

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

CHS Alliance



Foreword

Imagine if you and your loved ones were caught up in a crisis. Wouldn't you want your voice to be heard? Wouldn't you expect your needs to be met? Wouldn't you trust that your dignity would be respected? These are the essence of accountability as expressed in the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality & Accountability (CHS). Yet, as the 2022 Humanitarian Accountability Report demonstrated: accountability in the aid system is still disgracefully lacking.

In response to this challenge, CHS Alliance members continue to demonstrate their commitment to being more accountable and to building a more accountable system. By driving widespread adoption of the CHS, members are working towards greater accountability, more transparency and a system that works more closely and meaningfully with people affected by crises. Not just in organisational policies but also, more importantly, in the interface and interactions between aid workers and groups impacted by crises.

To determine our role in building a system that puts people affected by crises at its core, CHS Alliance listened carefully to our members and partners and created a bold new [strategy to 2025](#). In it we prioritise three areas that we seek to underpin through a greater number and diversity of organisations delivering on the Commitments of the CHS:

- Improving delivery of the CHS Commitments
- Building a stronger CHS Alliance movement
- Creating a more accountable aid system



In 2022, to ensure those nearest to communities are gaining the most from the CHS, the Alliance deepened our engagement in different contexts to learn from local leadership. We supported more organisations to join the movement – particularly national actors – and fostered increased connections to improve how members work with people affected by crises and contribute to building a more accountable aid system. We used the knowledge and evidence generated by our members' application of the CHS to influence people who effect system change.

The result: our accountability movement gained the greatest momentum to date.

Record numbers of organisations joining the Alliance and taking up a CHS verification were nationally based groups – more than 80% of new members in fact. More than 200 aid implementers, many of them national, have now committed to improving their work via one of the CHS Verification pathways. 35,000+ people from more than 100 countries have engaged with our training. Leaders at the highest level used our evidence to call for comprehensive change.

The CHS was designed as a central tool for humanitarians the world over. Yet since it was launched in 2014, the world has changed; and we have learned a lot about how the Standard is implemented. In 2022, we joined our fellow CHS custodians Sphere and Groupe URD to launch an in-depth consultation process to revise the CHS. Over the course of the year, we heard from more 3,000 people – many of them from communities impacted by crises – on how to strengthen the Standard. It will be ready for launch at the end of 2023, to guide even more organisations in the future.

Though we can never fully anticipate the crises ahead, we can prepare for them by ensuring that all aid actors, whatever their size and wherever they may operate, are meeting the CHS Commitments they have made to the people they serve. We believe and know from our research that an accountable aid system is a more effective aid system.

Thanks for joining us on this journey – we are looking forward to continuing our collaboration and demanding accountability in 2023 and beyond.



Tanya Wood
Executive Director,
CHS Alliance



Lola Gostelow
Chair of CHS
Alliance Board


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[CHS Alliance members](#)

Improved delivery of the CHS Commitments

Success should be measured by how those receiving support experience it. This is why the CHS is a measurable standard. Together, the CHS Commitments provide an accountability framework to help organisations assess and continuously improve their performance towards the people and communities they support.

To ensure those nearest to communities are gaining the most from the Standard, CHS Alliance deepened our engagement in different contexts to learn from local leadership. Together we have explored ways to make sure the CHS and its Verification Scheme are as accessible and useful as possible. We have been rapidly adapting our work so that the CHS is applied by national and local organisations, often those working most closely with people caught up in crises.



Raising the standard by measuring our Commitments

The scheme

The CHS Verification Scheme allows organisations to measure how well they are meeting the CHS Commitments. This is a crucial tool for continuous improvement: weaknesses can only be improved when they are visible.

The process

The verification process reviews documentation, observes project sites, and consults staff, local authorities, partners and, most importantly, the people affected by crisis and whom the organisation serves. These views and perceptions are then triangulated to assess the degree to which an organisation is delivering on the CHS Commitments.

The numbers

At the end of 2022, more than 200 organisations had either completed, or were in the process of undertaking, at least one CHS verification.

These organisations ranged from local to global; collectively these organisations had operations that spanned the globe. Today, there are organisations implementing the CHS in almost all humanitarian crises across the world.

Over the course of 2022, and to ensure greater uptake of the CHS at the national level, we engaged with more than 300 national Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representatives at seven online workshops to better understand how to support local NGOs apply the CHS.

From [Uganda](#) to the Philippines: we listened. This engagement translated into commitments. Nine national NGOs or affiliates completed their self-assessment this year, matching the number of INGOs completing this process, with dozens more starting their journey. **More than 50%** of all CHS Self-Assessments have been carried out by national NGOs.

“I firmly believe that CHS verification has an important role to play helping local organisations to strengthen their systems and organisational power over time, centred around the dignity of people facing crises. Created by the sector, for the sector, the CHS offers a common, universal framework that can be contextualised to the local situation, while being recognised at a global level.”

Rehema Kajungu, Deputy Director, Independently Verified CHS Alliance member organisation, TPO Uganda

The pathways

The CHS Verification Scheme offers three different pathways:

- **Self-Assessment** helps an organisation understand their capacity and performance against the CHS. As part of the process, organisations build individual improvement plans. It is carried out by organisations and supported by the CHS Alliance.
- **Independent Verification** provides organisations with an external, independent assessment of application of the CHS and areas where improvement is needed.
- **Certification** provides organisations with an external, independent assessment, measuring adherence to the CHS, and can result in an organisation receiving a certificate of compliance against the CHS.

Independent verification and certification are undertaken by an accredited, third-party auditor, the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI), which provides independent quality assurance services to improve the work of humanitarian and development organisations.

The future

To ensure CHS verification is as relevant, accessible, and useful as possible for as many diverse organisations as possible, CHS Alliance is committed to constantly reviewing and improving the scheme.

In 2022, CHS Alliance shortened the cycle for CHS Independent Verification and Certification to three years and improved access to the online tools supporting organisations to undergo CHS Self-Assessment.

During 2022, we kicked off an exciting opportunity for CHS verified organisations, with the development of a new online platform, supported by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). This digital tool will make it easier for individual organisations to manage their CHS Self-Assessment and to use the results. It will also give greater recognition to members that have completed any of the three verification options.

CHS Alliance also commissioned a review to see what is needed to further increase verification uptake from organisations that are closest to crisis-affected countries and communities. The results from the review will guide the future direction of this central plank of the Alliance's work.

[Learn more about CHS Verification](#)

Accountability trends

The report

CHS Alliance's biennial Humanitarian Accountability Report 2022: Accountability is Non-Negotiable launched on 27 September at the opening of the 2022 CHS Exchange. Supported by USAID's BHA, the report sought to understand what more can be done to build an accountable aid system, drawing on seven years of CHS verification evidence, other humanitarian data, and insights from across the sector.



The findings

The report provides evidence that the aid system is falling short when it comes to meeting our core commitments to people affected by crisis. Globally, aggregated data demonstrated that we are still not yet meeting any of the CHS Commitments. And while some individual organisations are exemplary in their accountability efforts, data – and reports from communities – demonstrate that far more needs to be done to make accountability to those we serve, a reality.

Recurring patterns

The second key finding is that we see recurring patterns: aid organisations are good when it comes to having effective policies and internal process and coordinating with other similar organisations. However, organisations struggle when it comes to listening to and learning from people affected by crisis. This is especially true in some critical thematic areas: protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment; supporting local leadership; including diverse groups; and environmental protection.

Measuring brings improvements

There is a reason to be hopeful: the data shows that organisations can improve their accountability performance when they apply and measure their efforts over time. Organisations that have consistently monitored and measured their work against the CHS over a number of years show clear signs of progress in how they work with people affected by crisis.

This is particularly the case for some of the biggest challenges the aid system faces – such as protecting people from sexual exploitation and abuse – with the CHS Commitment to welcome and address complaints having the lowest score. Promisingly, it is on this critical issue that we see the strongest gains made by organisations making deliberate efforts to improve against the CHS over the long term.

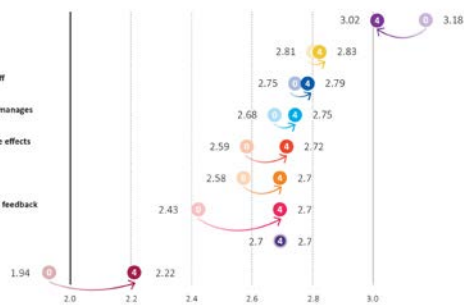


Average change in scores for CHS-certified organisations over a full cycle

Measuring change over time: average scores for CHS-certified organisations at the start and end of four years using the CHS

Communities and people affected by crisis can expect assistance that:

- is coordinated and complementary (Commitment 6)
- is appropriate and relevant (Commitment 1)
- is facilitated by competent, well-managed staff (Commitment 8)
- comes from an organisation that responsibly manages resources (Commitment 9)
- strengthens local capacity and avoids negative effects (Commitment 3)
- is effective and timely (Commitment 2)
- is based on communication, participation and feedback (Commitment 4)
- improves as organisations learn (Commitment 7)
- welcomes and addresses complaints (Commitment 5)



Source: Data from the 12 organisations that have completed at least one four-year CHS certification cycle. Scores shown are the average aggregated scores at the initial audit, compared to those at the recertification audit.

Key: ● Year of audit

[Read the report](#)

Affected people holding power to account

Peer-support communities

To support our members to better deliver their accountability commitments, in 2022 CHS Alliance lead an Accountability to Affected People (AAP) Community of Practice of 200+ member representatives. This provided a safe space for those at the frontlines of making organisations listen to, learn from, and change for, people affected by crisis. Through a series of webinars and collaborations, members shared challenges and crowd-sourced solutions on fundamental issues: from co-creating complaints mechanisms with communities, to taking early accountability action in Ukraine.

What is accountability to affected people?

Putting survivors first in the fight against sexual misconduct

We all have a part to play

We all have a part to play in protecting those affected by crisis from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH). The nature of humanitarian and development work means staff often hold great power over people at times and in circumstances when they are at their most vulnerable. Employees in the sector must also be able to work in a safe, harassment-free environment.

CHS Alliance offers a range of options to support its members and the wider system to protect people from SEAH. More than 270 member representatives come together as part of our PSEAH Community of Practice to exchange and learn from each other, sharing good practices and challenges.

Shining a light on the scale of abuse

To confront SEAH by aid workers, we need to better understand the extent of the problem across the aid system and how this unacceptable behaviour manifests. A greater volume of quality and comparable SEAH data will better equip the aid system to understand, make efforts to prevent and respond to this shameful failing.

To facilitate this, in 2022, 22 organisations – international, national and those from the private sector – began testing the CHS Alliance and Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)'s [Harmonised SEAH Reporting Scheme](#), with wide interest from many more. The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) supports this Scheme.

Closing the accountability gap

2022 also saw the Alliance join with the International Institute of Social Studies at Erasmus University (ISS) to co-lead an exciting project: [Closing the Accountability Gap to Better Protect Victims/Survivors of SEAH in the Aid Sector](#), supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project initiated new ways to address the accountability gap for survivors/victims of SEAH in three contexts: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Switching the focus in sensitive investigations

When organisations receive reports of sexual misconduct, it is vital they respond appropriately and conduct professional investigations. In 2022, CHS Alliance released a guide to help organisations through this process. [Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Investigation Guide: Recommended Practice for the Humanitarian and Development Sector](#) emphasises the importance of putting the needs of survivors at the heart of investigation processes.

Building up professional investigators

Credible, survivor-centred investigations into allegations of wrongdoing are critical to tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in aid, as well as to support and provide justice for victims and survivors. The better the standard of investigations, the more likely organisations are to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. Yet, currently, the aid system is hampered in these efforts by a lack of investigative capacity when incidents occur.

To close this gap, CHS Alliance, in partnership with Humentum and supported by the UK's FCDO, launched a new [Investigator Qualification Training Scheme](#) to build professional skills in SEAH investigations and establish a professional standard for investigators. By the end of 2022, more than 400 participants had participated in the first two tiers of this new scheme.

Stopping perpetrators of sexual misconduct moving between organisations undetected

In 2022, CHS Alliance continued to host the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)'s [Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#), which facilitates the sharing of misconduct data between employers, to prevent perpetrators moving between aid organisations unchecked. It has been implemented by nearly 200 organisations. By the end of 2022 more than 86,000 checks had been conducted resulting in over 230 applications being rejected at the final stage of recruitment.

What is Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment?

Cultivating culture change at every level

Taking a whole-of-organisation approach

We believe that to best serve those affected by crisis, humanitarian workers must be treated fairly and equitably and supported to do their jobs effectively. This requires competency in managing people as well as cultivating organisational cultures in which mindsets, values and behaviours align to the Core Humanitarian Standard.

In 2022, we merged our People Management activities with our efforts to promote Organisational Culture Change in the aid system. We were excited to start up a new Culture Community, bringing together 150 people management and HR professionals to promote whole-of-organisation approaches to meeting the CHS – from leadership to those working in organisational culture and systems change.

People and culture in the future of aid work

Participants from 27 countries came together at the [2022 Humanitarian HR conference](#) to learn from people management specialists from, across the sector and the globe, and discuss the changes needed to future-proof the people profession in the aid sector.

Governing well

How can the governing boards of aid organisations do their part to strengthen accountability in the sector? Following the [Working Well](#) and [Leading Well](#) reports, CHS Alliance published [Governing Well](#), funded by the UK FCDO, which outlines how governing boards can play a much stronger role in ensuring that the organisations they oversee meet the CHS Commitments.

Embodying change

CHS Alliance continued its original podcast series featuring conversations about promoting care and compassion in humanitarian and development settings. The podcast had been downloaded 3,633 times by the end of 2022, reaching listeners in more than 100 countries. [Listen here.](#)

[See how the Alliance works on organisational culture and people management](#)

Building capacity in core skills

Training in 2022

More than 600 people took part in extensive participatory training run by the CHS Alliance in skills that are critical for delivering the CHS Commitments:

- PSEA and Investigation Workshop for Managers
- SEA Investigation Workshop
- The CHS and the Role of Quality & Accountability for Focal Points
- Training of Trainers on the CHS
- Leading professional SEAH Investigations

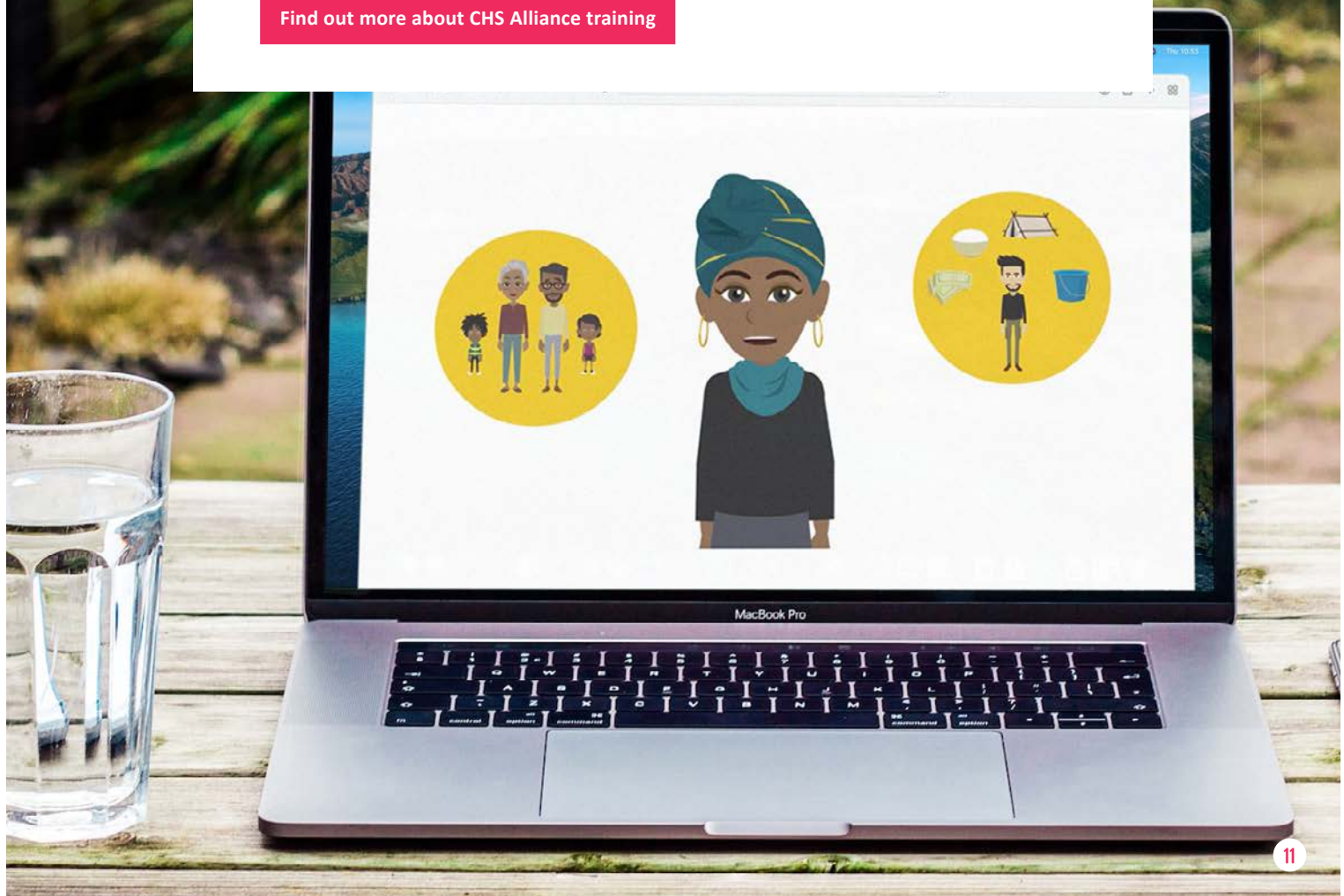
Global demand for eLearning

In addition to physical trainings, the CHS Alliance online training offering was as popular as ever, being accessed in 2022 by more than 7,000 people from all around the world in languages including English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Bengali and Ukrainian. The most popular courses included:

- Introduction to the CHS
- 15-Minute Mobile Guide: Quality & Accountability for the Humanitarian Response
- Understanding and Using the CHS PSEAH Index in One Hour
- Foundations of SEAH Investigations

More than 35,000 people worldwide have taken part in CHS Alliance training to date.

[Find out more about CHS Alliance training](#)



Building a stronger CHS Alliance movement

CHS Alliance members are the drivers of change. Members improve how they work with people affected by crisis and actively contribute to building a more accountable aid system. In 2022, we encouraged more organisations to join the movement, fostered increased connection between our members and supported our members as strong advocates for the CHS.

Widening the network

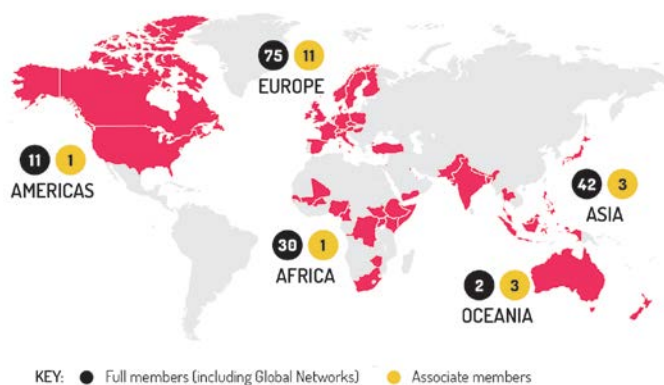
A stronger CHS Alliance movement

CHS Alliance members believe organisations deliver higher quality, more effective aid when they are accountable to the people they serve. We are proud of our diverse membership: whether delivering humanitarian and development assistance locally, regionally or across continents, all are committed to putting people in crisis at the heart of what they do by implementing the CHS.

New members

A record 27 organisations joined the movement in 2022, bringing the total number of full and associate members to 179. This includes eight Global Networks with 531 affiliates from around the world. This expansion was driven by the concerted efforts of CHS Alliance members who helped conduct national outreach at the country level. More than 80% of the new members who joined CHS Alliance in 2022 were national NGOs.

Members' HQs (excluding affiliates)



[Find out which organisations are members of the CHS Alliance](#)



Here are some of the reasons members joined us:

“Joining CHS Alliance is another investment for PEP Africa and the community we serve. As an exceptional added value, the network is an outstanding opportunity for horizontal and vertical exchange of experience. I am proud to say that I am investing in PEP Africa’s growth with the practice of the CHS.”

Melvine Wajiri, CEO, PEP Africa, Cameroon.

“Joining CHS Alliance gives Help a Child the opportunity to learn and reflect on steps to take in our efforts to continuously improve the quality of our programmes.”

Geert de Jonge, Manager Expertise & Development, Help a Child, the Netherlands.

Connecting with our membership

In 2022, CHS Alliance conducted an extensive dialogue with our members, speaking directly with almost 100 different organisations. This gave space for honest and open conversations about how the Alliance can better support and collaborate with members and their partners to achieve our shared vision.

[Join the CHS Alliance](#)

Alliance General Assembly meets

The fourth CHS Alliance General Assembly took place on 29 September 2022. We appreciated the 300+ member representatives who joined to share their views and suggestions about how to continue working collectively to demand greater accountability to people in crisis and deliver on our commitments.

A discussion on Building a Stronger Movement for Change presented key findings from the membership dialogue on how become stronger agents of change. Members were also consulted on how to make the CHS Verification Scheme more accessible to local and national actors. At the General Assembly CHS Alliance announced the four new and three returning board officers elected by members to bring their experience and innovation to guide the Alliance. They are: Coleen Heemskerck, Kajungu Rehema, Shahid Ali, Carly Sheehan, Eoin Wrenn, Yegana Guliyeva and Gloria Soma.

[Meet the Board](#)

Accessibility for all

Over the course of 2022, CHS Alliance translated many of our key guidance documents, resources, and tools into different languages with the help of our members. These translations include:

- The translation of the [CHS booklet](#) into Slovak, Hungarian and Romanian, bringing the total to 30 languages.
- The [PSEAH Index Animation](#) in French, Arabic and Swahili.
- The [CHS PSEAH Implementation Quick Reference Handbook](#) in French, Arabic and Japanese.
- The [Whistleblowing Protection Guidance](#) in French and Arabic.
- The [Code of Conduct Toolkit](#) in French, Spanish and Arabic.
- The [Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Investigation Guide](#) in French, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali and Urdu.

Sincere gratitude to our members, partners, and donors for supporting us to create more accessible resources with a global reach.

[Download all Alliance resources for free](#)

Creating a more accountable aid system

The need for greater accountability to people facing crisis has been recognised for many years, and there have been efforts by many organisations to do more. However, achieving systemic change requires bold leadership, the putting aside of organisational mandates and the coalescing around clear expectations on which we will be held to account.

Revising the CHS

The Standard

Standards need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they are adaptable to the changing environment, drawing on learning, new developments and innovation. The CHS is no exception. Which is why CHS Alliance, Sphere and Groupe URD launched an 18-month process in May to consult with multiple stakeholders on how to update and improve the Standard.

The consultation

Over the course of 2022, careful listening, frank feedback and authentic dialogues were facilitated through many different channels. The revision process prioritised listening to and understanding what people affected by crises all over the world need and value.

Strengthening the Standard

Across the year, we heard from more than 3,000 people globally and from all parts of the aid system – including communities affected by crisis – on their experience with the current CHS, and what a strengthened Standard should look like. Leaders and frontline workers from national and international NGOs as well as United Nations (UN) agencies from Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica and India had their say on how the CHS could become accessible and relevant to today's aid system. All contributions were taken on board and will inform the updated CHS, which is expected to be launched in late 2023.

[Find out more about the CHS revision process](#)

Influencing systematic transformation

Over 2022, CHS Alliance used the knowledge and evidence generated by our members' work to apply the CHS to influence people in positions to effect system change. This included working with leaders of CHS Alliance members, governing boards, the UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) members, humanitarian/resident coordinators, policymakers, national leaders, governments and donors to increase the momentum for change.

Collective accountability

In June 2022, CHS Alliance, as co-chair of the new IASC's Task Force on Accountability to Affected People, held a Side Event during the UN Economic and Social Council's Humanitarian Affairs Segment on collective accountability, hosted by Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP). Participants from all sides of the humanitarian system discussed ideas for how to drive system-wide change for greater collective accountability.

CHS Alliance worked closely with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion to contribute to the development of the IASC AAP Results Tracker. This is a valuable tool that enables Humanitarian Country Teams to gather evidence of what is working and where further efforts are needed. The tool is organised around the CHS Commitments, promoting the Standard's role as a universal accountability framework. USAID's BHA supported the development of this tool.

Donor responsibility on AAP

CHS Alliance was made a co-chair of the IASC Task Force on Accountability to Affected People (AAP), co-leading a workstream focused on supporting donor responsibility for greater accountability to people in crisis. This work drew on close collaboration and synergies with the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution.

Working in partnership

On 1 July 2022, CHS Alliance moved into a new NGO Humanitarian Hub in Geneva to strengthen interactions and collaboration between other humanitarian actors based in Geneva. The Alliance co-led this exciting initiative between organisations to address the increasing and increasingly complex humanitarian challenges. The Hub now houses a flourishing community of humanitarian actors fostering greater cooperation and innovation.

The Alliance invested in joining with other system-strengthening networks to raise our shared voice and push for systemic transformation. This group supported ALNAP in promoting and discussing the 2022 State of the Humanitarian System report.

Activating the network

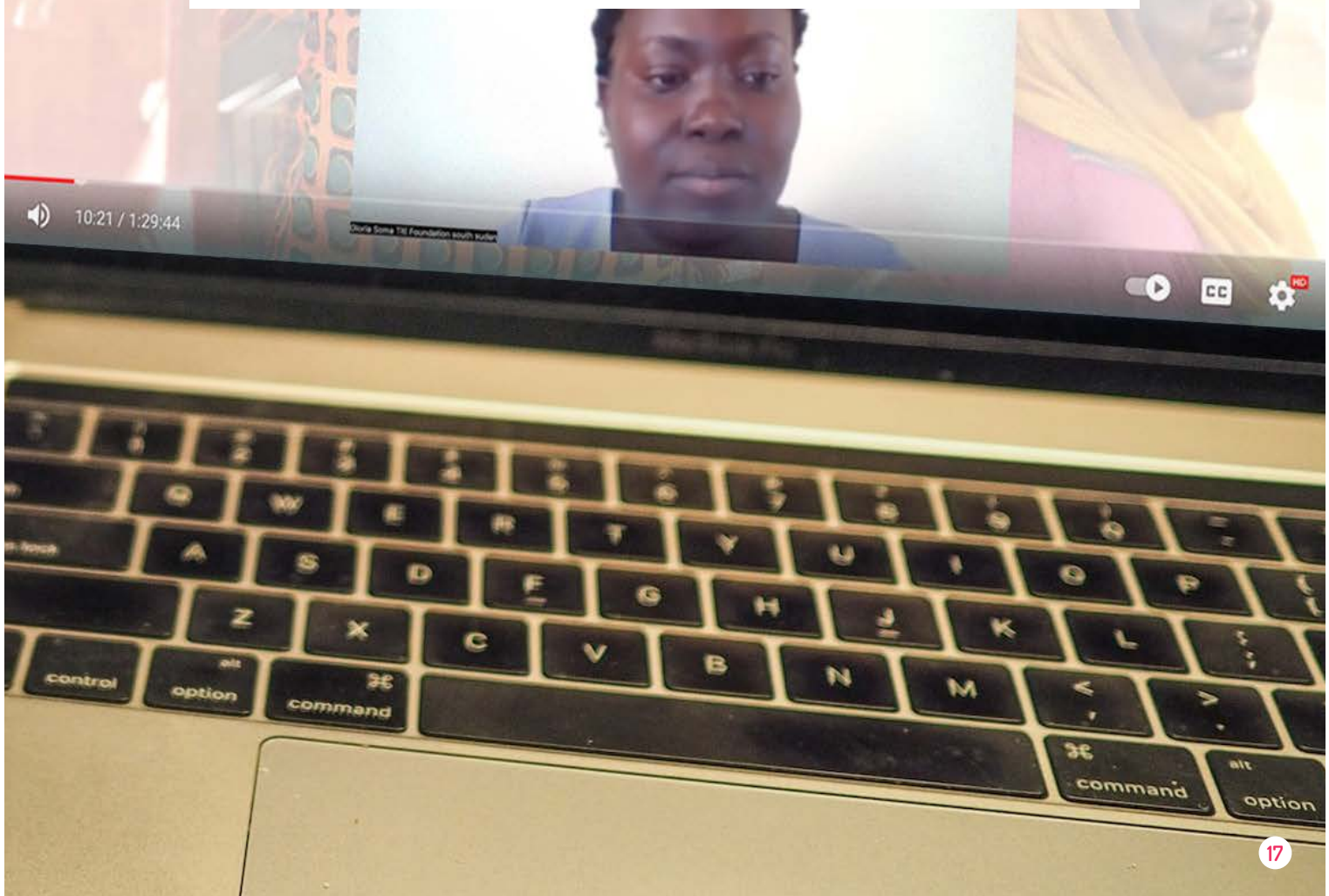
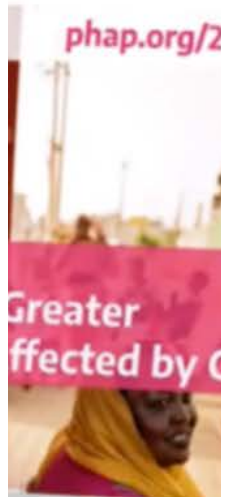
In 2022, CHS Alliance took up leadership of the power and culture theme at Humanitarian Networks Partnership Weeks. We worked with members and those working on innovations in accountability to organise and participate in multiple sessions over the course of the event, including sessions focusing on the benefits of CHS verification for donor due diligence and how effective data collection and analysis can strengthen accountability to affected populations.

CHS Exchange 2022

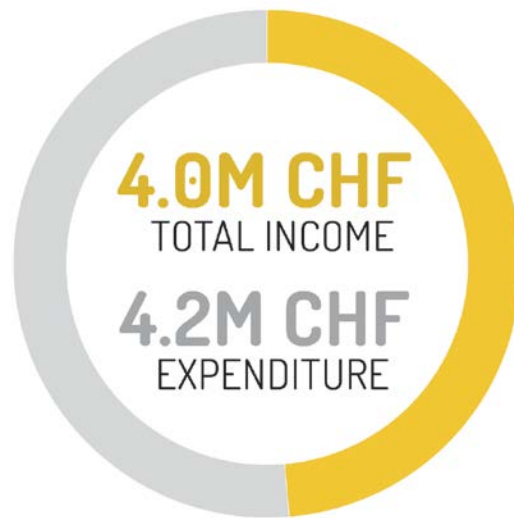
The 2022 CHS Exchange brought the global community together online to generate ideas on how the CHS can help drive a more accountable aid system, one that delivers on our commitments to people affected by crisis. Nearly 1,000 accountability aficionados from 90 countries registered for this event, which opened with the launch of the Humanitarian Accountability Report 2022. Participants joined interactive sessions to have their say on the future of the CHS, were welcomed to a simulation that demonstrated what a whole-of-organisation approach to accountability looks like and got people working together to generate ideas for greater collective accountability.

Watch all the sessions of the CHS Exchange 2022

CHS Alliance Members' Complaint Mechanism: *Verification data continues to show that the sector needs to do more to meet Commitment 5 – relating to complaints being welcomed and addressed. The Alliance takes this Commitment seriously. In 2022, the CHS Alliance Membership Complaint Mechanism received seven complaints, of which six were addressed and closed during the year. Our complaints mechanism is available [online](#).*



2022 Financials



For the full, audited CHS Alliance 2022 financial report, see our [2022 financial statements online](#).

Photo credits

In order of appearance: UN Women. Ayesha Hassan, Community World Service Asia and Rehema Kajungu, TPO Uganda at the CHS revision launch, CHS Alliance. UN Women/Ryan Brown. Jonne Huotari on Unsplash. ACT Alliance. Illustrations by Dedraw Studio.

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www.chsalliance.org | info@chsalliance.org

Geneva Office: Humanitarian Hub, La Voie-Creuse 16, 1202, Geneva, Switzerland.
T: +41 (0) 22 788 1641

London Office: Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB, UK.
T: +44 (0) 20 3445 5605

Design: Weaver Creative, www.weavercreative.co.nz