**Sphere Session for SIMEX. May 2022**

**Training report**

Introduction

Since 2020, Sphere has provided humanitarian standards training to participants in SIMEX, the UK’s largest annual international disaster response exercise. It is an operational (live controlled) field exercise designed to establish a learning environment for players to exercise disaster event response plans, policies and procedures. Player participation

comprises of: activate, mobilise, respond operationally on scene, report (internally and externally), implement short and medium-term plans, hand-over, demobilise and complete after-action reviews.

The two Sphere sessions were two hours in duration and held at the start of each day. Roughly half of the participants attended the first session, and half the second.

Participants

The first training session was attended by 21 participants, the second session had 24. There was a range of age, knowledge and experience.

What went well?

* The session had few slides and maximised participation through group discussion, video and activities.
* There was a good balance of facilitated discussion and group work, making particularly good use of the Sphere Activity Cards.
* Participants had access to the Sphere Handbook online, as a download, or via the HSP app.

What could be done differently, in order to improve?

* Maybe start with a short group activity, if only as a warm-up.
* The two groups were at different stages in the SIMEX, the second group having already made significant progress. The dynamic felt slightly different in each; the first group seemed more engaged. Perhaps there is a way for all participants at the same time or, at least, on the same day?
* In future, ways could be found to relate the content of the session more closely to the SIMEX scenario.

Other comments

Many thanks to SIMEX staff for their briefings and support in advance and on the day, with special mention to Phil Crook and Naomi Morris.

Stephen Blakemore / May 2022