



SPHERE STANDARDS AND TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) ON SPHERE MINIMUM STANDARDS

June 14th to 15th 2023 Toronto - Canada
October 10th to 13th 2023, Montreal-Canada

The Sphere Standards TOT was a remarkable, productive endeavor, enhancing participants' ability to improve humanitarian responses in Canada. The report reflects the enthusiasm and value that this training brought to all involved.

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1. Background

[The Humanitarian Response Network of Canada](#) (HRN) is a community of practice made of 42 Canadian Humanitarian Organizations. The HRN provides space to share learning and best practices, develop skills, communicate our work to the Canadian public coordinate our efforts when issues arise that need a collective voice. It seeks to share lessons learned with the view to strengthen the quality and efficiency of humanitarian action by creating a conversation around key humanitarian policy issues and practices and by providing dedicated capacity building opportunities. The HRN has identified Sphere training and Sphere training of trainers as one of the priorities for 2023 to meet the needs of the members.

HRN members have staff based in Canada, and some based overseas, who have not been acquainted to the Sphere standards, due to staffing changes. A regular Sphere training, possibly annually, would allow new staff to develop the basic understanding of Sphere standards. Also, a Sphere Training of Trainers, likely to a more limited number of people, will also HRN member to continue training internally their staffs based in Canada or overseas as required. And as the COVID-19 pandemic limited trainings and travels for almost two years, people previously trained as Sphere trainers, had limited opportunities to provide trainings so got limited training experience. The suggested training plan will include a quick assessment of HRN members Sphere training needs in the short and the long term, the provision of a basic Sphere training, followed by the provision of a Sphere Training of Trainers for interested individuals, and the coaching and supervision of the contribution of selected staffs of HRN members already trained in Sphere TOT.

In order to lead the Sphere training program, [HRN Canada](#) contracted [NSDation Consultancy Services](#).

About NSDation Consultancy Services

[NSDation](#), a Consultancy Services Company established in 2018 and registered in Turkey, collaborates with individuals, national and international organizations, and governments globally. The organization places a strong emphasis on respecting human dignity across all its activities. This principle is evident in its approach to team building within the company and its engagement with vulnerable communities.

NSDation leverages diverse technical expertise to work collectively and synergistically, aiming for higher-quality outcomes and meeting client expectations. The company specializes in developing and facilitating Sphere standards, quality assurance, and MEAL learning events. It contributes to sector-wide learning by establishing competencies, standards, and recognition systems while assisting organizations in capacity building. With the capacity to train thousands of aid workers annually, NSDation offers world-class in-person and remote learning programs.

The consultancy services extend to establishing and implementing Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems, conducting project evaluations (baseline studies, project/organizational medium-term evaluations/reviews, and end-term/impact evaluations/studies), and providing training to enhance the capabilities of MEAL practitioners within international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

2. Introduction

This report includes background, training program objectives, training details and methodology. It also highlighted the recommendations for future training programs. The program agendas are attached as annexes. Participants evaluation of both training events is provided in a separate report.

The training program was a collaborative effort between NSDation and HRN. NSDation took the lead in managing and delivering the training program under the guidance of Aya Yagan, a listed [Sphere Trainer](#) and the Technical Director at NSDation. Aya played a pivotal role in overseeing the program, coordinating with the facilitation team, providing mentoring and coaching, and supervising the delivery of the training.

On the other hand, HRN Canada was responsible for various logistical aspects of the training, including sending out invitations, booking the venue, and arranging training materials. Additionally, HRN nominated three co-facilitators from their network to support the training program. These co-facilitators included Dr. Abdel Monem Daymi, the Director of Special Programs at Islamic Relief Canada, Dr. Danielle Stodilka, PhD, CChem, and Diane Alalouf-Hall, Ph.D., who serves as the Director of PhiLab Quebec and is a Lecturer at UQAM and UdeM. This diverse team was skillfully coordinated by Patrice Charpentier, the HRN coordinator, who contributed to the training arrangements and ensured the smooth functioning of the team.

Sphere Standards Training:

The Sphere Standards Training took place at the [Lassonde School of Engineering](#) in Toronto, Canada. The training facility was well-equipped with audio and video equipment, flip charts, a whiteboard, and various other amenities, which greatly facilitated the diverse training activities conducted by the team using a range of methodologies.

This two-day training session occurred on the 14th and 15th of June in 2023, and the participants were drawn from the HRN's member organizations. Aya Yagan, the lead trainer, conducted the training remotely via Zoom, while two co-facilitators from the HRN network, Dr. Abdel Monem Daymi and Dr. Danielle Stodilka, were physically present in Toronto. In total, we had a group of sixteen (16) dedicated participants who not only attended but also successfully completed the course, each representing a distinct HRN INGO. The training was conducted in the English language, and its primary objectives were as follows:

- Explain the Sphere philosophy and use the Sphere handbook;
- Apply minimum humanitarian standards and guidelines to specific challenges encountered in their daily work;
- Demonstrate how listening to people and adjusting programming helps displaced persons in regaining dignity, well-being, and influence over their lives.

Sphere Training of Trainer:

The Sphere TOT Training took place at the [University of Quebec in Montreal](#), Canada. The training facility was well-equipped with audio and video equipment, flip charts, a whiteboard, and various other amenities.

This four-day training session occurred on the 10th and 13th of October in 2023, and the participants were drawn from the HRN's member organizations. Aya Yagan, the lead trainer, conducted the training remotely via Zoom, while three co-facilitators from the HRN network, Dr. Abdel Monem Daymi, Dr. Danielle Stodilka, and Diane Alalouf-Hall were physically present in Montreal. In total, we had a group of eight (8) dedicated participants who not only attended but also successfully completed the course, each representing a distinct HRN INGO. Of which, only one participant has attended the basic Sphere training in June.

The TOT symbolized a new milestone of Sphere promotion in Canada since it is a continuation of the Sphere capacity building program for the HRN. Accordingly, this training objectives were as follows:

- **Strengthening Existing Sphere Knowledge:** This part of the training aims to build upon the Sphere knowledge that participants have already acquired.

- Providing Participants with Facilitation Skills: The training also focuses on equipping participants with the necessary skills to effectively lead and facilitate Sphere events.

3. Training methods and techniques

Sphere Standards Training

The Sphere Standards training served as an introductory immersion into Sphere and the Sphere Handbook, utilizing the 2018 edition as its foundation. The program had a primary focus on acquainting participants with the Sphere philosophy, key humanitarian concepts such as dignity and accountability, and the core content encompassed within the handbook.

The three foundational chapters were conveyed in an interactive and participatory manner, fostering engagement by allowing participants to contribute examples from their own experiences. Additionally, the training offered an overview of the four technical chapters, with a particular emphasis on the pragmatic application of Sphere standards across diverse humanitarian responses.

On the second part of day two, participants engaged in a comprehensive case study, wherein they were organized into teams. Together, they collaboratively crafted a response plan that not only took into account the Sphere standards but also considered the adaptation of Sphere indicators, effectively applying the acquired knowledge in a real-world context.

Sphere TOT

The Sphere TOT program was meticulously structured around three distinct pillars, each tailored to specific objectives.

The first pillar was dedicated to a deep dive into the Sphere content, focusing on the foundational chapters, which encompassed the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles, and Core Humanitarian Standard. Additionally, it provided a comprehensive review of fundamental humanitarian concepts such as accountability, participation, and dignity. This pillar also facilitated participants' engagement with the four technical chapters through practical exercises, bridging the gap between theory and their practical experiences.

The second pillar placed a primary emphasis on adult learning principles and theories. It served as the foundation for the subsequent segment, where essential theories and facilitation techniques were presented, setting the stage for participant-led sessions. Under this pillar, the following sessions were delivered:

- Designing a Learning Event:

In the first segment, participants were introduced to the essential components of a session plan, which included defining the session's aim, objectives, key learning points, as well as the methods

and techniques to be used. A session plan template was then distributed to all participants, facilitating detailed discussions about objectives, methods, duration, and the required resources for each session.

- Understanding Adult Learning Principles:

This session was dedicated to heightening participants' awareness of adult learning principles and the various learning styles and motivations that drive learning. It provided an opportunity for participants to put these principles into practice, demonstrating their application in their own learning processes.

- Assessing Learning Needs:

The session commenced with an explanation of the significance of learning needs assessment, shedding light on the learning process, and introducing multiple methods for identifying and analyzing learning needs.

- Training Evaluation and Providing Constructive Feedback:

This session focused on increasing participants' knowledge of giving and receiving feedback, particularly constructive feedback. Participants were actively encouraged to demonstrate the application of constructive feedback to enhance self-awareness, personal development, and overall performance improvement.

- Becoming an Effective Trainer:

During this session, the aim was to present the qualities of successful trainers, distinguish between the roles of a trainer and a facilitator, and provide valuable insights, tips, and strategies for effective facilitation. The session also addressed managing challenging behaviors and personalities during training.

- Training Checklist and Measuring Training Impact:

This segment aimed to bolster participants' ability to develop and organize checklists for training events. An exercise tasked participants with creating a training preparation checklist that encompassed five key training steps, including needs assessment, planning, training design, delivery, and evaluation. The second part of this session delved into methods for measuring the impact of training on both short-term and long-term bases.

- Individual Action Planning:

In this session, participants were guided in planning their next steps along their Sphere capacity-building journey. They were introduced to an action plan template and worked individually to develop their personalized plans.

- Becoming a Sphere Trainer:

On Day 4, a dedicated session provided participants with insights into the process of becoming a Sphere trainer. It detailed the steps required and the number of training events they need to facilitate before becoming listed Sphere trainers. Furthermore, participants received guidance on how to approach Sphere and apply for listed trainer status.

The third pillar revolved around empowering participants to take the lead in conducting sessions. They were given numerous opportunities to present and guide sessions. These opportunities included facilitating the morning recap, leading brief five-minute mini-sessions on topics of their choice and conducting more extensive 30-minute maxi sessions based on pre-assigned Sphere chapters.

Before embarking on the maxi sessions, participants received session guidelines and were paired up to collaborate in groups of two. In total, four maxi sessions were conducted, covering the four technical Sphere chapters while integrating insights from the foundational chapters. Participants had the autonomy to choose their partners and determine the Sphere topics they wished to address.

The training program seamlessly integrated theory and practice, equipping participants with the skills and competencies necessary to become effective trainers. It employed fully participatory methods to accommodate diverse adult learning preferences, fostering a collaborative learning environment and ensuring active engagement. These methods encompassed an array of exercises, case studies, visual aids, videos, group discussions, and activities led by the participants themselves.

Each day concluded with facilitators conducting a recap of the day's topics, actively soliciting input and insights from the participants. Furthermore, they addressed any questions or concerns raised by the participants. The following days commenced with a recap of the participants' reflections and feedback on the training content and processes from the previous day. Participants were encouraged to lead these morning recap sessions in pairs, creating a more engaging and participatory atmosphere.

Mentoring co- facilitators

The lead trainer worked closely with HRN co-facilitators, with the aim of strengthening capacity building and infusing essential knowledge into humanitarian and development organizations. This collaborative effort included a series of online coaching sessions, which were conducted individually and in groups in preparation for each training events.

Throughout these sessions, the team engaged in in-depth discussions regarding training plans, methodologies, and delivery techniques. Additionally, co-facilitators received valuable and constructive feedback after their sessions, highlighting their strengths and areas for

improvement. This feedback mechanism proved highly effective, as it resulted in noticeably improved performance during subsequent training days.

4. Training quality control measures

The below measures were in place to ensure the training program is relevant to the context and participants needs:

- Prior to the course, participants were asked to provide information on their knowledge and experience on the topic, as well as their learning objectives. This was used by the training team to tailor the course.
- Participants completed action plans for using knowledge and skills which can be used by Sphere and the HRN as desired to feed into behavior evaluation and assess the degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job.
- Final training evaluation forms to collect quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants immediately following the training to evaluate the training from different angles.
- Final training report including detailed breakdown of feedback and suggestions for improving similar events.

5. Recommendations

Recommendations for future Sphere events

- Some TOT participants expected a greater emphasis on Sphere content rather than training techniques, as reflected in the TOT evaluation feedback. Therefore, it is recommended that future programs provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the training plan. This should indicate the overall program objectives which included an initial training dedicated to introducing Sphere standards to enhance participants' knowledge in this area, followed by the TOT event, which is designed to improve participants' ability to facilitate Sphere training. This clarification can be communicated through the HRN coordination office and reinforced in training invitations.
- One proposed solution also might consider a 2-hour pre-training online session. This will not only give the facilitation team a chance to familiarize themselves with the trainees and their expectations, but also serve as an opportunity to provide an introduction to the training, aligning everyone's expectations.
- Co-facilitators noted that the integration of visuals, cartoons, and practical real-life examples significantly enhanced participants' comprehension of how to utilize Sphere standards and integrate the foundational chapters. Therefore, it is advisable to incorporate visuals and real-life examples consistently throughout Sphere training events.

- The TOT participation rate fell below the expectations, and this can be attributed to certain factors, notably the selection of the city and the training venue. Conducting the training in Montreal, a primarily French-speaking city, despite delivering it in English, might have affected participation. Additionally, the frequent changes in the training room due to the university's academic semester were not conducive to effective organization. To address these issues, it is recommended that future training events secure an appropriate and stable training venue to enhance the overall experience.
- A suggestion emerged from the TOT evaluation to incorporate a session addressing the facilitation of varying sizes of Sphere training, spanning 1 day, 2 days, and extended durations, while also elaborating on the recommended focus and content for each training based on its specific duration.

Recommendations for the HRN co facilitators

- Dedicate additional time to delve deeper into the Sphere Handbook and explore the diverse training packages available on the Sphere website.
- Foster collaboration among co-facilitators and TOT participants, with HRN's support, to lead various Sphere events. These events could encompass introductory presentations, 1 or 2-day workshops, and extended training programs, primarily targeting HRN members' staff to augment their Sphere knowledge in Canada.
- Contact and coordinate with listed Sphere trainers and engage in co-facilitated Sphere events within Canada or other regions. This can be achieved by regularly checking the Sphere online calendar and connecting with the Sphere Geneva team to maximize Sphere training capacity and exposure.
- Actively contribute to and participate in ongoing Sphere events and initiatives to stay informed and up to date with the latest developments in Sphere standards. They can keep track of Sphere events by monitoring the Sphere online calendar.
- Apply to become a listed Sphere trainer once they meet the conditions outlined in the "How to Become a Listed Sphere Trainer" guidelines. This will help expand the pool of qualified trainers within the Sphere network. They can contact Sphere via learning@spherestandards.org

6. Appendix

Sphere Standards Training Agenda
Sphere training evaluation report (attached as a separate annex)

Introduction to Sphere Standards

Date: 14 & 15 June 2023
 Participants: The Humanitarian Response Network members
 Languages: English
 Objective: To familiarise participants with the structure of the Sphere Handbook, its principles and standards, and how to use them in disaster response.

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Explain the Sphere philosophy and use the Sphere handbook;
- Apply minimum humanitarian standards and guidelines to specific challenges encountered in their daily work;
- Demonstrate how listening to people and adjusting programming helps displaced persons in regaining dignity, well-being, and influence over their lives.

Time	Contents
DAY 1	
08:00 - 08:15	Welcome and introduction
08:15 - 09:15	Brief introduction to Sphere
09:15 - 10:15	Deep dive into the Sphere handbook
10:15 - 10:30	Coffee/Tea break – fresh air
10:30 - 11:30	The Humanitarian Charter
11:30 - 12:30	The Protection Principles
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch break – fresh air
13:30 - 15:00	Technical Chapter: Health
15:00 - 15:15	Coffee/Tea break – fresh air
15:15 - 16:00	The Core Humanitarian Standard

Time	Contents
DAY 2	
08:00 - 08:15	Recap of Day 1
08:15 - 09:15	Technical Chapter: Shelter
09:15 - 10:15	Technical Chapter: Food Security and Nutrition
10:15 - 10:30	Coffee/Tea break – fresh air
10:30 - 11:30	Technical Chapter: WASH
11:30 - 12:30	Case study_Groupwork (part 1)
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch break – fresh air
13:30 - 15:30	Case study_Groupwork (part 2)
15:30 - 16:00	Evaluation and closing

Sphere TOT Agenda



Sphere TOT Workshop Agenda Canada_ Montreal 10 October – 13 October 2023

	Day 1 Tuesday 10/10	Day 2 Wednesday 11/10	Day 3 Thursday 12/10	Day 4 Friday 13/10
Block 1 08:30 – 08:45	Opening - Icebreakers	Recap (participant led from prior day)	Recap (participant led from prior day)	Participant led sessions. (45 minutes) Second session
08:45 -10:00	Introduction to Sphere and the TOT	Adult Learning Principles	Introduction to group presentations and tips Group formation for Maxi sessions	Participant led sessions. (45 minutes) Third session
Break (15 min) 10:00 – 10:15	Break (15 min) 10:00 – 10:15	Break (15 min) 10:00 – 10:15	Break (15 min) 10:00 – 10:15	Break (15 min) 10:00 – 10:15
Block 2 10:15-11:15	Sphere content Foundational Chapters	Assessing learning needs	Training checklist & measuring training impact	Participant led sessions - (45 minutes) Fourth session
Block 3 11:15 – 12:30	Designing a learning event	Training evaluation and how to give Feedback.	Preparation time for Participant led Maxi (45 minute) session	Participant led sessions. (45 minutes) Fifth session
Break (90 min) 12:30 – 14:00	Break (90 min) 12:30 – 14:00	Break (90 min) 12:30 – 14:00	Break (90 min) 12:30 – 14:00	Break (90 min) 12:30 – 14:00
Block 4 14:00-15:15	Sphere content Technical Chapters Group Exercise	Introduction to Mini sessions 5-minute presentations (Participants led session)	Preparation time for Participant led Maxi (45 minute) session	Individual action planning
Break (15min) 15:15 – 15:30	Break (15min) 15:15 – 15:30	Break (15min) 15:15 – 15:30	Break (15min) 15:15 – 15:30	Break (15min) 15:15 – 15:30
Block 5 15:30-16:30	Using Sphere in context	5-minute presentations (Participants led session)	Participant led sessions. (45 minutes) First session	Final evaluation Networking & wrap up. Certificates and group photo

7. Photo gallery













