

REPORT of
An Interaction Program
On
Revised Edition of Sphere Hand Book-2011

20th July, 2011
Hotel Orchid, Tripureshwor
Kathmandu

DPNet Nepal Featuring Knowledge in Disaster

Interaction Program
on
SPHERE Hand Book 2011


Key Speakers From:

1. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
2. Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal (DPNet-Nepal)

Date: 20 July 2011
Venue: Hotel Orchid, Tripureshwor

Organized By: Disaster Preparedness Network - Nepal

Our Strategic Partners:



Organized by

Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal (DPNet-Nepal), Kathmandu, Nepal

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

CECI	Canadian Center for International Studies and Cooperation
DM	Disaster Management
DPNet	Disaster Preparedness Network
DP	Disaster Preparedness
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GA	Government Agency
GOs	Government Organizations
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Report of An Interaction Program on Revised Edition of Hand Book-2011

Introduction

1.1 Background

The Sphere Handbook has become one of the most widely recognized tools for improving humanitarian response. It is used by United Nations agencies, host governments, donor governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other actors involved in humanitarian response. The success of the Handbook reflects the fact that Sphere is responsive to the needs of people responding to and affected by disasters, so has proved to be a relevant and 'living' document.

In 2004, the first edition of the hand book was introduced in Nepal and DpNet-Nepal had worked for its translation and publication by adopting it in Nepalese context. Nepal is a developing country with minimum value of Human Development Index, hence, there is a high degree of risk even to manage and meet the minimum standard of the assistance at the time of emergencies. Hence, the application of SPHERE Standard has to be further intensified through creating better understanding about the SPHERE among the humanitarian actors. For that DpNet-Nepal has played a key role in Nepal. Since 2004, a number of technical changes have occurred and new cross-cutting issues have evolved in this sector. Additionally, the humanitarian environment has changed with the launch of the Humanitarian Reform process in 2005. This includes the cluster approach, and aims to enhance humanitarian response capacity, predictability, accountability and partnership.

The revision of SPHERE Standard (2011) was not designed to change the qualitative minimum standards or to overhaul the Handbook. Rather, it was meant to update the qualitative and quantitative indicators and guidance notes as needed, explore basic monitoring benchmarks and expected standards, enhance linkages between sectors and iron out inconsistencies, faults and important omissions from the 2004 edition. In this

context, the DpNet-Nepal has planned to organize an orientation session for providing better understanding of revised version of SPHERE Book targeting to humanitarian community including governmental, nongovernmental, professionals and UN agencies.

1.2 Rationale

An interaction program on "Revised Sphere Hand Book- 2011" organized by DpNet-Nepal updated and shared the partner organizations, humanitarian actors, DP/DR/DRR practitioners, policy makers, concerned professionals and other stakeholders the main features of the Sphere edition-2011. It also provided better understanding of revised version of Sphere Handbook as a number of emerging issues are now integrated in the edition-2011.

1.3 Objectives of the program

The main objectives of the program were:

- To describe the Sphere handbook's basic structure/key features.
- To highlight the changes being made with the new edition.
- To describe the processes and implication of sphere new edition in the humanitarian context of Nepal.
- Obtain inputs from the participants for having translated version of SPHERE Book.

1.4 Methodology

The session was conducted for around 3 hours.

- Presentation of Sphere Book
- Question and answer leading to interactive discussion
- Collection of feedbacks of stakeholders, experts, DP/DR practitioners and policy makers

- Publish a compiled shared learning bulletin maintaining the DpNet Web portal and email groups and shared among the partners

1.5 Participants

There were altogether 65 participants from 46 different organizations. They were representatives from Government agencies, UN agencies, International NGOs, local NGOs working in DP/DR/ DRR, Humanitarian Organizations, Professionals and individuals.

1.6 Date and Venue

An Interaction program was held at Hotel Orchid, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu from 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM on 20th July, 2011.

2. Proceedings/ Contents

2.1 Introduction Session

The program was started in an informal way with the quick introduction among the participants. **Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Treasurer of DpNet-Nepal** welcomed the key speakers of the event and representatives from GOs, the UN agencies, I/NGOs, civil societies, academia and individuals in the program. He highlighted the objectives and significance of the program. He stated that the program intended to share the information regarding the revised edition of Sphere Hand Book-2011 to the DRR stakeholders, practitioners, development activists and aid workers. He concluded his remarks extending warm welcome to all participants of the program.

The introduction session was facilitated by **Mr. Lubha Raj Neupane, Program Coordinator of DpNet-Nepal**.

2.2 Presentation Session

The presentation session was chaired and facilitated by **Mr. Pitambar Aryal, Acting Chairperson of DpNet-Nepal**.

Mr. Pete Garratt, Regional Disaster Management Coordinator, South Asia and the **key speaker** of the program presented a video. This 10-minute video presentation introduces the background and origin of Sphere process in the post-Rwanda crisis and that how the handbook evolved with a process of consultation and learning over a period of time. It also introduces the main features of the Sphere Handbook 2011 edition, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, within the context of the drive for greater quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector.

The presentation summarized that the Sphere Project was created by a group of humanitarian non-governmental organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Since its first trial edition in 1998, the Sphere Handbook has been translated into more than 40 languages, becoming the most widely known and internationally recognized set of standards for humanitarian response. The cornerstone of the Handbook is the Humanitarian Charter, which describes core principles that should govern humanitarian action and asserts the right of disaster-affected populations to life with dignity, protection and assistance.

After 10 minutes video presentation, **Mr. Pete Garratt** presented his paper on "**What's New in the Sphere Project.**" He explained the main philosophy of the Sphere and informed that significant changes have been made in the sphere book. He shared that the Humanitarian Charter was completely re-written, minimum standards are restructured and updated indicators and guidance notes, a stronger focus on protection was introduced. The four technical chapters are all to some extent re-structured. A number of emerging issues are now integrated and strengthened in Handbook. The impact of climate change, disaster risk reduction, early recovery of services and livelihoods, cash transfers, civil-military relations and psycho-social issues have been added as cross-cutting issues in this new edition.

He shared that the Humanitarian Charter has changed significantly. It is now easier to read, and structured more coherently around a number of common humanitarian principles that govern the actions of states, non state actors and indeed all members of society.

He clarified that this edition also introduces the principles – during armed conflict – of impartiality, the distinction between civilians and combatants, proportionality, precaution and impartial relief, as well as the principle of non-refoulement.

He shared that the new edition incorporates the humanitarian imperative role eg. the right to life with dignity, right to receive humanitarian assistance and right to protection and security commitments.

He elaborated that the 2011 edition incorporates a new chapter- Protection Principles- which considers the protection and safety of populations affected by disasters or conflict as an integral part of humanitarian response. He elaborated the four protection principles and protection could be preventive, responsive and remedial.

He shared the six core standards as they are based on best practices in the sector. Now the core standards incorporated are as: people centered humanitarian response, coordination and collaboration, assessment, analysis and design, performance, transparency and learning and aid worker performance. He shared that the Minimum Standards refer to four sets of life-saving activities: water and sanitation; food security and nutrition; shelter and non-food items; and health and they have all been significantly revised in the new edition-2011.

Finally, Mr. Pete Garratt concluded his presentation with emphasizing on key messages as affirming humanitarian principles and identity, right based people centered approach, enabling quality and accountability, a force for collaboration and coordination and professionalism.

Mr. Shyam Sundar Jnavaly, Vice-Chairperson, DPNet-Nepal presented his paper on **"Opportunities and Challenges in Adopting the Sphere Handbook 2011 in Nepalese Context."** He informed that we need changes in Sphere Handbook because the 2004 version was very vague in terms of understanding and a lot has changed in the last ten years in international law and standards. The presentation shared that the changes needed to focus more on autonomy and rights of affected people, importance of local and national response, prevention and mitigation, development to recovery.

He elaborated the overview of changes in 2011 edition of Sphere Handbook. It incorporated sequence and clarity of issues, defined roles of affected people, states, local/national and international humanitarian agencies.

He mentioned that the Humanitarian Agencies should understand humanitarian imperative, right/entitlement to protection and assistance and they have a commitment to minimum standards and accountability to those who seeks assistance. He shared some changes in structure of 2011 edition. The new edition incorporates changes on role, beliefs, minimum standards into key actions and key indicators. He elaborated that the focus of changes are in disaster and conflict, beliefs, common principles, local, national and international agencies and international community.

He shared that there are challenges in understanding Sphere as Sphere, realizing the Sphere in local context and translating the Sphere principle in practice. Sphere is not a familiar tool yet because responders are not well informed about the Sphere Standards and different needs of different vulnerable group during disaster. He highlighted the scope and potentials of Sphere. It is a right tool for People Centered Rights Based DRR and its principles and standards could be integrated for regular development activities. It has a high potentiality in realizing human security.

He concluded his presentation suggesting for translating of Sphere 2011 in Nepali so it could be easy to understand what is sphere for local people. Similarly, he emphasized on the trainings and capacity buildings at all level about Sphere Handbook and informed the promoters of Sphere in local and international level.

2.3 Open Discussion

With the presentation session, the discussion was opened for the participants for interaction suggestion and way forward.

Mr. Keshava Koirala from CECI put his concern that the assessment needs to be undertaken before to go for translation and for the adoption of the sphere into Nepali context. Mr. Nabin Pradhan from Plan Nepal has emphasized for the assessment of the

implementation and its impact to the concerned community. Mr. Rabindra Nath Jha from DWIDP recommended for contextualization of the sphere. According to him, the sphere should be adopted into Nepali context and need to be translated.

Mr. Ram Luitel from UN OCHA mentioned that there is a big challenge how to go ahead for the effective implementation. For that, language is a barrier so translation is essential and it could be disseminated through district level programs which are being organized these days frequently. He further explained that sphere is concerned to those who are working in the humanitarian sector in saving the life of people. Ms. Mausami Shrestha from Practical Action stated that how could we integrate Sphere principles into university education curriculum.

Ms. Rita Dhakal from UN OCHA said that the standards are different according to the country in practical so how could we adopt the standard principles of Sphere. For that we need to revisit the sphere how it is used in other context. Ms. Sunita Sharma from Oxfam raised her query that though sphere guidelines are importance, it is difficult to distinguish the category of disaster and implement it accordingly.

Mr. Murari Pokhrel suggested that we need to translate the Sphere into Nepali context but should follow the international standards. Beside that we need to coordinate with other stakeholders before translating it.

Similarly Ms. Anu Poudyal from UNICEF put her query that the quality of water sanitation and hygiene shouldn't be differentiated in emergency and in normal situation. Ms. Victoria Bannon emphasized that the sphere should be used in contingency planning by different clusters. All the cluster organization should be familiar about how standards are designed and how it is applicable in the context of Nepal.

Debriefing the presentation Mr. Shyam Sundar Jnavaly, Vice chairperson of DpNet-Nepal shared that DpNet-Nepal initiated the translation of Sphere in 2005 in Nepali context and more than 500 people were trained about sphere in Nepal.

3. Way forward/ Conclusion/ Closing

With the discussion among the participants, following conclusions were drawn up for the sphere introduction in Nepal.

- Need to be translated and the international standards should be followed before translating it.
- Coordination and timely sharing with other stakeholders in the process of translation is necessary.
- Mass sensitization is needed among stakeholders about Sphere.
- It needs to be contextualized.
- DRMPs and DDPPs, DDCPs, DDRMPs should integrate the minimum standards of sphere.
- Trained resources should be mobilized during emergencies to maintain the minimum standard of sphere from governmental and non-governmental level.
- Different kinds of handbook should be developed making them relevant to the community
- Need to develop in wide range of activities for the introduction of the sphere so DPNet-Nepal will translate, advocate and for coordinate GA, communities and other stakeholders for it.

Finally, **Mr. Pitambar Aryal, chair** of the program extended vote of thanks to all the participants and speakers of the program. He appreciated the active participation of the various organizations and also acknowledged the cooperation and efforts of IFRC to make the program successful. He expressed that the program is an opportunity for all of us to gain updated information on revised edition of Sphere Handbook-2011 and for bringing all the partners/ stakeholders on a common platform to enhance collaboration and coordination. He emphasized that standards are standards we should maintain but we need to translate and develop in wide range of activities. Hence DPNet-Nepal will initiate further discussion with its partners/ organizations for the translation of Revised Edition of Sphere Handbook-2011 in Nepali language.