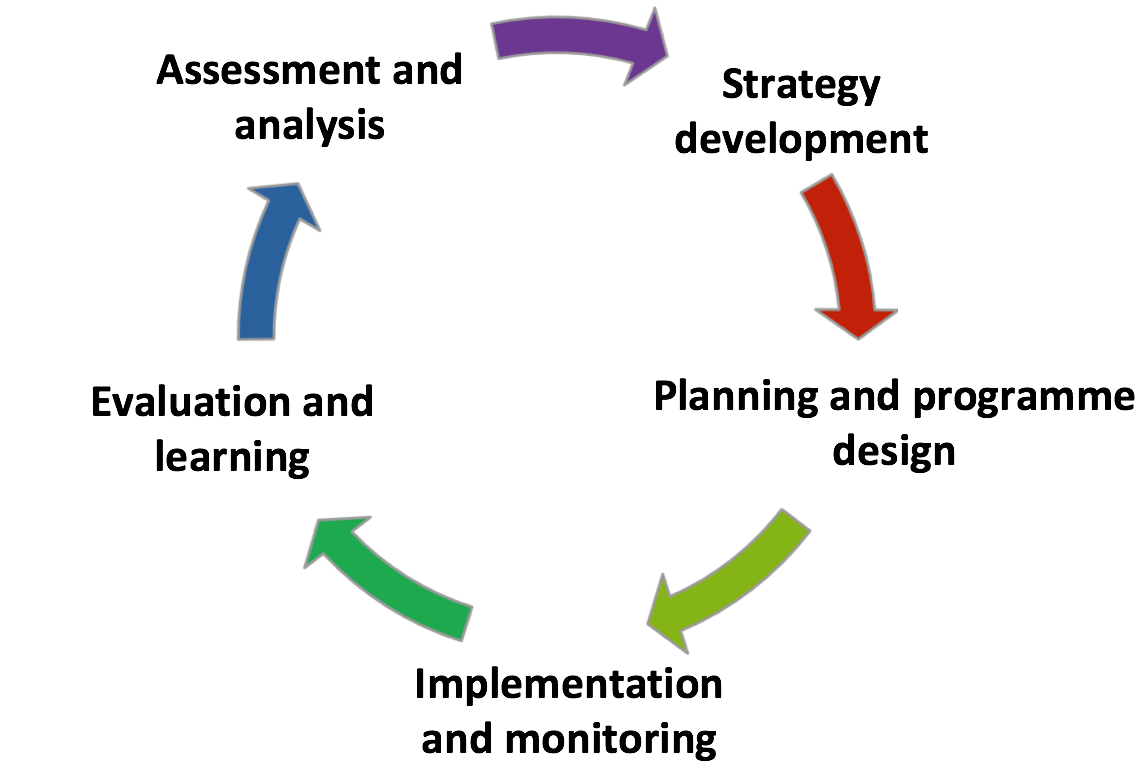
Programme Cycle “Check-Up” Exercise

The humanitarian programme cycle is a concept that links the different phases or activities that, together, constitute the life of a humanitarian response project or programme. Although the five phases are shown as discrete steps for the purpose of clarifying each, it should be noted that many of these phases do overlap and repeat throughout the life of a programme. Together, they provide a roadmap for quality and accountability for project managers and implementers alike.

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| --- | --- |
| **Five phases** | **Description of key actions for each phase** |
| **Assessment and analysis** | Collect data and compare with indicators to determine the scope of needs, ability to cope, operational setting, and delivery options. |
| **Strategy development** | Consider response options and methods alongside local conditions, market forces, security situation, and likely duration of the crisis to select strategies. |
| **Planning and programme design** | Discuss and design your project with the people affected, determine budgets, and allocate means and resources. |
| **Implementation and monitoring** | Run the programme and routinely check to see if it is meeting design objectives. |
| **Evaluation and learning** | Analyse the results of your programme; determine if intended results were achieved. Change course if need be, learn from each experience, and ensure that needed change can happen at all levels. |

**Activity instructions**

This activity presents 10 short scenarios illustrating these five phases. Review each scenario and determine if the actions or decisions presented are in line with applicable Sphere guidance. Each scenario is presented as a humanitarian “patient” reporting for a “check-up” using humanitarian principles as the doctor and the Sphere Handbook as your stethoscope.



Read each scenario and assess each one as either **“healthy”, “needs further examination”, or “ill”** and be ready to explain why. An answer sheet is provided for you to record the results of your examination. You need only fill the first column “Check-up results”. The doctors from Sphere will arrive later to prescribe any suggestions for improvement. **You have 10 minutes.**

**Programme cycle check-up activity – answer form**

|  | **1. Check-up results (healthy, needs further examination, or ill)** | **2. Suggestions for improvement (referencing Sphere)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1** |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |
| **7** |  |  |
| **8** |  |  |
| **9** |  |  |
| **10** |  |  |

|  | **Scenario** |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | A large earthquake just occurred in a major city. You will conduct an emergency assessment. Your manager just designed a new assessment form for your organisation. The coordination platform in the affected country has a standard assessment format designed to encourage information sharing and to avoid assessment fatigue. Since your manager insists that you use your own organisation’s format and says that it is better than the inter-agency one, you decide to use yours. |
| **2** | You met with community members today, to assess capacities and vulnerabilities relative to the developing drought. When you arrived, there were only women and children available to meet you since the men were needed by the local authorities to work on a community road. One of the women encouraged you to go on with your assessment, since women are aware of the needs of all family members anyway. You agreed and completed the assessment. You are now writing your report. |
| **3** | Refugees have recently crossed the border and are camping in a rural area. Since your market analysis did not support a cash-based system you decide to distribute dried beans as part of a dry ration basket that provides 2,100 kCal per person per day (and is in line with nutritional requirements), which the refugees will accept as these are a part of their customary food tradition. However, these beans take a lot of time and firewood to cook. The local population’s livelihoods are based on resources from the surrounding forest, and the local chief tells you that if the refugees cut and collect large quantities of firewood there will be violence with the local community. You decide to distribute the beans as well as firewood bought from the local community together with a replanting and training programme for improved forest management by the local community. |
| **4** | A storm has destroyed the crops and boats in this small island community. Markets are based on local farm produce and locally caught fish. You have been asked by your organisation to propose a response. Your executive officer wants the organisation to shift to cash-based assistance. Local Red Crescent volunteers report that there is nothing in the market. Since inter-island logistics are severely damaged you decide to distribute cash instead of in-kind support. |
| **5** | To provide equitable service to all communities and to coordinate and integrate into the government’s approach to local reconstruction, you adopt the same style of building and materials. Your programme engineer just pointed out that the government’s plan provides for an average of 6m2 of space per person in their new houses (almost twice Sphere’s minimum indicator of 3.5m2 per person). You decide to reduce the size of your house plans to 3.5m2 per person which means that you can now build twice as many houses as the government can for the same money. |
| **6** | Rebels just forced an entire village to flee to an undeveloped area in the nearby mountains. You had to submit your WASH programme proposal and budget to donors today if you are to be able to respond to critical needs in time. You did not have time to conduct community meetings or other participatory activities to refine your emergency programme proposal. |
| **7** | Your ongoing project organises emergency evacuations to safe shelters in a region affected by flash floods. During the last practice drill you conducted with the local Red Cross, you were satisfied that the needs of older people and persons with disabilities were met, since many of them were able to participate in the drill and reach the shelter. You decided to be thorough, however, and asked people who did not go to the shelter why this was so. They explained it was not an issue of ability or access to the shelter, but a fear of abuse there since they are in a minority group that is often persecuted when seen to be sharing public services and spaces with the majority. You decide to suspend the next planned drill until you can meet with both groups and find a solution. |
| **8** | You have excess funds left over from your food security project that will revert to the donor if not committed this week. You decide to build a water pump in the community. Today you learned that the local government just published its plans to build a water system for this same community this year. You don’t know whether the local government will be able to carry out its plan as announced. You order the supplies and announce that your project will go ahead as soon as possible. |
| **9** | Your organisation has a good reputation for being effective and efficient and donors have steadily increased their support of your programmes. To keep these vital relationships strong, you need to show accountability to those donors on the efficient use of their funds. In your last annual report, your organisation cited the successful delivery of 300,000 metric tons of rice to desperately hungry communities but failed to mention that during the same timeframe severe acute malnutrition rates rose, and one of your subcontractors was found to be engaged in a food-for-sex arrangement with a local woman. |
| **10** | You have just finished another challenging emergency response project in an area affected by a volcanic eruption. It was a very stressful period with no time for stepping back and reflecting on the project’s challenges, successes, and failures, let alone attending to your own family’s needs. You planned to conduct a learning review retreat with your team next week. However, you just received a call from your manager asking you and your team to go to a new eruption site on a different island immediately. Since you are considered an expert in this type of emergency response in the region you cancel the review, pack your bags, and go. |

**Programme Cycle Check-Up: Suggested answer sheet**

Key: **CoC**: Code of Conduct, **HC**: Humanitarian Charter, **PP**: Protection Principle, **CHS**: Core Humanitarian Standard; **S**: Standard, **KA**: Key action; **KI**: Key indicator; **GN**: Guidance note

| **Project cycle phase** |  | **Check-up result and example Sphere guidance** |
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| **Assessment and analysis** | 1 | **Ill** – Assessments should be coordinated where possible. Where there are faults in the coordinated inter-agency approach, work with the process to improve it.   * CHS commitment 6: “Humanitarian assistance is coordinated and complimentary.” * CHS commitment 2, KA 2.2: “Deliver humanitarian response in a timely manner, making decisions and acting without unnecessary delay.” It is important to be timely – work with others already in place to respond quickly. |
| **Assessment and analysis** | 2 | **Ill** – Assessments should incorporate the views and priorities of all stakeholders. In a chronic or slow-onset disaster such as a drought, there is time to do this right.   * CHS commitment 1, KA 1.2: “Design and implement appropriate programmes based on an impartial assessment of needs and risks and an understanding of the vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups.” * CHS commitment 3, KA 3.1: “Ensure programmes build on local capacities and work towards improving the resilience of communities and people affected by the crisis.”   *Note that this example is unusual, as it is more likely that women’s and children’s perspectives are not included in planning programmes.* |
| **Strategy develop-ment** | 3 | **Healthy** - But this strategy **may require further examination,** and heightened awareness of possible negative consequences.   * CHS commitment 3: “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.” Buying the fuel from the local community avoids tensions and possible violence between the two groups. * CoC point 5: “We shall respect culture and custom” (providing the traditional food) * Food security S 5: General food security, KAs 1 and 4: “Design response to meet immediate needs” and “Protect, preserve and restore the natural environment from further degradation.” * Food assistance standard 6.1: General nutritional requirements, GN: “2,100 kcal per person per day with 10–12% of total energy provided by protein and 17% provided by fat.” |
| **Strategy develop-ment** | 4 | **Ill** – Market analysis showed that markets were empty. The decision to use cash was based on the ease of delivery of cash over in-kind materials, rather than the usefulness of the cash to people in need.   * Checklist for supply chain management and logistics (see pages 23–25): Destruction of locally produced foods will require improving the supply chain to restock markets * Appendix: Delivering assistance through markets – see “Programming and markets” (page 20). A better approach would have been to find a way to support the local markets so that a cash-based response programme could work. * CHS commitment 2, KA 2.1: “Design programmes that address constraints so that the proposed action is realistic and safe for communities.” * Food assistance standard 6.1: General nutritional requirements, KA 1: “Assess people’s access to markets.” |
| **Planning and programme design** | 5 | **Ill** – Programme decisions should not be made on the basis of any one indicator alone, and further, these are minimums, not maximums. It will be important to assess further why the government’s house sizes are made as they are, if there is consensus on the part of the occupants and owners. This is a long-term solution… design minimums may need to be increased.   * HC paragraph 3: “As humanitarian agencies, we interpret our role in relation to the needs and capacities of affected populations and the responsibilities of their governments or controlling powers.” * CoC point 1: “The humanitarian imperative comes first.” * CHS commitment 6: “Humanitarian assistance is coordinated and complimentary.” * Shelter and settlement S 1: Planning, KA 3: “Work with stakeholders to identify the most effective and appropriate assistance options and how to provide these.” * Shelter and settlement S 3: Living space, KI: “4.5–5.5m2 of living space per person in cold climates or urban settings where internal cooking space and bathing and/or sanitation facilities are included.” |
| **Planning and programme design** | 6 | **Healthy** – In this scenario timeliness is a priority. The effort will have to be improved once essential life-saving needs are being addressed.   * HC paragraph 1: “Action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict and that nothing should override this principle.” * CHS commitment 1: “Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant.” * CHS commitment 2, KA 2.2: “Deliver humanitarian response in a timely manner, making decisions and acting without unnecessary delay”… “Acknowledge that decisions will be made based on imperfect knowledge in the early stages of an acute crisis and refine decisions as information becomes available.” |
| **Implemen-tation and monitoring** | 7 | **Healthy** – Thorough monitoring of the ongoing programme activities revealed the need for modification, and the field officer is responding by engaging the community to find solutions.   * CHS commitment 3: “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.” * CHS commitment 4: “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.” * CHS commitment 5: “Complaints are welcomed and addressed.” * Shelter S 5: Technical assistance, GN: Safe public buildings: “Ensure safety and access for all, including for persons facing barriers to moving and communicating.” |
| **Implemen-tation and monitoring** | 8 | **Ill** – The impromptu project seems to be based on having extra funds rather than on participatory assessment with stakeholders. Further, if the government may not be able to do the project due to shortage of funds, it might be better to support them and consult to propose an integrated programme rather than doing the project independently.”   * CHS commitment 6: “Humanitarian assistance is coordinated and complimentary.” * CHS commitment 9: “Resources are managed and used responsibly to for their intended purpose.” * Water supply S 2.1: Access and water quantity, GN: Management of the water systems and infrastructure… “Work with the community and other stakeholders to decide on the siting, design and use of waterpoints.” (This was not done in the scenario as the design was rushed due to the pressure to spend the funds.) |
| **Evaluation and learning** | 9 | **Ill** – The organisation is not being truly accountable by attempting to hide or at least not highlight problems in the programme.   * CHS commitment 7: “Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.” * PP 1: “Enhance people’s safety, dignity and rights, and avoid exposing them to further harm.” * PP 3: “Assist people to recover from the physical and psychological effects of threatened or actual violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation.” (Hiding the charge of sexual abuse in the programme denies the affected person’s ability to claim her rights.) |
| **Evaluation and learning** | 10 | Ill – The day-to-day pressures of constant emergency response have displaced the equally important responsibility to evaluate and learn from experience and shows a lack of adequate support to the overworked staff.   * CHS commitment 7: “Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.” * CHS commitment 8: “Staff are supported to do their job effectively and are treated fairly and equitably.” |

Space for your own notes below: