

Applied Research Projects 2023-2024

Final Report

Project Title	Assessing and improving humanitarian quality standards teaching in university curricula
Project Summary	To conduct research and formulate a recommendation paper on how to improve humanitarian standards teaching in tertiary education settings to best equip the next generation of humanitarians.
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List of Acronyms

EUPRHA	European Universities on Professionalisation on Humanitarian Action
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HADE	Humanitarian Action and Development Engineering
HAQF	Humanitarian Action Qualification Framework
HSP	Humanitarian Standards Partnership
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JANIC	Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation
JASHAS	Japan Association for Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies
KCOC	Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation
LMS	Learning Management System
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOHA	Network on Humanitarian Action
ODA	Official Development Aid
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
SCH	Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian
ToT	Training of Trainer
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States (of America)
USIG	Université de Solidarité Internationale
WASH	Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

Executive Summary

As the complexity and scale of humanitarian crises continue to grow, equipping the next generation of humanitarian professionals with robust knowledge and skills has become increasingly critical. This Applied Research Project, conducted by Master's students from the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID) in partnership with Sphere, aims to assess and improve the teaching of humanitarian quality standards in university curricula.

[Sphere](#) is a global organisation that promotes quality and accountability in humanitarian response through its widely recognised Sphere Handbook, which outlines minimum standards in humanitarian response (Sphere, 2023). Sphere's Theory of Change focuses on enhancing the knowledge and application of these standards globally, facilitating better cooperation among organisations, and ensuring that lessons learned are effectively applied to improve humanitarian outcomes (Sphere, 2023).

The research project addresses the overarching question: How best to equip the next generation of humanitarians and improve humanitarian assistance in the future? The methodology employed encompasses a thorough analysis of Sphere's E-learning survey records, pre-survey focus groups, desk reviews, and key informant interviews across five case studies in the United States of America (US), Afghanistan, Poland, Japan, and South Korea. This multi-faceted approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of current educational practices and identifies areas for improvement.

Insights

1. **Course Material and Curriculum Needs:**
Introductory materials that outline basic concepts such as humanitarianism, humanitarian standards, humanitarian response, and humanitarian crises are essential. These materials should be adaptable for classroom sessions and easily translatable to close the resource gap in countries like South Korea and Japan. Survey respondents also emphasised the need for a list of standards. Simplified materials that are easy to integrate into workshops and courses can significantly enhance the understanding of humanitarian practices, considering the varied terminologies used in different countries.
2. **Increasing Visibility of Sphere:**
Despite the high quality of Sphere standards, dissemination remains a challenge. Promoting the visibility of Sphere across different contexts is crucial, as highlighted in interviews. Sphere's secretariat and focal points can play a more active role in this regard, ensuring that the standards and materials reach a wider audience and are utilised effectively.
3. **Accelerating Humanitarian Networks:**
There is significant demand for improved cooperation among stakeholders to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Leveraging Sphere's extensive network with NGOs can foster better connections within and between NGO communities and academia, offering students a more holistic approach that combines academic and practical knowledge. This collaboration can enrich the learning experience and better prepare students for real-world humanitarian challenges.

Recommendations

1. **Introduction of Contextualised Materials:**
Develop audiovisual resources, introductory materials, and intensive workshops tailored to different contexts. These materials should be easily adaptable and translatable to ensure they meet the diverse needs of global educational settings.
2. **Development of a Lecturer Contact-Base:**
Create a comprehensive database of lecturers who are willing to engage with students and promote Sphere standards. This network can facilitate guest lectures, workshops, and other educational activities that enhance the learning experience.
3. **University Website/Webpage:**
Establish an online platform that outlines the resources available to professors and provides

information about the Sphere network, including a directory of professors who utilise Sphere in their teaching. This resource hub can serve as a central point for information and collaboration.

4. Identification of Key Contacts:

Identify individuals who are well-connected to universities within their regions. These contacts can help facilitate the integration of Sphere standards into university curricula and foster regional collaboration.

5. Collaboration Agreement:

Foster formal agreements between Sphere and universities or specific departments to embed Sphere standards into curricula. These agreements can ensure a structured and consistent approach to incorporating humanitarian standards in education.

6. Advancement of Enabling Networks:

Enhance networks within and between NGOs and academia to support the practical application of humanitarian education. Strengthening these networks can provide students with valuable opportunities for internships, fieldwork, and collaborative projects.

7. Training Programme and Pack for University Professors:

Develop a comprehensive training programme and resource pack for university professors on how to teach Sphere standards effectively. This programme should include workshops, instructional materials, case studies, and best practices to help professors integrate Sphere standards into their curricula and enhance their teaching methodologies.

This research project holds significant implications for strengthening the humanitarian sector's capacity to respond effectively to complex emergencies. The findings and recommendations are expected to inform Sphere's strategic efforts to support quality humanitarian education, ultimately leading to more effective and principled humanitarian assistance worldwide. By enhancing the integration of Sphere standards into university curricula, the project aims to better prepare future humanitarian professionals to tackle the challenges of an increasingly complex global landscape.

Introduction

Increasing numbers and extents of conflict, natural disasters, and climate change have aggravated the severity, complexity, and longevity of humanitarian crises (NIH Fogarty International Center, 2021). According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), a record of 339 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022 (UN OCHA, 2022).

To respond to the increasing needs of humanitarian action, Sphere launched *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response* in 2018. Its 4th edition provides the core humanitarian standards to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance. With a clear, rights-based approach (RBA), the handbook builds on the legal and ethical foundations of humanitarianism with pragmatic guidance, global good practice, and compiled evidence. The Sphere Handbook has been used by frontline humanitarian workers, state governments, donors, policy-makers, and higher educational institutions across the world (Sphere, 2023). Through “anecdotal evidence,” Sphere has ascertained that the handbook—along with other Sphere resources—has been used in many humanitarian and development degree programmes.

Sphere, through the next generation of humanitarian practitioners, aims to improve the humanitarian response by quality programming. This could be achieved by expanding the application of the Sphere Handbook and other Sphere resources within education settings. However, despite Sphere's global network with universities through focal points, members and trainers, there is no monitoring mechanism and research to track these relationships, particularly within humanitarian standards curriculum in universities.

Hence, the project aims to identify the gaps pertaining to humanitarian standard programmes in global tertiary education settings and recommend opportunities for how the Sphere secretariat could improve the quality of humanitarian standards in tertiary education to better prepare future generations of humanitarians. To be specific, the project reached out to the Sphere network to gather data on humanitarian curriculum in university programmes worldwide, examined the reach of Sphere, and identified its presence. This research may also equip the organisation to expand relationships with potential and existing university programmes and improve its own resources through a better understanding of current needs and expectations. Overall, the data collected can better inform Sphere how to leverage their assets to improve humanitarian education which will contribute to the preparation of future humanitarians.

Literature Review

Criteria and Structure

The literature review first explored the broader field of humanitarian education, followed by an examination of the existing opportunities and criticisms surrounding Sphere Standards and resources. Adopting a deductive approach that flows from a macro to micro perspective, the review aimed to enhance comprehension of the underlying principles of humanitarianism, humanitarian education, and the Sphere standards. Firstly, the review investigated the current status of humanitarian education, particularly in tertiary education settings. Secondly, it analysed the achievements of Sphere Standards as well as its challenges and critiques from scholars. Lastly, the literature review concluded by connecting the two concepts to investigate the overall usage and challenges of adopting Sphere Standards and resources in tertiary humanitarian education. Therefore, the objectives of the literature review are as follows:

- I. Status and challenges of humanitarian education in tertiary education settings
- II. Achievements, critiques, and challenges of Sphere Standards
- III. Analysis of the application of Sphere Standards in tertiary humanitarian education

The review provided a comprehensive understanding of how humanitarianism—including humanitarian actions, humanitarian assistance, and humanitarian principles—is taught in higher education programmes, as well as critical suggestions of potential theories, techniques, and resources undertaken to foster humanitarians while they are in the classroom.

I. Status and challenges of humanitarian education in tertiary education settings

A. Professionalisation of the humanitarian sector

Efforts to professionalise the humanitarian sector have been ongoing for over a decade, driven by the recognition that well-intentioned voluntarism is insufficient (Fiori et al., 2016). Scholars point out the tendency to "projectise" humanitarian agencies, operating them with a short-term, technical focus due to the pressure to show immediate impacts (Cabrera, 2016). This focus has also influenced high-level education programs. Stibral et al. (2021) highlight the lack of a unified curriculum in humanitarian education across universities, and Russ et al. (2010) note the absence of clear skills and competencies provided by Master's programs in this field. Recommendations for professionalisation include collaboration among universities to develop core contents and expand humanitarian competencies.

B. Recognition of humanitarian education as a multidisciplinary programme

An interdisciplinary approach is crucial for understanding the complexity of humanitarian crises. Kuznetsov (2019) stresses that humanitarian courses need a multidimensional approach to analyse technical, environmental, and economic problems holistically. Sphere has significantly contributed to aligning humanitarian responses by incorporating various perspectives, promoting resilience,

sustainability, and integrating fields like development, health, and technology (Smith et al., 2020). This approach led to the creation of professional engineering humanitarian education institutes and tools like the Humanitarian Action Qualification Framework (HAQF).

However, some scholars argue that current humanitarian education lacks sufficient multidisciplinary integration. Ngo and Chase (2021) found traditional engineering curricula inadequate for humanitarian education due to faculty's lack of multidisciplinary knowledge. Sabirov and Sabirova (2019) also noted a lack of sectoral professionalism among stakeholders in Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian (SCH) education. Scholars emphasise the need for education strategies that build socio-cultural, linguistic, cross-cultural, and communication competencies..

C. Common themes in the humanitarian educational programmes

Stibral et al. (2021) identify common themes in Master's programs in Humanitarian Action: the history of humanitarianism, principles and frameworks, aid theory and practice, and key humanitarian and development issues. Cross-cutting themes include humanitarian principles, ethics, disaster management, and technical aspects of humanitarian responses. The Sphere Handbook's elements, such as international humanitarian law, gender-based violence, and public health, are mirrored in these programs.

D. Engagement in real-world humanitarian experiences

Incorporating field experiences into the curriculum significantly enhances student satisfaction and academic achievement. Ngo and Chase (2021) found that international fieldwork and project-based learning positively influenced students' perceptions and abilities in Sustainability, Engineering, and Humanitarian Education. Similarly, Sabirov and Sabirova (2019) reported that practice-oriented education models improve students' satisfaction and competency in SCH education.

Integrating practical experiences with Sphere standards can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical humanitarian skills. Sphere standards emphasise accountability, participation, and evidence-based decision-making, fostering critical thinking and ethical reflection in humanitarian contexts.

E. Stakeholder coordination and partnership

Effective humanitarian education requires collaboration among stakeholders, from governments to civil society and the private sector (Smith et al., 2020). A shared understanding of the need for humanitarian education and comprehensive resource mobilisation is crucial. Smith et al. (2020) and Ngo and Chase (2021) highlight the importance of community partnerships and the convergence of trends like the demand for engineers in humanitarian action and development.

Recognizing the significance of humanitarian education by governments and businesses is key to improving SCH education. Sphere standards emphasise stakeholder mapping and situational analysis, promoting a people-centred and context-specific approach. Leveraging assets from various stakeholders can enhance educational resources and support for prospective humanitarian workers.

II. Achievements, critiques, and challenges of Sphere Standards

Sphere standards have transformed the humanitarian sector, shifting from a charity-based model to one guided by evidence and professionalism (Kennedy, 2019). They advocate for a rights-based approach (RBA), asserting that humanitarian assistance must enable those affected to restore dignity. Sphere training programs promote the adoption of these standards, reinforcing professionalism in humanitarian actions.

However, Sphere standards face criticism for their perceived rigidity and lack of contextual attentiveness (Kennedy, 2019). Critics argue that the decision-making bodies predominantly involve individuals from larger organisations in the global north, leading to limited representation of diverse perspectives (Amoakoh, 2019). This selection bias can impact the planning, funding, and advocacy processes, suggesting a need for improved cultural sensitivity and explicit assumptions in the standards.

III. Analysis of the application of Sphere Standards in tertiary humanitarian education

Integrating Sphere standards into tertiary education can enhance humanitarian programs by combining theoretical knowledge with practical skills through an interdisciplinary approach.

A. Overview of current tertiary humanitarian education programmes

The Humanitarian Action Qualification Framework (HAQF), developed by the [European Universities on Professionalism of Humanitarian Action \(EUPRHA\)](#), offers a comprehensive competency development framework for diverse learners (Walker & Russ, 2010). It promotes a learner-centred approach, involving learners in curriculum design and meeting their professional development needs.

The Network on Humanitarian Action's (NOHA) Joint Master's Programme is another example, involving 11 universities offering a specialised degree in humanitarian action (NOHA, 2023). This program addresses the complex challenges faced by humanitarian practitioners, promoting critical thinking and ethical reflection.

B. Overview of Sphere's resources

Sphere provides extensive resources, including a downloadable Sphere Handbook, training courses, and E-learning modules in multiple languages. These resources help humanitarians build skills and apply Sphere standards in practice. While there is anecdotal evidence of engagement with universities, further research is needed to systematically investigate the effectiveness and value of these resources in academic settings.

Methodology

The study was designed by the Sphere Secretariat, in partnership with Masters students from the Geneva Graduate Institute. In identifying Sphere's current involvement in university programs, the study proposed recommendations related to Sphere's roles and responsibilities in humanitarian education settings. The data collection phase of the study was carried out between January 2023 to May 2024

Specifically, the methodology operated on these aims:

- I. To analyse the data previously collected through E-learning surveys and user registration to identify Sphere's current reach in global humanitarian education.
- II. To connect with Sphere's established global community and gain insight into how the organisation could better meet student needs and improve curriculum in humanitarian programmes.
- III. To provide an in-depth description of selected countries through interviews with professors in the area of humanitarian studies, Sphere's focal points, and other stakeholders. Key informant interviews aimed to find:
 - A. overall status of humanitarian standards education in selected countries;
 - B. to whom, what, and how Sphere is taught in universities;

C. and attitudes towards Sphere, which inform its role in humanitarian standards education.

Sampling Design

The population of interest was professors and students who interacted with humanitarian standards in undergraduate and post-graduate studies around the world. However, discussions with professionals and members of the Sphere network were also integral in accessing populations and framing discussions. Since the study dealt with understanding Sphere’s reach on an international level, the sampling is partly dependent upon Sphere’s existing network. This consists of focal points, trainers, members, professors, students, and informal contacts accumulated through work in the humanitarian sector.

The sampling design differed slightly between modes of data collection. The survey, which included an invitation to the focus group, was disseminated to the Sphere network as well as through the social media of focal points and professors who were willing to share the link. The preliminary survey received 27 responses, and the focus group was attended by 16 members of the Sphere network.

The project selected five countries for the desk review and key informant interview: the United States (US), Afghanistan, Poland, South Korea, and Japan. Selection was influenced by Sphere’s contacts, researchers’ backgrounds and skills (including linguistic and cultural competencies), and the language provisions of Sphere materials (including E-learnings and the Sphere Handbook). Refer to *Table 1* for a discussion of country selection.

Table 1: Discussion of Country Selection

Country	Purpose of Inclusion
US	The US is a major humanitarian donor, and the research team possessed easily accessible connections to US university networks and educational materials. One focal point and three professors who integrate Sphere in their curricula were interviewed.
Afghanistan	Afghanistan, from the Central Asia region, could yield regional-specific insight into relationships in countries with limited access. One focal point and the director of an NGO were interviewed.
Poland	Two leading humanitarian education programmes offered within Poland: Postgraduate Humanitarian Studies Programme by the University of Warsaw and the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA), which is an inter-university joint study programme. Their curriculum composition, in conjunction with theoretical acquisition and field-level research in various country contexts, offers unique humanitarian education settings. One focal point was interviewed.
South Korea	Linguistic and cultural expertise within the research team. Low country participation was identified from the user registration data. However, through the active role of country focal points, the research team was able to expand the interviews outside the Sphere network. One focal point, one trainer, one professor, and a student were interviewed.
Japan	Linguistic and cultural expertise within the research team. Low country participation was identified from the user registration data. One focal point

	and one professor were interviewed. One focal point and one professor were interviewed.
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Sphere E-learning Survey Records

The team collected and analysed existing data from the online surveys administered at the end of Sphere’s E-learnings “How to be a Sphere Champion” and “Sphere in Practice” across English, Arabic, French, Spanish, and Japanese. This was cross-referenced with anonymous user registration data which consists of users who made an account through the Sphere website. A qualitative and quantitative approach was taken. Key ideas and patterns were investigated in survey responses and disaggregated based on country. However, the sample size of filtered responses limited the analysis of some surveys.

The quantitative analysis focused on participation by month and identified key trends in the data which indicated Sphere’s presence at specific universities. This population was filtered down to respondents who indicated they were students in the survey. Due to the theory that a peak in student respondents correlated with course requirements, the data indicated where Sphere E-learnings are used by universities. Upon further review, if responses from a particular country were concentrated around a certain date/month, they were compared with registrations in the user data which occurred in the same month and year and were from the same country.

Second, a qualitative analysis was undertaken of all the respondents who selected that they were a “student” or from an “academic institution”. It reviewed the feedback from the survey prompt: “Please feel free to leave any other comments or recommendations here.”

Finally, data from the user registration (university affiliations) was used in the desk review to supplement information from the five focus countries. Team skills were applied to translate data from Japanese and French to English, but the Google Translate function was employed for Arabic and Spanish. All data analysis took place using Google Sheets and Microsoft Excel.

Survey & Focus Group

A survey was designed and sent out in advance of the focus group to collect preliminary information from professors, focal points, members, trainers, and other relevant stakeholders in the Sphere network.¹ It gathered general information on their university network and preliminary feedback on Sphere resources pertaining to humanitarian education settings. There were 64 responses in total, 27 of which were submitted and analysed before the focus group.²

The goal of the focus group was to create a space in which the team identified challenges and opportunities for the application of Sphere in humanitarian standards education programmes. The focus group was carried out over Zoom March 19, 2024, with an open invitation to all focal points, members, trainers, university contacts, and other relevant stakeholders. It was formatted as an open-discussion, facilitated by two members of the Sphere secretariat and two members of the research team. The facilitation guide was released to participants beforehand.³ Nineteen people attended the focus group distributed across the following countries: Iran, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, and UK. Four attendees were affiliated with universities, three worked for NGOs, and two were Sphere trainers; all attendees had interacted with Sphere or implemented it within their workplace in the past.

¹ Refer to *Annex 1*.

² Refer to *Annex 4* for analysis of all 64 survey responses.

³ Refer to *Annex 2*.

The meeting was divided into two sessions and took place over two hours. During the first session, participants discussed what they believed to be the most important needs inside and outside the classroom. Then, they voted on the most pressing needs and discussed them during the second session in two breakout rooms. To conclude, the focus group was wrapped up with group presentations and discussions.

Case Studies: Desk Review and Key Informant Interviews

The desk review was carried out simultaneously with key informant interviews. This stage was geared towards identifying humanitarian graduate programmes within the selected countries. A guiding template was designed to organise the information from selected countries, including university, degree, required courses, electives, and learning outcomes. The team conducted general research through search engines before the interviews. However, interview subjects provided crucial insight and materials, which overall melded with the interview data presented in case studies of countries.

Key informant interviews were integral to the data collection phase to gain insight on overall attitudes among experienced stakeholders in humanitarian education towards Sphere. Interviews were conducted to expand on data gathered from surveys and the focus group. They took place over the course of April and up until early May. The interviews focused on interviewees from the five selected countries. They ranged from 30 to 60 minutes and were conducted over preferred video conferencing platforms (Cisco, Webex and Google Meet) or in-person, if possible. Relevant participants included professors, focal points, students, and practitioners in the field. The genre of a key informant interview was necessary due to the flexibility it afforded to identify personal beliefs held in the sector. All interview participants will remain anonymous, as the identity of participants was not necessary for the collection and analysis of data.

Limitations

Limitations of the study included time, language barriers, and cultural challenges. Translation tools could have produced distortions of data, but where possible, the language skills within the research team were employed. Due to the skills available on the research team, including cultural competencies and languages, this had an influence over capabilities during all stages of data collection. Time limited the quantity of survey responses and interviews. This, coupled with the accessibility and quantity of countries, could have led to an unequal distribution of observations and findings among countries. This limitation was especially relevant in the desk review stage, as some countries had more university information readily available due to greater documentation over time or greater prevalence of humanitarian programs.

Data Collection & Analysis

Sphere E-learning Survey Records

Sphere's data from E-learning surveys and user registration indicated a strong presence of Sphere in universities. Only those who completed the full E-learning course have access to the survey; however, it is theorised that students have a high completion rate because they are often required to take and complete the E-learning for a course. Seven surveys were analysed which can be found in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Breakdown of Sphere E-learning Survey Records

Survey	Number of Respondents	Total Countries Represented	Total Countries Represented (From greatest to least proportion of respondents)
How to be a Sphere Champion (English)	299	57	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), US, Ecuador, Yemen, UAE, Australia, and Zimbabwe
Sphere in Practice (English)	166	26	Australia, US, Italy, Germany, Colombia, Ecuador, and Canada
How to be a Sphere Champion (Arabic)	69	11	Yemen, Syria, Tunisia, and Morocco
How to be a Sphere Champion (French)	105	19	Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Haïti, and Cameroon
Sphere in Practice (French)	43	10	Côte d'Ivoire, Canada, and Burkina Faso
How to be a Sphere Champion (Spanish)	495	20	Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Spain
Sphere in Practice (Spanish)	39	3	Columbia, Ecuador and Guatemala

Due to a sample size of less than 30 students in the E-learning responses for ‘How to be a Sphere Champion (Japanese)’ (10 respondents) and ‘Sphere in Practice (Arabic)’ (2 respondents), they were not included in the analysis.

Summary of Findings from E-learning Records

Overall, Sphere E-learning seems to have a strong presence in certain academic institutions. Respondents from Guatemala, Ecuador, the UK, Columbia, the US, Australia, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire suggest a diverse population of students is interacting with Sphere.

How to be a Sphere Champion (Spanish) received the greatest number of respondents, and from these results, a strong presence of Sphere was found across five universities in Ecuador, two universities in Columbia, and two universities in Guatemala. A strong and continual presence of registrations from Universidad Central del Ecuador and University of Bedfordshire suggested that Sphere may have a long-term presence at these universities.

Considering each survey was released at a different time and one peak in the graph could greatly affect the sum of participants from each year, any trends that appear per year would not lead to strong assumptions. This data provides evidence of Sphere's presence in universities; however, presents limits. It does not include those students who did not finish the survey and only represents this singular use of Sphere resources.

Qualitative Overview of Recommendations

Many responded positively to the course within the surveys, but those who provided constructive feedback will be discussed below. The respondents were filtered down to “student” and “academic

institution" or "professional training body" to undergo the qualitative analysis on recommendations and comments.

Many comments centred on the extensive use of videos and precision. In "How to be a Sphere Champion (English)", it was requested that Sphere include more interactive elements and be more precise. Interactive elements such as more videos and real-life case studies to correspond with the application of the Sphere Handbook were raised. Comments on precision were related to clearer questions and the avoidance of acronyms within the E-learnings. "Sphere in Practice (English)" reiterated concerns about increasing interaction through more videos, less reading, and reducing and summarising longer text (a comment echoed in the Spanish survey). However, tension arose in one comment that said to reduce the videos for those who may have an unreliable internet connection.

Other comments were notable but did not appear more than once. A respondent noted that, in "How to be a Sphere Champion," the wording of the course was "complicated, ambiguous, and vague" at times. "How to be a Sphere Champion (French)" also requested an increase of practical content such as case studies and examples, while a respondent also noted the course should be advertised more. In the other French survey, others requested a list of humanitarian standards to use during the training and another module on humanitarian themes.

Discussion of E-learning Survey Respondents and Users

Overall, Sphere E-learnings seems to have a strong presence in certain academic institutions. Respondents from Guatemala, Ecuador, the UK, Columbia, the US, Australia, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire suggest a diverse population of students is interacting with Sphere. Considering each survey was released at a different time and one peak in the graph could greatly affect the sum of participants from each year, any trends that appear per year would not lead to strong assumptions. This data provides evidence of Sphere's presence in universities; however, presents limits. It does not include those students who did not finish the survey and only represents this singular use of Sphere resources.

Focus Group

The following three main questions were asked during the focus group and will guide the summary of findings:

- I. What are the most important things that students need to learn about humanitarian standards?

Participants identified a comprehensive understanding of humanitarian standards to be an integral component of education. This involves a comprehensive understanding of standards' origins, key themes, and applications in humanitarian response. An emphasis was also placed on the ability for students to adapt to complex situations while prioritising the appropriate standards. Finally, participants highlighted the significance of students engaging with various stakeholders involved in humanitarian efforts.

- II. What do you need in the classroom to help students better learn about humanitarian standards?

Creating an interactive and participatory learning environment that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills was identified as crucial for students' comprehension and application of these standards. For instance, participants highlighted the importance of incorporating visual sources, such as infographics and case studies, to aid students in understanding different scenarios and applying Sphere standards. They emphasised the power of storytelling and visual materials to enhance students' comprehension of the subject matter. By incorporating these elements, the classroom can effectively support students' learning about humanitarian standards.

- III. What do you need outside the classroom to help improve humanitarian standards education?

Participants' responses can be categorised into the following areas: experiential, resources, networking, and others. In terms of experiential learning, participants suggested organising field visits and simulations that provide students with hands-on experiences and interactions in humanitarian settings. Ideally, these field visits would allow students to translate theoretical standards into practice and receive primary source information and experience. This would enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the reality and environment of humanitarian crises.

Regarding resources, participants emphasised the importance of curating a comprehensive collection of case studies and best practice guidelines. These resources would serve as valuable references for students, allowing them to delve further into their understanding of humanitarian standards.

Networking opportunities were also highlighted as crucial. Participants suggested facilitating guest lectures, conferences, and mentorship programmes to connect students with professionals and organisations in the humanitarian sector. Such networking opportunities would foster knowledge exchange and potentially open doors to future career pathways.

Additional elements that were within breakout rooms include partnerships with humanitarian organisations, access to relevant databases, and opportunities for collaborative projects or internships.

Case Studies

United States of America (US)

A desk review coupled with the user data, three interviews with professors and an interview with a focal point were conducted for the US. The desk review was able to reveal a broad overview of humanitarian programmes in the US, as well as the presence of Sphere in some of these universities. The interviews provided a greater understanding of where and how Sphere is incorporated into the US humanitarian curriculum and possible steps forward for the organisation.

Integration of Sphere into humanitarian programmes was identified at Tufts, Florida International University (Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work), Columbia, Harvard, and Uniformed Services University through the desk review. These course titles included the phrases “preparedness and planning”, “humanitarian response”, “humanitarian action” and “emergencies”. Often, syllabi noted Sphere Standards in the description of the course, learning objectives, or required the Sphere Handbook for the course. However, online materials were limited, and only a few syllabi were acquired directly from professors, so it remains unclear how many programmes integrate Sphere into their curricula. The user data identified Sphere’s presence in over 100 universities in the US.

There were several emerging patterns or categorisations of programmes to note in the desk review. Humanitarian studies in the US are often linked to schools of medicine or public health. Of the 32 programs identified, 14 were linked to “public health.”⁴ Other thematic similarities included faith-based, military and engineering. Categorisations reveal the interdisciplinary nature of humanitarian education in the US and opportunities for networking between similar programs.

Interviews suggested that Sphere standards are deeply ingrained in humanitarian standards teaching in US universities. All three professors were former or current humanitarian practitioners and had become familiar with Sphere during their fieldwork. In the classroom, they understood it as fundamental to humanitarian practice and therefore, the curriculum. Their interpretations of Sphere Standards differed slightly, but essentially, they introduced them as “guidelines”. While professors had designed their own case studies, training and examples, the Sphere Handbook was used throughout the course. Some classes were over two decades old and had been developed by multiple professors

⁴ This includes programmes in medical or nursing schools at universities.

over time. Sphere, in this way, was seen as a standard to flesh out with real-world examples and application through additional assignments.

Although professors were the main points of contact within universities, none of the interview participants had consistent or direct contact with the Sphere Secretariat or focal points. However, some noted that guest lecturers in their courses were past authors or contributors of the Sphere Standards. This indicates that there may not be formal relationships established in the US between professors and Sphere, but past exposure to the organisation has created informal connections. This indicates that Sphere may need to strengthen networks between stakeholders as well as increase visibility in the US, as emphasised by one of the US focal points.

All interview participants mentioned the need for more or better quality guest lecturers to narrow the gap between theory and practise. Furthermore, a professor noted the need for specialised lecturers; for example, a practitioner with a military background would be the best suited for military students.

Whether students had prior experience or not, professors still noted the importance of translating theory into practice in the field. There were a few programmes that sent students to other countries to conduct fieldwork as part of their studies. Other programmes, such as Tufts and Columbia had weekend programs akin to “simulations,” which were meant to expose students to the reality of humanitarian fieldwork. Another suggested response was encouraging students to do domestic volunteering or fieldwork in their local communities.

Afghanistan

Two interviews were conducted. One participant was a Sphere focal point based at an NGO in Pakistan that also implements initiatives in Afghanistan. The other interview participant leads an NGO in Afghanistan and provided some materials for the desk review.

The NGO based in Afghanistan, in collaboration with Ghalib University, has established a network with other universities in the country. After reading the Sphere Handbook in 2018, the interviewee decided that this information was important to disseminate throughout the country. Since then, they have established relationships with Bost University, Malalay University, Kawun University, and Alfalah University. Beyond these established contacts, they also engage with 17 other universities in Afghanistan. At these universities, they administer workshops and training for interested students, some of whom are presently engaged in humanitarian response in the country.

Collaboration between NGOs and universities was essential in the context of Afghanistan. The Afghanistan-based NGO uses a collaboration agreement, based on sharing expertise, between their learning centre and universities. The Sphere focal point shared that their NGO had helped to roll-out a course at Kabul University on disaster risk and reduction through the facilitation of Kabul’s faculty. The Sphere focal point suggested that focal points could take on the role of contextualising materials and help professors design targets and outcomes in their assessment of student work.

Community development was the driving focus of humanitarian education programmes. Through an on-the-ground network of NGOs, practitioners, universities, and students, the Afghanistan-based NGO has been able to deliver accredited community development courses to students of a variety of academic backgrounds, including economics, medicine, and law. The collaboration agreement and their willingness to adapt materials to the local context (using local language and examples) have ensured that the education centres on community development. The Sphere focal point also noted the importance of contextualised content so that individuals can connect with the material and comply with the standards of the community. This ensures that when humanitarian principles are adopted, they are adapted in a way which leads to localisation and sustainability of humanitarian and development action.

The Afghanistan-based, along with universities, adapts and disseminates Sphere standards to other universities in Afghanistan. In tandem with their main university partners mentioned above, they take the relevant portions of the Sphere Handbook (dependent upon context), translate them into the local

language and provide these materials to other universities. Along with this mutually developed curriculum, the programme also brings in community experts to speak with students in these spaces that develop between the learning centres and universities. Students often speak with experts about their ideas in a conversational format.

Some challenges presented by the context of Afghanistan include funding and technical support. Within this context, humanitarian action may be perceived as a political act; therefore, actors in the field do not often publicise some of their activities, which may limit opportunities for funding.

Poland

An interview was conducted with the focal point, who is also a trainer. The desk review identified the two leading humanitarian education programmes offered within the country: Postgraduate Humanitarian Studies Programme by the University of Warsaw and the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA).

Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and Poland's geographic and political proximity to the conflict, student demand for humanitarian education has increased. As analysed through the desk review, the two main humanitarian education programmes were introduced during the interview; the Postgraduate Humanitarian Studies Programme, which is organised by the University of Warsaw and the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA), an inter-university joint study programme on humanitarian education.

NOHA implements peer-to-peer workshops, which encourage active participation by students. Particularly, these workshops were designed following the structure of the Sphere Handbook to introduce and deepen the knowledge of the Sphere standards. The workshops begin with "What is Sphere?" followed by its principles and foundations, which can be further specified in the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles, and Core Humanitarian Standards. The focal point emphasised that these workshops can be revised using other information and materials provided by the Sphere Handbook.

However, the breadth of material in the handbook brought some challenges when engaging with students through the workshops. So, to promote engagement with Sphere principles, the focal point distributed the Sphere Handbook after students completed their workshop. Since the majority of the workshop participants are only aware of the general existence of Sphere, the focal point found it more effective and impactful to receive the Sphere Handbook after the completion of the workshop.

Another strategy taken by the focal point was to develop linkages between the Sphere standards and its application in the field through interactive classroom discussions led by the students. The interview participants emphasised that the diversity of students in NOHA workshops helped to strengthen the discussion through their unique perspectives. However, this diversity also shed light on the importance of carefully considering the differences between individual understandings of concepts. Students could have differing ideas of "safety" and "emergency" which do not translate to effective practices in the field. As shown by this interview, strategies taken beyond tailored content are another key point to consider in the development of humanitarian education.

South Korea

Three interviews were undertaken with a focal point and trainer, professor, and university student in South Korea. The interviews identified several key findings regarding academic needs among the stakeholders (institutions, professors, students, and focal points), current limitations, and country-specific opportunities for humanitarian education in universities in South Korea. It was not possible to carry out supporting desk research, since there was a lack of online open sources.

First, the interview participants cited a severe lack of educational opportunities to study humanitarianism/humanitarian action in universities in South Korea. Overall, there was severe scarcity in Bachelor's or Master's programmes in South Korea which offer humanitarian education.

Although few courses on this topic were offered under the International Relations, International Development, or Political Sciences programmes, they were not mandatory or not regularly offered to students unless there was a strong need communicated by the professor.

Most interview participants mentioned that the limited availability of humanitarianism/humanitarian action courses lies in the lack of public interest in the issues. Interest in global humanitarian issues has arisen recently, mainly through the crises that happened in Türkiye and Syria. Therefore, the institution has not actively advocated for the learning needs of humanitarianism/humanitarian action. It also resulted in a lack of general knowledge among students attending the courses.

The interview also identified that although the courses included terms such as humanitarianism/humanitarian actions, the curriculum and teaching materials were mixed with international development, international cooperation, or Official Development Aid (ODA) interchangeably. In other words, an in-depth curriculum, exclusively addressing humanitarianism/humanitarian action issues was not found during the desk review and interviews.

The interview also found that the opportunities to learn humanitarianism/humanitarian action in South Korea were mainly the capacity-building workshops offered by the Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC). This has created challenges since these courses were only offered to professionals in international development or humanitarian NGOs with previous or current work experience; students were not qualified to attend them. The course offered by the professor who participated in the interview mainly consisted of students who have current or previous professional experience in the relevant area. However, even the mentioned course had to start with teaching students foundational concepts such as the definition and history of humanitarianism/humanitarian action.

Since there are only a few courses on humanitarianism/humanitarian action organised in Korean universities, the interview could not identify how Sphere standards are integrated into the Korean education system. A professor participating in the interview responded that their course introduced Sphere standards and principles in one session but not in depth. The individual added that the density of Sphere content is not useful in the Korean educational context, since most students do not have preliminary knowledge. The curriculum, rather, aims to introduce overall concepts and issues relevant to humanitarianism/humanitarian action. They suggested Sphere develop online resources or tangible materials that professors can use for one or two units in the curriculum to help students expand their basic knowledge about the issues in addition to Sphere standards. In terms of resources, language was mentioned as a barrier for students to access comprehensive resources.

The focal point and trainer suggested that the first step to advancing humanitarian standards in education in South Korea lies in enhancing overall interest in the subject and expanding resources for students to gain exposure to humanitarian issues. The interview participants also suggested a joint study programme with universities with long-term and academic expertise in the humanitarian/humanitarian action field so students can engage with a breadth of curriculum. All interview participants agreed that long-term discussion and efforts are necessary to integrate Sphere standards in Korean educational settings.

Japan

A total of two interviews were conducted, one of whom doubles as a focal point and trainer, and another of whom is a university professor who integrates the Sphere standards into their Master's course on emergency humanitarian aid/assistance. The desk review was dependent on the materials shared by the interview participants.

Similarly to the case study in South Korea, interviews showed that there are very few courses or programmes that teach students about humanitarian aid/assistance in general. One of the challenges that arose was the limited opportunities for students and practitioners to discuss the current situations

in the field. However, the interview conducted with the university professor showed that there is a great need for students to learn about humanitarian aid/assistance.

When using Sphere standards and resources within academic courses and programmes, interviews showed that the Sphere Handbook is a significant and impactful tool, specifically when teaching humanitarian principles to students. For instance, the interview respondents mentioned that international minimum standards in humanitarian assistance would foster a greater understanding of the field worldwide, regardless of the similarity to the context of Japan. An interview participant noted the availability of the Sphere Handbook in various languages as one of the strengths of Sphere. Since they teach the course on emergency humanitarian assistance in Japanese, having a Japanese-translated Sphere Handbook is efficient and effective when incorporated into the curricula.

Both interviewees brought up the significance of cooperation and collaboration between academia and the nonprofit sector, including practitioners. For instance, the professor shared the possibility of incorporating a field experience component into his future curriculum by partnering with NGO training centres both domestically and internationally. They emphasised the intersection of humanitarian assistance and innovation, reiterating the importance of having interdisciplinary courses. On the other hand, the Japanese focal point shared that one of the challenges of the sector is the weakness of frameworks. They mentioned that even with strong vision and commitment, poor frameworks often translate into execution challenges in humanitarian educational programmes.

However, the interviews showed that Japan has some of the most powerful networks in terms of domestic humanitarian assistance. First, there is the [Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation \(JANIC\)](#), which is an organisation that facilitates collaboration among Japanese NGOs involved in international development and humanitarian assistance work. The strength of JANIC lies in its ability to foster information sharing, knowledge exchange, and cooperation among its members (JANIC, 2024). It also serves as a platform for advocacy, influencing policies related to international cooperation (JANIC, 2024). Additionally, JANIC acts as a bridge between Japanese NGOs and international partners, facilitating collaboration and resource mobilisation. Secondly, the [Japan Association for Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies \(JASHAS\)](#) is an organisation that aims to promote academic research, knowledge exchange, and collaboration in the field of emergency humanitarian assistance. The network brings together academics, researchers, and practitioners, fostering collaboration and the sharing of best practices in humanitarian education programmes in Japan (JASHAS, 2024). Through conferences, seminars, and publications, JASHAS contributes to the development of evidence-based approaches and policies in humanitarian assistance, enhancing the overall capacity and professionalism in the field domestically. Having effective cooperation and engagement with these networks would have a strong potential for Sphere to further spread its standards and principles within Japanese humanitarian educational programmes.

Conclusion

The increasing complexity and severity of humanitarian crises require quality humanitarian actions. Sphere, through its 4th edition handbook, provides pragmatic, comprehensive, political, and programme-oriented guidance based on its rights-based framework and has successfully supported various humanitarian stakeholders, including NGOs, UN agencies, governments, and academia, throughout the intervention, policymaking, and standard settings levels.

To facilitate sustainable humanitarian responses, Sphere aims to enhance its presence—through the Sphere Handbook along with other Sphere resources—at global tertiary educational settings. In this regard, the project aims to propose recommendations about how Sphere could improve the quality of humanitarian standards in tertiary education to better prepare future generations of humanitarians.

Through various data collection methods, including surveys, a focus group, and key informant interviews, the study examined the overall presence of Sphere and courses, identified its challenges in

meeting students' needs and improving curriculum in humanitarian programmes, and analysed country-specific challenges and opportunities in leveraging Sphere to advance the quality of the global humanitarian education system.

The research discovered that Sphere has made its way into the curriculum on a global scale, but care must be taken based on each country or regional context in developing more resources for universities. The presence of Sphere was identified in universities across the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania; however, the breakdown by country is significant. The survey and focus group identified the application of Sphere standards and resources tailored to country-specific contexts as an important area for Sphere to develop, and interviews suggested that these must be created in collaboration with local NGOs and universities. Whereas, some contexts proved that resource needs may be even more fundamental at the level of breaking down key humanitarian concepts. Important differences were revealed between countries and showed the potential for Sphere, but also universities and NGOs, to play an active role in the development and delivery of humanitarian education. Their expertise and knowledge are essential to designing and providing academic materials and spaces in which students can receive quality humanitarian education.

The action plan for Sphere should focus on the advancement of resources, raising awareness of their programming, and promoting collaboration in the sector. Contextualised materials, a database of contacts, and translation services will contribute to the process of integrating Sphere at the level of the classroom. Increasing the visibility of Sphere through website and communication platforms will be essential to organising networks and materials, and implementing these resources. There exists an immense knowledge base available across regions and within local contexts that can be tapped into with greater collaboration among NGOs, practitioners and universities. These elements will all play an essential role in improving humanitarian education, ultimately serving students as they become important humanitarian actors in their communities and globally.

There still exists a large gap to be investigated in countries where Sphere's presence was noted. As summarised, humanitarian education is greatly dependent upon the context in which it is administered, so great care should be taken so that each response is tailored to the needs of the country. However, the existence of networks which have already been established offer incredible insight and evidence of the ability for collaboration to inform quality humanitarian education.

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Annex

Annex 1. Pre-Focus Group Survey Question (Conducted via SurveyMonkey)

1. Introduction

Humanitarian standards are needed now, more than ever.

We wish to strengthen our relationship with universities—to ensure the next generation of humanitarians receives the best possible grounding in humanitarian principles, minimum standards and how to use them.

We thank you for sharing your experience and ideas in the following survey, which should take around 10 minutes.

Sphere & Sarah Bellovich, Yejin Stella An, and Yuzuka Motegi (Geneva Graduate Institute, Applied Research Team)

PS Please feel free to forward this survey to other interested parties!

2. About You

1. Your first name
2. Your last name
3. Your email address
4. Your organisation
5. Which of the following best describes your organisation?
 - Academic institution or professional training body
 - Government, civil defence or national service provider
 - International NGO
 - National or local NGO or Red Cross/Red Crescent
 - Self-employed or consultant
 - United Nations or intergovernmental organisation
 - Other (please specify)
6. Your current job role
7. Your main country of work
8. What is your relationship to Sphere? (Select all that apply)
 - Sphere Board Member
 - Sphere Focal Point
 - Sphere Listed Trainer
 - Sphere Member
 - University Academia
 - Other (please specify)
9. Have you ever taught Sphere to university students? (Select one)
 - Yes
 - No

3. If you have taught Sphere in universities

10. Sphere offers various teaching resources on its website.
Please tell us if you have used them and, if so, indicate your satisfaction level.

Please feel free to tell us more here about how you currently use Sphere resources in your teaching.

	Not at all useful	Not so useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Essential	Have not used this resource
The Sphere Handbook	The Sphere Handbook Not at all useful	The Sphere Handbook Not so useful	The Sphere Handbook Somewhat useful	The Sphere Handbook Very useful	The Sphere Handbook Essential	The Sphere Handbook Have not used this resource
Sphere Training Pack(s)	Sphere Training Pack(s) Not at all useful	Sphere Training Pack(s) Not so useful	Sphere Training Pack(s) Somewhat useful	Sphere Training Pack(s) Very useful	Sphere Training Pack(s) Essential	Sphere Training Pack(s) Have not used this resource
Sphere E-learnings	Sphere E-learnings Not at all useful	Sphere E-learnings Not so useful	Sphere E-learnings Somewhat useful	Sphere E-learnings Very useful	Sphere E-learnings Essential	Sphere E-learnings Have not used this resource
Sphere YouTube Channel	Sphere YouTube Channel Not at all useful	Sphere YouTube Channel Not so useful	Sphere YouTube Channel Somewhat useful	Sphere YouTube Channel Very useful	Sphere YouTube Channel Essential	Sphere YouTube Channel Have not used this resource

11. If you have not used Sphere's resources, please tell us why.

- I did not know they existed.
- They were not suitable for my purposes.
- If they were not suitable for your purposes, please explain why:

12. Which universities do you teach or have you taught Sphere in? (Please list)

- University 1:
- University 2:
- University 3:
- University 4:
- University 5:

13. Do you know of other universities that you think should be teaching Sphere? Please include details of key people to contact, if you have them.

4. Concluding Questions

14. Please complete the following sentence: Sphere would be taught in more universities in my country if...

15. In your opinion, how could Humanitarian Standards education be improved in universities?

16. Please indicate whether you plan to attend our focus group on strengthening Sphere teaching in universities (Date and time to be mentioned):

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

17. Please let us know if you would be willing to participate in a 30-minute follow-up semi-structured

interview with our student research team?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

18. Do you give us permission to contact you regarding this initiative?

- Yes, I understand that I may be contacted by Sarah, Yejin, Yuzuka or any member of the Sphere team regarding Sphere's academia outreach programme, and that I will be able to opt out of these communications at any time if I change my mind.
- No thank you. It is my pleasure to complete this survey, but I prefer not to be contacted further regarding Sphere's academia outreach programme. If I answered 'Yes' or 'Not sure' to either of the two previous questions, these are the only exceptions in which you may contact me regarding this initiative.

19. If you have any further comments, questions or suggestions regarding this project, please share them with us here:

Annex 2. Focus Group Facilitation Guide

Time	Segment	Lead	Script	Tasks
10	Welcome & Setting the Stage	Facilitator 1, 2	<p><u>Facilitator 1</u> Welcome to our Webinar on Strengthening Sphere’s Presence in Universities. We appreciate the time you are willing to share with us today and look forward to an engaging and interactive workshop. My name is Facilitator 1 Fallon and I am Head of Learning and Events at Sphere. As you know, Sphere is about humanitarian principles, life-saving actions, and accountable humanitarian response that helps people in crisis survive and live with dignity. We are here today to reflect together on how Sphere can strengthen humanitarian standards teaching in universities, and are very lucky to have a student research team from Geneva Graduate Institute to help us.</p> <p>Now I'd like our student research team to introduce themselves... Tristan, Facilitator 3, Facilitator 2 (name, track, country)</p> <p><u>Facilitator 2</u> As already mentioned before, we are all students at The Geneva Graduate Institute in the Interdisciplinary International Studies Program. The goal of our research is to better prepare future humanitarians through the improvement of humanitarian standards education. The focus group taking place today will help us identify current needs in humanitarian standards education and find where Sphere can help meet these expectations. Your opinion is incredibly valuable to us today. There are no right or wrong answers, and we look forward to starting this conversation with you.</p> <p>Before we start the discussion, I will quickly go through the agenda for this meeting.</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Share the Jamboard (agenda)</p> <p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Turn on recording after consent.</p>

			<p>Consent: This Focus Group will be recorded. It will only be used for internal purposes and be accessible and used by the Sphere secretariat and the research team. Any content which appears in the final report will be anonymised. Our findings may be published on the Sphere website and used in presentations. Please message us directly now if you have any questions or problems related to these conditions.</p> <p>Now, we would like to learn a bit about you! In the chat, please send your name, background (career/ relationship to Sphere), current country of residence, any of your experiences in teaching Sphere in education settings.</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Send in chat: <i>Intro- Name, Background (career/ relationship to Sphere), Country of Residence</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator 1</u> Compile the "introductions" from the chat on a google doc.</p>
15 (25)	Icebreaker Question and Discussion	Facilitator 2	<p><u>Facilitator 2</u> We will now start with our first question. On the chat, you will find a Jamboard link. You can open it and find the second page with the Icebreaker question. The question has also been posted in the chat.</p> <p>Q: What are the most important things that students need to learn about humanitarian standards? (5 minutes)</p> <p>We will give you 5 minutes to answer the question. Please unmute at any time if you have a question about how to use Jamboard. This will also be practice for later questions.</p> <p>Ask for volunteers to share and explain what they wrote. (10 minutes) <i>Facilitator 1 might jump in if there are no volunteers</i></p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Send out the Jamboard</p> <p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Send in chat: <i>What are the most important things that students need to learn about humanitarian standards?</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Screen Sharing (Jamboard)</p>
25 (50)	Session 1(a): Needs in and out of the classroom	Facilitator 1, 2, 3	<p><u>Facilitator 1</u> Thank you for your comments and observations. We now have two more important questions for you.</p>	

The first is: ***What do you need in the classroom to help students better learn about humanitarian standards?***

The second is: ***What do you need outside the classroom to help improve humanitarian standards education?***

You will have 25 minutes to have the first discussion.

We will put you into # breakout rooms for the following session. Think about this within the context of your answers from the icebreaker question. In each room, you will have one of our team members as a facilitator. Please find your respective Jamboard page which will be labelled Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3.

After breakout room discussions, we will ask a spokesperson from each group to present their findings.

[SPLIT INTO BREAKOUT ROOMS]

Facilitator 1 , Facilitator 2 (in breakout room)

As mentioned in the main room, we will discuss what are the students and professors' needs inside and outside the classroom pertaining to humanitarian standards education.

First, you will have 5 minutes to answer the first question on the Jamboard.

(1) **What do you need in the classroom to help students better learn humanitarian standards?**

Go to the page [x] and add sticky notes with your answers. We have already added some ideas from the survey you are also free to expand upon.

The question is already written on the page and I will also send it in the chat

Facilitator 3

Open Breakout Rooms (random assignment).

Facilitator 1 ,

Facilitator 2

(In breakout rooms)

Guide attendants on corresponding page numbers (screen sharing).

Facilitator 3

Send a 1-minute warning that they should move onto the next question.

			<p>now.</p> <p>Now, please share your ideas. I will give you 10 minutes.</p> <p>Now we will move to our second question.</p> <p>Now, go to page [x] to add sticky notes to answer the following question:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(2) What do you need outside the classroom to help improve humanitarian standards education?</p> <p>We will give you 5 minutes. You can find the question on the page and in the chat.</p> <p>Now, please share your ideas. I will give you 10 minutes. Each one of you will have [n] minutes.</p> <p>Now, we will go back to the main session and present our jamboard. Please choose a representative.</p> <p>[RETURN TO MAIN ROOM]</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Send 1 minute warning that they should come back to the main session.</p> <p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Send a message to return to the main session.</p>
10 (60)	Session 1(b): Presentations	Facilitator 2	<p><u>Facilitator 2</u> We will now have a 2 minute presentation from each group of their jamboard. Group 1...Group 2.... Group 3....</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Share the screen of the Jamboard</p> <p><u>All Facilitators</u> <i>If the presentation needs any clarifications, facilitators actively ask more questions.</i></p>
10 (70)	Break	Facilitator 2	<p>You are free to take a break now. We will stay on the call if you have any questions. Please return to the computer at <i>(time)</i></p>	
5 (75)	Session 1(c): Voting	Facilitator 2	<p><u>Facilitator 2</u> Thank you. Now we are going to explore some of those needs, inside and outside respectively, in a bit more detail.</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Share the Jamboard link</p> <p>Post the voting results</p>

			<p>But first, we need to decide which are the most important. Please go back to your groups' jamboard. You each have two votes. One for the most pressing inside and one for outside.</p> <p>Please draw a tick next to the need you believe to be most pressing inside the classroom, and another tick on the most pressing need outside the classroom.</p> <p>You can click the pen icon on the left side of the jamboard to draw. Please let us know if you are not familiar or cannot use the jamboard. We will do it for you.</p>	in the chat.
20 (95)	Session 2(a): Group Discussion & Presentation Document (In-Depth)	Facilitator 1, 2, 3	<p><u>Facilitator 2</u></p> <p>Thanks for your vote. So, our second session will focus on expanding on these ideas. This is a great opportunity to share your hands-on experiences as well as expertise based on region-specific knowledge.</p> <p>Now, we will return to the same breakout rooms. In these rooms, you will have 20 minutes to discuss and respond to questions on a Google Document about the two needs you selected as a group. We highly encourage you to bring your experience to this discussion.</p> <p>As we did during the first session, we will ask a spokesperson from each group to share their findings before we conclude the focus group.</p> <p>You will now return to your original breakout rooms.</p> <p>[SPLIT INTO BREAKOUT ROOMS]</p> <p><u>Facilitator 1, Facilitator 2 (in breakout room)</u></p> <p>Please write the inside needs that got the most votes from the group. Your group voted on _____ for inside the classroom. We have included the suggested questions on a Google Document. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability, although we</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u></p> <p>Open Breakout Rooms with the same teams.</p> <p><u>Facilitator 1, Facilitator 2 (in breakout room)</u></p> <p>Send the Google Docs for participants' collaborative inputs</p> <p><u>Facilitator 3</u></p> <p>Send 1-minute warning that they should switch to the next set of questions</p>

			<p>recognise different needs will apply more to some questions than others.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) When meeting this need, is there anything specific to your country or context that needs to be taken into account? (2) What materials or resources are required to meet this need? (3) What are challenges or barriers to meeting this need? (4) How do you expect Sphere to help meet this need? (5) Are there any organisations already responding to this need that Sphere should work with? <p>Now, let's switch to the next component. Your group voted on _____ for outside the classroom. Please discuss the answer to the same questions. You will have 10 minutes.</p> <p>Now, you will go back to the main session and present the group's discussion for 2 minutes. Please choose one representative. Make sure to address what Sphere should do to meet these needs.</p> <p>[RETURN TO MAIN ROOM]</p>	<p>(outside the classroom setting)</p> <p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Send a 1-minute warning that they should wrap up the discussion and go back to the main session.</p> <p>Send a message to return to the main session.</p>
20 (115)	Session 2(b): Group Presentations & Discussions	Facilitator 2	<p><u>Facilitator 2</u> We will have two minutes for each group to present and each presentation will be followed by a short discussion (4 minutes).</p> <p>Group 1 will start us off...</p> <p>[Discussion prompt following each presentation]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Can anyone identify any country-specific limitations or barriers? (2) Any comments? <p>Thank you for your presentations!</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u> Share the Google Docs of each group on the screen as they present.</p>

5 (120)	Conclusion	Facilitator 1	<p><u>Facilitator 1</u></p> <p>It was wonderful having you all here today. We appreciate you taking time out of your schedules for Sphere. [Summarise some key points which came up in discussion].</p> <p>These results will be used for our final report on how we can better prepare future humanitarians. Please let us know if anything comes up.</p> <p>You can send any concerns or questions you may have to: info@spherestandards.org</p> <p>We will send you a follow-up email after the session with the survey link. Please take your time for it.</p> <p>We deeply appreciate you spending time with us today to help us in our research to improve the education of future humanitarians.</p>	<p><u>Facilitator 3</u></p> <p>Copy email in the chat.</p>
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1. Structure of the Key Informant Interview

1.1 Key Informant Interviews with Professors

- Assessment of Sphere Integration in Programmes
 - The alignment between learning objectives and outcomes mentioned in the programmes with the Sphere standards
 - Utilisation of the Sphere standards and principles within the programme curriculum
 - Contextualisation of programmes / the Sphere standards
- Teaching Methods and Resources
 - Teaching methods employed within the programme, such as:
 - Lecture-based learning
 - Practice-oriented / project-based learning
 - Field-based learning
 - Educational resources utilisation to support the programme
 - Visual aids (presentation, videos, any other interactive audiovisual resources)
 - Case studies as examples
 - The Sphere Handbook
 - Effectiveness of teaching methods and resources on students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits (KASH)
- Stakeholder Communication
 - Sphere engagement during the needs assessment (to identify the needs of professors and students)
 - Sphere engagement during the programme
 - Sphere engagement during the programme assessment
- Country-specific Gaps and Opportunities
 - Country-specific gaps in the utilisation of the Sphere standards in programme (i.e. programme design, implementation, and evaluation)
 - Country-specific recommendations on the utilisation of the Sphere standards in programme (i.e. programme design, implementation, and evaluation)
 - Challenges and/or recommendations regarding the support of Sphere Secretariat and/or focal points in programme (i.e. programme design, implementation, and evaluation)

1.2 Key Informant Interviews with Focal Points

- Monitoring of Humanitarian Standards Education Programme
 - Sphere engagement during the needs assessment (to identify the needs of professors and students)
 - Sphere engagement during the programme (implementation monitoring)
 - Sphere engagement during the programme assessment
- Stakeholder coordination
 - Identification of coordination between focal point(s) and Sphere Secretariat regarding Humanitarian Standards Education in the country
 - Identification of coordination between focal point(s) and professors regarding Humanitarian Standards Education in the country

- Country-specific Gaps and Opportunities
 - Country-specific gaps in supporting the programme(s)
 - Communication with Sphere Secretariat
 - Network with professors
 - Programme monitoring
 - Programme Assessment / evaluation
 - Country-specific recommendations on the support of program(s)

Note: It is recommended to focus the questions on key areas of concern for the project to keep the interview as short as possible. Plus, the interview should avoid any leading questions. The adapted interview guide should be pretested prior to its use with interview participants.

2. Administering the Key Informant Interviews

When conducting an interview:

- Inform the interview participant(s) regarding the purpose, structure, and any other relevant information in the beginning of the interview.
- Explain and ask the interview participant(s) to agree on the recording consent form.
- Conduct the interview in a team of two. One person will ask the questions, and the other will take note.
- Ask additional probing questions if needed and where indicated.

3. Key Informant Interviews Template (for Professors)

Interview No.	Date (dd/mm/yy)	Country	Name of interview participant	Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2

0 Introduction and Recording Content

Read the introduction to the interview participant(s)

Thank you for your time on this interview. This interview aims to identify the main barriers or challenges of applying the Sphere standards in *(programme title)* at *(name of the university/institute)* and discover points to improve for the better implementation of the educational programmes in *(country)*.

Before we start the interview, we would like to inform you that this interview will be recorded. It will only be used for internal purposes and be accessible and used by the Sphere secretariat and the research team. Any content which appears in the final report will be anonymised. Our findings may be published on the Sphere website and used in presentations. Do you agree?

1. Basic Information

1.1 Name

- 1.2 Country
- 1.3 Place of work/institution
- 1.4 Position
- 1.5 Years of experience (in teaching)
- 1.6 Field of expertise
- 1.7 Programme Title

2. Assessment of Sphere Integration in Programmes

- 2.1. Are you currently teaching any humanitarian standards course(s)?
- 2.2. Does your current/previous curriculum include the Sphere standards/principles?
- 2.3. Does your current/previous curriculum include the Sphere standards/principles?
 - 2.3.1. If yes, do you think the Sphere standards and/or principles reflect specific needs of students in (*country*)?
- 2.4. In your current/previous curriculum, what is/was the learning objectives and outcomes?
- 2.5. To what extent do you think these learning objectives and outcomes are aligned with the Sphere standards and/or principles?

3. Teaching Methods and Resources

- 3.1. What type of teaching methods did you apply in your aforementioned course(s)?
 - 3.1.1. Why did you choose that teaching method?
 - 3.1.2. How did it contribute to students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits?
 - 3.1.3. What were the achievements/challenges of the teaching methods?
 - 3.1.4. Was Sphere resource(s) helpful in applying the teaching methods during the curriculum?
- 3.2. Did you utilise any educational resources during the teaching?
 - 3.2.1. Do you need any of these resources during your educational programme? (specific examples of audiovisual aids, case studies (which resources, which countries), the Sphere Handbook, etc.)
 - 3.2.2. Have you ever used these additional materials to lead/support your educational programme? Sphere E-learning, Sphere training packs that can be downloaded from the Sphere website (For example, The Sphere Training Pack, Urban Training Pack, Online Training Pack, Short Workshop Facilitation Guide, etc.)
 - 3.2.3. How did it contribute to students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits?
 - 3.2.4. What were the achievements/challenges of the teaching methods?
 - 3.2.5. Was Sphere resource(s) helpful in designing/utilising your resources during the curriculum?

4. Stakeholder Communication

- 4.1. Do Sphere focal points in your country regularly engage during your design, implementation, and evaluation of your curriculum?
 - 4.1.1. Overall how would you rate the quality of the communication with Sphere? (very satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately unsatisfied, very unsatisfied), why?
 - 4.1.2. (very satisfied, moderately satisfied) How did you communicate with focal points? (means, frequency, phase)
 - 4.1.3. (very satisfied, moderately satisfied) During your communication, what is/was the role of the focal points?
 - 4.1.4. (very satisfied, moderately satisfied) How did it contribute to your teaching?
 - 4.1.5. (very unsatisfied, moderately unsatisfied) If not, why did you not communicate?
 - 4.1.6. Do/did you find any challenges of not communicating with Sphere in regards to your teaching?

5. Country-specific Gaps and Opportunities

- 5.1. Do you find any gaps and challenges while utilising the Sphere standards, principles, or resources in your curriculum, specific to the context of *(country name)*?
- 5.1.1. If so, when do you find the most gap(s)? (i.e. programme design, implementation, and evaluation)
- 5.1.2. If so, what do you think Sphere can support to solve this challenge(s)?
- 5.2. Do you have any recommendations on Sphere focal points in *(country name)* to better design, implement, and evaluate your curriculum?

4. Key Informant Interviews Template (for Focal Points)

Interview No.	Date (dd/mm/yy)	Country	Name of interview participant	Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2

0 Introduction and Recording Content

Read the introduction to the interview participant(s)

Thanks for your time on this interview. This interview aims to identify the main barriers or challenges of applying the Sphere standards in *(programme title)* at *(name of the university/institute)* and discover points to improve for the better implementation of the educational programmes in *(country)*.

Before we start the interview, we would like to inform you that this interview will be recorded. It will only be used for internal purposes and be accessible and used by the Sphere secretariat and the research team. Any content which appears in the final report will be anonymised. Our findings may be published on the Sphere website and used in presentations. Do you agree?

1. Basic Information

- 1.1 Name
- 1.2 Country
- 1.3 Place of work / institution
- 1.4 Position
- 1.5 Years of experience (in teaching)
- 1.6 Field of expertise
- 1.7 Programme Title

2. Monitoring of Humanitarian Standards Education Programme

- 2.1. Do you currently work on supporting humanitarian standards programmes at university in *(country name)*?
- 2.1. (yes) What are your specific roles and responsibilities?
- 2.2. (no, previously yes) What were your specific roles and responsibilities?
- 2.2. Have you engaged in any of the processes in designing, rolling out, and/or evaluating the humanitarian standards programmes in universities in *(country name)*?
- 2.2.1. (yes) What are your specific roles and responsibilities?
- 2.2.2. How did it contribute to the program?
- 2.2.3. Did you have any specific challenges?
- 2.2.4. How was your engagement reported/communicated to the Sphere Secretariat?

3. Stakeholder coordination

3.1. In regards to the support of the humanitarian standards program at university, how would you rate the quality of the coordination with Sphere Secretariat? (very satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately unsatisfied, very unsatisfied)

3.1.1 Why?

3.1.2. (very satisfied, moderately satisfied) How did you communicate with Sphere Secretariat? (means, frequency, phase)

3.1.3. (very unsatisfied, moderately un satisfied) If not, what are the biggest challenge(s) of the lack of coordination?

3.1.4. Do/did you find any challenges of not communicating with Sphere Secretariat in supporting humanitarian standards teaching in the universities in (*country name*)?

3.2. In regards to the support of the humanitarian standards programme at university, how would you rate the quality of the communication with professors? (very satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately unsatisfied, very unsatisfied)

3.2.1. Why?

3.2.2. (very satisfied, moderately satisfied) How do/did you communicate with professors? (means, frequency, phase)

3.2.3. (very unsatisfied, moderately un satisfied) If not, what are the biggest challenge(s) of the lack of coordination with professors?

3.2.4. Do/did you find any challenges of not communicating with professors in supporting humanitarian standards teaching in the universities in (*country name*)?

4. Country-specific Gaps and Opportunities

4.1. Do you find any gaps and challenges in communicating with Sphere Secretariat?

4.1.1. If so, what do you think Sphere can support to solve this challenge(s)?

4.2. Do you have any gaps and challenges in continuing the network with university professors in (*country name*)?

4.2.1. If so, what do you think Sphere can support to solve this challenge(s)?

4.2.2. If so, what do you think professors can support to solve this challenge(s)?

4.3. Do you have any gaps and challenges in supporting the design, rollout, evaluation of university programmes in humanitarian standards in (*country name*)?

4.3.1. If so, what do you think Sphere can support to solve this challenge(s)?

4.3.2. If so, what do you think professors can support to solve this challenge(s)?

4.4. Do you have any recommendations on Sphere Secretariat to better support the humanitarian standards education in universities in (*country name*)?

4.5. Do you have any recommendations on professors to better support the humanitarian standards education in universities in (*country name*)?

Annex 4. Pre-Focus Group Survey Analysis

From the pre-focus group survey, the results have been isolated which provide further insight into country contexts. Some results have been left out due to repetition in findings. Thirty-four respondents taught Sphere and 29 respondents had not taught Sphere. Thirteen were from an NGO or Red Cross/ Red Crescent, 11 were from an international NGO, 34 were from an academic institution or professional training body and four were from a government, civil defense or national service provider.

What support would you need from Sphere to establish a connection with these universities?

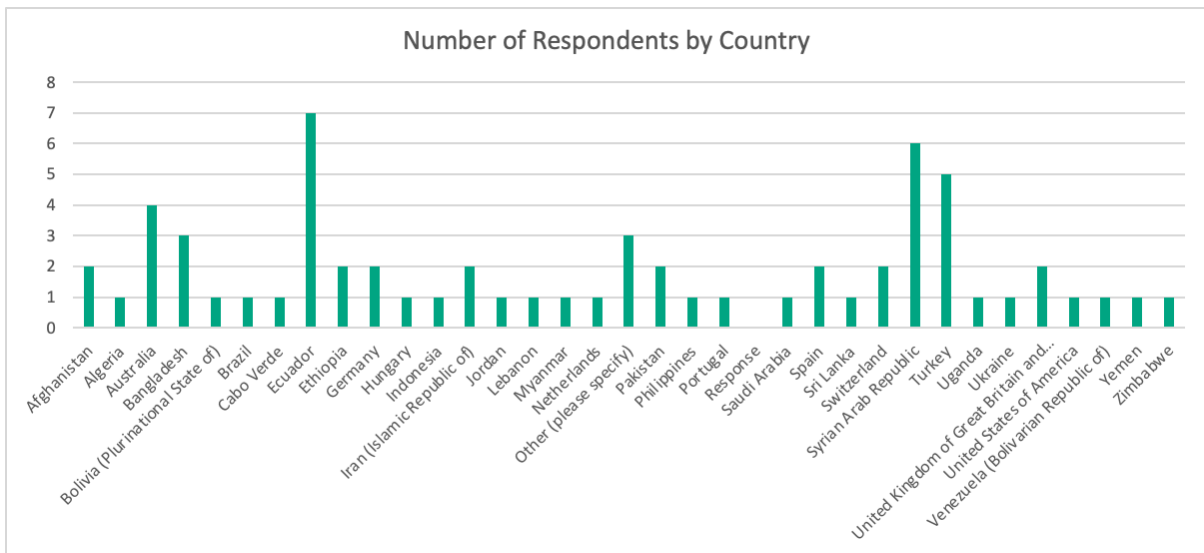
- Holding discussions and introductory sessions about the Sphere project with universities (Syrian Arab Republic);
- We need a letter to the university for coordination explaining the importance of the Sphere Principles (Saudi Arabia & Ethiopia);
- A memorandum of understanding between Sphere and universities so that the latter gets the recognition and right to use Sphere resources (Ethiopia).

Please complete the following sentence: Sphere would be taught in more universities in my country if:

- They convinced the university administration of the necessity of Sphere in education (Jordan);
- It could be expanded to include education on the legal protection of children and vulnerable groups (Syrian Arab Republic);
- Sphere is integrated into administrative and engineering colleges (Syrian Arab Republic);
- It was integrated into social responsibility curricula and continuing education programs.
- More practitioners are present in courses (Afghanistan);
- New fields of study touched on the humanitarian sector or were aware of Sphere (Australia, Turkey);
- they could get permission from the Ministry of Science (Iran);
- there was a memorandum of understanding or signed agreements (across countries).

In your opinion, how could Humanitarian Standards education be improved in universities?

- The opportunity for professors to have direct consultation with Sphere (Australia);
- By conducting several training workshops for professors on how to implement Sphere in cooperation with relevant international organisations (Syrian Arab Republic);
- Providing research and teaching grants (Sri Lanka);
- The creation of a multi-language platform for sharing ideas and resources.
- Creating a section in the Sphere Handbook that discusses different professional careers (Bolivia).



How useful would you rate the following Sphere Resources? (35 respondents total)

Usefulness of Sphere	E-learnings	Training Packs	Youtube Channel	Sphere Handbook
Have not used this resource	10	11	10	1
Not so useful	1	0	1	0
Somewhat useful	6	6	7	2
Very useful	12	15	11	11
Essential	6	3	6	21