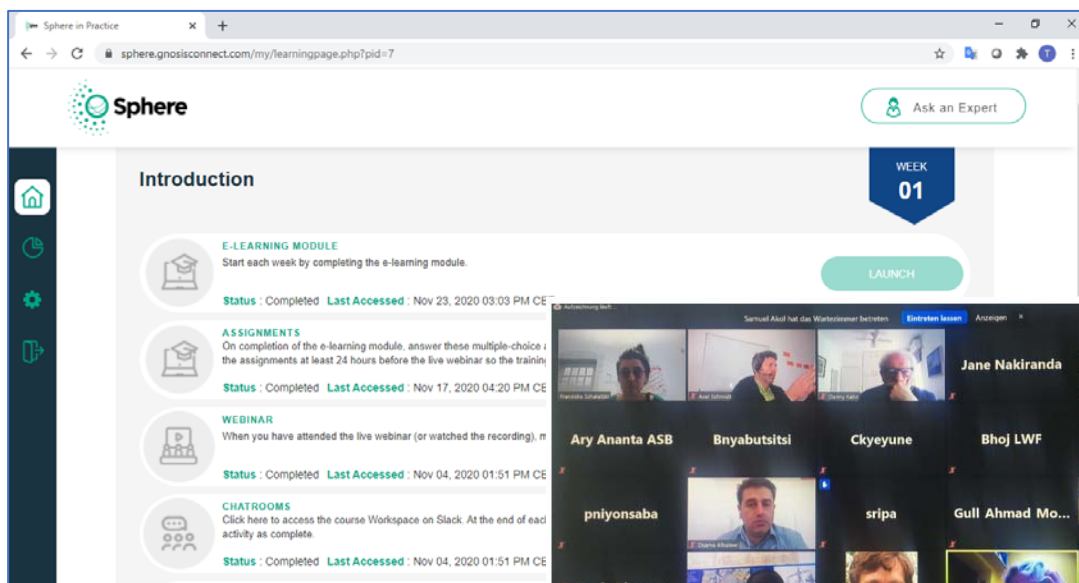


# Sphere in Practice

Massive online open course (MOOC) pilot

Online

5th to 19th November 2020



Screenshot of the Sphere in Practice learning journey on GnosisConnect



Screenshot of a Zoom webinar

## Contents

Background .....	2
Participation .....	2
Participant learning objectives .....	3
Training team .....	4
Agenda .....	4
Course statistics .....	5
Webinar data .....	6
Forum data .....	7
Conclusions .....	8
Appendix 1: Participant end-of-course survey results .....	9

## Background

Sphere in Practice (SIP) is a new online course due for release in early 2021. It can be taken by anyone at any time as a self-paced e-learning course, with a total study time of around 8 hours. Additionally, SIP can be run as a MOOC lasting 5 to 7 weeks, where each of the 5 e-learning modules are complemented by live webinars and moderated discussion forums. Done properly, the estimated total study time for the MOOC is around 20 hours.

In November 2020, Sphere was joined by Sphere focal points, ADH and ASB to deliver a pilot version of the Sphere in Practice MOOC lasting 2 weeks. The main objectives of this course were as follows:

1. to get actionable feedback on all aspects and elements of the MOOC, including the e-learning modules, videos, webinars, infographics, moderated forums, certificates, the new LMS, participant onboarding, guest speakers (subject matter experts), communications, surveys, certificates, etc.;
2. to give the training team practical experience of running the MOOC;
3. to capture the lessons learned through the feedback and practical experience and to pass this knowledge on to people and organisation that will run this course in the future;
4. to provide a new Sphere learning experience (limited to 2/5ths of the total SIP content) to less-experienced participants; and
5. to inspire more-experienced participants to run this course themselves, notably in French, Spanish and Arabic.

## Participation

The new MOOC materials are designed for courses with around 1,000 participants. We decided to target 100 participants for the pilot, from which it should be possible to make reasonable projections about the additional work required to effectively support ten times this number.

Given the specific objectives of this pilot MOOC as presented above, the first group of people targeted were Sphere trainers, Sphere focal point representatives, and Sphere members. These groups were essential for achieving objectives 1 and 5.

The invitation was also sent to ADH member organisations, which includes individuals with a wider range of Sphere experience.

At just 20 hours of learning, the MOOC is designed as an introductory-level course, so the eventual target audience for the full MOOC courses is not experienced Sphere practitioners, but rather people who are relatively new not only to Sphere but to the humanitarian sector. The feedback of less-experience people was therefore very important for achieving objective 1 (to give a different perspective from the experienced Sphere practitioners) and objective 4.

To compensate for expected drop out rates, 169 participants were pre-registered and sent instructions on how to complete their registration on the e-learning platform and start the course.

## Participant learning objectives

### Week 1: Introduction

#### E-learning module

After completing this introductory e-learning module, you will be able to:

- access the Sphere Handbook in several different ways;
- recount the history, vision and philosophy of Sphere;
- define the structure of the Handbook, including the foundation chapters, the technical standards and the annexes;
- explain how an organisation or individual can adopt the Sphere approach;
- recognise the elements of a minimum standard;
- distinguish the typical phases in the humanitarian programme cycle;
- identify the key contextual factors when providing assistance during a crisis.

#### Webinar

The idea of the webinars is not to repeat material in the e-learning modules but to reinforce some key points; to review participants' answers to the multiple-choice and open-ended questions; and to give participants the chance to put questions to the Sphere and other subject matter experts.

The week 1 webinars were facilitated by the core training team.

### Week 2: Drought in Abudi

#### E-learning module

By the end of this scenario-based module, you will be able to:

- define the principles, rights and duties outlined in the Humanitarian Charter;
- identify the value of information-sharing and effective two-way communication with affected people;
- recognise the value of active participation and of building on existing capacities in areas affected by crisis and conflict;
- explain the importance of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA);
- use the Sphere Handbook to analyse programmes to manage malnutrition and to support feeding of infants and young children.

#### Webinar

For the week 2 webinars, the training team was joined by guest speakers who are experts in PSEA and gender-based violence (GBV).

## Training team

### Core training team:

- Leo Frey (ADH): Course management
- Tristan Hale (Sphere): Course management, webinar co-host, forum moderator
- Ibrahim Hatibu (consultant): Webinar lead facilitator (Sphere expert), forum moderator
- Franz Schaeletzki (ADH): Course management, webinar host, webinar co-facilitator, forum moderator
- Axel Schmidt (ASB): Course management, webinar co-host, webinar backup facilitator, forum moderator

### Guest speakers:

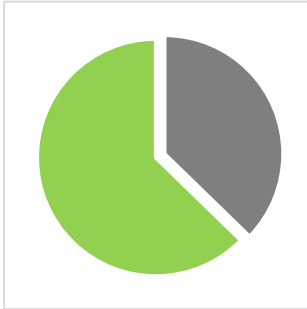
- Christine Ash-Buechner (consultant): Webinar guest speaker, forum moderator (PSEA/GBV subject matter expert)
- Jeanne Ward (consultant): Webinar guest speaker, forum moderator (PSEA/GBV subject matter expert)

## Agenda

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Onboarding users to digital platforms</b> Note this process should be given at least one week, but only two days were possible for the pilot as the new LMS was still being configured and tested.
<b>5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Module 1: e-learning, assignments, and moderated forums</b> Participants complete the first e-learning module, then complete the assignments (consisting of a quiz of multiple-choice questions and some open-ended questions). Several chatrooms are open. The topics in module 1 are: Introduction to Sphere; A consistent approach; Sphere in context; and Quality and accountability (Q&A)
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Module 1: webinar</b> This webinar was run once at 9am CET and again at 4pm CET to allow participants from the Americas, through Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, to East Asia to participate in one of the two sessions.
<b>11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Module 2: e-learning, assignments, and moderated forums</b> Throughout week 2, the PSEA/GBV experts moderated a PSEA forum.
<b>18<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Module 2: webinar</b> This webinar was also run twice. The guest speaker for the 9am CET session was Christine (based in Europe) and the guest speaker for the 4pm CET session was Jeanne (based in the Americas).
<b>19<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Open feedback conference</b> Participants were invited to join a Zoom meeting at 9am CET or 4pm CET to offer their feedback.
<b>19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup></b> November	<b>Catching up period</b> The learning platform remained active until the end of the month, giving participants the chance to catch up on any activities they missed. Webinar recordings were available via the learning platform.
December	<b>Certificates</b>

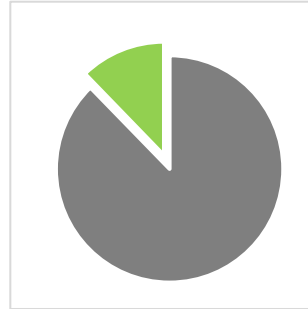
## Course statistics

Registrants that started at least one activity:  
106 out of 169 = 63%



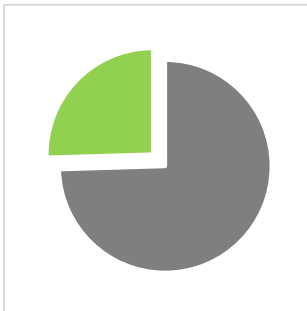
Pre-course dropout rate: 37%

Participants that completed all 10 activities:  
13 out of 106 = 12%



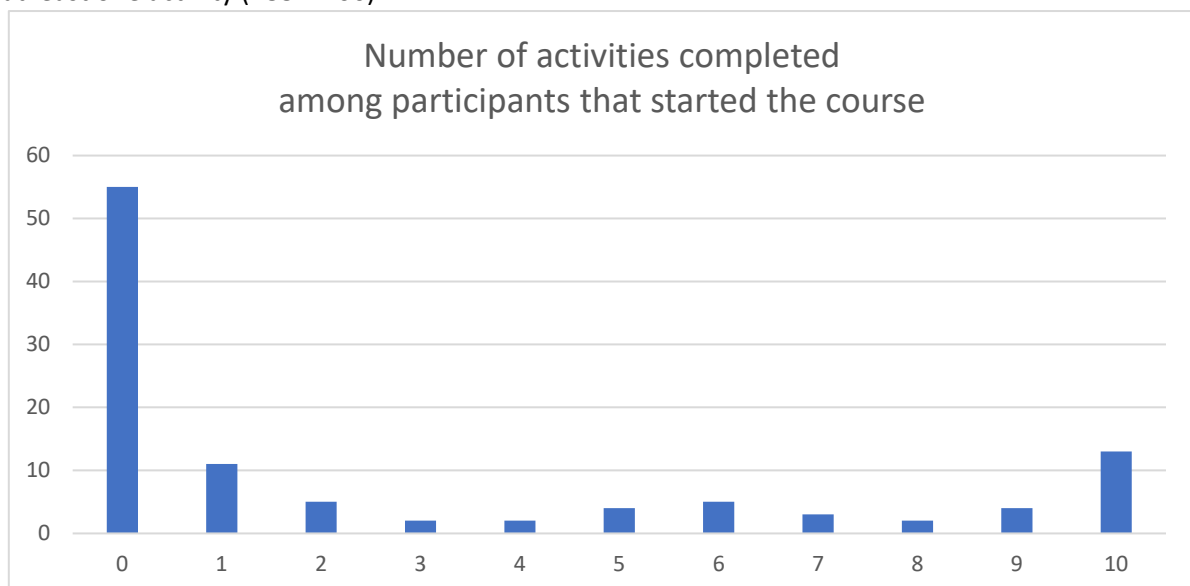
The total number of certificates of completion awarded was 27. This includes participants that were not recognised by the system as having completed all 10 activities, but successfully appealed and were awarded a certificate for having made a reasonable effort to meet the required criteria. Four appeals were rejected on the balance of evidence.

Participants that completed the course:  
27 out of 196 = 25%



Mid-course dropout rate: 75%

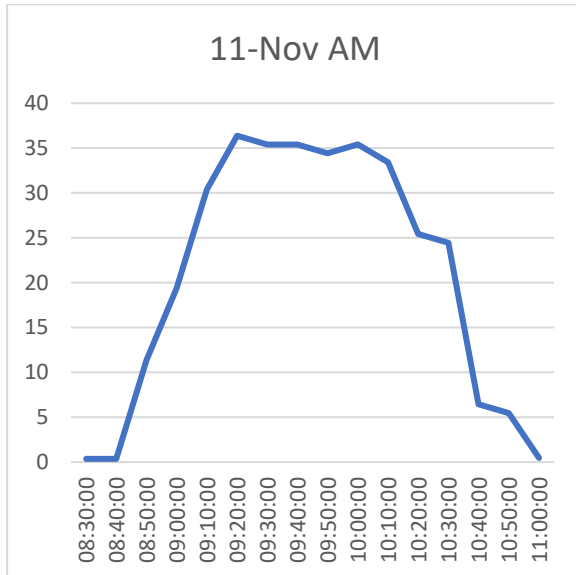
The total number of activities completed was 288, for an average of 2.72 per participant that started at least one activity ( $288 \div 106$ ):



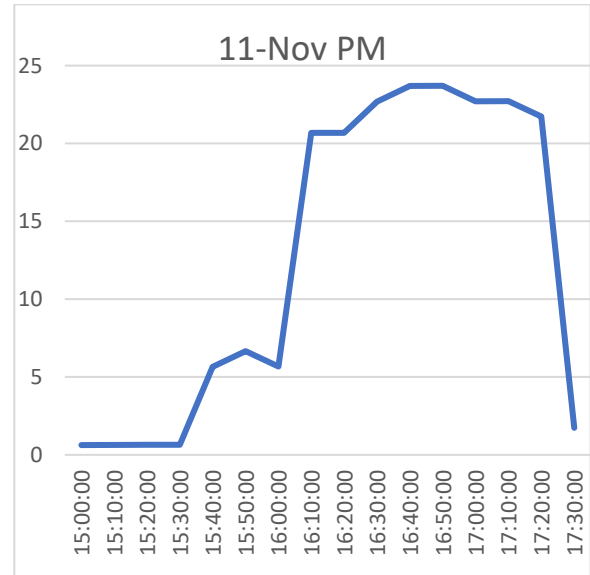
## Webinar data

### Attendance

#### Week 1

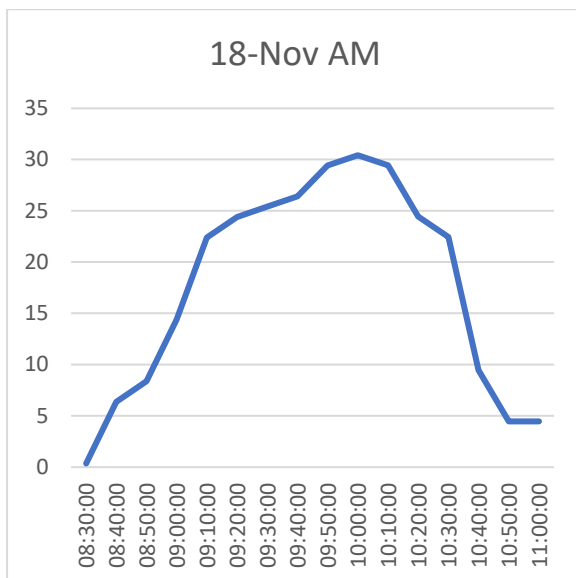


49 unique, 36 max.

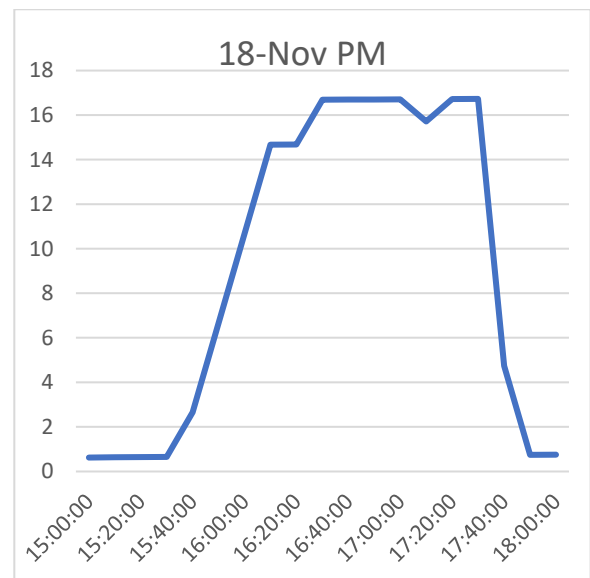


39 unique, 24 max

#### Week 2



39 unique, 30 max.



20 unique, 17 max. (30-minute overrun)

Not including the training team, the AM (9am CET) live feedback session was attended by 11 people, while the PM (4pm CET) session was attended by zero people.

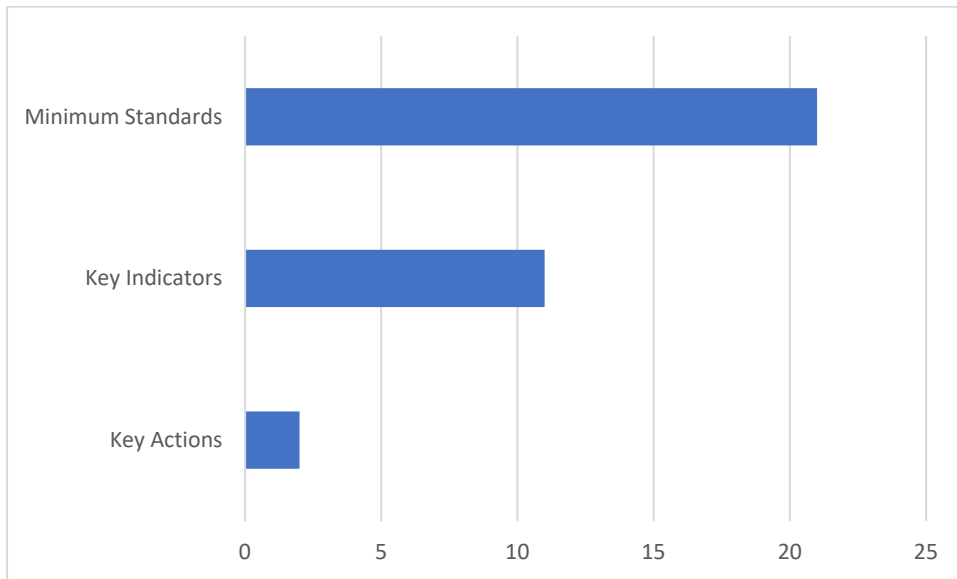
## Polls

During the week 1 webinar, participants were asked to identify the following statements...

- minimum of 15 litres of water per person per day
- 2,100 kcal per person per day
- minimum of 1 toilet per 20 people

...as either **Key actions**, **Minimum Standards**, or **Key indicators**.

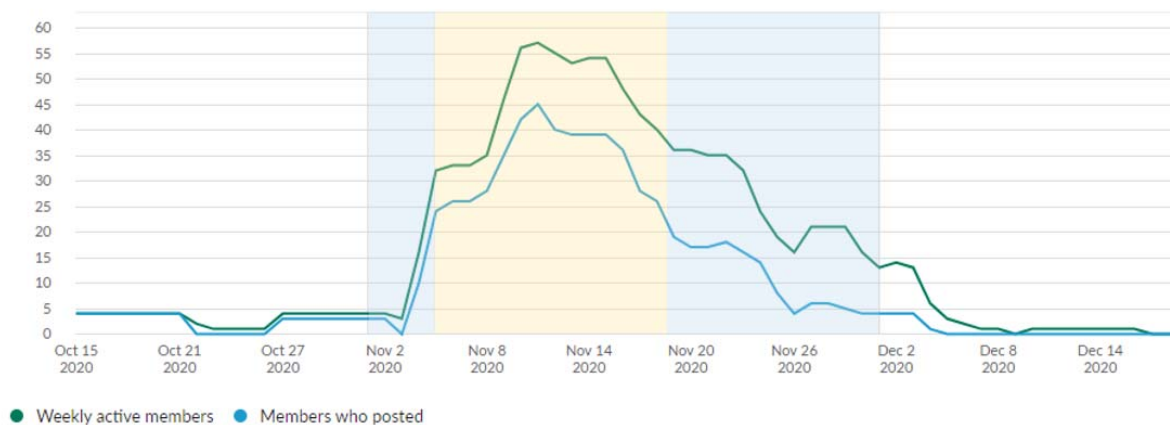
These are the results of the poll aggregated across the AM and PM sessions. 34 people voted.



The correct answer is **Key indicators**. Despite the module 1 e-learning containing several screens which attempt to clearly make this distinction, this harmful misconception persisted. (Out of the 11 people that answered correctly, 4 were listed Sphere trainers.)

## Forum data

The total number of messages sent in Slack was 1,524 (out of 10,000 allowed in the free version we were using). The yellow region represents the 2 active studying weeks. The blue areas are the onboarding and catching up periods.



## Conclusions

Overall, this project was a great success. As a tool for educating people about Sphere, the pilot MOOC was far from perfect, but we received a lot of positive feedback on the parts we got right, and plenty of useful, actionable feedback on how to improve for next time. This feedback has been captured, and provided it is used to make the next Sphere in Practice MOOC better, the pilot course served its most important purposes.

Objective	Result
to get actionable feedback on all aspects and elements of the MOOC	Achieved. The survey was completed 34 times and 11 people attended the live feedback sessions. Some feedback was also received via the discussion forums on Slack. More feedback from people that dropped out of the course between pre-registration and during the course would be useful.
to give the training team practical experience of running the MOOC	Achieved
to capture the lessons learned through the feedback and practical experience	Achieved. Refer to the separate <i>lessons learned</i> document
to provide a new Sphere learning experience to less-experienced participants	Achieved. Less than half of those awarded certificates were from Sphere's network of trainers and focal points. This objective was achieved but perhaps for fewer people than could have been hoped for.
to inspire more-experienced participants to run this course themselves	Not achieved yet. This is too early to gauge but should become apparent during 2021.

The 37% dropout rate before the course even started and the 75% dropout rate during the course, resulting in an 84% overall dropout rate, make for disappointing reading, but provide a good basis for improvement.

Some dropout is inevitable, but some specific contributing factors here are that the new Gnosis platform was only made available the day before the course started and it had not been fully tested. This meant that not enough time was allowed for onboarding participants, and those that did register may have faced technical problems which put them off continuing, e.g., the mobile experience was poor. Limited feedback from those that dropped out early limits our ability to measure how significant these, and other, factors were.

The poll data above reminds us that people with less experience of Sphere (and occasionally people with *more* experience) can get confused between standards and targets, and that the explanations in the Sphere Handbook (on pages 6 and 7) and in self-paced e-learning modules (SIP module 1) are **insufficient** to counter this misconception. The training team must continually reinforce this message throughout the MOOC and by all available channels, including moderated forums and webinars, and by providing contextual examples.



## Appendix 1: Participant end-of-course survey results

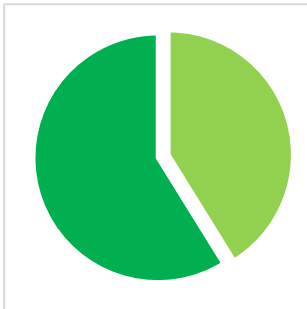
Submitting the end of course survey was a requirement of finishing the course, along with completing each of the 10 activities in the learning platform.

The survey contained just four questions (apart from the participant's name). The survey was completed by 34 participants. Everyone that registered for the course was asked to complete the survey, even if they did not engage with the course. Feedback from people that were unwilling or unable to complete the course is considered at least as important as feedback from people that completed it. This is important for understanding the reasons why people drop out, and for getting balanced feedback which is not biased because it only comes from finishers.

Despite this invitation, it should be recognised that these results are biased. 27 out of 106 (25%) participants (that started at least one activity) were eventually awarded a certificate of completion for materially completing the course (or making a reasonable attempt to do so). To represent the total population of 106 participants, around 75% of survey responses should be submitted by people that did not complete the course. In reality (due to self-selection bias), this percentage is 21% (7 out of 34).

### Overall experience

Multiple-choice question with options: Very poor, poor, neutral, good, very good.  
41% replied **good** and 59% replied **very good**.



### What did you LIKE MOST about the course, and WHY?

Open-ended question.



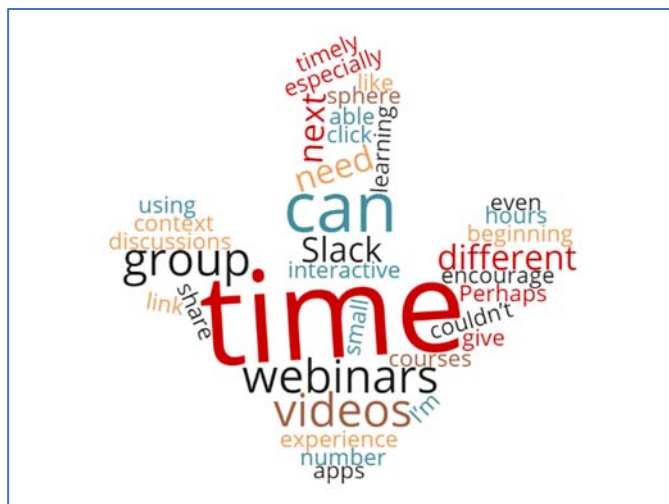
## Individual answers

The course was useful, because it was the first time I have participated in Sphere course and humanitarian standards were the issue I interested more
PSEA because it was spot on
The introduction of concepts, the availability of resources (literature) and the examples used for enhanced understanding.
Flexibility of time to join the course modules
How Participation and Communication interweave significantly in accomplishing Quality and Accountable humanitarian response. I really love the way the course handled this. Now i know how foundational these twin components are in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action. This contributed to the overall success of collectively revising the Sphere Handbook. It was a laudable opportunity worth scheduling from time to time
The activities life examples because we can see the different ways of applying the principles and necessary responses
The Simplicity and Interactive way of learning.
HOW TO USE THE SPHERE HANDBOOK TO GUIDE TO HUMANTARIAN RESPONSE
I like two Ways of communication as it is the best way of helping affected population to participate in their community-based protection
Yes. It was very active
Case studies and interactivities. This makes learning easier
Adopting the Sphere approach. This is important to me because not being able to fully achieve the minimum standards after you have done your best does not necessarily mean failure but work in progress that calls for striving for more resources, documenting lessons learned, what more needs to be done and action for more resources.
i liked open conversation section most because its a change to share opinions and learn about possible different cases.
Unfortunately I couldn't do the Sphere Pilot Course, I hope you invite me for next course!! I'm so excited to do this course because of my job.
The course relates directly and highlighted the guidelines & principles my institution and i must apply in response management. The facilitators were very knowledgeable about the subject and there was a lot of experience sharing coupled with the quick response to every question raised during the webinar and slack.
the second webinar about sexual exploitations and abuse, because on this topic we discus about the right of the survive and how to treat the perpetrator.
Foundation chapters. This is the most important part of humanitarian work which reminds us why we are doing what we seek to do. Technical chapters must be read in the backdrop of the foundation section.
case study in relation with the context of foundation chapters
8 interdependent chapters
The method of viewing the information because you followed the new design.
Although a lot of difficulties in net access because I live currently at Yemen which defined as the most country to live in, I feel very comfortable to deal with Sphere closely.
I like most the sphere glossary. This allowed me to know the definitions of a lot about humanitarian language
Interactivity, especially in the sessions!

Very informative and relevant to realistic situations in the context of humanitarian relief
I liked the approach that involved pre assessments, and well prepared and precise modules, and assessments that come before the webinars. This makes the webinars presentations live and look like revisions.
Very interactive engagements with people of vast experience across the globe
A lot of detailed information explained in a scientific and simple way
- Good mixture of online modules and assignments to do in your own time and live webinars for input and interaction. - Time requirement was suitable and doable even if you are working - Super friendly and helpful team - Good facilitation and instructions - Modules are designed in an attractive and varied way
The discussions in the breakout rooms as it was a productive exchange.
The combination of webinar and online e-course and the volume of material, paced over 5 weeks all suited my preferred learning style. It was great to have subject experts on each webinar. They were very responsive to questions in the chat box and Slack forum.
The simulation model of Drought in Abudi is the most liked one to me. The examples or scenarios for community participation in building their capacity and PSEA sections are useful for our program and current contexts. Humanitarian Agencies and their decision makers have a responsibility to create and maintain a good and safe working environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the office staff/volunteers and targeted populations.
PSEAH
The examples and case study. More realistic.
I liked the Q&A sessions of some of the webinars and the module that was structured as a case study

What do you recommend WE DO DIFFERENTLY next time, and WHY?

Open-ended question.



## Individual answers

For the next time, I recommend you to do final evaluation from the participants to measure the % of knowledge increased in this course
The time was small, spread out the course
It was not very straightforward on what to click to move to the next module. A number of times I tried to proceed from module but wasn't sure why it showed I had some modules still marked as incomplete. Perhaps having clear arrows to show where to click to proceed.
Have the course with other languages
Thanks to the course, I got familiar with Slack. I do not know if there were other peers first time users of Slack like me. Consider using more common apps in future experiences. The risks involved in the use of most recent yet-to-be-popular apps is usually far-reaching especially relating to participants' mastery of available options. On the whole, I found the approach used innovative and interactive.
I would have liked more hours of course to be able to analyze the examples of the Sphere in Practice
Conduct more webinars to exchange experience in different cultures.
The course time should be open such that learners can do the learning whenever they get time. Some videos didn't play especially at the beginning
I remember that, we have been participated actively in group discussion after the course and this helped to understand more about the course. Please could let everyone share experience even if the time is limit.
I sent all my notes on Slack
Use app to facilitate workshops such as padlet or kahoot. The trainers need more contact with participants
The courses should be given much more time because some humanitarian workers undertake them while at the same time engaged in their daily activities.
time management because topics and time are not matching,
I'm so sorry I couldn't do the course but I'm doing the survey because you ask me to do even if I couldn't do it, I hope to be invited for the next course!
My expectation was met. Keep it up. We need to encourage participation of female learners, in my observation and group breakup sessions, women representation was low compared to men.
I recommend you to provide more training about humanitarian because it is essential
When a context is picked up as a fictitious case study, ensure that all the four technical sectors are incorporated so that learners would be able to link them all.
add sign language interpreter in the video for improving accessibility.
Increase the number of days
Add more videos and interactive questions.
The platform is very difficult to use and it must be developed, it needs high net access and only using by laptop.
Continue in the same way and give opportunity to those working in fragile context to understand well sphere standards, alarm timely, respond timely to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintaining affected population's dignity
Maybe a module to introduce the different technical tools used in the MOOC at the beginning might be useful.
Nothing
Organize recognition events for successful participants. This can encourage more participation. Also refresher courses can be organized regularly with particular teams
Need for more hours and group discussions
More videos about sphere For visual people
- Earlier and clearer information including a summary timetable ("do the modules here, go for chats there, attend the webinars then with this link etc.")
I would mix up more synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences by maybe set up shorter webinars but therefore more often and leave enough room for discussions and exchange of practical examples from people's work.

As this was the test/pilot, inevitably there were technical glitches with the e-course (videos not showing, links not working) - these can be time-consuming & frustrating. The multiple channels (ie Slack+Zoom+chatbox+Email ... can be a bit overwhelming. It would be helpful if these can be streamlined somehow.
The small group exercises from different continents could be done differently. This could give to share their real experiences and community of practice in their working areas.
Nothing
In tests. I think questions should call participants to make less mistakes. Some are confuse or misleading. They are like some kind of trap. Perhaps they helo to apptehend more from the error, but time is wasted when is already scarce
I would suggest that you maybe expand the content of the webinars. And May be include more interactive presentations.

Any other comments

Open-ended.

Everything was going on well, it was well managed and the methods which were used like Poll and Chat box for answering of questions were more useful and more efficient
Not Applicable
Unfortunately I was not able to complete the course. Besides having a challenge on proceeding from one module to another, I got time constraints during the period and had to shift attention to urgent work requirements that came up. Looking forward to the similar courses in the future, nonetheless.
NA
A few configuration issues to be looked into; I missed out on both live webinars for technical reasons, maybe on my part, i don't know. i used a desktop. Should we know what kind technology we should have in future exchanges? I think the 100% success requirement was good. Because it made sure we knew the answers to all the questions before moving on to the next level. In addition, the Gnosis platform seems to be a good interactive tool. One really has to be familiar with it. I appreciate the availability and promptness of the course administrators to resolve participants' technical difficulties.
I liked everything, especially the way that the Sphere in Practice was structured and in the webinars, I found the group analysis very interesting. I would like to do the course again in Spanish and I will appreciate if you could take me into account to participate in order to deepen the knowledge acquired
E-learning is excellent, and I suggest to add more sections to the e-learning modules. Webinars were good and with high value Regarding the tests, its good to have the suggested correct answers and the feedback to the non-answered questions and the wrong answered questions.
The technical support for good and timely
I like the methods that facilitates have been used where we have group discussion after the course. In the assignment, I see that there is open end questions which help everyone to show his understanding of the course. Methods used were wonderful and helpful in the understanding
Very good. Hope we start deliver this training in Arabic and I am ready to help in translate.
Each session cannot last more than 30 minutes because it is the maximum attention time of a person in front of a computer. This time you can fill in spaces for questions or surveys (15min)
I liked the modules, the facilitators and the questions. This was very resourceful and I look forward to more of such.
thanks
I will be waiting the next Sphere course!
Looking forward to session 3. What i liked; It was a learning to me with vast sharing and referenced materials which prepared me for my response work especially the case management in module 2. What i didn't like: The videos in my e-learning module that never played.
about Gnosis platform you have to change how the completion of e-leaning may result because till now it show me that e-leaning is in progress while I already finish all

Overall, this is a great module. I thoroughly enjoyed. It is expected that a few technical hiccups would be there in a new attempt which is fine. On the content and the mode of presentation (training), I have already shared my comments in slack and in webinars.

multiple choice in assignments would be good with less options to answer. max 4

In general the course was very interesting.

Thanks a lot for this great opportunity.

At another time, I recommend to let the participant to suggest some topic to be discussed during the courses. The e-learning must be more attractive and more easily to the participants in limit access to net locations.

Multiply and diversify training modules for staff and humanitarian

it was refreshing my mind, thank you

Include specific topics in the training. Like an M&E training based on SPHERE standards

I really missed all the videos. More technical expertise is needed to ensure videos are accessible to all. Somewhere it required me to install a software to be able to access the videos. This is sometimes not possible with computers of our organizations like World Vision where we have no rights to install anything.

I liked very much the presenters and their wealth of experience

Which I liked and the simple explanation and examples that were there. What I did not like was the lack of the videos. Since I am considered a visual person, the best way to learn for me is through videos

- e-learning modules: I enjoyed them and I think they are excellent for people who haven't attended a SPHERE training yet or are new humanitarians. For more experienced people some more in-depths digging into the content might be good but maybe they are not the main target group for this kind of training - live webinars: well facilitated and good speakers. I liked the chance to interact and how the speakers engaged with questions and comments. A more realistic time frame in the instructions might be good to allow for all the questions and comments. - assignments: the multiple-choice questions were fine. If you made a mistake (missed to tick an answer) it didn't tell you which answer was missing. So you could potentially tick a second one but still fail because you missed a third correct answer. - the Gnosis platform: fine but a few glitches (not able to tick certain boxes, tended to take you back to login page if you went from 'home' to 'settings' or such) - technical support: very fast, friendly and supportive

Will have more to say when the course is over and I have experienced all the modules.

I liked the self-learning module and simulation of drought in Abudi to go through important aspects of human rights, community participation for capacity building, & PSEA with experiences sharing in breakout sessions. Thanks a lot for all facilitators for making this discussion lively and putting all resources together.

I think they are people with a lot of knowledge and experience. I really liked the explanations, I believe it would be better if it was in person. Thank you!!

The platform is difficult for me, I am not very expert in networks and internet. Cases, photos, videos could be closer to Latin America context. Language is also a barrier for me (not insurmountable), but I hope the course will be in Spanish soon. Thanks a lot

I would Prefer it if I had the opportunity to proceed with the modules at my own pace instead of having to wait until the modules were published a week later.