
SPHERE TRAINING OF TRAINERS BANGKOK, THAILAND

29 Sep – 3 Oct 2023



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Contents

1.	BACKGROUND AND GOAL.....	2
2.	PRE-TOT: PLANNING AND PREPARATION	2
2.1	Objectives and Agenda.....	2
2.2	Training and Management Team.....	3
2.3	Coordination Meetings	4
2.4	Selection of Participants.....	4
2.5	Welcome Webinar.....	4
2.6	Learning Needs Assessment -.....	4
3.	DURING TOT	5
3.1	Highlights of Joint Session	6
3.2	Highlights of Sphere Refresher and Trainer Competencies Sessions.....	6
3.3	Sphere Handbook Activity Card	8
3.4	Highlights of Participant-Led Sessions.....	8
3.5	Sphere Advocacy Session	8
4.	LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9
5.	APPENDICES.....	10
	Appendix 1: Final Sphere ToT Agenda.....	10
	Appendix 2: List of Participants (not to be published, for internal use only).....	11
	Appendix 3: Learning Needs Assessment Training Evaluation Results	12

1. Background and Goal

It is critical that aid workers deliver quality humanitarian response. In an ever-changing and complex operating context, it is often a challenge for aid workers to know when and how to apply standards that enable them to deliver quality assistance, and to be accountable to the communities they serve. [The Sphere Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response](#) and the [Core Humanitarian Standard](#) sets standards for humanitarian action and promotes quality and accountability. The effective implementation of this initiative requires a commitment to build institutional and individual capacity of those engaged in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a response to disasters or conflicts. The aid sector has come to realize that developing capacities and institutional knowledge is key to being an accountable organization.

The Sphere ToT was organised by Community World Service Asia (CWSA) in collaboration with the Sphere Secretariat. CWSA is a humanitarian and development organisation and a member of Sphere and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance. CWSA is the Regional Focal Point for the Asian Disaster Risk Reduction Network's (ADRRN) Quality and Accountability Hub, Sphere Country Focal Point in Pakistan and the Regional Partner in Asia for Sphere.

This Sphere Training of Trainers (ToT) aimed to develop humanitarian professionals' skills in training, promoting and applying Sphere Minimum Humanitarian Standards. The goal is to increase humanitarian professionals' efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the areas of the greatest needs in the humanitarian context by using Sphere Standards and CHS.

This report is a summary of the content of the Sphere Training of Trainers (ToT) held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. It includes an overview of the course content, with feedback from the participants and trainers. The agenda and list of participants are attached as appendices. All the training material including material produced by participants in the participant-led sessions was made available to the participants.

2. Pre-ToT: Planning and Preparation

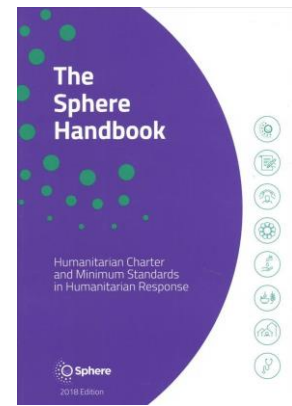
The planning and preparation of the Sphere ToT began approximately six months before the actual ToT.

2.1 Objectives and Agenda

The Sphere ToT was organized in tandem with the CHS Revision Workshop which took place one day before the ToT. All Sphere ToT participants attended the revision workshop. In addition, a Safeguarding workshop took place alongside the Sphere ToT. Three joint sessions for participants of ToT and Safeguarding to benefit from both the workshops were planned. The joint sessions were finalized when the trainers met in Bangkok just before the workshop. See Agenda in Appendix 1.

The five-day Sphere ToT was developed to strengthen organizations and individual capacity to:

- Explore how to apply the Sphere Handbook 2018 as a tool for disaster response
- Explore use of additional tools and methods to enhance delivery of Sphere awareness sessions and trainings
- Enable participants to develop their own briefing and training material to suit their needs
- Enhance understanding on Sphere and CHS application in the organization including the challenges of implementation
- Create a peer support system to enable participants continue their learning and sharing journey



2.2 Training and Management Team

The team of trainers and CWSA management team complemented each other to ensure smooth delivery and running of the ToT.

- *Lead Trainer:*

Uma Narayanan specializes in human resources, organisational development and accountability in the humanitarian sector. Her background is in Organisational and Systems Development and she worked as an Organisation Development and Human Resources practitioner for more than a decade. She is committed to quality and accountability and is a Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standard trainer and advisor. As a facilitator, Uma has organised, over 200 workshops and training sessions both locally and internationally. Uma is also an experienced Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Investigator and accredited Associate Executive Coach.

- *Co-Trainers:*

Nazanin Kazemi has been the Country Director of International Consortium for Refugees in Iran (ICRI) for 25 years and in that capacity has facilitated the establishment of numerous INGOs in Iran. ICRI has also been a Sphere Focal Point for over 20 years and has successfully translated 3 editions of the Sphere Handbook into Farsi. Nazanin has co-facilitated many Sphere trainings and continues to advocate for humanitarian standards in Iran.

Tristan Hale is Sphere's Communications and Learning Services Manager. Tristan joined Sphere in 2017 as Learning and Training Manager and started his new role in 2021. Prior to joining Sphere, he held various roles in the finance sector. He also serves as a board member of Lake Aid, an association supporting displaced children and families in Annecy (France). Tristan holds a degree in Computer Science from the University of Bath (United Kingdom). He speaks English and French. His expertise is in the areas of adult learning, finance and computing. He has conducted numerous Sphere trainings, presentations and webinars.

- *CWSA Management Team*

Samina Jamshed is a Senior Programme Officer with CWSA. Her role was to represent CWSA and ensure participants and trainers are supported to run a smooth ToT. This was done in a sterling manner by Samina and her team members Zunaira Shams and Zainab Mir.

2.3 Coordination Meetings

A series of coordination meetings were held in preparation of the Sphere ToT:

- Meetings between Lead Trainer and CWSA Management Team
- Meeting between Trainers on content of the ToT
- Meeting between CWSA and Sphere Secretariat on the roles and responsibilities
- Meeting between Lead Trainers of Sphere ToT and Safeguarding Workshop
- Meeting between Lead Trainer and Trainer of a recent Sphere ToT in Ukraine

The coordination meetings allowed a clear division of roles and responsibilities and clarification of expectations among those who were directly and indirectly involved in the Sphere ToT.

2.4 Selection of Participants

A total of 84 applications were received from 14 countries for the Sphere ToT. All applicants provided their motivation and future intent upon completion of the ToT. Selection was done progressively to avoid last minute confirmation and lead time for processing the visas. A total of 26 participants were confirmed, however two participants were unable to attend for failing to obtain visa.

2.5 Welcome Webinar

A virtual welcome webinar (45 minutes) was conducted by the Lead Trainer, three weeks before the Sphere ToT. The main aim of the welcome webinar was to introduce the agenda and what is expected of the participants, introduce the participants and their expectations to one other. The welcome webinar was attended by 90% of the participants. Link to the welcome webinar was shared to those who were unable to attend. The welcome webinar set the tone for the Sphere ToT and assured participants of the support they will receive to successfully complete the ToT.

2.6 Learning Needs Assessment -

In addition to the application process, participants were asked to respond to a few questions to assess their learning needs. See attached the results of the learning needs assessment (Appendix x: Learning Needs Assessment).

In summary, 10% of the participants were new to Sphere (not new to CHS) and have not had the opportunity to rigorously refer to the Sphere Handbook. Of those who have had prior Sphere trainings, 40% have not referred to the Sphere Handbook and the Sphere website for resources in recent times. At least 30% of the participants have conducted Sphere trainings or briefings in the past. Participants from Iran have not had the chance to refer to the 2018 version as it was not translated into Parsi and still relief on the 2011 version.

All participants were requested to complete either one of the following online trainings:

E- Learning link:

<https://spherestandards.org/online-courses>

- 1- How to be a Sphere Champion (60 minutes).
- 2- How to use the Sphere Handbook (60 – 90 minutes).
- 3- Sphere in Practice (8-20 hours).

Before the in-person Training of Trainers (ToT) session, initially, all 26 participants completed one online course within the specified deadline. However, it is noteworthy that prior to the in-person session, all participants diligently completed all three courses, showcasing their enthusiastic engagement and keen interest.

Certificate – completion rate was 100% for all 3 online courses before the in person ToT.

3. During ToT

This section presents the highlights of the Sphere ToT sessions. Day 1 comprised setting the foundation and covered aspects such as the history of Sphere and the foundational chapters. Day 2 focused on technical chapters while Day 3 focused on trainer's competencies. Day 4 and 5 were dedicated to participant-led session.

The training included a wide variety of methods, including presentations, participatory exercises, case studies, group discussions, role plays and films. As the aim of the course was to train trainers, all the participants planned and delivered a 45-minute session (in groups of three), which was filmed and made available for the participants at the end of the TOT.

The training was formally opened by Shama Mall who gave a brief welcome remark to the participants. Trainers and management team were introduced.

3.1 Highlights of Joint Session

The joint sessions were held on Day 1 and Day 5 of the Sphere ToT. A total of 54 participants from both workshops participated in the joint sessions. On Day 1, three joint sessions were held as following:

- a. *Introduction to Safeguarding.* Participants explored the basic concepts of safeguarding and protection.
- b. *Introduction to CHS.* Despite attending the CHS Revision workshop, many of the participants were still unfamiliar with CHS. Participants worked in group and presented the importance of each commitment and challenge of carrying out the key actions.
- c. *Humanitarian Standards Partnership (HSP)* led by participants and trainers from both the workshops. Participants were briefed by the Trainers on their role and aim of the session. 5 standards were presented in a world café format with an aim to identify and increase knowledge of the Humanitarian Standards Partnership.

Humanitarian Standards Partnership:

- The Sphere Handbook
- Minimum Standard for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS)
- Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS)
- Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS)
- Minimum Standards for Education – Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
- Minimum Standard for Market Analysis (MISMA)
- Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities
- Minimum Standard for Camp Management
- Standards for Supporting Crop-related Livelihoods in Emergencies (SEADS)
- Core Humanitarian Standard

On the last day, the joint session focused on sharing of experiences and key take-aways from both workshops. This was done country-wise and region-wise in a global share fare format.

3.2 Highlights of Sphere Refresher and Trainer Competencies Sessions

○ *Sphere Essentials*

The session focused on the presentation of history and the process of the formation of the Sphere Handbook for the participants to understand the rationale and the context in this, and the spirit in which the project came about.

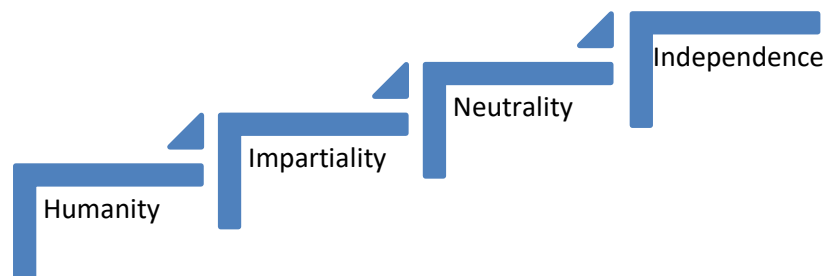
The trainer also discussed the timeline of events that impacted the world and the humanitarian sector. The logic of the handbook structure and the format of the content was explained. Cross-cutting issues and key phrases and terminology were covered as well as the concepts of standards key actions key indicators and guidance notes

○ *Humanitarian Principles, Code of Conduct and Humanitarian Charter*

Sphere philosophy and the emphasis of the legal foundation and beliefs that inform the CoC and the charter was presented in a lecture form. The importance and use of the CoC till this

day was also discussed in addition to the universality of the charter and the beliefs, roles and responsibilities.

Participants found the Humanitarian Charter session the most challenging to present in a training. This session was revisited during the Sphere Card Activity which was conducted by on Day 3.



- *Protection Principles*

This was a popular and highly relevant session given the context participants were currently operating in, such as Myanmar, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc. The session reviewed the four principles in a fashion parade where each 'model' paraded a protection principle. Key messages of each principle were shared by the 'model'. This was followed by application of protection principles and implications when violated. The need of advocacy to gain more access was one commonly agreed upon action points.

- *Sphere Technical Chapters*

Several methods were used to refresh participants knowledge on the Sphere technical chapters. Trainers provided a short introduction to the foundation chapters and the important aspects of the technical chapters in general, their overlapping nature and the basics of the importance of WASH, Food Security and Nutrition, Shelter and Settlement, Health Services.

Participants were provided with a scenario to explore the WASH chapter, where there were rumours of an outbreak at the hotel. They were asked to assess the hotel premises using the WASH standards.

After that, they underwent a food ration tactile/visualisation activity to appreciate the Food Security chapter. On a separate table, these items were made available: sugar, rice, lentils, cooking oil, flour, salt, pasta. Participants were asked to measure items that would make up 2100kcal as stated in the Sphere indicators. They found the exercise of measuring useful and could relate to the food distribution processes that many have participated or witnessed in their projects. 2100kcal is seen as very minimal and the exercise allowed them to imagine what this means for the affected population.

One of the key considerations in this exercise was the importance of understanding the context when preparing the food distribution. Participants also reflected on the importance of CHS and protection principles during food relief.

The introduction to the Shelter chapter covered the importance of the chapter and its interconnected nature and the different settings in which shelters develop a different meaning. Trainer provided three groups with the demographics of a family, and they were simply asked to design a shelter using any of the materials available in the room.

The methods and content for the technical chapters were well received on Day 2. Participants seemed to have met the objective of becoming familiar with how to use the book to gain the necessary information for their questions and tasks

3.3 Sphere Handbook Activity Card

Sphere Card Activity session was delivered the day before the participant-led session. The session was yet another attempt to show how Sphere sessions can be designed and delivered using cards. The session aimed for participants to learn new skill through designing and playtesting a new activity using the cards. Participants were presented with a set of Sphere Activity Cards at the end of the session which was highly appreciated by the participants.



It is expected that new activities created by ToT participants (which are critically acclaimed) should be captured and submitted to Sphere. The Activity Cards are in Beta phase with just 150 packs printed. The product could be altered for future print-runs and could be shipped with an instruction booklet (or instruction cards) including several activities.

3.4 Highlights of Participant-Led Sessions

The aim of the participant-led session was to enable participants to practise their skills as a Sphere trainer, including writing objectives and session plans. Constructive feedback was given by fellow participants and the trainers.

8 participant led session (group of 3) was delivered on Day 4 and 5. All groups kept to the time limit of 45 minutes, except for one group who went over time.

3.5 Sphere Advocacy Session

On the last day, participants were divided into 8 groups of three with particular consideration for those who spoke the same language. A role play consisting of three role players: advocate, target and observer were demonstrated using different advocacy messages. Each participant had the opportunity to play all three roles.

4. Limitations and Recommendations

The ToT experienced a few limitations; however, this was appropriately managed and did not significantly affect the overall quality of the ToT.

- **Participant Selection and Visa Application:** Selection of participants was done on a rolling basis instead of waiting for the final deadline of application. This was because visa application takes three months or more for countries like Afghanistan and Myanmar. There were more qualified candidates that applied just before the deadline and limited number of spaces did not allow participation of these candidates. Longer lead time for selection process could help to resolve this challenge.
- **Sphere Training Capacity and Follow Up:** Even though majority of the participants noted in their application having conducted trainings in Sphere, the knowledge and skill levels were not as high as expected and review of the basics of Sphere was still required. Requesting all participants to complete at least one online training was helpful to have a common base of knowledge. It is recommended that follow up support in the form of mentoring and webinars is provided to continue participants' learning journey and equip participants better for their future interventions. Additionally, participants completed an action plan, and this may be used as a basis for follow up and support.
- **Language Barrier:** Language barrier in English was one of the main barriers for learning, although this was managed by ensuring support was provided to those who needed extra assistance to understand the content. Peer support was also encouraged where participants were supporting those whose command of English was inadequate. For regional ToT where main medium is English, it is advisable to have a minimum command of English language to ensure learning experience of all the participants is high.
- **Full attendance and Certificate:** One participant fell ill during the ToT and was not able to fully participate whereas another participant missed half a day on the last day without any prior notice and reasons. This did not significantly affect the dynamic of the group as it was the last day. CWSA should have a clear requirement on providing certificate upon completion if full participation is required or 80-90% of attendance is accepted.
- **Joint Session:** Joint session was too huge to allow deep dive and learning. Having to handle more than 50 participants in a meaningful deep dive sessions was a challenge and attempts were made to have smaller group discussions during the joint sessions.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Final Sphere ToT Agenda

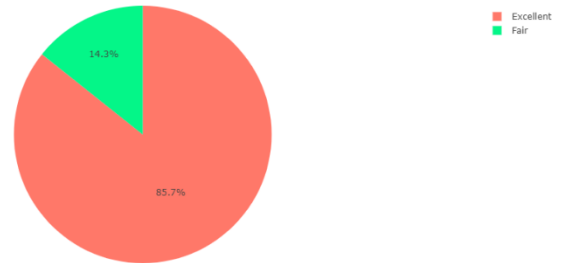
	Day 1 (Friday)	Day 2 (Saturday)	Day 3 (Sunday)	Day 4 (Monday)	Day 5 (Tuesday)
8.30 am	Welcome & Opening Getting to know each other.	Review	Review	Review	Participant-led Session
	Introduction to Sphere / Sphere Essentials	Protection Principles Technical Chapter 1: WASH	Sphere Handbook Activity	Participant-led session	
10.30 am	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee		Coffee
10.45 am	Joint session with Safeguarding Workshop Introduction to CHS Standard	Technical Chapter 2: Food Security & Nutrition	Training Cycle		Participant-led session
11.30 am	Introduction to Safeguarding		Principles of Adult Learning	Sphere Advocacy	
12.30 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.30 pm	Joint Session Introduction to Q&A Initiatives	Technical Chapter 3: Shelter & Settlement	Designing & Planning Training Training Methods, Roles & Competencies	Participant-led session	Experience-Sharing (Joint Session)
3.15 pm	Tea	Tea	Tea	Tea	Tea
3.30 pm	Humanitarian Principles Code of Conduct Humanitarian Charter	Technical Chapter 4: Health Services	Preparation for participant-led session	Participant-led session	How to enlist as Sphere Trainer Evaluation, Closure, Follow Up, Action Plan, Certificate
4.30 pm					
5.15-5.30	Recap & Daily Feedback	Recap & Daily Feedback	Recap & Daily Feedback	Ends at 5.00pm Dinner	

- Joint Sessions – Sphere ToT and Safeguarding Workshop participants
- Sphere Review & Refresh Sessions (participants are expected to be familiar with and have used Sphere)
- Sessions focus on competencies required of a Trainer
- Participants will deliver session

Appendix 3: Learning Needs Assessment Training Evaluation Results

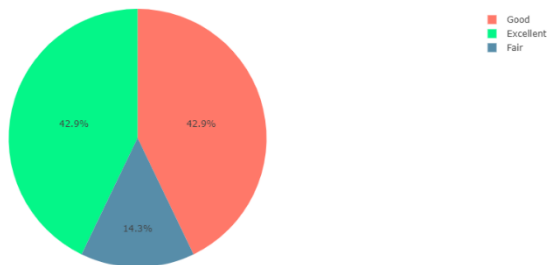
Q.1 Assessment of pre-workshop arrangements:

- I. Appropriateness of pre-workshop information (invitation, confirmation, etc.) through welcome webinar, emails and phone calls

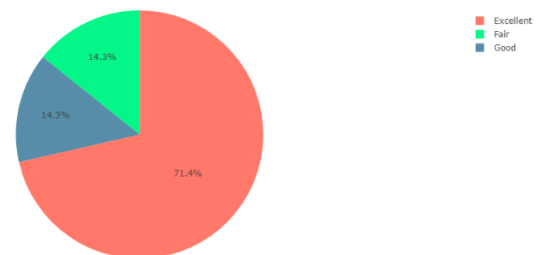


Q.2 Assessment of facilities provided:

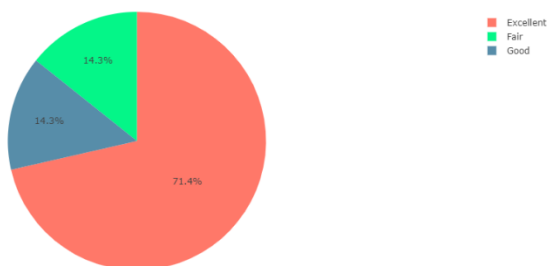
- I. Quality of Meals/Tea



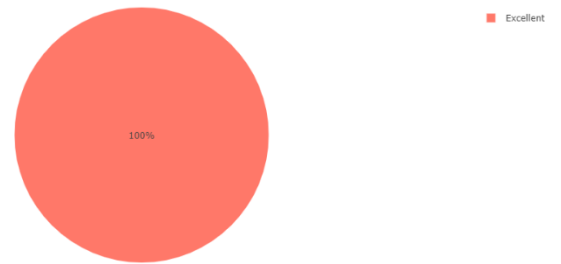
- II. Quality of Training Venue



- III. Quality of equipment used during the training

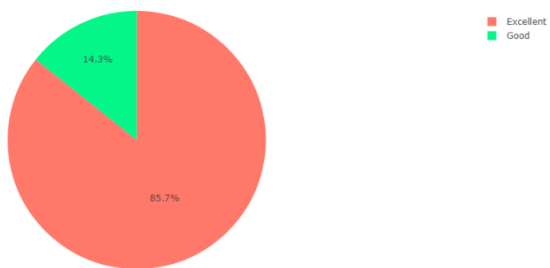


IV. Effectiveness of management team



Q.3 (A) Assessment of ToT Trainers (Uma Narayanan)

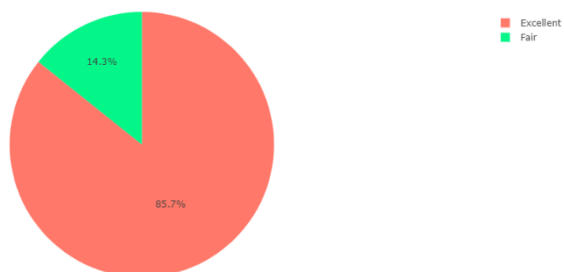
I. Trainer's knowledge on the subject matter



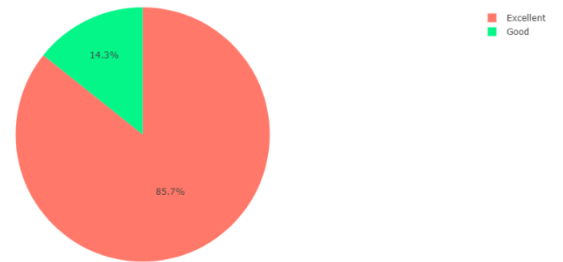
II. Trainer's ability to communicate concepts with clarity



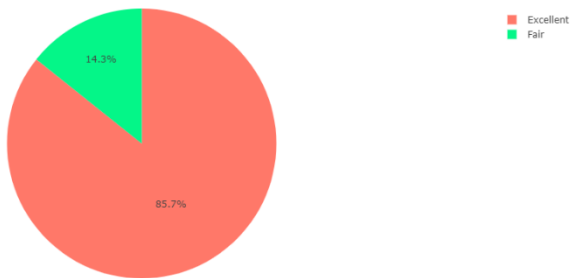
III. Trainer's skills to ensure participatory and interactive approach/group activities



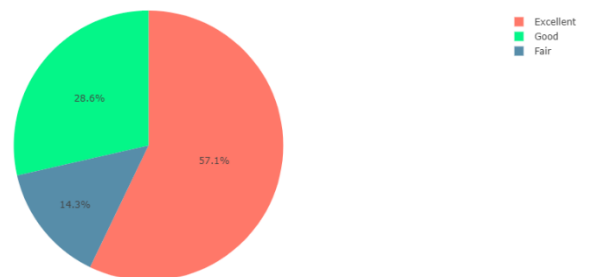
IV. Trainer's behavior



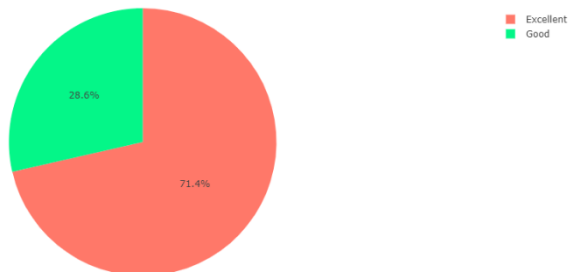
V. Quality of material (handouts etc.) used, in terms of relevance



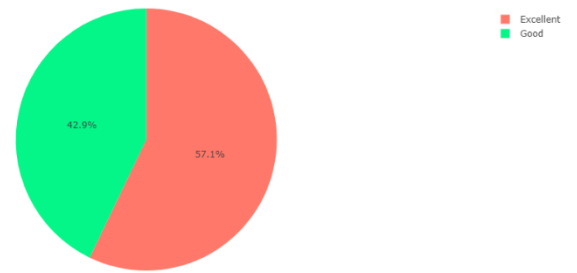
VI. Time allocation/ logical flow for different sessions of the workshop



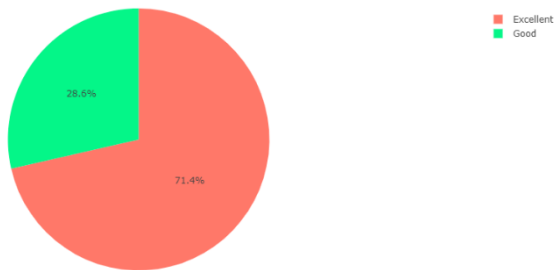
VII. Logical flow between the sessions



VIII. Level of group activities during the workshop

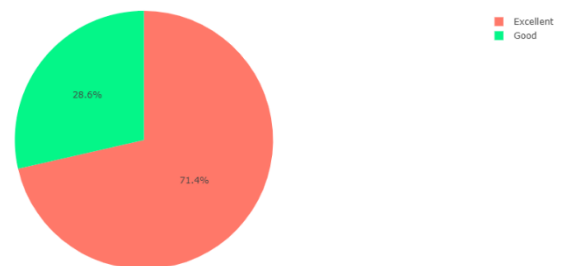


IX. Opportunity to raise concerns and discuss issues

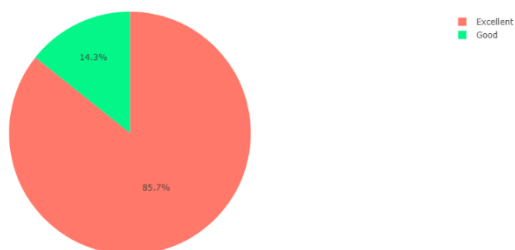


Q.3 (B) Assessment of Workshop Trainer (Tristan Hale)

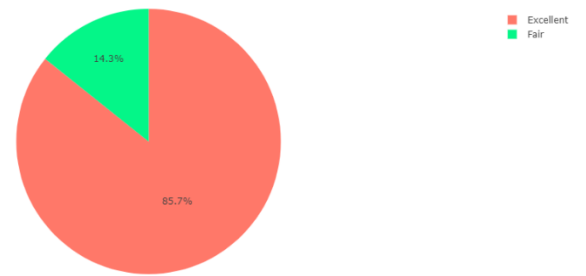
I. Trainer's knowledge on the subject matter



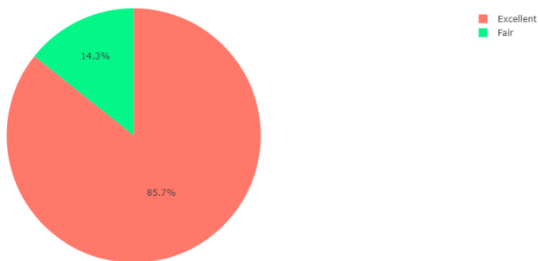
II. Trainer's ability to communicate concepts with clarity



III. Trainer's skills to ensure participatory and interactive approach/group activities



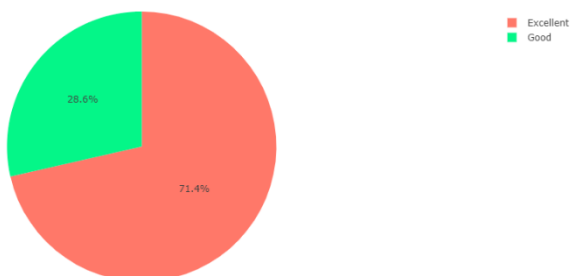
IV. Trainer's behavior



V. Quality of material (handouts etc.) used, in terms of relevance



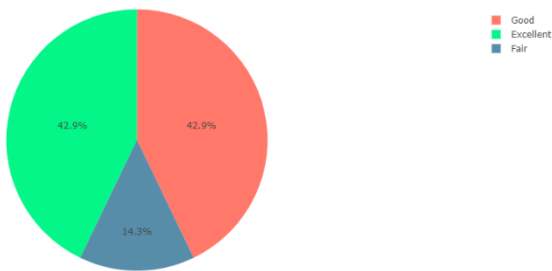
VI. Time allocation/ logical flow for different sessions of the workshop



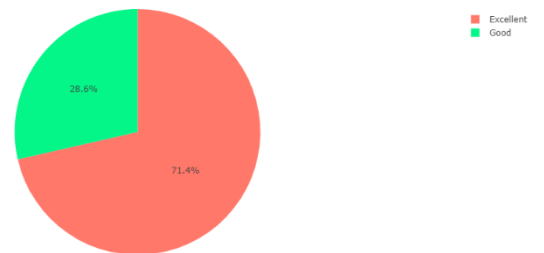
VII. Logical flow between the sessions



VIII. Level of group activities during the workshop

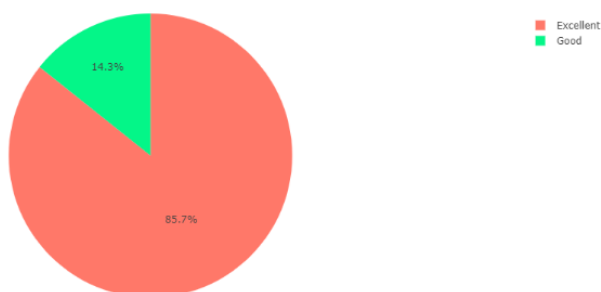


IX. Opportunity to raise concerns and discuss issues

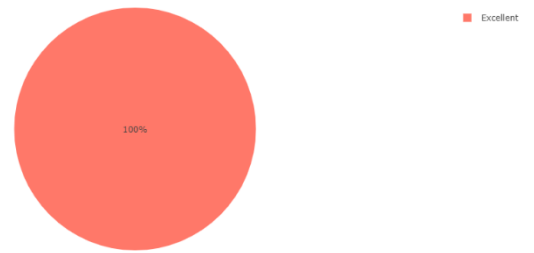


Q.3 (C) Assessment of ToT Trainer (Nazanin Kazemi)

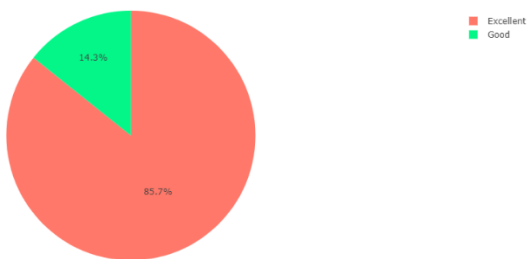
I. Trainer's knowledge on the subject matter



II. Trainer's ability to communicate concepts with clarity



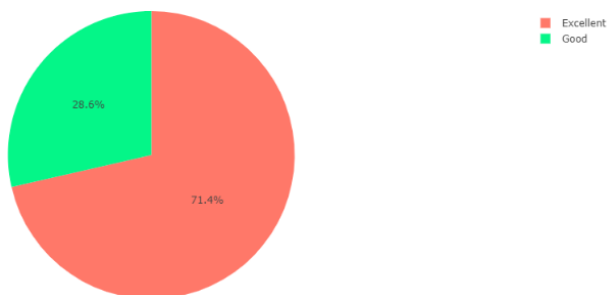
III. Trainer's skills to ensure participatory and interactive approach/group activities



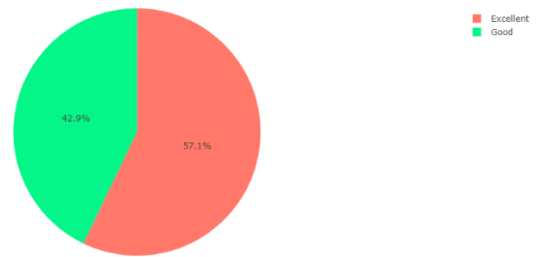
IV. Trainer's behavior



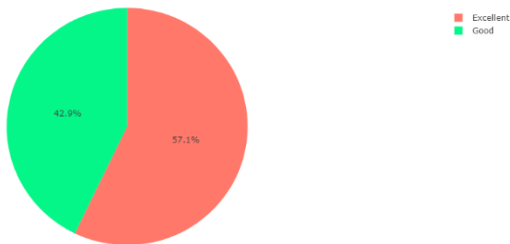
V. Quality of material (handouts etc.) used, in terms of relevance



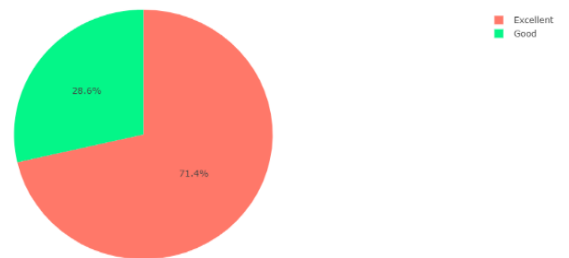
VI. Time allocation/ logical flow for different sessions of the workshop



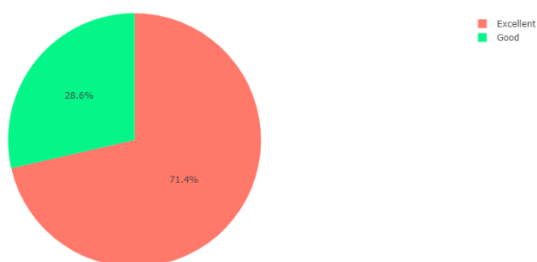
VII. Logical flow between the sessions



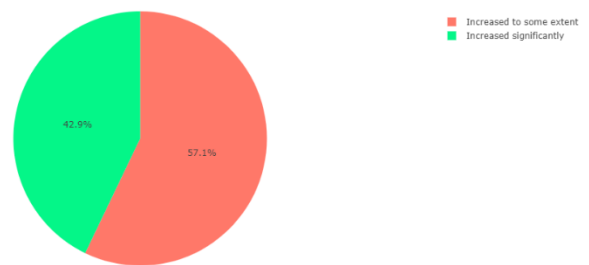
VIII. Level of group activities during the workshop



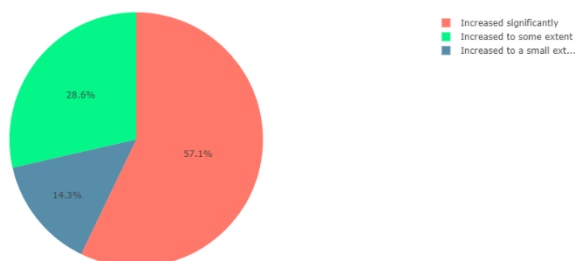
IX. Opportunity to raise concerns and discuss issues



Q4. (A) How would you rate your knowledge of the Sphere Standards, now that you've completed the training workshop?



Q4. (B) How would you rate your confidence level as a potential Sphere, now that you've completed the training workshop?



Q 5.A Which topic/discussion or learning of the ToT had the most impact on you?

- I. Develop my training modules was quite a challenge but brought out the best in me. It was an opportunity to give my colleagues the inspiration to push their boundaries. (1)
- II. Humanitarian principles, CHS, protection principal, MEAL (1)
- III. Participants led session (1)
- IV. Sphere is not a reference or a guide, but it is a movement, it is not only to enhance quality and maintain accountability, but it is about the rights of the people. I also liked how the facilitators let us familiarize ourselves with using the Sphere Handbook and the different training and learning techniques. (1)
- V. Technical Chapters (1)
- VI. The facilitators' creative use of different methodologies and tools in making the TOT learning much more effective and efficient made the most impact on me. (1)
- VII. variety of training methodology (1)

Q 5.B Which topic/discussion or learning of the ToT had the least impact on you?

- I. None of topics (1)
- II. None (1)
- III. None. All were impactful in their own context. (1)
- IV. Technical Chapters (1)
- V. Technical chapter (1)
- VI. Technical chapter of Sphere book (1)
- VII. Can't think of any... (1)

Q.6 List 3 key actions you will take in the next 6 months

- I. Preparation for Sphere Trainer local region -Advocate Organizational Management Team and Board for Sphere applying -Conduct Sphere Training to Staff and Volunteer -Established Sphere Training and Technical Sharing team organized by Myanmar Participants from this training (1)
- II. 1. Cascade all the learnings with my colleagues. 2. Integrate Sphere topic in the upcoming training with the DRRM volunteers. 3. Apply the Sphere principles and standards in the food distribution to the affected families of Typhoon Egay (Doksuri) at the end of this month. (1)
- III. Complete my notes and lesson learned of the workshop, Revise my training plan and hopefully contact the first training. (1)
- IV. In the next 6 months, I will share my learnings with my staff. We will continue to include Sphere Standards in our program, but now with much more intent and mindfulness. (1)
- V. Keep in touch with colleagues and expand network by contacting local focal point. (1)
- VI. Module develop, train or orient staff, ensure reflections in PP writing. (1)
- VII. Will do Sphere ToT (1)