and relationships that would help:

1. improve the use of the IPC in improving the accountability of donors and agencies involved in the provision of food assistance by providing a basis for the monitoring of their performance in relation to needs-based programming
2. improving IPC's own accountability to populations whose food security status affected is monitored by the IPC and whose level of assistance is influenced by the IPC's determination of their food security status.

In relation to the latter type of accountability it was recommended that the IPC partnership:

*should develop an accountability framework that explicitly considers its own accountabilities to all stakeholders especially to the populations whose food security status is being determined.<sup>60</sup> This should involve the development of criteria covering the range of acceptable practice in relation to what data is used, how it is used, the conclusions drawn from it and the transparency of the process. For IPC to be held accountable for the veracity of its practices will require the involvement of an independent organisation from outside the partnership. (Shoham and Borton, 2009 p.xiii)*

## **1.9. Selected Issues and Challenges**

### **1.9.1 Other Third Party Certification Schemes in the Field of NGO Self-Regulatory Initiatives**

The 2008 Humanitarian Accountability Report included a brief discussion of the benefits and opportunity costs of different approaches to accountability. It will be no surprise that the multiplicity of approaches continues to present challenges.

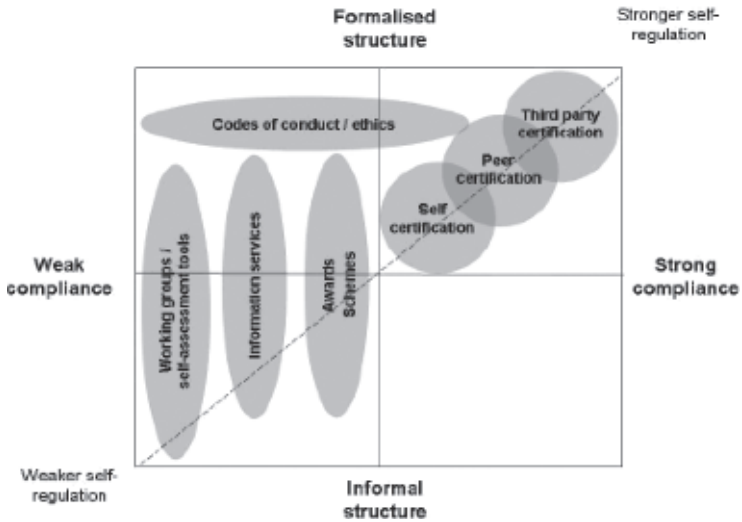
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<sup>59</sup> The IPC partnership comprises FAO, WFP, Oxfam, Save the Children, FEWSNET, CARE, and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission. <http://www.ipcinfo.org/>

<sup>60</sup> HAP was suggested as an organisation that could assist the partnership in the development of such an accountability framework.

During 2009 the One World Trust made a valuable contribution to the understanding of the scope of the challenge and ways in which it might be approached. As noted in Section 4, the online database of CSO Self-Regulatory Initiatives launched in June 2009 was providing summary information on over 320 initiatives (codes of conduct, certification schemes, working groups, self-assessments and information services) across 80 countries, by the end of the year. The launch of the database was accompanied by an analysis of the self-regulatory initiatives included on the database (Warren and Lloyd 2009), which included a useful typology differentiating the types of CSO self-regulatory initiatives (see Figure 1). Of particular significance to those interested in HAP is the ‘third-party certification’ grouping in the top right hand corner of the diagram below.

**Graph 1. Types of CSO self-regulatory initiatives**



Source: Warren and Lloyd 2009.

In January 2010, the online database was searched using the terms: “Certification scheme” and “Humanitarian/emergency relief” yielding seven entries<sup>61</sup> and “Certification scheme” and “Development” yielding nine entries<sup>62</sup>. Not surprisingly there was some overlap between the two sets of results.<sup>63</sup>

The searches did not include some of the certification initiatives covered in this chapter (notably People In Aid, GRI, AMAN, CES, Credibility Alliance, Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy, the Philippine Council for NGO Certification; or the ISO 9000 series), suggesting either that the search terms used had not been appropriate or that the online database is not yet complete. If the latter is the case, then it would appear that the total number of self-regulatory initiatives may actually be higher than the 320 figure cited when the database was launched.

If national schemes (i.e. schemes only covering NGOs based in or operating within one particular country) are excluded, only a limited set of international schemes providing third party certification remain. This author judges the set to comprise HAP Certification; the People In Aid Quality Mark; the SGS NGO Benchmarking Service and the ISO 9000 series of quality management systems. If the People In Aid Quality Mark (with its particular focus on human resource management) is set to one side, then we are left with the SGS Benchmarking Service and the ISO 9000 Series (specifically ISO 9001) as international third party certification schemes that may be compared directly with HAP.

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<sup>61</sup> “Certification scheme” and “Humanitarian/emergency relief” yielded: the HAP 2007 Standard; AusAID’s Accreditation Scheme for NGOs; the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia’s Voluntary NGO Certification System; the Canadian Council for International Cooperation’s Code of Ethics and Operational Standards; the Swiss NPO Code; the UK DEC’s Accountability Framework; InterAction’s PVO Standards Self Certification Plus.

<sup>62</sup> Certification scheme” and “Development” yielded: Foreign Aid Ratings’ Foreign Aid Certification; SGS’s NGO Benchmarking service; ACFID’s Code of Conduct; AusAID’s Accreditation Scheme for NGOs; the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia’s Voluntary NGO Certification System; the Canadian Council for International Cooperation’s Code of Ethics and Operational Standards; the Paraguayan School of Organisations for Social Development (Colegio de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo) System for the Evaluation of Organizational Development (Social Sistema de Evaluación de Desarrollo Organizacional-SEDO); InterAction’s Child Sponsorship Accreditation Project; InterAction’s PVO Standards Self Certification Plus.

<sup>63</sup> This chapter includes descriptions of many of the self-regulatory initiatives yielded by the searches, though space prevented inclusion of all of them.

### → Box 18. SGS Benchmarking of NGOs

Société Générale de Surveillance's (SGS) third-party benchmarking service for NGOs was originally developed by a former ICRC delegate who, in 2002, carried out his own personal review of organisational and systems performance indicators and proposed an approach to benchmarking that was then taken up by SGS and its creator employed by SGS.

To date the principal users of the SGS Benchmarking service have been national Red Cross/Crescent Societies (18 national societies, mostly in Africa, have so far gained certification), national members of Plan International and national NGOs particularly in Guatemala, Iran and Brazil.

Version 2.2.2 of the benchmarking tool introduced in 2009 is made up of 101 indicators of organisational and systems performance measures covering: Governing Body; Strategic Framework; Integrity Management; Communication Advocacy and Public Image; Human Resources; Fundraising Resource Allocation and Financial Controls; Operations; Outcomes and Continuous Improvement.

Source: SGS NGO Benchmarking Service

<http://www.ngobenchmarking.sgs.com/ngo-benchmarking-certification-audit.htm>

### → Box 19. ISO 9001

ISO 9000 is a family of standards for quality management systems. ISO 9000 is maintained by ISO, the International Organization for Standardization and is administered by accreditation and certification bodies. ISO 9001 is the standard that establishes the requirements for a quality management system and which can be used for certification by organisations that wish to have their conformity to the standard verified by an independent auditor. The rules are updated in successive versions as the requirements motivate changes over time. For instance ISO 9001:2000 was succeeded by ISO9001:2008. Although the ISO standards originated in manufacturing, they are now employed across many different types of organisation including humanitarian agencies. In 2001 Medair became the first humanitarian NGO to become ISO 9001:2000 certified at a worldwide level.

The principal components of ISO 9001:2008 are:

- Overall Requirements for the System
- Requirements for Management
- Resource Requirements
- Requirements for Products or Services
- Requirements for Analysis and Improvement

An NGO International Network on ISO (INNI) was established in 2002 to engage with the ISO in shaping the new standards and guiding the direction of their implementation. (<http://inni.pacinst.org/inni/NGO.htm>).

It would not be appropriate to attempt a comparative assessment of HAP, SGS and ISO here as it would be unlikely to be regarded as wholly objective and the task is best left for analysts publishing in more neutral publications. What can be noted here though, is that whilst the HAP 2007 Standard was

developed through an extensive process of consultation and with inputs from a wide range of humanitarian actors, the same cannot be said for the SGS Benchmarking tool. Whilst the HAP Certification audit involves interviews with a range of staff, partners and beneficiaries and members of affected communities, alongside observation of practice, including during programme site visits, the same cannot be said of ISO 9001 which is essentially a desk-based assessment.

A workshop on Beneficiary Accountability in Humanitarian Assistance hosted by PSO (the Dutch capacity building association) in December 2009 noted the limitations of ISO certification, even though many Dutch NGOs have achieved ISO certification.

*ISO certification alone is insufficient to guarantee beneficiaries accountability in practice. Beneficiaries often have very limited power, especially in a humanitarian emergency context. Additional tools and instruments are required for improving beneficiaries' accountability in areas such as information, participation and complaints handling. The HAP standard consisting of six benchmarks and 19 requirements are valuable instruments for improving quality management systems of organisations and their partners. These HAP instruments can make humanitarian action more accountable to beneficiaries. (PSO 2009 p.4)*

It would appear that HAP is the only third party certification scheme that is tailored to the needs of humanitarian agencies **and** places beneficiaries and affected populations at the centre of its approach.

### **1.9.2 Challenges and Good Practice Cases: Evaluation, UN agencies and Clusters**

Three particular areas of the humanitarian system and practice may be viewed as presenting a particular challenge to efforts to improve accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities:

- Most evaluations of humanitarian action do not assess accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities either 'explicitly' or 'systematically' (see Box 3)
- Accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities is poorly developed within at least two UN agencies (WFP and UNICEF) that perform critical roles within the humanitarian system (see Section 6)
- Accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities is poorly developed within most of the Clusters that are integral to current humanitarian reform efforts (see Section 6).

Fortunately however, within each of these “areas of challenge”, there are examples of good practice, all of significant benefit to initiatives to improve accountability to beneficiaries within the humanitarian system undertaken by HAP and its members.

### **Evaluations of Humanitarian Action**

Whilst the majority of the 23 evaluations reviewed did not ‘explicitly’ or ‘systematically’ consider accountability to intended beneficiaries and local communities, the evaluation by Save the Children of its response to Cyclone Nargis (Featherstone et al. 2009) serves as a model of good practice in this regard and provides pointers as to how HAP and its members can improve practice in the field of humanitarian action evaluation.

Significantly, the evaluation criteria used by this study broke with the traditional DAC evaluation criteria and added ‘accountability’ in its own right. In addition, the evaluation team included consultants and personnel from other agencies as well as from Save the Children, and included not only a Child Participation Specialist, but also an Accountability Specialist (seconded from CARE). Furthermore, one of the four case studies prepared as part of the evaluation was an “Evaluation against the HAP Accountability Principles”.

The following suggestions are offered to the HAP membership and to the HAP Secretariat for increasing the proportion of evaluations of humanitarian action that systematically assess accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities:

- Advocate for the use of “accountability” as an additional evaluation criteria to be used in evaluations of humanitarian assistance
- Advocate for beneficiaries and affected communities to be explicitly included as key stakeholders in all evaluations of humanitarian assistance
- Work with ALNAP to prepare good practice guidance for evaluation managers and evaluators in assessing accountability to intended beneficiaries and affected communities.

### **UN Agencies**

This chapter has looked in greater detail than before at how accountability is defined and practised in three UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR) that are central to the humanitarian system. The concept of accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities was found to be poorly developed within key documents of both WFP and UNICEF. That this can be said of UNICEF, with all its work to improve the ‘voice’ and well-being of children and women and which only completed work on an accountability framework in 2009, is particularly surprising.



Whilst time and space has not allowed a full exploration of the reasons why humanitarian accountability should be so poorly developed in these two agencies, it would seem that a common factor is the currently very narrow conceptualization of accountability in the two agencies. For the UN Children's Agency in the year 2009 to be defining accountability in terms of 'work being conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards' and 'performance results being reported accurately and fairly' is extraordinarily narrow. Why such a narrow definition should have been adopted is unclear but of potential relevance is that, in recent years, both UNICEF and WFP have put significant effort into Results Based Management (RBM) and strengthening their ability to report on their results. It would indeed be unfortunate if it turned out that these processes have had the effect of diminishing rather than increasing their respective accountabilities to the beneficiaries and communities that they serve.

Fortunately, UNHCR provides an example of a large UN agency that has also put significant effort into RBM over recent years, but where:

- There is an explicit and repeated commitment to the 'persons of concern' and 'participation' in the agency's strategic priorities
- A system has been developed (the Accountability Framework for Age Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming) to monitor the performance of staff in creating an organisational environment to "achieve equitable outcomes for all persons of concern"
- The leadership of the agency had the courage to embrace an invitation to participate in an NGO peer review process accountability to disaster affected populations (SCHR's Peer Review process)

Achieving HAP's vision of "a humanitarian system championing the rights and dignity of disaster survivors" will require the adoption by the principal UN humanitarian agencies of definitions of accountability that explicitly acknowledge accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities and for humanitarian accountability to be integrated into the strategic priorities and objectives of such agencies. Achieving this will take time and concerted engagement with a range of groups including executive boards, donors and proponents of results-based management. However, having the example of UNHCR to refer to helps make the task less daunting. If UNHCR is willing to take on the role of championing the importance and benefit of improving humanitarian accountability within the UN system, HAP and its members should support UNHCR and collaborate with its efforts in as far as they are able.

## Clusters

On the basis of the information reviewed, it would seem that a similar picture exists in relation to accountability to beneficiaries within the clusters. Within the humanitarian reform process accountability continues to be seen primarily as an issue of clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the various actors and agencies involved, rather than improving accountability to affected population. The assessment by the WASH cluster was that humanitarian accountability was poorly developed in other clusters (Ferron 2009). And yet, through the WASH Cluster Accountability Project (with three HAP members playing a lead role in the four member Steering Group), the WASH Cluster has been undertaking pioneering work. Not only has this work involved identifying and acknowledging the nature and scope of the challenge of improving downward accountability within the cluster, it has also developed a set of practical tools to help WASH agencies and personnel in doing so.

Once again, the fact that an active group within one of the clusters is providing leadership and encouraging and supporting good practice in relation to accountability will be a significant help to HAP and its members as they seek to improve accountability to beneficiaries and affected populations in the other clusters.

## 1.10. Concluding Assessment

From the materials reviewed in this chapter, the impression is one of continuing progress in the process of widening and deepening of accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities within the humanitarian system. Whilst 2008 saw a rich crop of substantive and pertinent publications, there were noticeably fewer substantive publications during 2009. If a narrative theme were to be selected to characterise the year, it would probably be “consolidation, reflection and the further development of policies and procedures.”

Notable developments and achievements included:

- the establishment of the Global Inspectorate Project by HAP and Save the Children
- a steep increase in HAP’s membership
- ongoing revisions of the HAP 2007 Standard and the Sphere Handbook
- the successful completion of the SCHR Peer Review of Accountability to Disaster Affected Populations

- the launch of the online database of CSO self-regulatory initiatives by One World Trust
- the launch of the inter-agency working group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
- A marked increase in work on both professionalisation and leadership within the humanitarian sector
- The publication of a major study by the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project accompanied by a commitment to promoting downward accountability over the remaining two years of the project.

And as noted earlier, pioneering steps were taken:

- in the evaluation of humanitarian action by Save the Children in its innovative approach to the evaluation of Cyclone Nargis
- by the WASH Cluster in its excellent work on humanitarian accountability
- by UNHCR in its commitment to 'persons of concern' in its strategic priorities, in its monitoring of the Accountability Framework for Age Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and in its participation in the SCHR Peer Review process.

Within the Red Cross family there were a number of positive and/or promising developments including:

- a process within ICRC to develop an accountability framework for the organisation;
- the publication of professional standards for protection work; and
- explicit commitments to beneficiary participation and accountability in the Federation's new ten year strategy and to establishing a peer-review mechanism to accredit well-functioning National Societies.

The year also saw positive steps in the donor community, though these often had a broader focus than just the humanitarian sector alone. These included:

- significant and encouraging developments in the US as a result of the new Obama administration
- the completion of a major collaborative study on Citizens Voice and Accountability
- the scaling up of Social Accountability approaches within the World Bank
- further work on the process of monitoring and evaluating donor performance in relation to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

In the cross sector networks, ALNAP contributed in a range of ways towards improvements in quality and accountability with the successful completion of the “State of the System” pilot and significant contributions to the understanding of impact assessment, the process of innovation within the sector and the components of humanitarian performance. Among the many organisations and approaches involved in undertaking needs assessments, the IPC Partnership may have taken a pioneering step by considering issues of accountability within needs assessment (i.e. accountability by assessors towards those whose ‘needs’ they have ‘assessed’).

Such steps and developments represent real progress in improving the quality and accountability of the humanitarian system and HAP and its members can be proud of their contribution to such progress.

## References

The 23 evaluations included in the reviewed sample of evaluations were:

Alexander, Jessica (2009) “Emergency Shelter Cluster Review: Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar” (April) International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva

Binder, Andrea (2009) “Real Time Evaluation of the GenCap Project” Final Report May GPPI Berlin

Brusset, Emery et al. (2009) “A ripple in development? Long term perspectives on the response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004” A joint follow-up evaluation of the links between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) May, Sida, Stockholm

Crisp, Jeff et al. (2009) “Surviving in the city: A review of UNHCR’s operation for Iraqi refugees in urban areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria” July PDES/ UNHCR, Geneva

Featherstone, Andy et al. (2009) “Evaluation of the Save the Children Response to Cyclone Nargis” (April) Save the Children London

Gelfand, Jan et al. (2009) “Evaluation of DIPECHO Action Plans for the Caribbean” Main Report April, ECHO Brussels

Gruñewald, François and Véronique de Geoffroy (2009) Evaluation of the DG ECHO Partnership with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) ECHO, Brussels

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## CHAPTER 2

### Perceptions of Humanitarian Accountability—Annual Survey

Since 2006 HAP has captured perceptions of humanitarian accountability. Findings from the first survey, included in the *2005 Humanitarian Accountability Report*, showed perceptions of accountability to intended beneficiaries of aid to be extremely low.<sup>64</sup> When asked to answer the same question for 2009, 39% of the respondents indicated that agencies were highly accountable to their intended beneficiaries and a further 46% ranked agencies' accountability to their beneficiaries at a medium level.<sup>65</sup>

### 2.1. Method

For the 2009 survey, the questionnaire—consisting of 14 questions—was available online and publicised widely.<sup>66</sup> Questions one through five related to the respondents' background; six to nine asked respondents to provide their perceptions of the past, current and future accountability trends; the next three questions referred to the respondent's views on organisational practice, including two new questions related to levels of participation by disaster-affected communities in assessing organisational performance and to the extent to which organisations foster an environment conducive for

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<sup>64</sup> Just 20% of respondents to the 2005 Perception Survey believed agencies were “doing enough” to warrant a claim of being accountable to beneficiaries.

<sup>65</sup> Medium refers to those responses marked between 4 and 6 (inclusive) on a spectrum from 1 to 10 when answering the question, “When marked out of a maximum score of 10 (with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest) how do you rate the accountability of humanitarian agencies to intended beneficiaries in 2009?”

<sup>66</sup> HAP used SurveyMonkey® for the survey. A call to participate was announced and advertised across the following communication platforms: emails were sent to over 2000 contacts from the HAP Database, announced on the HAP Facebook group and on the HAP/Building Safer Organisations D-group. ReliefWeb posted a permanent link to the survey for its duration, ALNAP, Voice, ICVA, CaritasData Magazine, the One World Trust, BOND and other organisations ran announcements of the Perception Survey in newsletters and on their website; reminders were placed in the HAP Newsletter and on the HAP website.

communities to raise complaints; the final two questions allowed respondents to provide additional comments on humanitarian accountability in 2009 and to request a copy of the 2009 Humanitarian Accountability Report. A total of 377 responses were received during the six weeks (from 15 December 2009 to 29 January 2010) when the survey was open. The full text of the survey is reproduced at the end of this chapter.

## 2.2. Findings

### Summary

The vast majority of responses came from staff of international NGOs working in Asia and Africa, with slightly higher representation from headquarters (44%) than programme sites (32%). Almost half of the respondents (44%) worked for HAP member agencies, an increase from last year (38%). This year saw a decrease, from 27% to 16%, in respondents who did not know if their agency had a relationship with HAP, suggesting a slight increase in HAP brand awareness.

A great majority of respondents (79.5%) perceived that there had been an increase in overall discussion and interest in accountability in 2009, representing an increase of 18.5% when compared to the 2008 perceptions. However, in juxtaposition to these figures, the percentage of respondents who considered that their agencies were doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability dropped from 83% to 53%.

Nearly two thirds of respondents from HAP member agencies perceived that there had been an improvement in accountability to intended beneficiaries in 2009 when compared to previous years, and that this trend was likely to continue in 2010.

### 2.2.1. Who responded?

The vast majority of respondents were from international NGOs (64%), 14% from national NGOs, 7% from UN agencies, 6% from the donor community, 1% from host governments, 2% from research bodies, 2% from quality assurance initiatives and 4% indicated their affiliation as 'other'.

The majority of respondents stated their region of work as global (35%); the next largest group was from Asia (27%), followed by Africa (24%), Europe (7%) and the Middle East (4%). The Americas and South Pacific region were under-represented with only 2.7% and 0.3% of respondents, respectively. Excluding the addition of the "global" category, these findings do not differ greatly from previous years.

In terms of function, 44% of respondents were from headquarters and 32% from programme sites. Headquarters-based programme managers were the single largest group of respondents (17%), followed by headquarters-based policy/advisory staff (14%) and programme site practitioners (13%). As in

previous years, the percentage of programme site staff engaged in policy/ advisory work had the lowest representation at a mere 6%. From the overall number of respondents, 13% declared their main function to be headquarter-based senior management and 14% as programme site management (as in Country Directors). Those who indicated their main function to be *Independent Consultant* and *Other* made up the remaining 9% and 14%, respectively.

For the 2009 survey, respondents had the option to indicate if they worked for HAP certified agencies, for agencies that had received capacity building support from the HAP Secretariat, or for partner agencies of HAP members. A quarter of respondents came from HAP certified member agencies, with a further 18% from non-member agencies that had received HAP capacity building support and 14% from HAP members' partners. The vast majority of respondents (68%) represented HAP member agencies (including certified members), only 15% stated no relationship with HAP, and 16% were unsure of their agency's relationship with HAP. This represents a significant increase in respondents from member agencies when compared to the 2008 survey when only 38% of respondents reported that they worked for a HAP member agency.<sup>67</sup>

Respondents to the 2009 survey also had the option to indicate if they considered themselves as disaster survivors or if they had received aid in the past. From the total number of respondents, 25 identified themselves as such, representing 7% of the total number of respondents.

### **2.2.2 Perceptions of humanitarian accountability to different stakeholder groups<sup>68</sup>**

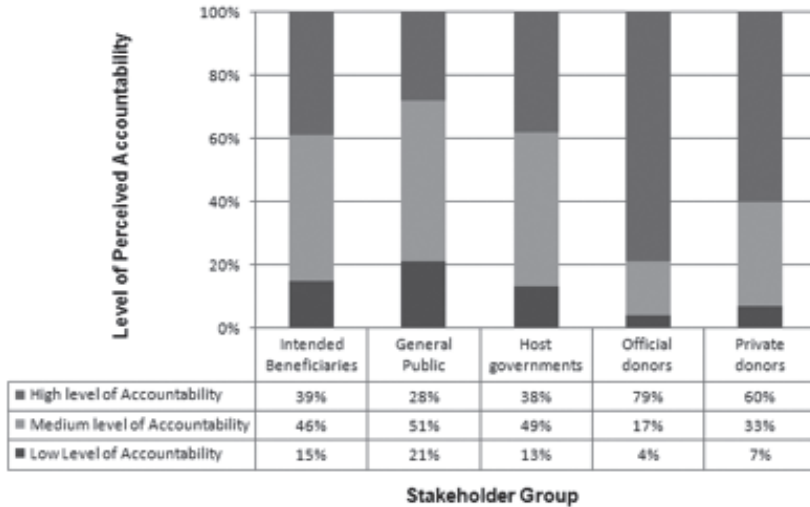
The 2009 findings continue to support the trend set in previous annual reports insofar as they indicate a significant gap with respect to improving accountability to disaster survivors and host governments. These two stakeholder groups continue to score much lower than the donor community when respondents rank accountability to different stakeholder groups (see Figure 1).

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<sup>67</sup> In 2008, 15% of respondents indicated that they had no relationship with HAP, while 27% did not know if their employer was a HAP member or not.

<sup>68</sup> In keeping with the survey in previous years, respondents were asked to rate perceptions of accountability on a 1-10 scale. In order to manage the data, the results have been collected into three levels of accountability: high (7 to 10), medium (4 to 6) and low (1 to 3).

**Figure 1: Rating of Humanitarian Accountability by Stakeholder Group**

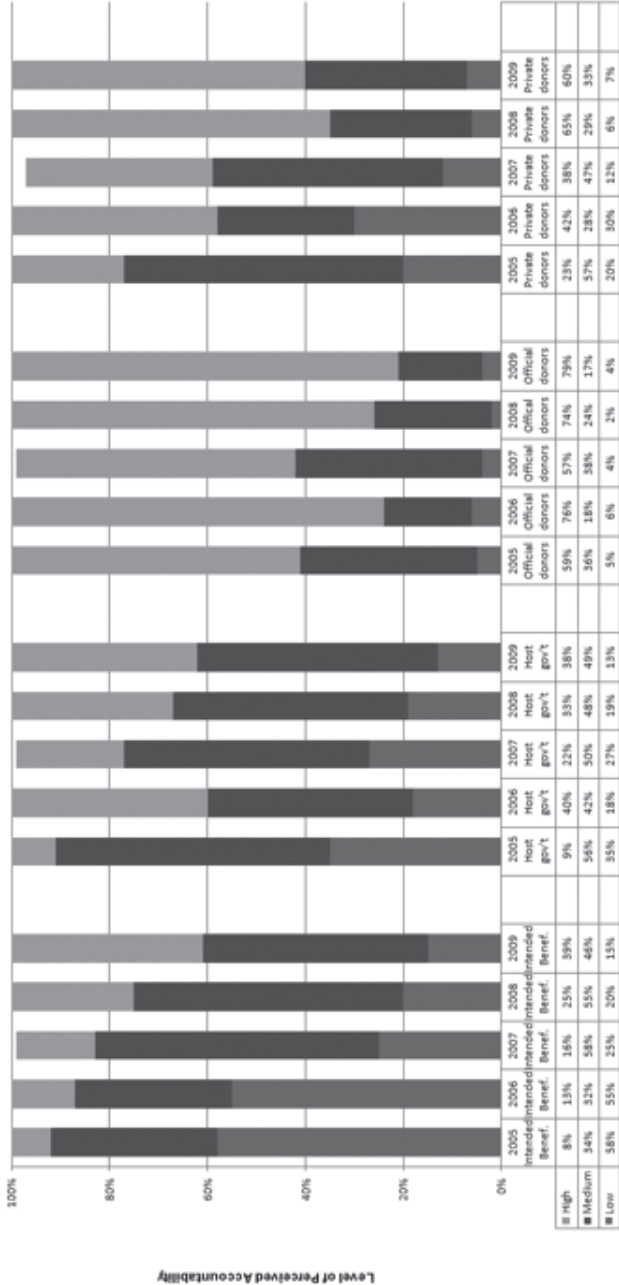


Of the 2009 respondents, 39% ranked accountability of humanitarian agencies to disaster survivors as high (7 or above), 46% in the middle of the scale (4 to 6), and the remaining 15% as low (3 or below). However, Figure 2 provides a picture of substantial improvements in perceptions of accountability since HAP first collected data in 2005, with all five annual surveys indicating consistent improvements in “high” accountability ratings across all stakeholder groups.

Extrapolating the answers from respondents who identified themselves as disaster survivors or recipients of aid, the majority perceived a moderate level (6 out of 10) of accountability to intended beneficiaries and 82% believed that the current level of accountability offered an improvement over the previous year. One respondent noted, *“Humanitarian accountability to disaster survivors still fails to address all beneficiaries of aid; questions remain as to the agencies’ implementation of accountability practices to those participating in micro-financing, human rights and governance, and other development initiatives”*.

Since 2005, there has been an increase of 31% in perceptions of accountability towards beneficiaries, of 20% towards donors, of 29% towards host governments and of 37% towards private donors. Although other variables may be at play and could possibly bias an interpretation of the figures, the cross-year trend suggests an overall improvement in accountability, possibly the result of the aid agencies’ combined efforts to become more accountable to different stakeholder groups and the ongoing work undertaken by quality and accountability initiatives such as ALNAP, Coordination SUD, the ECB Project, Groupe URD, the Sphere Project and HAP, to mention just a few.

Figure 2: Cross-year comparison of perceived accountability rating to four stakeholders groups



A second trend established by the perceptions surveys over the past few years still holds in 2009: institutional donors are perceived as the group that receives the most prominent place on the pecking order of accountability, with disaster survivors coming in at the bottom alongside the host governments. HAP has traditionally identified this gap as the ‘accountability deficit’—a situation where the principle stakeholder group (the intended beneficiaries of humanitarian aid) remains at the bottom of the accountability league tables. The commitment made by HAP and its members is to work in partnership so as to reverse these perceptions and the practice that informs them, towards an order where the intended beneficiaries of aid become the group to which humanitarian action is most accountable.

**Figure 3: Humanitarian Accountability Rating: Current and Future**

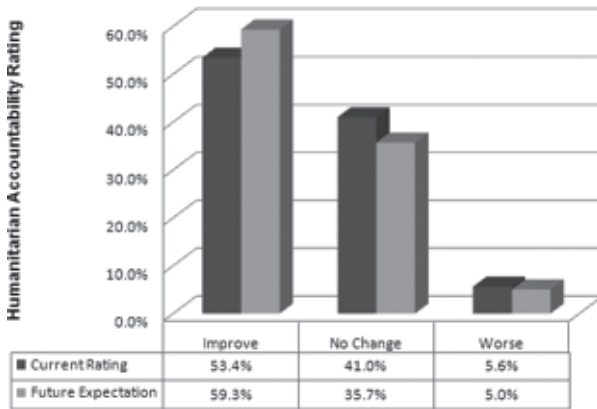


Figure 3 shows respondents’ perceptions of humanitarian accountability in 2009 (when compared to 2008) and their expectations for 2010. 53.4% of respondents stated that *overall* humanitarian accountability had improved in 2009, with only 5.6% believing it had worsened and 41% seeing no change.<sup>69</sup> When asked to share their views for next year, slightly more respondents expected that accountability to intended beneficiaries would improve by the end of 2010 (59%), 36% that it would stay the same, and 5% that it would deteriorate.

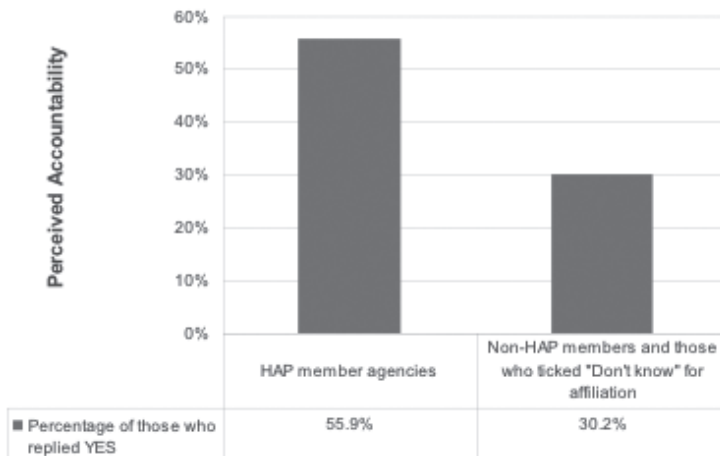
<sup>69</sup> In the 2008 survey when asked to predict outcomes for 2009, 64% of the respondents expected accountability to intended beneficiaries to improve, 30% felt that the situation would stay the same, and 6% expected it to deteriorate.

### 2.2.3. Organisational practice of humanitarian accountability

In answering whether their organisation had done “*enough to ensure humanitarian accountability*”, respondents were asked to consider HAP’s definition of accountability<sup>70</sup>. The answers show that only a slight majority (53%) of respondents felt that their organisations had done enough to ensure humanitarian accountability in 2009. When disaggregating data from different respondent groups, 63% of programme site staff compared to 49% of headquarters-based staff felt that their organisation was doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability. Respondents who identified themselves as headquarters-based policy/advisory staff gave their organisations the lowest ranking to this question, with only 38% of respondents from this group indicating that their agencies were doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability.

Very little can be learnt by comparing the overall perception (of 53%) against the previous two years, when only 38% in the 2008 survey but an impressive 70% in 2007 felt that their organisation was doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability. Perhaps what can be said is that respondents seem to be judging each year on its own merits, hence providing a rather volatile picture.

**Figure 4: Do you feel that your organisation is doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability?**



<sup>70</sup> The definition is as follows: ‘Accountability is the means by which power is used responsibly. Humanitarian Accountability involves taking account of, giving an account to and being held to account by disaster survivors’.

The results in Figure 4 show that 56% of respondents from HAP members versus 30% from non-members perceived their organisation to be doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability. This would seem to confirm that HAP membership is associated with enhanced levels of organisational commitment to humanitarian accountability, another trend established through the perceptions survey in previous years.

## **2.2.4 Voices of disaster-affected populations**

Two new questions were added to the 2009 Survey to capture perceptions of the extent to which organisations enable disaster-affected communities to provide feedback and voice concerns. The first question asked whether the views of disaster-affected communities are considered when an organisation monitors and evaluates its performance. Exactly half of the respondents answered affirmatively, with 42% answering “no” and 8% “I don’t know”.

The second question within this section of the survey focused on collecting perceptions related to organisational efforts to foster an environment where disaster-affected communities can raise complaints about the quality of aid programmes *and* about staff misconduct (including sexual exploitation and abuse). Respondents were asked to rank their responses out of ten (with one being the lowest and ten the highest).<sup>71</sup> Over half of the respondents believed that their agency was fostering an adequate environment to allow disaster-affected communities to raise complaints on both the quality of aid programmes and staff misconduct; 10% answered “I don’t know” and 12% felt that they were not sufficiently aware so as to provide an answer to this question.

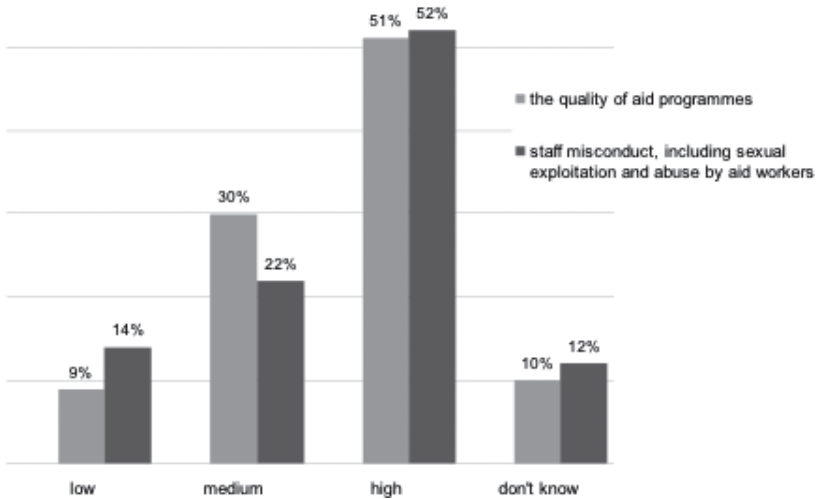
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<sup>71</sup> Respondents were asked to categorise perceived accountability on a 1-10 scale. In order to manage the data and remain consistent with similar questions in the survey, the results have been collected into three levels of accountability: high (7 to 10), medium (4 to 6) and low (1 to 3).



Figure 5 (below) provides the full results for the second question.

**Figure 5: How do you rate your agency's efforts to foster an environment where disaster-affected communities can raise a complaint about:**



### 2.2.5. Increasing levels of discussion and interest around accountability issues

An overwhelming number of the respondents (80%) felt that there had been an increase in discussion and interest around humanitarian accountability issues over the year. 16% felt that there had been no change and 4% that there had been a decrease in interest around accountability.

The great majority of senior managers based in headquarters (81%) perceived an increased level of interest in and discussion of accountability, while three quarters (76%) of programme site staff and 72% of programme site managers have expressed this view. These figures either present a mild increase in perceived interests (such as in the case of programme site staff) or a consistent trend of improvement, as in the case of programme site and headquarters-based senior managers.

Sixty-seven respondents took the opportunity to elaborate on their answers by providing comments on humanitarian accountability in 2009. Selected comments are reproduced in the box below.

## 2.3. Conclusion

The 2009 Perceptions Survey has continued to support the trends that have emerged over the past five years. While there is growing optimism about progress being made in accountability across the aid sector, the results also highlight the gap in accountability to different stakeholders, particularly so to intended beneficiaries and host governments.

### → Box 20. Selected quotes from survey respondents

'Agencies need to start embedding accountability into existing monitoring and evaluation systems instead of having it as an add-on; this way staff won't see it as extra work.'

'Humanitarian accountability is a process, it needs commitment and support from all players, sharing lessons, and seeking to improve always.'

'Accountability without participation and communication for social change is not possible.'

'In my point of view, HAP has a pivotal role in the accountability of humanitarian agencies, by helping agencies to be more effective at the grassroots level through building the capacities of their implementation partners.'

'I remain convinced that accountability to beneficiaries is a key element in improving humanitarian response; therefore, accountability must continue to be prioritised by agencies and the donor community. We must not allow different agendas and priorities to push accountability to the sidelines of this playing field.'

'Having recently moved from an INGO to a donor, I can see accountability from both sides and say without a doubt that agencies are more concerned with accountability to their donors than they are with accountability to their beneficiaries.'

'The impact of accountability mechanisms is evident at every field site I have evaluated.'

'HAP has only just started and it has its challenges, however, the positives outweigh the negatives.'

'Progress on accountability to beneficiaries is being made, though it is slow. It is critical to keep accountability in the public domain; this report and survey help in keeping the issue alive.'

## Perceptions of Accountability in Humanitarian Action in 2009

### We are looking for your views

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership would like your views in this short survey, which will only take 3 minutes of your time to complete. Your answers will be treated in confidence, and published as aggregated findings in the forthcoming 2009 Humanitarian Accountability Report. The survey closes on **26 January 2010**.

Please consider the following when answering the survey: Accountability is *the means by which power is used responsibly. Humanitarian accountability involves taking account of, giving an account to and being held to account by disaster survivors.*

### About you

**1. My region of work is ...**

**2. My main function is ...**

Other (please specify)

**3. I mostly work/consult for ...**

Other (please specify)

**4. The agency that I mostly work / consult for ... (Tick all those that apply to your agency.)**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> is a Member of HAP                              | <input type="checkbox"/> is a Certified Member of HAP       | <input type="checkbox"/> has no relationship with HAP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> has received capacity building support from HAP | <input type="checkbox"/> is partnering with a Member of HAP | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know                |

**5. If you consider yourself a disaster survivor or have received aid in the past,**

- Please tick here

## Humanitarian accountability in 2009

In 2009, humanitarian agencies responded to flooding in Argentina, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Niger, the Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand; Cyclones Bijli and Jade; droughts in Ecuador and Paraguay; Hurricane Jimena and Typhoons Ketsana, Koppu, Mujigae, Parma; earthquakes in Bhutan, Honduras, and Indonesia; as well as the ongoing crises in Afghanistan, DRC, East Timor, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, Sudan/Darfur, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Northern Uganda, Zimbabwe and other 'forgotten emergencies'.

### 6. When marked out of a maximum score of 10 (with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest), how do you rate the accountability of humanitarian agencies to the following stakeholder groups in 2009?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intended beneficiaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
General Public	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Host government/authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Official donors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private donors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Accountability trends

In 2008, agencies responded to earthquakes and tsunamis in Central America and the Asia Pacific region, flooding in East, West and Southern Africa, Bangladesh, Pakistan, ongoing crises in Afghanistan, Chechnya, DRC, East Timor, Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar, North Korea, the Palestinian Territories, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan/Darfur, Uganda, Zimbabwe and other 'forgotten emergencies'.

### 7. Do you feel that there has been an increase, decrease or no change in levels of discussion and interest around humanitarian accountability over the last year?

### 8. Do you think that the accountability of humanitarian agencies to their intended beneficiaries improved, deteriorated or remained much the same in 2009 when compared to their performance in 2008?

### 9. Do you expect that the accountability of humanitarian agencies to their intended beneficiaries will improve, deteriorate or remain much the same in 2010?

## Organisational practice of humanitarian accountability

**10. Do you feel that your organisation is doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

**11. Do you think that the views of disaster-affected populations are given sufficient consideration by your agency when it monitors and evaluates its performance?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

**12. Out of a maximum score of 10 (with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest), how do you rate your agency's efforts to foster an environment where disaster-affected communities can raise a complaint about:**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
a. the quality of aid programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. staff misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## CHAPTER 3

### Voices of Disaster Survivors in Southern Sudan

Since 2007, the Humanitarian Accountability Report has presented the views of people with first hand experience of receiving aid alongside findings from the perceptions of accountability survey, members' accountability workplan implementation reports and the overview of main accountability developments across the sector during the respective year. While the 2007 and 2008 Reports provided a selection of quotes from aid beneficiaries that typified the sentiments most often expressed to HAP staff during programme-site activities in different countries<sup>72</sup>, a more detailed overview based on focus groups and semi-structured interviews held with disaster-survivors and aid recipients in Southern Sudan was prepared for the 2009 Report, to provide a more thorough exploration of experiences and opinions.

This chapter cannot and does not claim to represent the range of perspectives of aid recipients in Southern Sudan, but it aims to share some of the issues that were consistently raised by persons from different states and diverse communities and to highlight some overall themes and trends on the aid efforts in 2009, with particular focus on quality and accountability as expressed by recipients of aid.

The chapter is structured into four main sections: the first section presents the method utilised to collect the information; the second section highlights the main findings in relation to some key areas of accountability that were explicitly discussed with communities; the third section presents several cross-cutting themes relevant to accountability and quality programming that are emerging from the discussions; and the final section includes some summary remarks

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<sup>72</sup> This was not to claim that the voices cited were representative of the world's disaster survivors and aid recipients.

(without attempting an analysis of the points raised in discussions), and a cross-section of discussants' expectations of the aid agencies.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.1. Method

Based on 44 focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews<sup>74</sup>, this chapter highlights some of the main issues raised in relation to aid efforts in 2009 by 539 persons in Southern Sudan.

Nine field facilitators collected the information as follows<sup>75</sup>: four teams of two led the focus group discussions; one of the teams undertook two semi-structured interviews, and one facilitator interviewed 22 other people. Discussions took place from 18 January to 24 February 2010 in four different states in Southern Sudan's three main provinces: Western Bahr-El Ghazal (communities in and around Wau), Northern Bahr-El Ghazal (communities in and around Aweil town), Jonglei (communities in and around Bor town); and Central Equatoria (both Yei and Juba).

The discussion and interview guidance was consolidated with feedback from the field facilitators during a briefing workshop and following a small sample test in Juba. The results provided twelve main open-ended questions – and suggestions for follow up questions – aimed at gauging issues of concern in relation to international assistance efforts and the quality of the relationship between aid agencies and communities in 2009, as well as suggestions for improvement in the future. Specific questions were asked on the relevance and extent of information availability about aid activities, of participation in the aid efforts, and of access to safe means for receiving redress as experienced or perceived by disaster-survivors, aid recipients and non-recipients of aid in Southern Sudan.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Comments received in relation to individual agencies have already been communicated to the respective agency, when such data could be disaggregated from the field notes. A debriefing session with country office staff based in Juba will be scheduled in the first half of 2010.*

<sup>74</sup> *A total of 515 people contributed through focus group discussions, and 24 through individual interviews.*

<sup>75</sup> *Samahi Limited, a private and independent research and consultancy company registered in Juba, Southern Sudan, was contracted to manage the data collection and the field facilitators (with the exception of one). All facilitators were Sudanese nationals from different ethnic backgrounds, with some understanding of the communities that they visited. Monica Blagescu, HAP's Policy Services Coordinator, prepared this chapter based on data collected by the facilitators.*

<sup>76</sup> *The questions and guidance notes agreed with the facilitators can be downloaded from the Resources page on the HAP website.*



Field facilitators visited areas where there was high level of aid activity in 2009 and held conversations with: people whose households received direct support from aid agencies; people from communities where households other than their own received direct support; and people where aid agencies delivered projects for the benefit of the wider community. The facilitators also visited returnee communities, people who were never displaced, and people in rural and in urban areas. The facilitators reached out to people of different backgrounds and varying levels of exposure to aid efforts, including but not limited to chiefs and village elders, local administrators, religious leaders, teachers, NGO extension workers and community mobilisers, extremely poor people, people of various political preferences, and people from both larger and smaller ethnic groups<sup>77</sup>. In as far as possible, the teams made an effort to speak with women as much as with men and to reach people of various age groups and levels of vulnerability, including disabled people, orphan youths, elderly, widows and illiterate persons. At several locations, facilitators met separately with women and with youth, respectively.

Some of the facilitators joined a debriefing session in March and contributed to drawing out some of the main trends emerging across the focus group discussions and interviews, which informed the headings in the summary section below.

### **Some limitations**

Facilitators started each discussion by introducing themselves, their role and the purpose of the conversations. Participants were informed of the likely amount of time that it would take for the discussion – estimated by facilitators based on the numbers in the group – and were asked for their permission for notes to be taken.

The majority of people who contributed to the discussions seemed to have understood that the facilitators were not carrying out a needs assessment; many expressed appreciation that someone was interested in their views, which would be also shared more broadly. Yet despite facilitators' reassurances of confidentiality<sup>78</sup>, some people were not comfortable to express open criticism, in case that this may jeopardise in some way the support that they receive.

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<sup>77</sup> Other factors that were considered in the selection of the focus groups within sites were patterns of settlement, areas that have experienced aid assistance and where HAP member agencies are or have operated in the past, accessibility and security. At each location, the teams sought permission from local government authorities to carry out the focus group discussions.

<sup>78</sup> While facilitators and the writer can connect the information to communities at a specific location (for focus group discussions) and to individuals (for interviews), participants were reassured that nobody else would have access to information that would allow them to connect participants with their responses. No names or addresses of participants were requested or recorded during the discussions.

This was particularly the case in instances where staff of local NGOs and/or extension workers from the community participated in the discussion.

During the debriefing session, facilitators highlighted some potential biases on their part that may have influenced both the conversations and the trends that they highlighted in their notes. For example, one facilitator who took interest in aid agencies' recruitment practices asked more follow-up questions in relation to employees from Southern Sudan versus expatriates; one facilitator had first-hand experience working with a government department and the notes from that team highlighted several issues related to the interaction between aid agencies and the local government.

Information gathered during the discussions was captured in writing (in many cases directly in English) and transcribed at a later date into location-specific reports. While facilitators and interviewers were advised to maintain an accurate record of the discussions, some of the quotes presented below may not always be the exact words used by people in discussions, and might also be a reflection of the facilitators' and interviewers' interpretation of the discussion.

## **3.2. Summary of discussions**

### **3.2.1 On information sharing**

At the start of the discussion, focus group participants were encouraged to think about agencies that provided assistance in their communities in 2009 and the type of assistance that was provided. While in some communities people were aware of either the name of an agency working locally or a project that was being implemented, only few could name those responsible for a particular project.

Many communities were not clear about what constituted aid assistance, where this came from, who was entitled to receive it and on what basis. One person said: 'We don't understand how they are doing their things.' Many people could not differentiate between projects implemented by NGOs or the UN, and both were often mistaken for government-led initiatives or vice-versa; one group said, 'we don't know their names because there are too many of them. We only know this one because its staff visits us frequently.'

In some communities, people were aware of who receives assistance, and a few identified beneficiaries by their gender or age groups, 'because they live there' and 'go to that school', because they are disabled or sick, mothers with children, orphans, or because they are returnees. Overall, there was limited

knowledge of why particular people or communities were selected to receive assistance while others were not. Another person added: 'Some are lucky and get the help, some don't receive anything.'

Many people did not understand why different agencies selected the same people in their community to receive different types of support, 'while some of us do not receive anything from anyone and in the next village I heard that every household received both food and mosquito nets', one woman said.

### **How information is accessed**

Community meetings were a main means through which people found out information about aid agencies and assistance that they would provide. In one community, people were very appreciative of an organisation that 'register people prior to any activity and days before they come and tell us that an activity will take place.' However, someone in another community said, 'We never know anything about the NGOs and why they come here. Some people fear the NGOs registering them before they tell us how they will assist.'

People spoke highly of an agency that 'set up a committee of elders so one can access them and ask more questions' and one that 'came to our community and organised meetings to make us aware of the support that they will give throughout us.' Another agency was appreciated for '[w]hen this NGO first arrived here, the staff came for an introduction with the entire community.'

In one of the groups, someone said: 'We read their logos, we see their cars and their sign posts [but we also want] them to come to us and tell us so that we know who to hold responsible if what they tell us doesn't happen.'

In several communities, where aid agencies have local offices, people said that they would access information from the office. However, in one instance, frustration was expressed at the response received when trying to approach an agency directly to ask for more information: 'We went and asked and we were told not to disturb people.'

In most communities, people would 'go to the SSRRC [Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission] to look for what I want to know about them.' In only five groups, people named agency representatives whom they would ask for more information during regular field visits.

People in remote areas had the least knowledge of aid agencies and the assistance that they provide, as this quote illustrates: 'We don't receive any information here in the bush and never hear anything about anyone coming to give us assistance.' In a few communities, women were able to identify who provides assistance in their village, while the men didn't know that information.

An elderly explained this: 'some of the women who go to the market walk long distances and they find out who is being handed out support. They also tell the other women when they have the chance.'

### **Information and trust**

Lack of information or poorly communicated information led some communities to stop trusting what they heard from aid agencies. As a result, particularly in instances where false expectations had been raised, a few communities expressed frustration and a loss of trust in the agencies themselves. In one group, someone said that 'one NGO came and promised to come back with a program but they never returned to us. I don't remember the name of the NGO, but there were many like it.'

Several communities were disappointed at not getting information about what agencies were doing in their villages and why they were visiting. Often a brief visit that was not properly communicated to the community would raise expectation that aid would follow, although in many cases communities acknowledged that this was not necessarily stated by the agency.

Sudden changes in expected deliverables, with no explanation, left people feeling angry. In one community, people shared the example of an agency that registered each person from the village yet distributed only three nets per household regardless of the number of individuals in the household.

In several urban areas, people highlighted the use of signposts as a good means for aid agencies to disseminate information about their projects, particularly in relation to construction. In one of the focus groups, participants shared the example of a signpost that included information of the overall cost – of USD 1mil – for building a market hangar. 'We expected that this would be something very big that the entire community could use, but in the end it was more like a shed. For all this money? Where did the money go? We don't know who to trust anymore.'

### **Risks of limited information**

In another community, people talked about a girls' education scholarship programme, which was meant to last for four years but ended after two, except for two girls who continued to receive support. Lack of information as to why the scholarship ended for most girls after two years but continued for the other two led some people in the community to suspect that the girls still receiving support had 'some form of relationship' with staff from the agency implementing the project. Someone in this community explained that nobody had any evidence to justify this claim, but that 'without clear information, everyone will come up with some rumour.' Another person added: 'To avoid

any discussion, we as the beneficiaries of such NGOs, we want those NGOs to display their plan of action, so that if it is not going to benefit us like they said, we can withdraw from their support.'

### **What people want to know**

In most discussions, people had specific suggestions about information that they would like aid agencies to share with them. The quotes below offer a cross-section of such suggestions:

*'We want to know the projects of those NGOs and who they are targeting.'*

*'We want to know what the organisations do, where their offices are, why they are coming to register us.'*

*'We want to know how frequently they will distribute aid.'*

*'We want to know the criteria used in choosing the location of their operation and why some NGOs leave before completing their projects.'*

*'We want to know what they do, their aims, and their integrity.'*

*'We want to know more about plans and their budget should be made known to the community so that we judge whether money went missing.'*

*'What we want to find out from the start is what support they can offer and the duration of their work in our community.'*

*'I want to know the programmes of those NGOs, who they are, where they come from and what they plan to do here [...] This will help us know and differentiate the aid giving NGOs from the spy NGOs.'*

At a few locations, some people said that it did not matter what agencies would tell them, but what they would do for them. 'We don't want empty promises, we just need enough support to reach everyone,' someone said.

### **3.2.2 On community participation**

In many communities, facilitators were given examples of agencies that have consulted with people, mainly during needs assessment and, in several instances, as part of monitoring and evaluation. Agencies that 'consulted us to find out what are our needs, before they started their work' were recognised and appreciated in most discussions.

Some people raised criticisms that consultations did not happen or they did not happen with the appropriate people in their community. Others had complaints about the way in which consultations took place and had suggestions on how to improve the process.

Many people suggested that better engagement with leaders at the start of the project would benefit the project throughout its implementation, although there was some contradiction between this and requests for more consultation with the entire community.

### **Limited consultation**

Most communities were aware that 'usually the chiefs are involved in needs assessments alongside the SSRRRC and other government officials.' While most people acknowledged this as a necessary practice, some also implied that relying on officials is not sufficient: 'Nobody came to us to ask about needs as community people'.

Based on what they heard, facilitators reflected that consultation was limited not just in terms of who was involved in the process, but also with regard to the project stage at which agencies sought the views of communities. One of the chiefs said, 'This NGO came to me as I am the chief; I told them all our needs, but no one came back to ask me about my views in regards to the work done.'

One community shared the example of one agency that distributed seeds that did not yield any crops and the agency did not follow-up to try and replace the seeds. In another community, an organisation distributed seeds in August, and people ate the seeds instead of waiting for the right season to plant them. As one man commented 'aid organisations need to consult with communities before not after they start implementing a project; then, it is too late.'

In one community, participants reflected that: 'The people who do surveys to assess our plight do not reach us here.' Some recalled that, when they did receive assistance, 'We didn't make any decisions and nobody asked us what we needed. They just came and gave us support [...] they left as abruptly as they arrived.'

### **Beneficiary selection: unequal distribution and overlap**

In several communities, people recalled agencies that involved community representatives, the elderly or the chiefs in beneficiary selection. In some cases responsibility for selection was passed entirely onto the chiefs while, in others, community meetings were held 'to form the list of the neediest.'

Uneven aid distribution particularly among neighbouring communities but also within the same communities was believed to spur tensions. This had escalated particularly in communities where the returnees were perceived to receive more or better quality assistance than the local communities. Some people recognised that 'this is just that some of us are jealous that we stayed here and suffered' and suggested that better information from agencies – on who is entitled to receive what, and how decisions are made – would go a long way to address some of these tensions.

Some communities were concerned with the overlap in aid projects that targeted the same groups, particularly the returnees. One teacher said: 'in our community, there have been two agencies providing food to those returning from Kenya and Uganda, which must be the reason why there is never enough food for all of us.'

In one group, people who were not included on a food aid beneficiary list said that they participated in meetings organised by the respective agency, understood the selection process and recognised that not everyone could receive help because resources were limited.

### **Beneficiary criteria**

In one focus group, people mentioned an NGO that discriminated against people of different religions during distribution, though they could not tell whether the agency had a policy to choose aid recipients on faith grounds; some thought that the staff of that agency might be discriminating based on their own religious beliefs. One of the chiefs in this community said, 'it is not easy for us to ask questions when we don't know how much is allocated for what project and what are the rules for choosing who will receive help.'

During the discussion with one community, people recalled an NGO that helps orphans: 'they ask you if one of your parents is alive, whatever you tell them they write it down; but when it comes to distribution, they forget the book and give aid to those whose parents are still alive. They just do business.' Several such instances were raised during discussions, where selection criteria were not followed; in many instances the community pointed to local staff or expat staff from the region being involved in such cases. When asked what the solution could be to such challenges one of the groups concluded: 'We want the white staff to decide who will be the lucky ones and to tell us.'

### **Community representatives**

In some communities, people said that the assistance should be given to the chiefs because they know best who in the community is in most need and they would use the goods in the most calculated way. This view was not held by all,

with some people saying that communities should mobilise themselves and appoint representatives: 'Community representatives should be the medium used to deliver things to us, because we trust them, they know us and know who is the neediest.'

### **Information needed for participation**

In some communities, people noted that aid agencies need to raise their awareness and share information so that everyone in the community could participate in meetings and engage with agencies effectively. One group said that 'Those NGOs do not care to speak to us because they know that we are not educated', and suggested that it was the responsibility of agencies to educate people and of everyone in the community to share rather than withhold information when they had access to it.

### **Participate to take responsibility**

At one location, several people who had been part of a committee set up by an international NGOs were appreciative of the fact that this made them take responsibility in their own hands; 'it pushed us to think for ourselves and find solutions to our problems' they said. This was reflected in two other discussions, though one interviewee concluded: 'we have now become the lost generation, with some of us being too dependent on others.'

### **The opportunity cost of participation**

In various communities, people mentioned that many do not come to consultation meetings not just because they do not know about them but because they choose not to partake: many live very far away, cannot leave their household responsibilities behind, or are disillusioned with previous consultations, saying 'what good could come of it?' Specifically, the lack of follow up and feedback from aid agencies after communities contributed to needs assessments was criticised by some groups.

## **3.2.3 On raising complaints and seeking redress**

When asked how concerns or complaints would be raised in relation to the activities of aid agencies, most communities did not have an answer. Two of the facilitators commented that, if given the opportunity, most communities in Southern Sudan are more likely to complain about lack of or insufficient aid than about the quality of the assistance received. There were several examples shared during the discussions of communities raising issues with the office of an agency or even retorting to violence against its staff, mainly in relation to perceived discriminatory recruitment or dismissal of local staff (which resulted in the extended family or an entire community turning against an agency.)



At two locations, people mentioned that some aid agencies encouraged them to organise themselves and appoint a representative who would raise issues during regular meetings with the respective agencies. 'We have just elected community representative for both the youth and the entire community so in case of any complaints from us, they will raise them for us.'

When asked whether they have raised any issue of concern in the past, one group did not believe that any complaint would be addressed '[s]ince they only care for their own people', while another said '[we didn't raise any complaint] because it is a waste of time since most of the people who are helped are helped by their relatives working for NGOs.'

From all conversations where this topic was approached, it became clear that there was a lack of understanding as to what communities could complain about, to whom and how. The quotes below are illustrative:

*'If we don't know where their offices are then how can we send a complaint?'*

*'We don't know who to complaint to. We have no authority to meet and talk to any aid agency [...] as we approach the office, we get asked too many questions.'*

*'It is good to raise complaints than to become violent, when you know a place where to raise the complaint to. But we don't know any place.'*

*'These NGOs do not involve us in their work, then how can we raise any complaint about them, when we don't know what they are trying to do in the first place.'*

*'Because we never see them here, it is difficult to raise any issue with them. After the borehole broke down, we were hoping that they would come back so we could tell them. But they never did.'*

*'We were not told that we can raise any complaints about the work of NGOs, and even these aid agencies are not staying in one place and so we cannot tell them when something was good or something bad.'*

Several people mentioned cases of nepotism in beneficiary section or fraud and corruption in aid distribution (allegedly involving local officials), but were convinced that there were no options for raising complaints. Some felt that international agencies are afraid to confront the government officials on such problems so as not to jeopardise their good working relationships.

### **3.2.4 On aid workers**

During discussions, facilitators asked people to share their experience and views on the staff employed by aid agencies, and the relationship that exists between communities and aid workers. The general view was that international staff should spend more time at project sites, and there were some contradictory opinions in relation to recruiting local staff.

In several communities, people said that: '[w]e don't know anything about the staffs of these NGOs. They just come to distribute what they have and they go away. We don't interact with them.' While no comments were made on the technical skills or professionalism of aid workers, people did mention that they would expect staff to treat them with respect, to understand the local culture and act with integrity; in one of the groups, someone said that 'Staff should not encourage prostitution in our community in return for employment.'

#### **Recruiting local staff**

Concerns were raised in most communities in relation to aid agencies that choose to hire expatriate staff at the expense of local staff. In some discussions, people expressed frustration that returnees were given preference when agencies hire local staff and, as one youth said 'they've only just returned, are receiving most support, taking all the jobs, and there is very little left for us who stayed behind.'

Some people felt that an education abroad and good command of English were too often seen as substitutes for understanding the local context. One former NGO worker said 'many amongst us are being trained on different new skills, but we have no opportunities to practice and sustain them [...] aid organisations forget that they are the only employers in many places, and that some of the skills they teach us are no good to us'. In one group, someone asked: 'why are even the cooks of aid workers brought from abroad? Do they think that Sudanese people don't know how to cook?'

As a result of local staff not being hired by aid agencies, one community felt that 'staffs fail to communicate with the community since the NGOs employ only foreigners, like some who employ Kenyans from top to bottom. They should employ the people from the areas where they operate who know exactly the needs of the community. If the role of NGOs is to bring development, then they should employ locals.'

In one location, there was a more general sense that recruitment was not on merit: 'Our interaction with these organisations is not going well because they give job opportunities to who they know but not to who are fit to do the work.'

In contrast to all this, in some discussions, people highlighted that local staff cannot always be trusted or do not have the right skills for the job. When asked how the differing views could be reconciled, the answer was: 'it will not be easy, but we cannot always rely on others from outside; we also need to learn, else just leave us to ourselves.'

### **Staff integrity versus nepotism and corruption**

At several locations, people said that those with power who have access to aid resources would more often than not ensure that their families benefit first. In some cases, leaders or local staff were accused of distributing part of the aid supplies for themselves. When asked how such instances could be avoided in the future, it was suggested that local staff should be deployed to far away locations from where their households are, so that they cannot easily give preferential treatment to their own families. Another suggestion was that, 'if foreigners spent more time amongst us and looked at where the money is going, the situation may be different'.

An example was shared in one community of an instance where 'people are correctly registered, then the cards are kept by the local staff who sell them to others'. In another, 'we do not have good interaction with these NGOs that give food to the pupils during the day then are selling food to the community at night.'

Many people expressed frustration and recognised that nepotism, fraud and corruption stops assistance from reaching intended beneficiaries, yet some said that they do not have a problem with benefiting while they can when someone close to them is in a position of power, because 'resources are short and we may not get anything else otherwise' – as one man said during an interview.

### **Field presence**

In many communities, people said that they wanted to see regular presence of international staff at project site 'so that they see with their own eyes the problems that we have' and 'to make sure the money they give is turned into benefits for many [...] not just some staff who receive big pay cheques'. Another group said 'We want them to be based in the community where they are working so that they understand us and communicate well with us.'

International staff who spent more time in the community and made an effort to speak some words in the local language were singled out in several interviews as setting a good example for what aid workers should be like. 'We like those who don't just drive expensive cars, eat in restaurants and spend their day in

the office' said one woman 'but who come and talk to us, and show us that they care about what their projects mean in the village.'

### **3.2.5 On local partners**

While the facilitators did not prompt discussion on partnership arrangements, some people raised questions over why some international agencies choose to implement projects through local partners. Local partners were seen in several instances as middlemen whose staff and their families would benefit at the expense of entire communities. One person commented: 'Why does the money have to change so many hands? By the time it gets to us it becomes less and less.'

## **3.3. Other cross-cutting themes**

Several cross-cutting themes directly relevant to accountability and quality programming that emerged from the focus group discussions and the interviews are presented below; some of these have been identified with the facilitators during the debriefing session.

### **Tangible and lasting results**

Both communities that could or could not identify the agencies providing assistance to them had strong views when encouraged to comment on the quality of the aid received in 2009. Much of the feedback was positive, particularly in relation to projects that had tangible results.

*'Good roads and hospitals are now nearer the people. With schools, children are being educated keeping them busy and preventing them from becoming criminals.'*

*'Demining projects have been good, we can now see people walking freely wherever they want to go, without fear.'*

*'If you come with a project, people should see what you are doing. If you are an education organisation, then you should build schools or teach children, if you are a water organisation, then boreholes should be constructed.'*

*'The other organisations are not so good because we did not see anything being done for the entire community.'*

### **Commitments that are not kept**

In several locations, people had examples of assistance that had been expected but never arrived. Many people talked about how some aid workers raised the hopes of entire communities by doing household surveys and never returning with a project. In the absence of any follow up, entire communities felt disillusioned. 'We want an organisation that will follow up with what it has promised, but not just register our names.'

Some community representatives thought that both local and international agencies are often using this information to mislead donors and keep the money for themselves: 'They cheat everybody ... they cheat us, and they cheat those who gives them the money. How do they expect us to stop cheating?'

In several instances, people spoke of projects that were initiated but never completed. In many cases, this was said to be a result of the project starting with little or no consideration for the community needs, locally available resources and the operating constraints of the context; as people in one focus group recalled 'they realised it would be too expensive to finish it'. This was in relation to a slaughterhouse 'which had a very sophisticated design and a lot of money went into it. But in the end, there is no electricity, no staff have been trained in how to use it, there is no access road, and now nobody is using it.'

In many of the focus group discussions where such frustration was raised, people acknowledged that this problem could simply have been solved through better information sharing: 'we just want to know why such things are happening. Does it mean that those NGOs are here to cheat people or to serve the people?'

### **Insufficient or inappropriate interventions**

Many people expressed frustration towards aid agencies and the government alike for a lack of or limited assistance. A teacher at the market said: 'What happens to all this support that people from abroad send us? Instead of improving, the situation is getting worse and my family in the village will never benefit from all the money that foreign countries send us.'

Examples were given in several focus group discussions of schools of four classes that were built by agencies with only two latrines; of boreholes that were dug so far away from households that people would spend a day walking to them; and of agricultural projects that provided seeds but no tools for people to work the land.

Some people also said that lack of skills is not an issue: ‘what good is it that we have all these trained people, but no resources to use their knowledge?’ a former extension worker said.

The lack of follow up and clarity in roles and responsibility between agencies and communities was raised in several discussions: ‘They installed boreholes but failed to come and do any maintenance. How can such NGO be considered good? How do they expect us to maintain the borehole when there are no able bodied men left in the village?’

### **Political instrumentalisation**

In two of the focus group discussions people raised concerns that some aid agencies or their staff have become too close to some political parties. ‘NGOs should not interfere into politics’ one of the groups concluded.

Power politics was also identified to play a role in agencies either choosing or being allowed to work at one location or another: ‘Most NGOs around here are located in [that place] since before the CPA. That is very few make it on our side. There is political discrimination; the current government prefers [that place] from the rest of the counties.’

### **Dependency and mixed views on relief versus development assistance**

Several groups criticised the dependency created by the ongoing emergency relief efforts, though most questioned the more recent approach of some agencies that are shifting from relief to development and, in so doing, are transferring the delivery of services onto the government. The quotes below are illustrative:

*‘There are some organisations working really well in our community, but others are not so good. Some of these organisations have handed their work to the government – health services, for example, which have become very bad since.’*

*‘During the war, the support from NGOs was better. Since the Peace Agreement, the support is much less or it has completely stopped.’*

*‘During the war, many agencies were helping people with sorghum, oil, lentils, and many other things. But now since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed things fell apart. People before were well off.’*

*‘In the past, they used to give aid, food to mothers and children, but these days there is nothing.’*

*'Why has the World Food Programme stopped food distributions? Have they run out of supplies?'*

*'If NGOs were helping before because of the war, then let the war continue.'*

*'NGOs were much better before the peace.'*

On the other hand, many people said that they do not want to be dependent on outside assistance.

*'Outsiders came here and did things for us and we forgot how to do them ourselves. We have all become idle.'*

*'Aid agencies should not deliver food but rather distribute agricultural equipment, seeds, and help us get water in order for people to be able to work for themselves.'*

*'Aid agencies should ask us from the beginning how we can contribute to the activities rendered by them, not wait until too late then surprise us by asking us to also contribute.'*

### 3.4. In Summary

The majority of people who contributed to the focus group discussions or were interviewed showed appreciation for the international assistance that was targeting their communities and highlighted positive changes that they have seen as a result of international aid efforts. Projects aimed at basic services<sup>79</sup> (water, food, health and education) and improving livelihoods more broadly were valued, though many people explained that what they received was not sufficient for them to become self-sustainable.

A small number of beneficiaries said that the improvements they have experienced as result of international assistance have been limited. With the exception of a handful of agencies that had been operating at the same locations for many years, there was a sense that most aid projects were short-term and not designed to provide long-term solutions. As the conversations progressed, some people also expressed concerns about the sustainability of aid efforts, believing that livelihoods of many communities could be threatened once international aid agencies ended their programme. One teacher said

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<sup>79</sup> Extensive information was recorded during discussions in relation to specific projects (or agencies), though such information was not included in this chapter.

that, 'without outside help, we would all be gone by now. But we need to see benefits that will last us longer, so that we don't wither once all help is gone.'

Many people whose experiences and views are shared in this chapter expressed mixed opinions about the extent to which NGOs and other aid agencies share information with them, consult them in project decisions or enable them to seek redress. Many positive comments were made about the approaches of specific agencies that share information and consult communities in projects from the start, thus enabling them to gain a sense of ownership and to 'take responsibility of [their] faith in [their] own hands' as one of the discussants said. Yet several concerns were also raised about the effect of long-term relief interventions on community coping mechanisms, due to the dependency that aid efforts has created at some locations.

Without appropriate information about aid providers (be they international or local NGOs or UN agencies) and about entitlements and deliverables, many communities felt disillusioned. Limited or no consultation with communities at the start of the project and insufficient regard to local resources resulted in several failed projects that communities spoke about. Overall, many people expressed concern about nobody taking responsibility when projects fail or do not meet their expectations.

While some people looked at the aid agencies as the main providers of services, all expressed concern about the diminishing assistance since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005. Lack of ownership and meaningful engagement to develop projects that have sustainable results has been raised as a challenge that needs to be addressed.



→ **Box 21. What people expect from aid agencies**

*'They should come and talk to people and help according to what the need of the community is.'*

*'The NGO should not make a decision by themselves on behalf of the community; it should be a collective decision made.'*

*'The people they employ should be people who know the needs of the community and who can interact well with the locals.'*

*'The NGOs should be patient with the community since they may come across many challenges here.'*

*'If an NGO consults people, registers their names and finally distributes their assistance, I can say this is a good job.'*

*'They have to follow up and monitor their activity.'*

*'NGOs should first consult the chiefs and form a committee which comprises of the NGO staffs and local chiefs. This would make their work much easier because the chiefs would tell them how to deliver their aid peacefully.'*

*'Those NGOs that want to work here should clearly show us their workplan; besides, they have to give us capacity building before implementing their work because this would give us the chance to participate with them in carrying out the work.'*

*'We want organisations coming to our community to treat us with respect and to understand the culture of our community.'*

*'Staffs from organisations that are here to help need to stop having relations with women in our community.'*

*'We need aid organisations to fulfil their objectives effectively. Their concern for the people should be seen by not stealing food items that is supposed to be for vulnerable groups. All in all, if they fail to finish what they promise, then they better not come at all.'*

*'Aid agencies coming to our community should involve us from the early stages of planning so that the people in the community feel this is also their project. This may take more time and not go always with the plan, but it is the only way that we can also learn.'*



## CHAPTER 4

### Summary of HAP Members' Accountability Workplan Implementation Reports<sup>80</sup>

#### 4.1. Introduction

When an agency becomes a full member of HAP, it makes a commitment to implementing the HAP Principles of Accountability, preparing a detailed annual Accountability Workplan for implementing the Principles, monitoring its performance and submitting an annual report to the HAP Secretariat vis-à-vis the Workplan, reporting to HAP on complaints handling, and paying the annual membership fee.

In previous years, the Humanitarian Accountability Report presented members' annual reports exactly as they were submitted to the HAP Secretariat. This year, the members' annual reports are being placed on the HAP website and this chapter is intended to provide a summary of the reports submitted to the HAP Secretariat by the agreed deadline. It is hoped that this change will increase the accessibility of the most significant features of the reports, and thereby reveal the impressive level and range of accountability improvement activities being undertaken by HAP's membership, whilst enabling those interested in greater detail to review the reports of individual members on-line.

This chapter summarises the annual Accountability Workplan implementation reports covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2009. Of HAP's 40 Full Members at the end of 2009, 27 had joined prior to 2009 and were therefore required to report on activities in relation to their workplans. Of these 27, 22 submitted reports in time for inclusion in this chapter. The five members that were unable to submit reports in time experienced a range of difficulties including changes in key staff and the demands of new operations – in particular the Haiti earthquake disaster of 12 January 2010 which placed

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<sup>80</sup> John Borton prepared this summary.

exceptional demands on many members.<sup>81</sup> These five members will have to report to the General Assembly and it is expected that their reports will also be placed on the HAP website alongside the other 22. Annual reports were not due from the 13 Full Members joining HAP during 2009, though five have taken this opportunity to submit a report.<sup>82</sup>

While Associate Members are not required to develop Accountability Workplans, they are encouraged to report on activities, achievements and challenges in promoting the HAP Principles of Accountability. One Associate Member submitted a report for 2009 (People In Aid).<sup>83</sup>

This chapter therefore represents a summary of the annual reports submitted by 28 HAP Members (22 Full Members joining prior to 2009, five new Full Members that joined during 2009, and one Associate Member).

## 4.2. Structure of the Chapter

Given the requirements and structure of the process for achieving and renewing HAP certification, there were significant expected similarities in the content of the reports from those members working towards certification and those that have achieved certification and are preparing for either their mid-term progress audits or re-certification audits. For this reason, the reports submitted by Certified Members are considered separately from those submitted by Full Members that have undertaken a baseline analysis against the HAP Standard with facilitation support from HAP, which in turn are considered separately from the reports submitted by the other Full Members. Members' reports are therefore summarized in the following order:<sup>84</sup>

### **Certified Members**

1. CAFOD
2. Christian Aid
3. Tearfund

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<sup>81</sup> The five Full Members that had joined prior to 2009 but were unable to submit a report in time for inclusion in this summary were: Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement (ACTED); Medair; Muslim Aid; Norwegian Refugee Council and Save the Children UK.

<sup>82</sup> These five were: Community and Family Services International (CFSI); Focus Humanitarian Assistance; Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); PMU InterLife; Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) India.

<sup>83</sup> As People In Aid's activities during 2009 are reported in Chapter 4, the organisation's report is not considered in detail in this chapter.

<sup>84</sup> Recent members submitting a report, though not required to do so, are highlighted in italic text.

4. DanChurchAid
5. MERCY Malaysia
6. OFADEC
7. Danish Refugee Council

**Full Members that have undertaken a baseline analysis<sup>85</sup>**

1. ACT Alliance (formerly ACT International)
2. CARE International
3. COAST Trust
4. Church World Service (CWS) Pakistan/Afghanistan
5. Concern Worldwide
6. *Focus Humanitarian Assistance*
7. Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
8. Merlin
9. Women's Refugee Commission

**Other members<sup>86</sup>**

1. Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)
2. *Community and Family Services International (CFSI)*
3. Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)

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<sup>85</sup> Whilst a baseline analysis is not a requirement of the certification process, it is a recommended step in preparation for certification. The baseline seeks to establish where an agency currently stands in relation to the HAP Standard and its level of compliance with each of the requirements, thus helping the agency to affirm existing good practice, identify gaps and decide areas for improvement. While it draws heavily on information provided by staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders, a baseline analysis undertaken by an external facilitator – such as HAP Secretariat staff – provides objectivity and impartiality in the findings. Not all the members listed here have undertaken baselines at both their head office programme sites; for instance CARE International (the international secretariat of the CARE Confederation) and Women's Refugee Commission (an advocacy organisation not having country offices) have only undertaken a baseline at their head office.

<sup>86</sup> The following members have indicated in their reports that they are planning to undertake either a baseline analysis or a certification audit during 2010; baseline analysis – NCA; PMU InterLife; SEEDS; Sungi; certification audit: COAST Trust; CWS P/A; Concern Worldwide; Merlin; Sungi. In its delayed report, Save the Children UK indicates that "a decision was made to commence certification" and "this decision and future ways forward need to be reviewed following the decision in November to move to a single international programming unit within Save the Children International"

4. Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)
5. Naba'a (Development Action Without Borders)
6. *Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)*
7. Oxfam GB
8. *PMU InterLife*
9. Sungi Development Foundation
10. *Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) India*
11. World Vision International (WVI)

The final section offers some reflections on the themes and trends that are apparent from the reports.

### 4.3. Certified Members<sup>87</sup>

For **CAFOD** and **Christian Aid** the focus of activities in 2009 was on their certification audits. In CAFOD's case the audits took place at the head office in London and at the agency's offices and programmes and those of its partners in Mozambique. As part of the process, a sample of self-assessments that had been completed by ten country offices were also reviewed. In Christian Aid's case the audits took place at the head offices in London and Dublin and at the agency's offices and programmes and those of its partners in Burkina Faso and India. HAP certification was awarded to CAFOD in September and to Christian Aid in December. Significantly, certification for both agencies extends not just to their humanitarian programmes but across the whole organisation and applies to all programmes. In addition, both agencies are non-operational and the certification process considered quality management accountabilities within the agencies' relationships with national partners and within the programmes implemented by national partners.

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<sup>87</sup> All 7 certified members submitted reports in time for inclusion in this chapter. The intention in ordering the members in relation to how recently they achieved certification is to convey a sense of actions that typically follow upon certification and the preparations that are required for the recertification process that must take place within three years of the original certification.

In 2009, **CAFOD** also:

- Delivered week-long training programmes at all country offices (which included sessions on CAFOD's Accountability Framework and its Safeguarding Children Policy)
- Worked on the development of a complaints handling mechanism (CHM)<sup>88</sup> and policy that incorporates the Safeguarding Children Policy, policies and procedures in relation to fraud prevention and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The CHM policy and its accompanying implementation toolkit will be rolled-out to all programmes and partners during 2010.

**Christian Aid** also:

- Finalised an Accountability Framework and an Open Information Policy for the organisation that are available on the Christian Aid website
- Ran accountability training and facilitated self-assessments for staff and partners in five countries
- Prepared a range of communications products (leaflets, briefing papers, videos, cartoons, Frequently Asked Questions FAQs) to raise awareness of the importance of accountability to beneficiaries and Christian Aid's membership of HAP and the HAP Standard
- Supported two national partners (Association Najdeh and YAKKUM Emergency Unit) to become members of HAP
- Facilitated self-assessment processes for national partners in Kenya and Sri Lanka<sup>89</sup>
- Provided complaints handling mechanism (CHM) training for partners in Ethiopia
- Revised the Christian Aid Emergency Handbook to incorporate improved guidance on accountability to beneficiaries.

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<sup>88</sup> In summarising the reports, terms used by members and with which their staff are familiar have deliberately been retained in this summary even though this may risk confusing some readers well versed in the terminology used by HAP. For instance, some members use the term "complaints-handling mechanism" whilst others use the term "complaints and response mechanism" or "complaints and response system" but are referring to the same process containing similar principal elements.

<sup>89</sup> As guided self-assessments managed by the HAP Secretariat.

→ **Box 22. Perspectives on downward accountability in Kenya: Christian Community Services Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE) a partner supported by Christian Aid**

"Downward accountability has made our work easier. Community members and SDCs [Station Development Committees] are now the custodians of the projects. Because they know the budgets, they monitor the whole process from tendering to implementation and evaluation to ensure value for money". *Isaiah Oba – CCSMKE Project Coordinator*

"It is my first time to see NGOs telling us the amount of funds available for a project. As you can see it has made us to construct a bigger tank, since the school management knew the funds available, they topped up and provided labour to increase the capacity of the tank. This is transparency in practice". *Marta Paul – Headteacher of a secondary school in Moyale*

Source: Christian Aid (2009) "Accountability: A Partner Perspective" Christian Aid and CCSMKE. Case study submitted to HAP.

**Tearfund** and **DanChurchAid (DCA)** had both achieved certification in June 2008 thus their activities during 2009 involved a mix of follow-up activities from the certification process, preparing for mid-term progress audits (conducted approximately 18-months after certification), awareness-raising and training and the further development and roll-out of accountability-related policies, processes and guidance for staff.

**Tearfund** addressed minor non-compliances and recommendations made during the certification process and prepared for a mid-term progress audit that took place in December 2009. In addition:

- a Quality Standards Field Guide (based on a 2008 Good Practice Guidelines report)<sup>90</sup> was field tested and published
- Standard Terms of Reference for evaluations of humanitarian programmes with an emphasis upon participation and beneficiary satisfaction were prepared.
- Feedback mechanisms for partners were finalised
- Feedback mechanism for supporters/public were updated and will be implemented during 2010
- A draft Feedback Policy for staff was drafted and will be used as a basis for consultations throughout the organisation during 2010

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<sup>90</sup> *Tearfund (2008) "Disaster Management Team Good Practice Guidelines on Beneficiary Accountability".*



- A system was established to provide Tearfund's Leadership Team with quarterly summaries of feedback received from communities and beneficiaries across the operational programmes, indicating the responses given and the actions taken.

During 2009 **DanChurchAid** (DCA) launched a year-long pilot of a web-based complaints system and the piloting of complaints handling mechanisms in Malawi, Angola, Ethiopia and Cambodia. A mid-term review of these efforts was presented to senior management and the Board.

→ **Box 23. DCA's web-based complaints system**

A complaints page (<http://www.danchurchaid.org/contacts/complaints>) was launched in March 2009. After 6 months 16 complaints had been received. The complaints were about DCA's activities in Denmark (fundraising procedures, fraud allegations, etc.) as well as the agency's international activities. 11 of the complaints were "sensitive" and 5 were complaints about operational matters. Six of the complaints resulted in a 'lesson learned' with the result that an adjustment was made to a procedure or an internal discussion held and follow-up actioned with the intention of avoiding further complaints.

Source: DCA (2009) "Midterm report on DCA's Complaints Handling Systems" 15<sup>th</sup> October Copenhagen.

In addition, DanChurchAid rolled out a Humanitarian Quality Management System (HQMS) and provided accountability training for staff in 6 countries and all national staff in the other countries where the organisation is running humanitarian programmes.

→ **Box 24. Perspectives on downward accountability in Malawi: Evangelical Lutheran Development Service (ELDS) a partner supported by DanChurchAid**

"As a result of the introduction of the HAP Standard at community level, our relationship with beneficiary communities has improved tremendously as they are able to follow our complete programme management cycle and they are able to make a complaint or request more information if they believe something is not in accordance to the promises made to them, or in line with our policies and standards. During a recent meeting in Sitafa, Chikwawa where we operate with the support of DanChurchAid, one village representative told us, 'we were in the dark, now our eyes have opened. The era of imposing things on us is now over'.

Excerpt from an interview with ELDS staff, Judith Jere and Alick Kaonda, The HAP Newsletter August 2009.

During 2009 **MERCY Malaysia** finalised Handbooks for Employees and for Volunteers, introduced a staff grievance policy and undertook a series of staff training sessions on accountability and the HAP Standard. An M&E department was established but staff turnover delayed its activities. An important learning process for the organisation was that a 2007 pilot to test a complaints handling mechanism “died an unnatural death” due to inadequate follow-up and dissemination of the results across the organisation. During 2009 therefore a fresh complaints policy was finalised and disseminated to an estimated 90% of field staff and HQ staff. 70% of projects were judged by the agency to be compliant with the HAP Standard Benchmark 3 on participation and informed consent. The organisation is preparing for the recertification process, which is scheduled to take place by November 2010.

**OFADEC** held several training sessions on accountability, the agency’s complaints handling mechanism (SINFOR) and the prevention of sexual harassment for staff and partners during the year. Two complaints were received both of which were handled in accordance to SINFOR. Quarterly consultations were held with representatives of the Mauritanian refugee communities served by OFADEC. Challenges experienced by the agency included the highly dispersed nature of the refugee settlements and inadequate resources. OFADEC has also been preparing for the recertification process that is due before April 2010.

→ **Box 25. The benefits of transparent complaint handling: OFADEC’s handling of a complaint by refugee students in Dakar**

One of OFADEC’s programmes involves the provision of education and scholarships to refugee students in Dakar through a UNHCR-funded scheme. In May 2008 refugee students sent a complaint to UNHCR claiming that they had not received their full support and suggesting that OFADEC may be responsible for taking the missing funds. OFADEC’s explanation was that this was a misunderstanding resulting from delays in the receipt of donor funding for the scholarship scheme that left the funding cycle out of sync with the Senegalese school year. When a group of the students were unsatisfied with this explanation OFADEC invited them to form a five person committee to undertake a review of the agency’s files, financial records and banking transactions related to the scholarship programme. The committee spent four days in OFADEC’s offices. Their report confirmed the source of the misunderstanding and confirmed that OFADEC’s tracking system and financial records were accurate and up to date. As a result of the report and discussions with the students OFADEC has now improved its communications with students including the labelling of payments, the system of informing students about any delays in payments and provides students with access to their individual records to check that payments have been made in accordance with their scholarship agreements. Not only was the complaint resolved but the trust and partnership between the agency and the students was strengthened.

Summarised from “A case study into complaints handling” prepared by Sheryl Haw and Nfanda Lamba <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/ofadec-case-study-into-complaints-handling.pdf>

The **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** applies the HAP Standard across all its programmes, including its substantial demining work. The focus of DRC's accountability and programme quality efforts during 2009 included:

- the formulation and publication of "Vision Values and Standards 2009" (referred to by staff as 'The Value Compass') for DRC's domestic and international activities
- the development of eleven local Humanitarian Accountability Frameworks tailored to the context in particular countries and published in local languages
- the development of a generic format for managers on their accountability responsibilities
- the formulation of a Joint Cooperation and Management Standards for the whole organisation.

DRC's complaint mechanism for field staff is now judged to be functioning in 60% of international programmes whilst the complaints mechanism for beneficiaries is judged to be functioning in 50% of programmes. Between October 2009 and January 2010 a baseline analysis was undertaken in preparation for the recertification audit before April 2010.

#### **4.4. Full Members who have undertaken a baseline<sup>91</sup>**

**ACT Alliance** became a Full Member of HAP in September 2008 with the intention of certifying the ACT Coordinating Office (CO). A longer-term objective of the CO becoming a certifying body for members of the ACT Alliance is under consideration. As of January 2010, the ACT Alliance has six ACT members that are full members of HAP in addition to the Secretariat. Of these, two are HAP certified and four have baselines completed. The CO is expecting that other ACT members will join HAP during 2010.

During 2009 the principal activities included:

- Undertaking baseline analyses of the ACT CO and one of ACT's members in Uganda.

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<sup>91</sup> *The Full Members that have undertaken a baseline analysis but did not submit a report in time for the preparation of this chapter and are not included here were: Muslim Aid and Save the Children UK, although the latter only completed a documentation review at the Head Office in London.*

- Development of an Accountability Framework for the whole Alliance and the first steps in the development of a Complaints Handling Mechanism.
- ACT participated in Group 3 of the SCHR Peer Review of Accountability towards Disaster-Affected Populations and learning and follow-up are underway.
- Formation of an Accountability Advisory Group comprising 16 representatives of ACT members world-wide and the holding of an inaugural annual meeting at which Terms of Reference (TOR) were agreed together with a workplan for 2010.
- The post of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation and Learning Officer was created within the Secretariat and the recruitment process is due to be completed in early 2010.

The former ACT International became the **ACT Alliance** on January 1, 2010 following successful completion of the unification with ACT Development. Accountability and high quality are strong values in the new Alliance as can be seen in the Founding Document.<sup>92</sup>

For **CARE International** a focus of its accountability activities during 2009 was the development of a draft Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF) – a process that involved wide consultations (including input from HAP and a commissioned review by the One World Trust) and testing of the draft HAF in different contexts. A revised user-friendly version of the HAF was endorsed by CARE’s Emergency Working Group and will now be piloted for one year. A workshop on accountability was held for members of the Standing Team and Regional Emergency Coordinators during 2009 and there was further roll-out of the Complaints Handling Mechanism (CHM). Functioning CHMs were successfully implemented in all major responses. Also, in 2009 CARE International participated in “a useful reflection session” with other large INGOs facilitated by an independent member of HAP’s Board, to discuss issues of certification and large INGO federations.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> <http://www.actalliance.org/>

<sup>93</sup> *The meeting took place in April 2009 and involved representatives from CARE (International and USA), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps, Oxfam (GB and America), Save the Children (USA) and World Vision International.*

→ **Box 26. The benefits of community participation: CARE's response in Gaza**

During its response in Gaza CARE and its local partners agreed the selection criteria to be used in consultation with the affected communities and ensured that the criteria were clearly communicated to the affected communities. During the subsequent After Action Review, the emphasis on transparency about the assistance criteria and its impartial distribution were identified as being a key contributing factor to the success of the distributions, particularly in view of the tense relationships with the local authorities during the conflict.

Source: CARE International 2009 Accountability report based on the Accountability Workplan Guidelines

During 2009 the **COAST Trust** finalised its HAF, CRM and Information Disclosure Policy (ICP); these were approved by the Trust's Board. Work is underway to incorporate the HAF into the Operations Manual. The new policies and mechanisms are being disseminated via COAST offices, the website, and the organisation's yearly diary and are summarised in beneficiary passbooks. In addition the Senior Management Team developed a monitoring system to track compliance with the HAF and provide monthly reports to the Chief Executive. COAST followed the Accountability Framework during the response to Cyclone Aila which struck coastal areas in May. The organisation is aiming to achieve certification during 2010.

**Church World Service (CWS) Pakistan/Afghanistan** developed a draft HAF prior to undertaking a HAP Baseline Analysis in September 2009. In keeping with the detailed Action Plan drawn up following the Baseline Analysis, the draft HAF will be revised before finalisation and approval in early 2010. A CRM is under development and will be piloted in 2010. Other activities undertaken during the year included:

- Sharing the HAP Principles posters (in English and Urdu) with 100 affiliates/partners
- Revision of monitoring forms to encourage beneficiary participation and the reporting of it
- Training for staff and partners on HAP and Sphere in Sri Lanka and Nepal as well as in Pakistan
- The establishment of a Quality and Accountability Department with staff who also support the organisation's organisational development and capacity building programmes and internal audit teams Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance programme/service.

Following the 2008 closure of HAP's office in Pakistan 2008, CWS P/A took the lead as a HAP Focal Agency in the region, by providing support to other

agencies in improving accountability to disaster-affected populations. The agency submitted a funding proposal to the UN Humanitarian Response Plan 2010 to develop HAFs and complaints handling mechanisms for ten selected agencies in Pakistan.

CWS P/A emphasised accountability to beneficiaries in its ongoing and new operations in support of IDPs within Pakistan and this was reflected in positive feedback about the agency from IDPs. HAP certification audits are planned for early 2010.

A main focus for **Concern Worldwide** during 2009 was a programme of regional workshops to introduce country offices to the HAP Standard and then the participating staff returning to their own country offices and conducting self-assessment 'baselines' against the Standard. In this way, it is planned to complete self-assessment 'baselines' in 21 country offices by March 2010. An Accountability Framework was finalised and approved by the Senior Management Team and work continued on developing a Complaints and Response Mechanism. By the end of 2009 four country programmes were piloting CRMs and six more were preparing to pilot them. It is planned to finalise CRM guidelines by June 2010. In addition several policies were revised to take account of the HAP Standard and the new Accountability Framework including the Programme Participant Protection Policy (P4), the Concern Code of Conduct (C3) and the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Guide. Concern's certification audits are scheduled to take place in early 2010 and the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) will observe the process.

**Focus Humanitarian Assistance**, an affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), became a member of HAP in March 2009. Over the following nine months it undertook HAP Baseline Analyses at the Head Office (FOCUS Europe) and in FOCUS India. A draft Humanitarian Accountability Framework was prepared and is due for ratification by other offices and trustees. A Complaints and Response Mechanism is being developed and will be rolled out in 2010.

During 2009 **Lutheran World Federation (LWF)** undertook a HAP Baseline Analysis at its Head Office and in its Uganda country programme and completed its participation in the SCHR Peer Review of Accountability towards Disaster-Affected Populations. Lessons from both processes were reflected on within the agency (including at the annual meeting of Field Directors) and incorporated into planning processes. LWF's Accountability Framework

was reviewed and updated. A Complaints and Response Mechanism was introduced in Nepal and in Kenya incentive workers were given orientation on the Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Workers in the Kenya Refugee Programme. LWF participated in an ACT Development process to compile Impact Assessment Tools and the “ACT Impact Assessment Toolkit” was provided to LWF country offices.

**Merlin** undertook HAP Baseline Analyses at its Head Office and field offices in the Democratic Republic of Congo and prepared an Accountability Action Plan to address the needs identified. Other steps/activities during the year included:

- Finalisation of a Programme Management Cycle Guide for use by all programmes
- Inclusion of steps to improve accountability in the three-year organizational strategy and in the plans for Country Programmes and Head Office departments.
- Development of a Humanitarian Accountability Framework (scheduled to be finalized in 2010)
- Introduction of the HAP Standard to all Head Office staff and senior staff of Country Programmes.

During the year Merlin also achieved People In Aid’s “committed” status. Merlin’s HAP certification audits are scheduled to take place during 2010.

**→ Box 27. Building on Emergent Knowledge and Experience: Merlin in Myanmar and Nepal**

The response to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar enabled us to further engage with HAP on a programmatic level, developing approaches that helped to increase the knowledge of Merlin staff within the delta, the opportunity for communities to influence our programme design and provide us with feedback on our work. Our evaluation of the Myanmar programme generated a lot of learning on mainstreaming accountability and this has been incorporated into our Accountability Action Plan. The team in Myanmar is now leading in Merlin’s development of accountability tools and guidance. This has included the development of a comprehensive system to help our country programmes assess their current level of accountability based on our experiences in Myanmar. The Nepal team have used this system to assess their approaches to community engagement and partnership development and, although much was already in place to ensure our accountability to these stakeholders, has now established a clear plan of action to build best practice.

Compiled from Merlin’s Annual Report

As an advocacy organisation, the **Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)** occupies a unique position within the HAP membership. In early 2009 WRC undertook a HAP Baseline Analysis. One of the needs identified was that of clarifying words and terms that are commonly used within the organisation and this resulted in the publication and dissemination of definitions of such words and terms. During the year external and internal Complaints Handling Procedures were finalized, as was a Quality Management System. The WRC Accountability Framework was finalized and approved by the Board. Orientation of staff on the Accountability Framework and the other procedures is scheduled for early 2010. A user-friendly data management tool to monitor and evaluate compliance accountability commitments is under development.

#### **4.5. Other members<sup>94</sup>**

As an independent national association of over 70 Australian NGOs, the **Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)** seeks to fulfil its HAP membership requirements through encouraging improvements in accountability among Australian NGOs. A principal vehicle for these efforts is the ACFID Code of Conduct, which commits ACFID members to high standards of integrity and accountability. ACFID presented the HAP Standard at a number of events. ACFID's report notes that, "although Australian agencies uphold the HAP values, Australian agencies are not in a position to take up base-line audits or full accreditation. This stems from a variety of challenges regarding managerial and federation issues, a lack of resources and streamlined processes." A review of the Code of Conduct is planned for 2010 and ACFID have invited HAP to support this process through the provision of advice and sharing the experiences of HAP's membership.

**Community and Family Services International (CFSI)** became a member of HAP in March 2009 and almost immediately undertook an Accountability Organizational Self-Assessment (AOSA). The results were reviewed in July and incorporated into the new Strategic Plan 2010-2014 that was approved in November. A draft Accountability Framework was prepared, as was a draft Complaints Handling Mechanism. However, work on the Accountability Workplan was delayed due to the decision to prioritise the organisation's response to the typhoons that damaged large areas of Luzon in October 2009. During the response CFSI encouraged beneficiaries to make use of the SMS texting to provide immediate feedback to the organisation on its distributions and this established an ongoing dialogue with many beneficiaries. The draft

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<sup>94</sup> *The Full Members that have not yet undertaken a baseline analysis and did not submit a report on time for the preparation of the chapter, thus are not included here are: ACTED, Medair and NRC.*



Accountability Framework and the delayed Accountability Workplan will be considered in early 2010.

During 2009 **Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)** commissioned an organisational assessment that was carried out by OHRD an Afghan capacity building organisation. The assessment highlighted the need for a review of CoAR's policies and strategic plan, the revision of its human resource management system, administration and financial manuals and the need for it to develop a management information system (MIS). Work began on the MIS but was delayed as a result of resource limitations. Insecurity and irregular funding were identified as particular challenges facing the organisation.

For **Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)** the Israeli assault on Gaza at the beginning of the year had significant impact on the nature and orientation of its programmes during 2009. Though unable to give attention to preparing the organisation to carry out a HAP Baseline Analysis, the agency had undertaken "an emergency response programme in Gaza that responded directly to the expressed needs and concerns of the communities, and that offered locally sourced, familiar aid items accompanied by instructions in Arabic". Following the principle of "nothing about us without us" MAP's projects have significant community participation through focus groups, independent surveys, video testimony and confidential forms and were felt to have contributed to the agency's preparedness prior to the conflict and its ability to respond effectively when it started. 6 months after the end of the conflict MAP conducted a survey of 6,000 beneficiaries of its programmes and the responses "directly influenced" the revision of its emergency pre-positioning and response plans. With regard to undertaking a HAP Baseline Analysis the agency indicates that, "as MAP strengthens its internal procedures, we will continue to assess our capacity to carry out baseline analysis with HAP."

**Naba'a (Development Action Without Borders)** undertook a HAP guided self-assessment at start of year within five months of becoming a HAP member. A Code of Conduct and procedures for handling complaints were prepared and a four person complaints handling committee established. Staff were trained on Child Rights Programming in line with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the number of disabled children included in the Early Childhood Programme and therefore consulted on design of programme was increased to 22%. The agency hosted a regional NGO conference on promoting gender equality.

**Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)** became a HAP Full Member in July 2009. During the remaining five months of the year it:

- Included clear statements on accountability to rights holders in its Global Strategy 2011-2015

- Drafted an Accountability Framework (to be finalised in 2010)
- Introduced all HQ staff to the HAP Standard
- Drafted and tested a self-assessment tool for use by all field offices
- Prepared for HAP Baseline Analyses which will be undertaken at the Head Office and in the Ethiopia Country Programme in early 2010
- Reviewed the agency's monitoring systems to improve focus on accountability to rights holders
- Revised the TOR template for evaluations to improve participation/assessment of performance in relation to rights holders
- Prepared a draft policy on complaints handling
- Revised the incident reporting system to comply with the requirements of the HAP Standard and the complaints handling system.

During 2009, **Oxfam GB** completed its participation in the SCHR Peer Review of Accountability to Disaster Affected Populations (together with UNHCR and LWF in Group 2). Approximately one third of recommendations arising from the process were implemented during the year. Others will be addressed next year and beyond. According to the report to HAP “probably most important lesson learnt was that it was time to ‘put some managerial muscle on the accountability bones’ that we already have”. Also during the year:

- the Partnership policy was revised following the Strategic Evaluation of Partnership completed in 2007 and an internal peer review is currently underway of Oxfam's ability to be a good partner
- the Complaints Policy was integrated into management reporting; consequently it is now an organisational requirement for all programmes to respond to and report complaints
- Complaints mechanisms are in place in humanitarian programmes though it is recognised that more work is require to make them fully effective
- the Evaluation Policy was operationalised
- Guidance on how to include community voices in monitoring was piloted in the Horn, East and Central Africa region.

Twenty-two Oxfam country programmes now “have/use” the Programme Accountability Matrix whereby programmes score themselves against four Accountability Dimensions (transparency, participation, learning and evaluation, feedback mechanisms).

In February 2010 Oxfam published its Accountability Report for the year May 2008 to April 2009 covering: Feedback Mechanisms and Complaints; Monitoring Evaluation and Learning; People; Governance; and Oxfam’s Carbon Footprint.<sup>95</sup> The report notes that the standards adopted are the Global Reporting Initiative and the International NGO Accountability Charter. According to Oxfam’s report to HAP, the agency currently has no plans to undertake a HAP baseline analysis or certification audit.

**PMU InterLife** became a member of HAP in July 2009. Shortly after joining an Accountability Workplan was agreed that schedules HQ and field baselines to take place in October 2010. Following a HAP-facilitated workshop, a draft Humanitarian Accountability Framework was prepared. Ten partner organisations will be consulted before the HAF is finalised around March 2010. A workshop on developing complaints and response mechanisms was held in Kenya for partners and sister organisations in Kenya and this is providing input to the development of a CRM system which should be ready in draft form in early 2010. A new project management handbook that takes the HAP Standard into account is currently being prepared.

It had been planned to undertake a HAP Baseline Analysis of **Sungi Development Foundation** during 2009 but this was delayed due to security concerns. It was therefore decided to conduct a guided self-assessment and this is scheduled for completion in February 2010. Despite this delay the organisation achieved the following:

- Revised Sungi’s Emergency Response Manual to include HAP Principles
- Established a Complaint Handling Mechanism which included the setting up of a complaints handling committee
- Disseminated materials and information on HAP Principles to staff and beneficiaries in local languages
- An estimated 90% of staff are now judged to be trained/informed of the HAP Principles and complaint handling procedures.

Sungi is planning to undertake its HAP certification audits at end of 2010.

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/accounts/downloads/accountability-report-0809.pdf>

→ **Box 28. The Benefits of improved accountability and participation: Sungi's response during the IDP emergency in Pakistan**

During its response to the IDP emergency resulting from the Pakistan Army's offensives against armed opposition groups in the Swat Valley and South Waziristan, Sungi established Humanitarian Quality Management Committees (HQMCs) in the programme areas. The HQMCs comprised male and female beneficiaries and were involved in assessments; identification and verification of beneficiaries; and participated actively throughout the project period. Among the lessons identified by the organisation were that its promotion and practicing of accountability:

- increased the credibility of the organisation among stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries;
- reduced the misuse of resources
- improved coordination between the various stakeholders and humanitarian agencies

Compiled from Sungi's Annual Report

**Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) India** became a member of HAP in July 2009. Over the next 6 months it undertook training of senior staff on accountability and the HAP Standard and drew up a draft induction programme for all staff. A draft Humanitarian Accountability Framework was prepared and work began on the development of draft guidelines for Complaints and Response Mechanism. Selected staff within the organisation were identified to serve as focal points in the development of guidelines for beneficiary participation. A HAP Baseline Analysis is scheduled to take place in March 2010.

During 2009 **World Vision International (WVI)** launched a World Vision Accountability Community of Practice (COP), which will serve as the main coordinating body for accountability across the organisation. External participants in the launch and inaugural meeting in Nairobi in November included HAP, One World Trust, Transparency International, Keystone and KPMG. One of the first projects to be undertaken by the COP will be the development of an organisation-wide (emergencies and development programming) programme accountability framework, which will replace the current HAF.

WVI also reports that, during the year, it:

- Formed a steering committee to draft WV public disclosure policy
- Undertook initial development of an integrated review function among various performance measurement units
- Achieved greater coherence across the various parts of the organisation in complaints handling processes and improved linkage between

organisational policies and processes on child protection, whistle-blowing and community complaints and grievances

- Undertook joint activities on accountability with its ECB partners
- Compiled a compendium of tested accountability tools which were distributed and posted on the internal website
- Participated in the Transparency International work to develop guidelines on preventing corruption.

The Food Programming and Management Group (FPMG) was particularly active in working to improve accountability to beneficiaries and affected communities:

- All food aid projects are now required to include complaints and response mechanisms
- FPMG developed and disseminated a guide and video on community CRMs into food aid programmes
- A Quality Assurance Strategy for food aid programmes is currently being finalised and work is underway to improve the links between Complaints Response Mechanisms, M&E systems and Post-Distribution Monitoring.

Following reflection within WVI on the organisation's governance model and its multiple mandates (covering emergencies, development and advocacy), the previously declared objective of achieving HAP Certification of the Food Programming and Management Group became (as indicated in the 2009 report to HAP) "[c]ontinue learning about certification and how it could be applied to World Vision in the future." Currently WVI has "no plans to report" with regard to undertaking a HAP Baseline Analysis or certification audit.

## **4.6. Some Reflections on Themes and Trends**

To an external observer, it is striking and impressive to see the effort and commitment of HAP members (supported in a variety of ways by the HAP Secretariat) focussed on improving accountability to beneficiaries and disaster-affected communities. That the majority of those members that have recently joined, are intent on progressing rapidly through to certification and are keen to report on their progress (even when not required to do so) is encouraging and implies a faster increase in the number of certified members in the years ahead.

Many of the reports reviewed displayed an impressive frankness and self-critical tone. That members are prepared to reveal (in reports that they know will be placed in the public domain) instances of planned activities not taking place due to turnover of key staff, or progress faltering due to insufficient support from senior management or the agency's leadership, suggests that annual reporting against accountability even of itself can contribute to greater transparency, self-awareness and, quite probably, more effective learning.

A focus of attention virtually across the whole membership is the development of accountability frameworks and complaints handling/response mechanisms. This also applies to members that have achieved certification and are now engaged in contextualising their organisational accountability frameworks to the different country-level contexts or are rolling out complaints handling systems across all country programmes.

A recurring lesson among those highlighted by members is that implementation of the HAP Principles or the Standard leads to an improved relationship between the agency and the community and increases the likelihood that the programme will be effective and achieve its objective. Whilst these experiences do not provide the 'proof' that improved accountability leads to improved programme quality and outcomes, the fact that they are so frequently reported by HAP members does point to the existence of some sort of 'virtuous relationship'. It is anticipated that, under the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan, HAP's Research Programme will contribute to revealing the nature of this relationship and the conditions under which it produces the optimum benefits.

Finally, members' reports indicate commitments in 2010 that, if all achieved, will see: at least five more members complete baseline analyses; five more members achieving certification; and the recertification of the first three members to achieve certification in 2007 (Danish Refugee Council, OFADEC and MERCY Malaysia).





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