

Recommendations from the Bangkok Regional Workshop *Presentation to the Global Humanitarian Platform, 2 July 2008*

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Before coming to this meeting, I thought it would be helpful to gather the views of some of my colleagues in Bangladesh to supplement the findings of the regional GHP workshop in Bangkok and to share my experiences from the Bangkok workshop. I invited a broad range of international NGOs in Dhaka to a meeting to discuss the *Principles of Partnership* and the GHP. The turnout was very poor and no one knew about the PoP or the GHP, not even at the country director level.

Better Dissemination of the PoP is Needed

That disappointing reality is one that is not unique to Dhaka. At the Bangkok regional GHP workshop, it was very clear that there had not been adequate dissemination of the PoP within the humanitarian community. Organisations need to be clearer about how they see the PoP in terms of their organisational priorities. How much has each agency that has been part of the GHP done within your agencies to make sure the PoP are understood and used?

The ultimate aim of the PoP is to provide better protection and assistance to affected populations and to save more lives by working together. This aim is very important and could be stated more clearly in the wording of the *Principles* themselves.

There is a clear need for the PoP to be better *disseminated*, not just distributed and there needs to be the “socialisation” of the PoP within organisations. They need to be more practical and accessible.

Some of the recommendations that came out of the Bangkok workshop on how to help organisations better understand and use the PoP included:

- ✦ Insert an explanatory paragraph at the beginning of the PoP describing where they came from to help people understand their origins;
- ✦ CEOs should provide clearer expectations on how they want the PoP used within their agencies;
- ✦ The PoP should be given the same importance that other documents like the Code of Conduct and Sphere have within the humanitarian community. The PoP should be included with such documents so they are given more prominence and are better known.
- ✦ Provide more tools like the “10 practical ways to use the PoP,” which are useful, so that people know how to use the PoP in their daily work;
- ✦ Ensure further translations to help reach a broader audience. Since the Bangkok workshops, more translations have been made available; and
- ✦ Appoint focal points to help answer questions around the PoP.

There was also a concern about contextualising the PoPs for different situations. Can they be applied in the same way in both disasters and armed conflicts?

Building Partnerships and Relationships Before Humanitarian Crises

A very clear recommendation from the workshop was that partnerships need to be built in advance of disasters and armed conflicts: what could be called “sustained capacity building.” There needs to

be continuous work on strengthening partnerships, using the PoP as a guideline. Contingency planning processes, disaster risk reduction (DRR), or response preparedness are among the ways to work together, thus creating relationships that work.

The PoPs were seen as a useful tool for exploring and talking about partnership relations. Partnership should be enhanced by building on the existing capacity of partners, as well as building the capacity of partners. Such an approach needs to be integrated throughout organisations; total institution, including fund-raising capacity.

Examining a Real Case

The workshop looked at the response in Myanmar and how the PoP would be applied if the “flood gates” were opened and humanitarian organisations were allowed into the country. Since there will be a case study discussion on Myanmar, I won’t go further into that.

Challenges

There is a need to monitor and evaluate the way that the PoP are being used if we are to be serious about their implementation. We must find a “middle ground” between the “carrot approach” and the “stick approach” to ensure that PoP are being used to improve partnership.

There was a more direct challenge put to the heads of agency from the field. You were requested to report back to the field on the status of the implementation of last year’s GHP recommendations. And, six months after this year’s meeting, they would like to see a similar report back to the field on the recommendations that will be agreed today.

Finally, we should remember that the success of the PoP will be whether or not more lives have been saved as a result of their use.