

Launch of the Sphere Handbook 2018

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Organized by: Sphere Community Bangladesh
11 March 2019, BRAC Center Inn, Mohakhali, Dhaka.



1. Introduction

Sphere project's flagship publication, the Sphere handbook, is the oldest initiative in the field of humanitarian standards. It has been field tested and updated a number of times and recently in 2018. Ms. Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere came to Bangladesh by the invitation of IoM to launch Sphere handbook 2018 at Cox's Bazar on 10 March 2019. COAST Trust and BRAC, along with Sphere Community of Bangladesh (SCB) also organized a launching program with her in the capital.

2. Objectives

- a) To introduce the new version of handbook, especially the differences and additions.
- b) To share the underlying issues with Ms. Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere.
- c) To interact with each other and discuss primary ideas on how to multiply the standards and the accountability in the humanitarian sector.

3. The launching



Mr. Moyeen Ahmed, BRAC and also the focal person of Sphere Community in Bangladesh;

He welcomed the guests and participants of the Sphere

Handbook 2018 launching program. He expressed his sincere thanks to the SCB member and the Executive Director Ms. Christine Knudsen for responding and allocating time for this launching

program. Later he handed over the microphone to the moderator to continue the sessions.



Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, the Executive Director of COAST Trust and also the moderator of this program;

He expressed his sincere gratitude to the guests and the participants

for attending the program in such a short notice to make the event successful. "We will learn from Ms. Christine Knudsen the difference between the new and the old of Sphere handbook and how we can multiply the standards of this handbook in our emergency response in Bangladesh", he said. It is the opportunity for us, the SCB members, as Christine is here today and we learn and ask questions to her about emergency response, standards, accountability and community engagement in emergency response, he added. Later the guests and participants introduced each other.



Ms. Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere;

In her presentation, she shared what's new in the Sphere handbook, 20 years of its journey and development, the consultation

process, frontline workers experience worldwide, global engagement and contribution of global leaders in updating the handbook 2018. She said, humanitarian response is a challenge in the changing world. The actors who are using this handbook could contribute more in the humanitarian response by taking appropriate actions. Dignity, right to dignity, meaningful participation, community engagement, accountability, code of conduct, etc. are in the Sphere handbook. It will help us understand how to use this handbook.

She said new standards have also been developed, informed by recent practice and learning, such as WASH and healthcare settings in disease outbreaks, security of tenure in shelter and settlement completely restructured, and palliative care in health. Different ways to deliver or enable assistance, including cash-based assistance, market support, technical assistance, etc. are also integrated into the Handbook.

After her presentation, she depicted the audience a short video clip on "What is new in the Sphere Handbook 2018". Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01PHMGrmpWE>.

Learning from the video clip: The major leaning from the video are: in the middle of a crisis, how could one help other around him/herself? To not just survive but to thrive with dignity. How could one know if s/he is doing the right thing at the right time? Sphere handbook will give us the right answers of those questions—based on needs without discrimination. The handbook recognizes that the people have the right to assistance, to life with dignity, to protection and security and to fully participate in the discussions related to their recovery. This handbook translates this principles and rights into practice by setting some minimum standards and guides us for their sustainable recovery.

She also shared the audience that new online courses are available in the website. Whoever in the humanitarian action, can learn and become a Sphere champion while responding to the people affected by crisis and disaster that you serve. She also informed that Sphere is on the process to get online live comments from the practitioners worldwide in 2019 to enrich the handbook.

4. Open discussions and Q&A



Mr. Francies Atul Sarker, Executive Director, Caritas and panel member of this program;

We could ensure multiplication of this handbook standards through building capacity of our local people and through ensuring localization process. We, Caritas, however, took the standards of this handbook seriously in implementing our programs, especially on the protection issues and in strengthening our accountability system.



Mr. Khodadad Hossain Sarker, Advisor-Resilience of NIRAPOD and panel member of this program;

Development organizations are practicing humanitarian standers while responding to the people affected by crisis or disaster. He, however, underscored the need of implementing the standards by the government, especially by the ministry of disaster management and relief.



Mr. Golam M Billah, Islamic Relief; This is the time to look back on how far we achieved in maintaining standards while implementing humanitarian response programs in

Bangladesh. This will help us to get an overview of our progress and guide us on what new needs to be done in emergency response.



Mr. Nayeem Gowhar Wahra, Disaster Forum and panel member of this program;

Yes, initiatives and assistances are good but sometimes we should say no to the assistance if that are not suitable for people affected by crisis or disaster. Engagement of community members and actors are also important. We need to document what is working well and what is not, especially in Rohingya response—so that we can learn from the practical experiences and share with us. The challenge is to take the handbook to the people and new generation. There are some small Bangla documents in Disaster Forum’s website in this regard and that might be helpful for the practitioners, he informed.



Mr. A M Nasir Uddin, ActionAid Bangladesh;

In the context of humanitarian response, accountability and community engagement, what we have maximised and what we could do more in next and how Sphere community in Bangladesh can contribute—these are the biggest challenges. We need to make the handbook available for all and inclusive. To do so, we need to produce the handbook in brail method and audio-visual version to include everyone.



Mr. AKM Jashim Uddin, ADAB and panel member of this program;

ADAB is a country-wide network of local and national NGOs. We can distribute this handbook to all of our members so that they can learn and practice. Bangla version and a short form of this handbook will help practitioners and we request, someone should take that responsibility. Capacity building of officials, youths and stakeholders needed to maintain the standard. He also underscored monitoring and strong coordination among practitioners in humanitarian response.



Mr. Rafiqul Islam, Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) and panel member of this program;

We could aware the handbook and the standards to our FNB members so that they can learn and replace it in their disaster response programs. We could even organize orientations and workshops with

our FNB members in district and Upazilla levels. Training could be organized for our committees, if needed.



Mr. Bijoy K. Nath, Concern Worldwide;

The first launching of this handbook held in Cox'sbazar and the second launching is in the capital with the national and international Sphere community members. He, however, underlined the third launching at the ministry of disaster management and relief. Corporate organizations also should be brought under these standards, he added. Many donors do not use these type of humanitarian standards, we should take initiatives to encourage them.



Ms. Badrun Nahar, Dhaka Ahsania Mission;

We have long been engagement in humanitarian response and we follow the humanitarian standards while responding. In our experience, we found that besides community engagement, youth engagement and their contribution could bring more fruitful result. So, we need to focus on youth engagement in responding humanitarian crisis.



Mr. Tanjir Hossain, ActionAid Bangladesh;

Is it possible to work with the government on this issue? He asked a question. It is not just the Sphere, we, the practitioner, should communicate the government, donor and other organizations so that they can understand and practice these standards in humanitarian response.



Dulon Gomes, World Vision;

We should give priority in implementing this handbook in our emergency response programs. Training is needed for that purpose. We should also advocate for adapting this standards/handbook as a course in the university programs, particularly in the disaster management and climate change related departments. The Sphere Community Bangladesh needs to be more vibrant in Bangladesh, he added.



Ms. Mehbuba Yasmin, Oxfam;

To better understand and to better respond, Bangla version is important. Besides our regular practitioners, we

also need to engage those who might need to use these standards—like political leaders, youth, etc. It will help us to make the standards inclusive more while responding people affected in crisis.

Mr. Suman Ahsanul Islam, Humanitarian Leadership Academy, BRAC;



It needs to contextualize in Bangladesh so that we can learn and implement program according to the handbook standards. He requested Christine Knudsen to support Sphere Community Bangladesh (SCB) more from Geneva so that the SCB can perform well. He also urged to strengthen our capacity for ensuring localization process. He also hoped that we can add value more if all those happen soon.



Mr. Sajedul Hasan, Director of the Humanitarian Response Program of BRAC and panel member of this program;

A number of participants of this program underscored the need of Bangla translation of the handbook, we, the SCB, can consider it to do so, and if it happens, we can use this Sphere Bangla handbook through KAYA platform so that we can reach out many. We can train our BRAC colleagues, especially who are engaged in the Rohingya response program, so that they can ensure more accountability in implementing emergency response programs. We also have a plan to orient about the standards to the Camp in Charge (CiC) in Cox'sbazar. In the context of localization of NGOs, BRAC contemplating implementation of programs with the local partners to work with and response together.



Mr. Iqbal Uddin, COAST Trust;

The protection principles and the humanitarian standers are excellent but the handbook is big in volume and would be difficult for humanitarian practitioners at local level to understand, memorize and deliver accordingly as described in the handbook. Is it possible to get a shorter version of that handbook? Which will be easy, readable and understandable for the field level practitioners.

5. Conclusion

While the discussion was completed, the moderator requested the participants to sign the Grand Bargain and Charter4Change. He also

requested to invite other NGOs to be a new member of the Sphere community in Bangladesh. Then he requested Christine Knudsen to give her final comments over the discussions went on.

Christine said, you proposed Sphere Bangla version, it is okay but the initiative would come from you, the SCB. Short form or popular version of Sphere handbook can be derived by you. The handbook is here and to connect new organization, we need to work on it.

While replying to the recommendation on publishing brail version of this handbook, she said we do not have a plan right now on that. In doing advocacy at national and local level, she said, the US and the European organizations showed very

eagerness of that handbook to adopt and lot of discussions will take place in the international context Government engagement will add a lot of value in our endeavor, we need to advocate on that. About online discussions and learning, she said we have activity-wise learning materials and modules online to facilitate training. In her concluding remarks she said, while practicing the handbook, we can evaluate us, we can have reflection and can encourage us to implement a better humanitarian program when needed.

Report prepared by:

*Md. Iqbal Uddin
Assistant Director
COAST Trust*

Annex: 1
Outline:

Draft	
Title of the seminar	Launch of the Sphere Handbook 2018
Organized by	Sphere Community Bangladesh (SCB) with the support from BRAC and COAST Trust
Date, time and venue	11 March 18h30 to 21h30, 18h30 to 20h30 seminar and 20h30 to 21h30 dinner, BRAC Center Inn, 1 st floor, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka.
Participants	Humanitarian officials of local, national and international NGOs, CSOs, Network leaders in Bangladesh, total number 50-60.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. To introduce the new version of handbook, especially the differences and additions. II. To share the issue with Ms. Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere. III. To interact with each other and discuss primary ideas on how to multiply the standards and the accountability in the sector.
Welcome speech by	Mr. Moyeen Ahmed form BRAC, Focal Person, Sphere community in Bangladesh.
Moderated by	Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Executive Director, COAST Trust.
Chief Guest	Ms. Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere.
Honorable panel members	<p>Mr. Zia Chowdhury, Country Director, CARE</p> <p>Mr. Rafiqul Islam, Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh</p> <p>Mr. Sajedul Hasan, Director, Humanitarian Program, BRAC</p> <p>Mr. Francies Atul Sarker, Executive Director, Caritas</p> <p>Mr. Nayeem Gowhar Warha, Disaster Forum</p> <p>Mr. Khodadad Hossain Sarker, Advisor-Resilience/Mr. Mita, NIRAPOD</p> <p>Mr. AKM Jashim Uddin, ADAB</p>
Methodology	<p>In first stage, there will be short welcome speech form Mr. Moyeen and he will invite the moderator and the panel members in the podium.</p> <p>In second stage, the moderator will take the floor and initiate the flow of the seminar.</p> <p>In third stage, Ms. Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere will be invited to give a brief on new addition of Sphere handbook for around 15 minutes.</p> <p>Then in fourth stage, the moderator will start inviting one by one the panel members, and in between he will also invite participants form the floor.</p> <p>He will request the panel members should be limited in 120 to 180 seconds and the participants form the floor should be for 60 to 90 seconds. Especially he will request them for expressing commitment on multiplication of the standard.</p> <p>Before summery and conclusion, the moderator will invite Ms Christine Knudsen, the Executive Director of Sphere for her last reflection.</p>
Communication	Mostafa Kamal Akanda, Assistant Director, COAST, +8801711529792
Press release/ short report	Will be available in www.coastbd.net

Annex: 2

Honourable guests and honourable participants list:

Sl. no	Name	Organization
1	Anamul Haque	HelpAge International
2	Francies Atul Sarkar	Caritas
3	Md. Rafiqul Islam	FNB
4	A M Nasir Uddin	ActionAid Bangladesh
5	Hasina Mita	NIRAPAD
6	Bijoy K. Nath	Concern Worldwide
7	Mizanur Ragman	Habitat for International
8	Mohammad Ali	Oxfam
9	Ratan Biswas	BRAC
10	Badrun Nahar	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
11	Suman Ahsanul Islam	Humanitarian Leadership Academy
12	Mathew Mondol	Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh
13	Kazi Munir Mosarof	NGO Forum for Public Health
14	Prodip K. Das	BRAC
15	Kandoker Towhid	BRAC Humanitarian Program
16	Golam M Billah	Islamic Relief
17	Farid Ahmed Sagor	Friendship
18	Sayed Nesar Ahmed	UPHCSDP-II LGD(IC)
19	AKM Jashim Uddin	ADAB
20	Hasibul Mannan	BRAC International
21	Khodadad Hossain Sarker	NIRAPAD
22	Dulon Gomes	World Vision
23	Sanat K. Bhowmik	COAST Trust
24	Bayezid	BRAC
25	Mehbuba Yasmin	Oxfam
26	Nayeem Gowhar Warha	Disaster Forum
27	Sanjida Afrin	BRAC
28	Rejaul Karim	BRAC
29	Iqbal Uddin	COAST Trust
30	Mostafa Kamal	CRS
31	Tanjir Hossain	ActionAid
32	Awfam Ahsanul	BRAC
33	Vincent Chang	BRAC University