

Annual Report **2018**

spherestandards.org





Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of Sphere,

What a remarkable year! Not only did we launch the new edition of the Sphere Handbook after historic levels of consultations, we also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Sphere movement and how it has transformed the humanitarian sector. None of this would have been possible without the commitment of so many of you. It is because of the thousands of practitioners, advocates, partners and donors around the world that Sphere has truly transformed into a global community of shared purpose. Thank you for the work you do every day.

The fourth edition of the Handbook, launched in November, was a culmination of these efforts and brought the power of the Sphere network to light. It is the result of the most far-reaching and inclusive global consultation process in Sphere's history, with direct feedback from practitioners working for at least 450 organisations in more than 65 countries. To meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community of users, the Handbook was designed to be more accessible in language and format. The Handbook is printed, online and interactive and we will be continuing the momentum by creating a platform in 2019 for practitioners to contribute their own learning and expertise in real time. You can read more about the Handbook and the interactive platform on pages 4-5.

Following the global launch of the Handbook in Geneva, Sphere Focal Points and partners quickly took the opportunity to share it back with their own communities. You can read more about events which took place in Afghanistan, Germany, Indonesia, Spain, South Korea, Pakistan and Thailand on page 6. Many more events are planned for 2019, so please check our online calendar!

For the first time in our history, Sphere launched an open call for membership this year. All founding members renewed their membership and 35 new organisations joined, along with 50 individual practitioners. In November, the General Assembly elected the new Executive Committee and voted Colin Rogers of Plan International as President. You can read more about these changes in our governance on page 17.

Sphere's voluntary Focal Points network is a vital contribution to quality and accountability. In 2018, we welcomed five new Focal Points from China, the Czech Republic, Germany, Syria and Yemen, growing the total to 55 globally. Their work to advocate, train and promote Sphere locally and regionally is essential for implementing the standards in context.

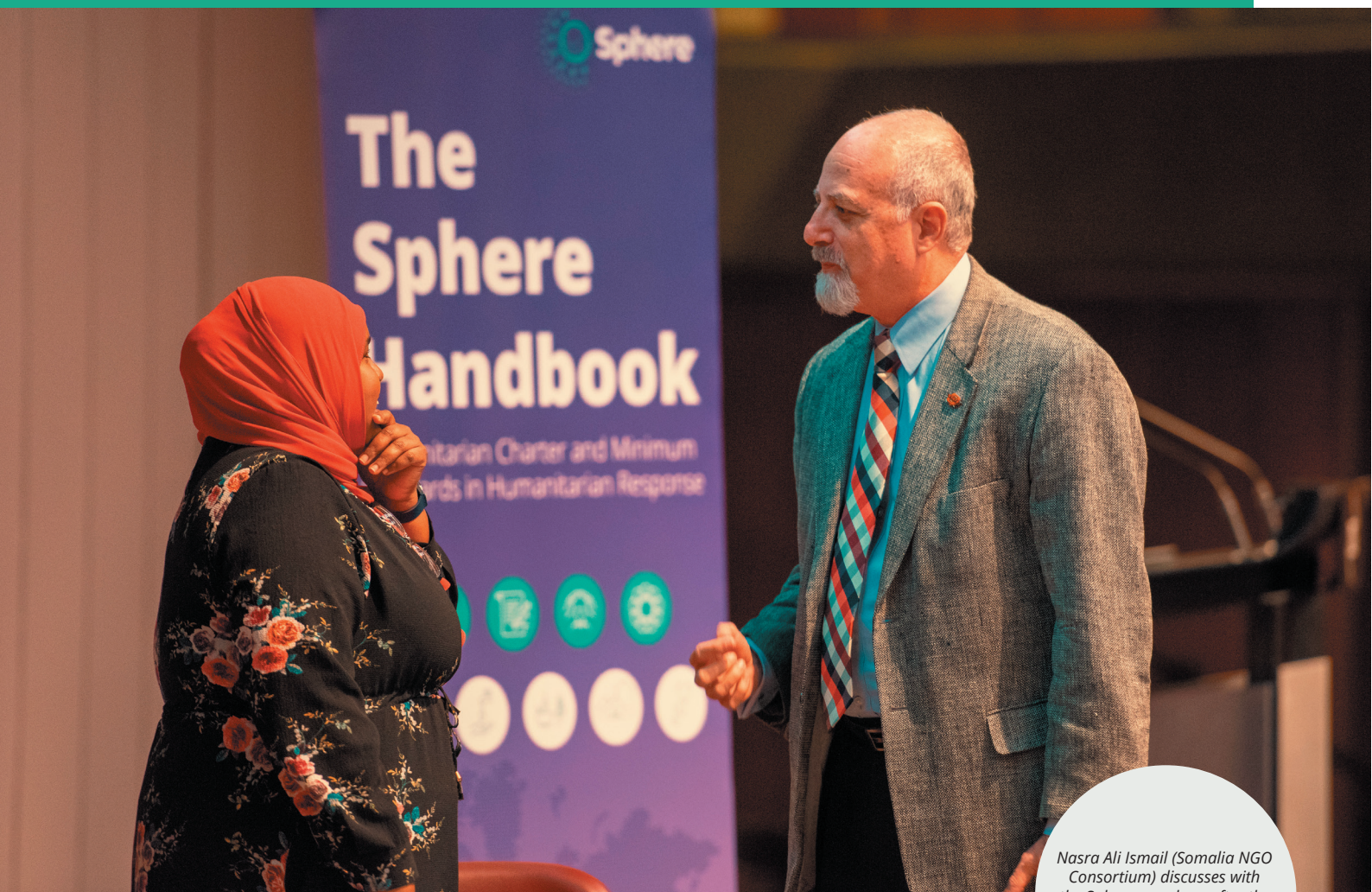
The Humanitarian Standards Partnership, a platform for cross-sectoral collaboration of standard-setting initiatives, also grew to include important work on the inclusion of older people and people with disabilities in humanitarian operations (see pages 13-14).

We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead with all of you, building on the achievements of 2018. With an expanded network, new and updated training tools, user-generated learning and an increasingly diverse community of humanitarian practitioners, Sphere stands ready to support your own work to improve quality and accountability. Most importantly, we will continue fostering lively exchange with practitioners to bring the Sphere standards to life.

We look forward to continuing this important work together!

Christine Knudsen
Executive Director

Table of contents



Nasra Ali Ismail (Somalia NGO Consortium) discusses with the Sphere members after the Geneva launch of the Sphere Handbook.

2018 AT A GLANCE	3
2018 SPHERE HANDBOOK	4
THE SPHERE NETWORK	7
TRAINING AND ADVOCACY	11
HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS PARTNERSHIP	13
COMMUNICATION	15
MANAGEMENT	17
AUDITOR'S REPORT	19



2018 at a glance

- Celebrating the **20th anniversary of the Sphere Handbook**, the fourth edition was released in November. The global launch in Geneva kicked off a series of worldwide events during which today's humanitarian challenges were discussed and debated by those who contributed to the Handbook.
- Sphere's **innovative interactive digital platform** allows users to seamlessly browse the Handbook and access additional resources online. The platform was created to become a collaboration tool with the Handbook users and capture humanitarian practice as it evolves.
- Sphere began a new institutional chapter by **opening its membership base** to individuals and organisations which share a strong commitment to improving quality and accountability in humanitarian action around the world.
- The Sphere General Assembly elected **new leadership**. This marked the transition from interim to full governance structures that has occurred since the organisation was registered in 2016.
- **Five new focal points** expanded the reach of Sphere's advocacy efforts in China, the Czech Republic, Germany, Syria and Yemen. The network now includes 55 Focal Points and one regional partner, spanning five continents.
- Sphere trainers held **workshops in more than 20 countries**. The Sphere training package was downloaded some 1,700 times during the year. A range of **new training resources** to support the revised Handbook is in the pipeline.
- The number of **national authorities embracing the Sphere standards** continued to grow. The Ecuadorian government joined Chile and the Philippines among others in formally recognising the Sphere standards as the normative basis for the country's humanitarian activities.
- The *Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities* became the **seventh member of the Humanitarian Standards Partnership**, providing guidance on how to ensure that the needs of older people and people with disabilities are taken into account in humanitarian response.
- A **newly launched website** introduced Sphere's offer to **Learn, Act and Connect** to support humanitarian quality and accountability. Available in four languages, the website presents comprehensive information on the new Handbook and learning events, as well as an invitation to engage with a dynamic global community.



The Handbook was launched in Lahore, Pakistan, in November 2018.

2018 Sphere Handbook



The Handbook launch event in Geneva gathered more than 200 participants.

The release of the fourth edition of the Sphere Handbook marked a historic milestone for both Sphere and the humanitarian community. Built on a deeply inclusive and comprehensive consultation process and grounded in the expertise of practitioners from across the globe, the new Handbook consolidates key developments that have transformed humanitarian assistance in recent years.

The first part of 2018 saw the final production stages of the Handbook after the broad

consultation process which concluded in 2017. The final text was approved by the Sphere Executive Committee in May and translated into Sphere's working languages (Arabic, French, Spanish). The Handbook was launched in Geneva on 6 November, with new Sphere members and many of Sphere's founders joining the 20th anniversary event.

This edition of the Handbook was produced in plain English, to be more accessible to practitioners and more easily translated. Commitments to translate into Chinese, Ger-

What is new in the Sphere Handbook 2018?

- The Handbook builds on evidence and experience in key areas that are driving shifts in how humanitarian assistance and protection are provided. These include increasing needs in **urban settings**, more complex and **protracted crises** and the growing use of **cash-based assistance** in humanitarian action.
- The new edition has a much stronger and consistent focus on **community engagement**, participation and accountability across all chapters.
- More attention is given to working with **national and local authorities** to localise the Sphere approach to context.
- **New standards have been developed**, such as WASH in healthcare settings, security of tenure, clinical management of rape and palliative care.
- The **Core Humanitarian Standard** is fully integrated into the Handbook and joins the Humanitarian Charter and Protection Principles as part of the foundational chapters.

man, Japanese and Urdu were already in place by the end of the year and more languages are expected in 2019.

A new digital way to explore humanitarian standards: The Interactive Handbook

The revised Sphere standards were immediately accessible in a range of portable formats – such as PDF, mobile app and hard copy books – to meet the needs and preferences of an increasingly diverse community of users. The Handbook is also available through an online digital platform which allows interactive access and a more dynamic user experience.

Users can now easily browse through chapters and themes, click through to related standards in other chapters and quickly check references. Starting in 2019, users will also be able to add real-time comments and



share their experience of working with the standards. They will be able to upload emerging evidence or new case studies and discuss with other users through a moderated forum. Over time, the digital platform will become a collaboration tool which captures ongoing changes in practice and knowledge. Sphere will support these conversations and exchanges within the humanitarian community, building on the momentum and engagement of the revision consultations.

Past and future of humanitarian standards: celebrating 20 years of the Sphere movement

The publication of the flagship Sphere Handbook also marked a milestone as Sphere reached its 20th anniversary. To celebrate, Sphere hosted a special event

in Geneva on 6 November with more than 200 participants, including founding members, leaders from Sphere's early days and practitioners from around the world.

The evening opened with keynote reflections from Peter Walker, one of Sphere's founders in 1997 and Christine Knudsen, Sphere's current Executive Director. They discussed the evolving role of humanitarian standards, changes within the humanitarian sector over the last 20 years and emerging challenges to quality in the sector. In a thoughtful debate moderated by Heba Aly (Director of IRIN / The New Humanitarian), Nasra Ismail (Somalia NGO Consortium), Jagan Chapagain (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC) and James Darcy (2011 lead author of the Protection Principles and Humanitarian Charter), reflected on how the standards created a common language among different humanitarian actors and contributed to collective capacity. They noted challenges to the humanitarian principles in daily work and how Sphere's integrated approach to principled quality and accountability continue to be a benchmark for professionalisation in the sector. In their view, the standards increasingly constitute a normative basis for humanitarian response, where governments can build local frameworks to protect the rights of people and communities affected by crisis.



Two artistic performances held in the Umerkot district, Pakistan, introduced the content of the Handbook to local communities.

"When we started it, we had a hard time publishing the Handbook. It now exists in more than 30 languages. The humanitarian community has taken it, run with it and improved it over 20 years."

Peter Walker
co-founder
of the Sphere movement

"I like to call Sphere the 'North Star' which guides us".

Nasra Ali Ismail
Deputy Director of Somalia NGO Consortium, a Sphere member organisation

Introducing the new Handbook to the global Sphere community

Following the launch in Geneva, a series of events organised by members, partners and other stakeholders took place and continues in 2019. Sphere Focal Points, trainers and members presented the new elements of the latest Handbook edition and explored how the use of the revised standards could leverage work within their communities. In the last two months of 2018, events were held in Afghanistan, Germany, Indonesia, Spain, South Korea, Pakistan and Thailand.

- Some 150 participants from more than 30 countries attended the regional launch held in **Bangkok**, Thailand – hosted by Community World Service Asia (CWSA) and with the active participation of the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network, ALNAP, Church of Sweden and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). The event also wrapped up a six-day Training of Trainers on using standards in practice.
- In Spain, the Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria (IECAH) organised a series of Handbook launch events in Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao and Valencia. **The Madrid** event gathered some 70 participants and a wide range of stake-

holders, including representatives from the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation, the country's development NGOs network, the Spanish Red Cross, Oxfam Intermón and Fundación La Caixa. The lively discussion was highlighted in an article which appeared in the Spanish newspaper El País and which defined Sphere as an “essential reference” for actors involved in humanitarian response.

- The Handbook launch event in **Bonn**, Germany, was hosted by Aktion Deutschland Hilft (ADH) and Deutsche Post DHL with the participation of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The event covered issues related to disaster preparedness (including rapid recovery of logistics functions), emergency training for rapid response teams and ways to link training and preparedness between Deutsche Post's GoHelp program and Sphere.
- CWSA organised performances of a play in two villages of the **Umerkot** district, Pakistan, introducing the content of the new Handbook to local communities. Some 130 people from across the district attended the performances, which included music and allowed participants to interact with the artists. Focusing on the Sphere standard on “Food assistance targeting, distribution and delivery”, the play revealed the needs and preferences of the communities in terms of cash and voucher mechanisms.






“We learnt that the Sphere Handbook caters to the needs of all women, children and – most importantly – the disabled members of the community, who mostly go unnoticed.”

Jai Ram Dhaas

from the Ratan Bheel village in Pakistan, after attending a launch event.

The Sphere network



-  Focal Points and Regional Partners
-  Member organisations
-  Individual members

55

Focal Points and
one regional
partner

35

Member
organisations

50

Individual
members

MENA

7 3 6

Asia

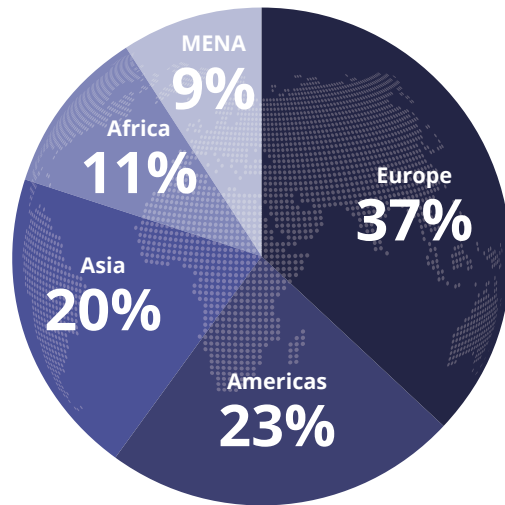
22 7 4

Africa

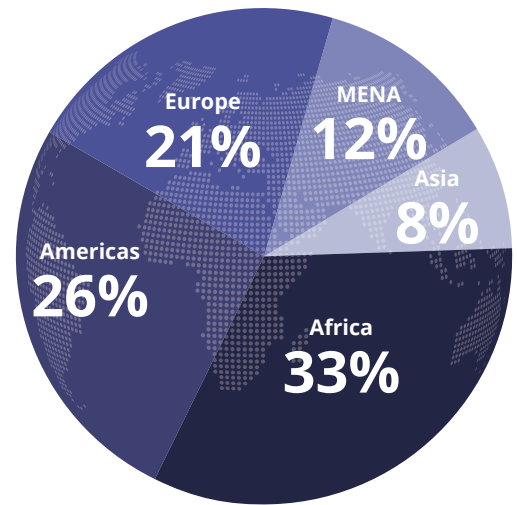
7 4 16

Oceania

1



Sphere members by region
Member organisations



Sphere members by region
Individual members

Membership

Sphere also marked its 20th anniversary by beginning a new chapter of its history, as it invited users of Sphere to become members of Sphere and to play an active role in its development and direction.

The membership offer was launched in June and invited individuals and organisations to join Sphere, along with the founding members who each represent international federations of NGOs. All Sphere members share a belief in the power of applying humanitarian standards in achieving principled humanitarian action.

This shift marked the full establishment of Sphere's new participatory governance structure as an independent organisation. Sphere members now play a key role in decision-making through the General Assembly, including the organisation's strategic direction in coming years. They contribute to the global activities of the Sphere community, acting as catalysts for improved humanitarian quality and accountability.

All of Sphere's founding members reaffirmed their long-standing commitment, as well as 11 Focal Points. The result is a more geographically diverse group, as well as more balance between large and small, international and national NGOs. By the end of the year, 35 organisations and some 50 individuals had formally become Sphere members.

"Becoming a member of Sphere is a huge plus. It shows our commitment to humanitarian standards and tells the world that we are accountable to affected people."

Manu Gupta
co-founder and director
of SEEDS India

Network

The Sphere network, a global community of practitioners committed to promoting and advocating for Sphere standards at country and regional levels, continued to grow in 2018. Five additional Focal Point organisations joined the network, expanding the reach of Sphere's advocacy efforts in China, the Czech Republic, Germany, Syria and Yemen. By the end of the year, the network included 55 Focal Points and one regional partner, spanning five continents.

"My team is just back from a humanitarian mission in Lombok and we're now starting a new one in Palu to respond to the earthquake and tsunami. During our missions, we always use the Sphere Handbook to improve quality and responsibility and ensure accountability for our humanitarian actions. We are greatly helped by this handbook."

Dwi Sakti, humanitarian practitioner, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) Indonesia and the Philippines

Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina, a member of the Sphere Focal Point group in that country, translated the 2011 Sphere Handbook into Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. In Iraqi Kurdistan, the Barzani Charity Foundation released a Kurdish version of the same edition. Thanks in part to this contribution, the 2011 Handbook became available in 39 languages and accessible to many more practitioners and communities.

The Sphere network played a key role in the launch and dissemination of the 2018 Handbook, organising events in seven countries as well as several training workshops. Ecuador was the first country in Latin America



Sphere trainers and Focal Points in south-east Asia held workshops with a focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian assistance.

“We are looking forward to working together [with Sphere] to lift the level of standards in emergency response with local players.”


Khaled Erksoussi
Secretary General of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

to update local trainers about the new elements in the Sphere Handbook 2018. CARE International organised a successful Training of Trainers event in December, hosted by the national Disaster Risk Management Secretariat (Sphere Focal Point in the country) and with support from the European Union’s humanitarian agency (ECHO). CARE also translated part of the Sphere communications material on the Handbook into Spanish, making it accessible to Latin American participants.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), the newly recognised Focal Point in Syria, organised Sphere training workshops in rural Damascus and Aleppo in December. The 50 SARC volunteers and employees who attended found Sphere to be a practical resource and an excellent coordination tool for response teams on the ground. A video


produced by SARC shows snapshots of the training and the feedback of participants. It is available at bit.ly/SARC-Sphere-training.

Sphere trainers and Focal Points in Bangladesh and Indonesia facilitated workshops with a focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian assistance. The training events were accessible to all humanitarian practitioners, regardless of their physical ability, including through translations into sign language.



Learn

Sphere Knowledge
Sphere members have the opportunities to learn about humanitarian standards and how to use



Act

Sphere in practice
Sphere membership strengthens the member’s advocacy for improvement on the ground, acting on Sphere Knowledge in context



Connect

Sphere community
Sphere members can now join fellow organisations in a vibrant global community, committed to improving quality and accountability across the sector

Training and advocacy

Learning and training

Sphere's training activities continued to reach a broad segment of the humanitarian community. Sphere trainers held workshops in at least 20 countries, including at-risk and crisis-affected contexts such as Sudan, the Philippines, Pakistan and Syria. Training of Trainer sessions were conducted in at least six countries, with new trainers supported in building awareness and capacity for putting standards into practice.

Sphere updated its training resources and developed new materials based on the content of the new Handbook edition. Among these, the What is New in the 2018 Sphere Handbook? learning module aims to support trainers and lecturers in any presentation, seminar or workshop focusing on the new edition. The module was tested in Ecuador before its release in January 2019.

The Sphere training package, covering virtually all aspects of the use of Sphere standards, was downloaded some 1,700 times during the year. Sphere began working on a fully updated edition of the training package, to be tested and released in 2019.

Sphere workshops were conducted in Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Ecuador, Germany, Indonesia (including North Sumatra), Iran, Iraq, Japan, Libya, Myanmar, North Korea, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Sudan, Syria and the USA.

Training of Trainer events were conducted in Bolivia, Ecuador, Lebanon, Libya, Paraguay and the Philippines.

"The Sphere standards are now used as references in Ecuador's national response plan to define protection rights, principles of humanitarian action and the technical actions to be implemented in case of a disaster. This will allow for much more effective humanitarian action."

Daniel Arteaga

Ecuadorian disaster management expert and Sphere trainer

A library of e-learning resources, provided by members of the Humanitarian Standards Partnership and other partners, was published on the Sphere website as a "one-stop shop" for online courses on humanitarian standards. As of November, the library featured a newly released "How to be a Sphere Champion" course, available in four languages. The course helps practitioners learn how to promote Sphere within their network and how this benefits people affected by crises. The "Sphere Handbook in Action" e-learning remained popular, with 2,150 people completing it (on the Sphere platform alone) in 2018. Sphere's Learning Management System (LMS), the software used to deliver online courses, was also updated to comply with data protection regulations and to be responsive on mobile devices.

Advocacy

Sphere's 2018 advocacy activities largely revolved around the launch of the 2018 Sphere Handbook and the global engagement that it generated. Through the members of the global network, Sphere also continued to support local and international actors in promoting the application of humanitarian standards.

The advocacy efforts of the Sphere Focal Point in Ecuador, the Secretaría de Gestión de Riesgos and local members of the Sphere community resulted in the reaffirmation of the role of humanitarian standards as the foundation of local risk management structures. Just as Chile and the Philippines had done in 2017, the government of Ecuador formally recognised the Sphere standards as the normative basis for the country's humanitarian response activities in its newly adopted National Disaster Response Plan. Sphere was acknowledged as a core partner for work on disaster preparedness.



The Syrian Arab Red Crescent organised Sphere workshops in Damascus and Aleppo in December.



The Quality and Accountability group discussed issues around localisation and the empowerment of crisis-affected communities.

The Japan Quality and Accountability Network (JQAN), together with Sphere Focal Point JANIC, continued to work closely with the Japanese government in developing and delivering trainings to local humanitarian actors, based on the Sphere standards. These efforts resulted in a shift in governmental policies. Breaking with a centralised approach, the government has been increasingly contracting local NGOs – considered more trustworthy due to their application of standards – to manage disaster response centres.

In October, Sphere hosted the biannual meeting of the Quality & Accountability Group, an informal gathering of individuals and organisations. Ahead of that meeting, Sphere invited some 20 experts to discuss issues around localisation and how standards can be used to not only improve programming but also empower crisis-affected communities.



“In the Tokushima prefecture, in the west of Japan, they learned about Sphere and decided that every staff member in the crisis management unit should be trained in Sphere standards. There is an increasing recognition that agencies that adhere to international standards are trustworthy in crisis management situations.”

Takeshi Komino

General Secretary of Church World Service Japan, JQAN representative and co-author of the Sphere Handbook CHS chapter

Responding to Typhoon Mangkhut in the Philippines

In September 2018, Typhoon Mangkhut caused devastation across several regions in south-east Asia. In the Philippines, Sphere supported local NGO LifeHaven in delivering training to the humanitarian workers directly involved in the response. The two-day event took place in October in Tuguegarao, a region which was significantly affected by the typhoon. The workshop was designed to be facilitated and attended by persons with disabilities. Sphere also used this opportunity to pilot a set of training materials specifically developed for emergencies.

Humanitarian Standards Partnership



The Humanitarian Standards Partnership (HSP), developed out of the “companion standards” model of collaboration between Sphere and other sectoral standards, welcomed a new partner. The Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities became the seventh HSP member in May.

These standards, developed by the Age and Disability Capacity Programme (ADCAP), offer guidance on ensuring that older people and people with disabilities are fully engaged and involved in all stages of humanitarian action. These standards fill an important gap by providing specific guidance in an area that was only partially covered by other HSP initiatives.

The partnership also continued to advocate for a wider application of humanitarian standards. During UNOCHA’s Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week, it hosted an open session entitled “Minimum Standards in the Real World”. During the session, participants from different backgrounds were invited to discuss challenges in standards implementation and means to overcome them.

In August, Sphere’s Aninia Nadig presented a paper developed by HSP members at the World Conference on Humanitarian Studies in The Hague. The paper discussed the role of humanitarian standards in shifting agency towards local actors to increase participation and accountability in disaster management.

The HSP mobile application, also called "HSPapp", continued to respond to the needs of fieldworkers around the globe. Since its release in October 2017, the application has allowed users to access and browse six sets of humanitarian standards, even when off-line. By its first anniversary, the app had been installed some 9,400 times across 184 countries. This high user rating shows that the HSPapp is an essential tool for any humanitarian practitioner on the move.

As part of Sphere's new governance structure, the HSP maintains a seat on the 12-member Executive Committee to ensure that Sphere's key role as a convening platform for multi-sectoral standards continues in the ExCom's deliberations.

The aim of the Humanitarian Standards Partnership is to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian action across all sectors and a harmonised approach to support users in the application of standards.

The Partnership organises joint training opportunities, research and outreach initiatives and advocacy activities calling for an increased application of humanitarian standards.



The HSPapp One year later



9,404
App installs



296,000+
Page views



184
countries



4.8/5
App rating



The HSP Steering Committee met in Geneva in November.



Communication

Sphere increased its visibility with the humanitarian community and shared important information on humanitarian quality and accountability through a range of communications channels.

2018 saw the launch of a new visual identity that better represents Sphere's current status as an independent organisation and a convening platform within the humanitarian community. The brand gives the organisation a fresher look, while the new logo builds on the recognised elements of Sphere and recalls the global reach of Sphere's activities.

To support the launch and dissemination of the new Sphere Handbook, Sphere produced a wide range of communication materials and made this launch pack available to partners planning an event. The pack included a short video detailing the focus of the 2018 edition as well as a series of video interviews with Handbook authors.

A new website was developed to better present Sphere's activities. Sphere-standards.org, available in four languages, features new ways to engage with the Sphere community, as well as an improved resources menu and informative pages on

humanitarian standards. In the six months that followed the launch, the website was visited by 52,000 unique users.

Sphere's contact database and social-media audience base continued to grow steadily. By the end of the year, the Sphere mailing list included more than 103,000 subscribers, having gained an additional 3,800 since the previous year. The Facebook page reached more than 15,400 users, while some 7,000 people followed Sphere on Twitter. Since July 2018, Sphere is also active on LinkedIn.

The Sphere staff participated in key international events, where they had the chance to exchange, learn and discuss with humanitarian practitioners from across the globe on issues of humanitarian quality and practice:

- OCHA's Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week, Geneva (February);
- InterAction Forum, Washington DC (June);
- UNHCR's Annual Consultations with NGOs, Geneva (June);
- ECHO Partners Conference, Brussels (November);
- Act Alliance General Assembly, Uppsala (November).




and then distill that experience in the Sphere Handbook.

This animated video, which supports Handbook users in familiarising with the 2018 edition, presents the new elements in the Handbook in a simple and engaging way. Watch the video at bit.ly/what-is-new-video




The Sphere Handbook launch pack: The authors' video interview series



 **20 years of quality and accountability
for humanitarian action**
bit.ly/20-years-Sphere-authors

 **Who is using the Sphere handbook?**
bit.ly/using-Handbook-authors

 **What is new in the fourth edition of the
Handbook? The authors' perspective**
bit.ly/what-is-new-authors-perspectives

 **The Handbook consultation process**
bit.ly/Handbook-consultations-authors

Management

Governance

The Sphere General Assembly met twice during 2018, in May (hosted by Oxfam Intermón in Barcelona) and in November (hosted by Sphere in Geneva).

During the May meeting, the General Assembly approved amendments to the Sphere Statutes, revised to reflect Sphere's new membership offer as well as the detailed by-laws for governance and membership mechanisms.

The Executive Committee was also tasked with the review of the draft Handbook. This included a review of the process and of the aims of the revision as well as the final text and product. The Handbook was endorsed and approved, with comments provided to ensure the final edit had the length and focus agreed upon in 2016. These comments were brought on board and the final text and structure were approved and sent for production in early July.

An extraordinary General Assembly meeting in November welcomed all new members and elected a new Executive Committee. Colin Rogers (Plan International) was elected as the new Sphere president. The Assembly warmly thanked outgoing president Martin McCann (RedR UK) for his service and dedication over the past years. Suzanna Tkalec (Caritas Internationalis) was appointed Sphere's new Vice-President, while Nelson Castano (IFRC) was named Treasurer. The meeting was an opportunity to present the new elements in the 2018 Handbook and report achievements against Sphere's 2015–2020 strategy.

An extraordinary General Assembly meeting in November welcomed its new members.



Sphere's Executive Committee

Plan International

Representative:
Colin Rogers (President)

Caritas Internationalis

Representative:
Suzanna Tkalec (Vice President)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Representative:
Nelson Castano (Treasurer)

ACT Alliance

Representative:
Alwynn Javier

Concern Worldwide

Representative:
Ros O'Sullivan

International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

Representative:
Ignacio Packer

Humanitarian Standards Partnership

Representative:
Minja Peuschel

RedR International

Representative:
Tanaji Sen

Save the Children

Representative:
Rohan Kent

Sphere India

Representative:
Vikrant Mahajan

Co-opted members

Two additional members were co-opted to ensure the full composition of the Executive Committee, as per Sphere Statutes and invited to join the Committee at its first meeting in 2019.

BIFERD

Representative:
Jonas Habimana Seruvugu

Somalia NGO Consortium

Representative:
Nasra Ali Ismail

Management and financials

At the end of 2018, the Sphere office in Geneva was composed of seven staff members. A new Communications and Membership Director position was created in February and charged with the task of leading the development of Sphere's community of practice as well as its global communication activities. It became a full-time position in September.

Sphere's consolidated operating revenues in 2018 amounted to 1,529,207 CHF. This represents a decrease of 16.2% compared with the previous year, largely due to some multi-year grants which were fully received in 2017, in support of the 2017-2018 programmatic activities related to the Handbook's development and production.

Consolidated operating expenses rose to 1,628,188 CHF, with a 13.4% increase since 2017. This increase was mainly due to the production phase of the 2018 Handbook and the related launch events.

For more details, please refer to the financial statements annexed in this report. The full Consolidated Financial Statements and Auditors' Report are available at spherestandards.org/financials-2018.

The generous support of donors made Sphere's activities possible throughout the year. Sphere appreciates the increasing diversity of its donor base, as well as growing number of multi-year grants which translate donors' long-term commitment to this work.

Sphere is deeply grateful for the support of the following donors:

- Australian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), Department of State, United States of America
- Church of Sweden (SIDA)
- Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA)
- German Humanitarian Assistance, Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Germany
- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Irish Aid
- Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), US Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Switzerland Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

The Sphere office staff

Christine Knudsen, Executive Director
Tanya Wood, Membership Director (from March to July 2018)
Romain Benicchio, Strategic Communications and Membership Director (as of September 2018)
Tristan Hale, Learning and Training Manager
Wassila Mansouri, Membership and Network Officer
Aninia Nadig, Policy and Advocacy Manager
Barbara Sartore, Communications Manager
Loredana Serban, Finance and Administration Officer

The newly elected Sphere president Colin Rogers (left) with the outgoing president Martin McCann.



Report of the auditors on the abstract of the financial statements to the Board of Sphere Association Geneva

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprise the balance sheet and the statement of income and expenses for the year ended 31 December 2018 are derived from the examined financial statements of Sphere Association for the year ended 31 December 2018. We expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements in our report dated 15 April 2019. Those financial statements, and the summary financial statements, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on those financial statements.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Swiss GAAP FER, the Swiss law and the association's articles of incorporation. Reading the summary financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of Sphere Association.

Board's responsibility

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of Swiss GAAP FER, the Swiss law and the association's articles of incorporation.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Swiss Auditing Standard (SAS) 810, 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the examined financial statements of Sphere Association for the year ended 31 December 2018 are consistent, in all material respects, with those financial statements, prepared in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER, the Swiss law and the association's articles of incorporation.

PricewaterhouseCoopers SA

Marc Secretan
Audit expert
Auditor in charge

Marcello Stimato
Audit expert

Geneva, 18 April 2019

Enclosure:

- Financial statements (balance sheet and statement of income and expenses)

*PricewaterhouseCoopers SA, avenue Giuseppe-Motta 50, case postale, CH-1211 Genève 2, Switzerland
Téléphone: +41 58 792 91 00, Téléfax: +41 58 792 91 10, www.pwc.ch*

PricewaterhouseCoopers SA is a member of the global PricewaterhouseCoopers network of firms, each of which is a separate and independent legal entity.

Balance sheet

as at 31 December 2018

With comparative year figure
in Swiss francs

ASSETS	<i>Notes</i>	2018	2017
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	221'319	349'078
Accounts receivable	6	224	33'618
Accrued income	7	447'395	304'983
Prepaid expenses		10'893	9'563
Total Current Assets		679'831	697'242
Non current assets			
Guarantee rental deposit		12'269	12'267
Total Non current assets		12'269	12'267
TOTAL ASSETS		692'100	709'509
LIABILITIES			
Short-term liabilities			
Accounts payable		79'133	78'820
Accrued expenses		137'226	72'112
Total Short-term liabilities		216'359	150'932
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds		237'325	339'897
Total Restricted funds		237'325	339'897
Capital of the organisation			
General reserve		74'402	66'329
Operational reserve		142'990	102'990
Specific project balances Sphere Handbooks		-	41'288
Specific project balances Strategic Development		20'000	0
Net result of the year		1'024	8'073
Total Capital of the organisation		238'416	218'680
TOTAL LIABILITIES		692'100	709'509

Balance sheet

as at 31 December 2018

With comparative year figure

in Swiss francs

ASSETS	<i>Notes</i>	2018	2017
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	221'319	349'078
Accounts receivable	6	224	33'618
Accrued income	7	447'395	304'983
Prepaid expenses		10'893	9'563
Total Current Assets		679'831	697'242
Non current assets			
Guarantee rental deposit		12'269	12'267
Total Non current assets		12'269	12'267
TOTAL ASSETS		692'100	709'509
LIABILITIES			
Short-term liabilities			
Accounts payable		79'133	78'820
Accrued expenses		137'226	72'112
Total Short-term liabilities		216'359	150'932
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds		237'325	339'897
Total Restricted funds		237'325	339'897
Capital of the organisation			
General reserve		74'402	66'329
Operational reserve		142'990	102'990
Specific project balances Sphere Handbooks		-	41'288
Specific project balances Strategic Development		20'000	0
Net result of the year		1'024	8'073
Total Capital of the organisation		238'416	218'680
TOTAL LIABILITIES		692'100	709'509

Design: Franck Carlichy - <http://franckcarlichy.com>


We are grateful to Community World Service Asia (pages 3, 6), the Japan Quality and Accountability Network (page 12), Alexander Petrenko (pages 2, 3, 4, 16), Barbara Sartore (pages 12, 13, 14, 17, 18), Axel Schmidt (page 10) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (page 11) for the pictures included in this report.





Sphere

Rue de Varembe 3 | 1202 Geneva | Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 522 3679 | info@spherestandards.org

 [sphereNGO](#)

 [spherePRO](#)

 [spherestandards](#)