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Erratum

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ERRATUM

Erratum to: Accountability in Humanitarian Action

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In the originally published version of this manuscript, in section 4, "Trends of Humanitarian Accountability", the timeline referenced in the text was erroneously omitted. The table "Number of interviews" should be replaced by the timeline in this erratum.

1991 Adoption of **UN General Assembly resolution 46/182** designing the blueprint of the current humanitarian system, recognising the Red Cross movement's principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality for the whole humanitarian system and allotting a coordinating role to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affair (OCHA). Also signalled the formation of the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)**, a policy making body of UN agencies and NGO platforms.

1992 InterAction – an alliance of INGOs and partners in the United States - adopts **voluntary standards of accountability to donors**. InterAction's membership consists of INGOs of all pedigree: development, peacebuilding and humanitarian and hence growing influence of development standards into the humanitarian domain.

1994 Launch of the **Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs** in Disaster Relief. The need for accountability action was triggered by the Ethiopian famine response of the 1980s that saw a multiplication of humanitarian actors and the Somalia crisis with a high level of instrumentalisation of aid. The Code consisted of ten commitments, including commitment 9: "We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept

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resources". There were more than 300 signatories, boosted by the Rwanda crisis. The code was characterised by feeble language and there was no follow-up on signatories.[1]

1995 **People In Aid** was formed to improve organisational effectiveness in the humanitarian and development sectors, and to improve the management and support of relief workers. The report "Room for Improvement: The Management and Support of Relief Workers" was also published, which presents weaknesses and challenges of the humanitarian system and ends with recommendations for "a code of good practice in the recruitment and management of staff and the creation of a professional body for relief and development".[2]

1996 Publication of Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, concerning the 2004 Genocide. Recommendations led to different initiatives, including ALNAP, Sphere and HAP (see just below).[3]

1997 Formation of the **Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance** (**ALNAP**): a network of INGOs, UN agencies, members of the Red Cross/Crescent Movement, donors, academics, networks and consultants to learn and share on accountability and improve response to humanitarian crises. ALNAP continues to be especially significant for the second component of accountability, i.e. giving account, being answerable or transparent. This is also done at sector level by providing meta-analysis of evaluation reports and collating lessons learnt.

1997 Publication of **People In Aid Code of Best Practice** in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel. Not only important for internal accountability and protection of staff, but also geared to enhancing an attitude of accountability among service providers. Revised in 2003.

1997 **The Sphere Project** started in order to develop minimum standards in collaboration with leading NGOs, interested donor governments, and UN agencies. Sphere Standards are published in the regularly updated Sphere Handbook. To underpin the Standards, a **Humanitarian Charter** was drafted by different humanitarian actors.

1998 Initiation of the **Humanitarian Ombudsman Project**, originally aiming to develop a system-wide ombudsman. After field trials that failed for different reasons, ranging from a lack of existing accountability structures and

1 P. Walker, 'Cracking the Code: The Genesis, Use and Future of the Code of Conduct', *Disasters* 29, no. 45; D. Hilhorst, 'Dead Letter or Living Document? Ten Years of the Code of Conduct for Disaster Relief', *Disasters* 29, no. 4, 2005, 351–69.

2 R. Macnair, 'Room for Improvement: The Management and Support of Relief Workers', Network Paper. London: ODI (Overseas Development Institute) and Relief and Rehabilitation Network. September 1995, 10, available at: https://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/1995/09/networkpaper010.pdf. (last visited 01 Mar. 2021).

3 N Dabelstein, 'Evaluating the International Humanitarian System: Rationale, Process and Management of the Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Rwanda Genocide', *Disasters* 20, no. 4, 1996, 286–94.

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resistance in the sector to oversight, the initiative was transformed to the Humanitarian Accountability Project based on self-regulation.[4]

1999 Publication of **Do no Harm** by Mary Anderson[5] and launch of the 'Do no Harm' advocacy approach focusing on how aid and conflict interact of Collaborative for Development Action (CDA). Transformed to CDA collaborative learning projects in 2003, instigating the influential **listening projects**.

2000 Publication of the first **Sphere Handbook,** revisions in 2004, 2011, and 2018.

2002 Scandal broke out in West Africa following a UNHCR/Save the Children study on sexual exploitation of refugee children by aid workers and peacekeepers in West Africa, revealing many accountability gaps, especially in relation to *taking responsibility*.[6] Leading to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) **Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** and subsequently six core principles to be incorporated into the codes of conduct and staff rules and regulations of member organisations of the IASC, and in 2005 the IASC Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings.

2003 The **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP).** A multi-agency initiative to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian action.[7] HAP institutionalised accountability through standards that its membership committed to live up to, through self-regulation, at both agency and inter-agency level.

2003 17 Donors initiate the **Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)** and launch the **Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship**. These were drawn up to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of donor action (e.g. by reducing the reporting load through harmonisation), as well as their accountability to beneficiaries (e.g. the promotion of standards, and supporting learning accountability initiatives). The initiative has grown to include 42 donors, and bi-annual reports are produced where donors individually and collectively report on indicators attached to the principles.

2004 Launch of **COMPASS** – quality reference framework – by Groupe URD. Standards based on a different view of the meaning of standards, where

4 Ian Christoplos and John Mitchell, 'A Humanitarian Ombudsman Revisited?', *ALNAP* (blog), 15 March 2018, available at: https://www.alnap.org/blogs/a-humanitarian-ombudsman-revisited (last visited 07 Mar. 2021); Hilhorst, 'Being Good at Doing Good?'

5 M.B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - Or War*. Boulder, CO, 1999.

6 A. Naik, 'The West Africa Sex Scandal', *Humanitarian Practice Network* (blog), October 2003, https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-west-africa-sex-scandal/ (last visited 08 Dec. 2019).

7 A. Callamard, 'The HAP and Humanitarian Accountability', *Humanitarian Practice Network* (blog), May 2003, available at: https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-hap-and-humanitarian-accountability/ (last visited 10 Dec. 2019).

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COMPASS aimed to be more adaptable to different types of crises and setting, rather than set universal standards.

2005 First **Humanitarian Accountability Report (HAR)**.

2007 **HAP Standard** to self-regulate quality assurance systems published, revised in 2010. As with many initiatives, the standard gained importance with reference to a recent crisis, in this case the 2004 Asian Tsunami that led to "Calls for more robust forms of agency regulation and programme quality assurance arose from studies and reviews of the December 2005 Asian tsunami response although there was little consensus on the details of such schemes".[8]

2011 Publication of the IASC Principals' **Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP)**. Five principles pertaining to leadership, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation, and design, monitoring and evaluation. This was followed by the creation of an IASC **Task force on Accountability to Affected Populations** in 2012.

2012 HAP, People in Aid and Sphere launch the **Joint Standards Initiative (JSI)** in order to review and seek coherence of humanitarian standards, based on a global stakeholder consultation.

2012 **Ground Truth Solutions**, an INGO, was created to amplify the voices of people affected by crisis, local partner organisations and field staff. It aims to have affected people influencing how humanitarian aid is designed and implemented.

2014 Launch of the **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)**, as outcome of the JSI. Copyright holders of the CHS are the CHS Alliance (formerly HAP and People in Aid), Sphere, and Groupe URD.

2014 Publication of **Handbook for Good Practice on Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Programmes** by Transparency International.

2015 Formation of the **Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance (CHSA)**, resulting from a merger between HAP International and People In Aid. While earlier standards completely relied on self-regulation and self-verification, the CHS is designed to enable independent certification, verification or benchmarking. Led to formation of **Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI)** – independent auditor for humanitarian and development sector using the Core Humanitarian Standard as its benchmark.

2016 Organisation of the **World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)** and launch of the **Grand Bargain.** The Grand Bargain included further commitments to the localisation of humanitarian aid and to accountability; centring around participation, community engagement and feedback. WHS especially acknowledged the diversity of actors in humanitarian crises by using the

8 HAP International, *Humanitarian Accountability Report 2006*, Geneva, HAP International, 2006, 9, available at: https://d1h79zlghft2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2021/02/2006HAR.pdf (last visited 25 Mar. 2021)

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term 'eco-system'in their documentation. In the prelude to the WHS, the Southern NGO network **NEAR** was formed.

2016 **Charter4Change** is an initiative launched at the WHS that solidifies commitments to localise humanitarian aid. It has been signed by 38 INGOs and endorsed by over 400 National and Local organisations. It also includes a **Charter for Accountability**, led by national and local NGOs, wherein downward accountability is seen as crucial for locally-led action.

2017 Renewed efforts for accountability in relation to **Protection against Sexual Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse** following the scandal about sexual abuse by aid workers in Haiti and elsewhere.

2018 Formation of the **Alliance for Empowering Partnership (A4EP)**, a network of Southern advocates for empowerment.

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