The AFTER ACTION REVIEW OF HAP DEPLOYMENT MISSION TO ETHIOPIA SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 2013
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I.   Introduction:

The Inter Agency Accountability Working of Ethiopia (IAAWG-E) is the working group primarily constituting of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) member agencies operating in Ethiopia. The working group was formed in Addis Ababa in 2009 in order to share best practice in implementing the HAP standards in the Ethiopian context. The group function aims to support member agencies and their partners in developing tools and strategies for the implementation of the HAP standards in quality management in Ethiopia and to contribute to HAP members meeting the standards. Since 2012, HAP member agencies have been actively engaged in reinvigorating the group function through defining Terms of Reference (TOR) which outlines the purpose and mandate of the group and defining action plan towards strengthening joint efforts among the group members and enhancing the capacity of member agencies.

HAP International is the membership agency under which most IAAWG-E members have been registered as ordinary and certified members. During the period between 06 February and 02 April 2013, HAP deployed two of its senior staff, Maria Kiani (Senior Quality and Accountability Adviser) and Gregory Gleed (Accountability Officer) on a deployment mission with the aim to support the group in implementing its work plan and further strengthening the working group towards implementing the HAP standard. Dan Church Aid (DCA) Ethiopia which is the elected secretariat and the designated lead of the group for the one year period (September 2012-August 2013) liaised with the HAP team and coordinated the HAP deployment activities.

During the course of the mission, the HAP team organized a series of capacity building workshops for IAAWG-E members and their local partners operating at the field level. Furthermore, field visits were conducted in Dollo Ado in Somali Region (refugee camp) and Borana zone, Oromiya Region (pastoralist and disaster prone community) through the involvement of the IAAWG member agencies to assess the landscape of accountability in order to identify existing good practices and challenges in working with affected communities. Organizational accountability assessment was also conducted in light of the benchmarks among eight interested IAAWG-E member organizations and summary reports were shared by the team. The organizational self assessment exercise helped to identify institutional strengths and challenges in promoting accountability.

II.   After Action Review (AAR)

Following the completion of the deployment mission, IAAWG-E members undertook an After-Action Review (AAR) of the mission on the request of the HAP team. The aim of the AAR was to examine the main outcomes and achievements of the deployment and identify ways in which future HAP deployments can be improved.

The findings will be an input into HAP's continual learning process to further improve its work and its deployments. The AAR was led by selected focal persons of the IAAWG-E and the report was compiled by Dan Church Aid, who is the current host and Chair of the working group. A

check list with a set of guiding questions was developed to guide the discussion. The key focus areas included the strengths of the deployment, lessons learnt, the way forward in implementing lessons learnt and suggested areas of improvement for future deployments. A total of 11 organisations represented in the IAAWG-E participated in the AAR.

III. METHODOLOGY

- A two hour workshop was held with IAAWG member agencies on 2 April at DCA office in Addis Ababa
- Bilateral written feedback was given by four agencies via email

IV. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM THE AAR

Overall, the working group members agreed that the HAP team had performed all the tasks planned with the IAAWG-E for its deployment period, although within a tight time frame. The activities have greatly contributed to enriching the group experience and improving the quality of its interaction, supporting the capacity of focal persons and individual agencies involved in the process. In addition, the team worked with international and UN agencies, which helped to generate useful information for the groups' future engagement and links with these groups.

The IAAWG-E has benefitted in a number of ways from the whole deployment exercise among which the following are the major ones:

- The presence of the team enhanced the individual and collective understanding, as well as clarity among the working group members around the HAP benchmarks. The different exercises facilitated by the team enabled to link the theoretical basis for HAP with the practical implementation. One of the group members noted, *'I found the clarifications on the HAP benchmarks interesting and the sharing of some experiences from other countries was also helpful'*.
- The series of workshops organised by the team have promoted cross learning and encouraged members to contribute to the peer learning process by facilitating presentation of organisational experiences by several agencies. The group became aware of existing expertise and resources within its members and the opportunity for further experience sharing and adoption of good practices under the different benchmarks. *A member of the IAAWG indicated, 'I learnt a lot and felt the support from the others that also participated in the workshops. It showed us the resources that we have in the group and reinforced the need for better communication and sharing'.*
- From the different bilateral discussions, workshops, field work and organisational self-assessments, the HAP team was able to locate good practices and tools within organisations that could be shared among group members for possible adoption. In this regard, the experience of organisations on designing and implementing Accountability Frameworks, complaints mechanisms, information sharing (currently mainly focusing on community level information boards), and integrating accountability in the monitoring and evaluation processes are some of the areas where practical experience was exchanged.
- The facilitation of the HAP team contributed to increased interaction and bond among group members. The overall process enabled to build a spirit of collaboration and common

purpose, enhancing clarity to group members about what can be done collectively and where the group can go from here. It created interest among group members to contribute and suggest ways to increase the quality of the group's interaction. The experience from other countries in relation to how similar groups function brought lessons on the dynamics of collectively working on accountability. In this regard, the commitment, the approach, engagement and sense of camaraderie demonstrated by the HAP team motivated the IAAWG members to further commit themselves to the HAP purposes. '*The team's facilitation has strengthened the working group and gave it the vigour it needed. It also has brought those of us who were working together even closer around well-defined goals and also has brought in new interest*'.

- The rapid self-assessment, facilitated by HAP, served most organisations as an *"eye opener"* leading for most to an action plan aiming to improve their performance and quality management. As noted by one of the participants, '*The HAP team assisted us in better understanding where we stand against the HAP Standard. From this, we organised an internal Accountability Working Group, used the report to identify our priorities, and determined the HAP benchmarks that we would focus on in 2013*'. Some of the participating organisations have developed or are in the process of developing action plans based on the findings in order to further improve organisational efforts towards accountability. Following the assessment, some have started to adopt an accountability framework and planned training on the benchmarks for HQ and field office staff. The country director of one of the organisations said, '*This deployment presented us with an opportunity to jump-start our quest to embody the highest standards of accountability and quality management. The staff members gained a better understanding of the HAP principles and benchmarks, and are truly focused on integrating a "HAP way of thinking" into our organisation*'.

- The team helped to identify practical challenges faced by accountability focal persons and brought these to the attention of senior management. Through different meetings and bilateral discussions, the HAP team highlighted the value of accountability focal persons and their work. Better appreciation of their work by senior management increased the level of support to the work of focal points. Furthermore, the team pushed senior management to participate in the activities of the group and also strengthen their commitment to the objectives of the group.

- The recommendations suggested by the HAP team at the end of its deployment are important contributions to strengthening the IAAWG-E.

V.   Key lessons learnt during the engagement with the HAP team:

- Accountability already exists in the processes of organisations. Organisations often feel that they have not done well on the requirements of the standard while they are already doing different things within the community they work with even though they may not refer to it as "accountability". Often, work has to be done in simple but incremental ways, acknowledging one can't become perfect instantly.

- Working with the team enabled to understand the "*The power of coming together*" and the strengths of collaboration. This was best demonstrated by the 'stone soup' story shared by the HAP team members during one of the workshop sessions. There are unacknowledged resources which, with proper facilitation, can be uncovered. One member of the IAAWG-E noted, *"The biggest lesson for me is seeing the need to coordinate. We are*

all working on separate efforts which, if put together could cover the whole requirements of the HAP Standard".

- Complaints handling mechanisms are wrongly defined in terms of 'complaints boxes' that are in most cases irrelevant in traditional and often illiterate communities. Complaints handling mechanisms need to be contextually appropriate.
- Periodic self-assessments are needed for continual self-reflection and improvement.
- Community consultation is a basic tool to identify levels of fulfilment of accountability commitments.
- The value of working with partners and field staff. Often, information stays with staff working at Addis level and does not trickle down to field staff and partners who are on the front line, directly working with affected communities and stakeholders. Field staff often have critical insight, know-how and better ways of working with communities but these are often compromised by requirements imposed from headquarters. In this regard, results of the field work by the HAP team provided an opportunity to assess the level of collaboration with partners.

VI.   What resulted from working with the HAP team and how it will be taken forward:

- Prioritisation of humanitarian accountability as an agenda item within respective organisations, which is an indication of increasing attention.
- IAAWG-E member agencies are now interested and willing to contextualise their Accountability Frameworks, most of which have been formulated at their respective head offices. They also see the need to organise trainings/ orientations for their staff and partners and create awareness about their accountability commitments.
- The rapid accountability assessment provided participating agencies with a chance to identify gaps within their compliance structures and helped with the formulation of action plans. The member agencies that participated in the organisational self-assessment will organise a peer learning process to share their progress and challenges in implementing their action plans.
- Humanitarian accountability standards will be mainstreamed in different partnership processes (e.g., in partnership agreements, as well as in reporting requirements).
- The presence of the team has demonstrated ways and encouraged the working group members to come together and share tools and information, and not just show up at meetings. This has increased commitment of the group members. The group will structure meetings in a way to encourage regular presentations by individual agencies and share different responsibilities to further enhance participation and contribution.
- The lessons from the field and discussions in the workshops resulted in members of the group recognising the need and value of working jointly. This has also motivated members of the group to make an effort towards creating a collegial environment and working with a consolidated approach at grassroots level.
- The engagement of the team with different international agencies enabled to gather important information and paved the way to create links with other networks, both within NGOs and UN agencies. This will be further followed up and concretised by the group.

- The team created an opportunity to access valuable HAP resources online (HAP website, the sharing of updates, etc) which will be constantly referred to in the process of working to strengthen accountability.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE HAP DEPLOYMENTS

- Either increase deployment duration or its frequency to have good insight and provide better support – or alternatively, focus deployment on only one benchmark or outstanding issue.
- Allocate more time for community consultations.
- RAA should be supported by community consultations instead of only focusing on organisations.
- More visit to more places should be planned to understand diverse contexts in Ethiopia (e.g., DRR contexts).
- Trainings of Trainers should be scheduled by HAP deployment to ensure 'filtering' (trickle down of skills).
- Workshops could be longer/series of engagements to ensure all issues are covered.
- Online workshops/webinars and other 'modern' means may allow further engagement.
- Facilitate cross learning between different working groups and compile lessons learnt and best practices.
- Aim to have a plan for follow-up - next support/experience exchange (attempt to create regular link if it is possible).
- Another visit at the working group and more workshops on specific issues of interpreting the Standard in practice or developing working documents for each organisation, as it is important to make it part of the overall organisation and not a standalone issue.

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The findings will be an input into HAP's continual learning process to further improve its work and its deployments. The AAR was led by selected focal persons of the IAAWG-E and the report was compiled by Dan Church Aid, who is the current host and Chair of the working group. A check list with a set of guiding questions was developed to guide the discussion. The key focus areas included the strengths of the deployment activities, lessons learnt, the way forward in implementing lessons learnt and suggested areas of improvement for future deployments.

A total of 11 (eleven) organizations represented from the IAAWG-E members participated in the AAR.

Annex: Organizations and Staff Members* that Participated in the After Action Review

S.No	Name	Position	IAAWG-E Member Agency
1	Adamu Beyene	Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator	Islamic Relief
2	Maureen Graybill	Country Director	ZOA
3	Yeshmebrat Ejigsemahu	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	ZOA
4	Fanaye G/ Hiwot	Accountability and Government Relations Adviser	Care Ethiopia
5	Emebet Diaso	Senior Program Officer	International Medical Corps (IMC)
6	Gebrehiwot Ewnetu	Senior Programme Officer	Danish Refugee Council
7	Sisay Dejene	Accountability and Participation Advisor	Save the Children
8	Tsegaye Challa	Humanitarian Program Officer	Trocaire/ Cafod/ Sciaf
9	Rev. Torbjorn Toll	Contact Person in Ethiopia	Church of Sweden
10	Yilma Hirpha	Equality and Accountability Advisor	Concern World Wide
11	Dereje H/Mariam	Emergency & DRR Officer	Help Age
12	Aneni Assefa	Programme and Communications Officer	Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
13	Hanna Abate	Gender and Capacity Building Program Officer	Dan Church Aid

* This includes those that participated in the AAR workshop and those that provided written feedback afterwards.