



hqai

HUMANITARIAN QUALITY
ASSURANCE INITIATIVE

2020

facts, figures, insights
and an outlook

HQAI is 5 years old.
The CHS is 6 years old.

Where do we stand with
the role of independent
CHS quality assurance in
promoting quality and
accountability, spearheading
participation, safeguarding,
facilitating localisation and
reducing duplication of due
diligence processes?



© Martina Holmberg, Diakonia. Bicycle manifestation
on International Women's Day in Bangladesh.

- what we do -

HQAI offers three auditing services for organisations, networks and initiatives working in the humanitarian and development sector: [certification](#), [independent verification](#) and [benchmarking](#).

“The changes we made have significantly improved our **relationships with the communities** we work with.”



Rizwan Iqbal
ACT Alliance

Simplicity!
A new animation [video](#) describes our work effectively. →



↑ HQAI CHS certification mark: an icon of trust.

The diversity of HQAI’s audited partners in terms of sizes (1 to 150 country programmes), types (UN agency, National Societies of the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, national, international) and mandates (humanitarian, development, advocacy) demonstrates the flexibility of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) as a standard, and of HQAI’s methods to measure its application.



↑ Small, big, national, international, network, group, humanitarian, development or both ... the diversity of HQAI’s audited partners is impressive (status 03/2021). Read their stories on our [website](#).

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations can use to improve their work. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid and development work. The CHS places communities and people affected by crisis at the centre and is a measurable standard.

Core Humanitarian STANDARD

Why is it important to measure?

Those who measure can track progress over time towards compliance with the standard. Doing it independently is the most rigorous way. This is what HQAI does. When we measure, organisations improve. HQAI offers independent verification and certification under the CHS verification scheme. Both services provide organisations with an external perspective on where they stand in the application of the CHS and point out areas of strengths and weaknesses.

The CHS Alliance's 2020 Humanitarian Accountability [Report](#) revealed how much progress CHS-verified organisations have made in meeting their commitments to the children, women and men facing disasters globally. CHS Commitment 6 on coordination and complementarity is the closest to being fully met by verified organisations. Commitment 5 on welcoming and addressing complaints is least satisfactory.

"Evidence from the large number of organisations verified against the CHS, shows that we are building something that has commitment, investment and is driving real change."



Tanya Wood,
CHS Alliance

"We are empowered and actively participate."



Serene,
participant in a youth
programme,
Lebanon

COVID-19: To mitigate travel restrictions and their aftermaths on audits, HQAI has developed effective remote assessment techniques. However, these will not, and should not, completely replace face-to-face interviews in the future.

**In 2020, HQAI auditors consulted
104 community members remotely.**



HQAI is a not-for-profit NGO registered as a Swiss association. Watch the video [HQAI in 90 seconds](#) to better understand who we are and visit the [website](#) to see our smiles.

New people joined in 2020 and enriched the organisation with an incredible diversity of experience, skills and knowledge.

1 new President:

Kate Halff

1 new staff member:

Jeanine Byrom

4 new members:

Elsa Matilde Escobar, Rayelene Govender, Jason Phillips, Amany Qaddour

10 new auditors:

Andrew Bradley, Francesco Dagostino, Amina Deji-Logunleko, Mayumi Fuchi, Camille Guyot-Bender, Simon Lawry-White, Philip Miller, Lisa Partridge, Efehi Ubebe, Léa Valentini

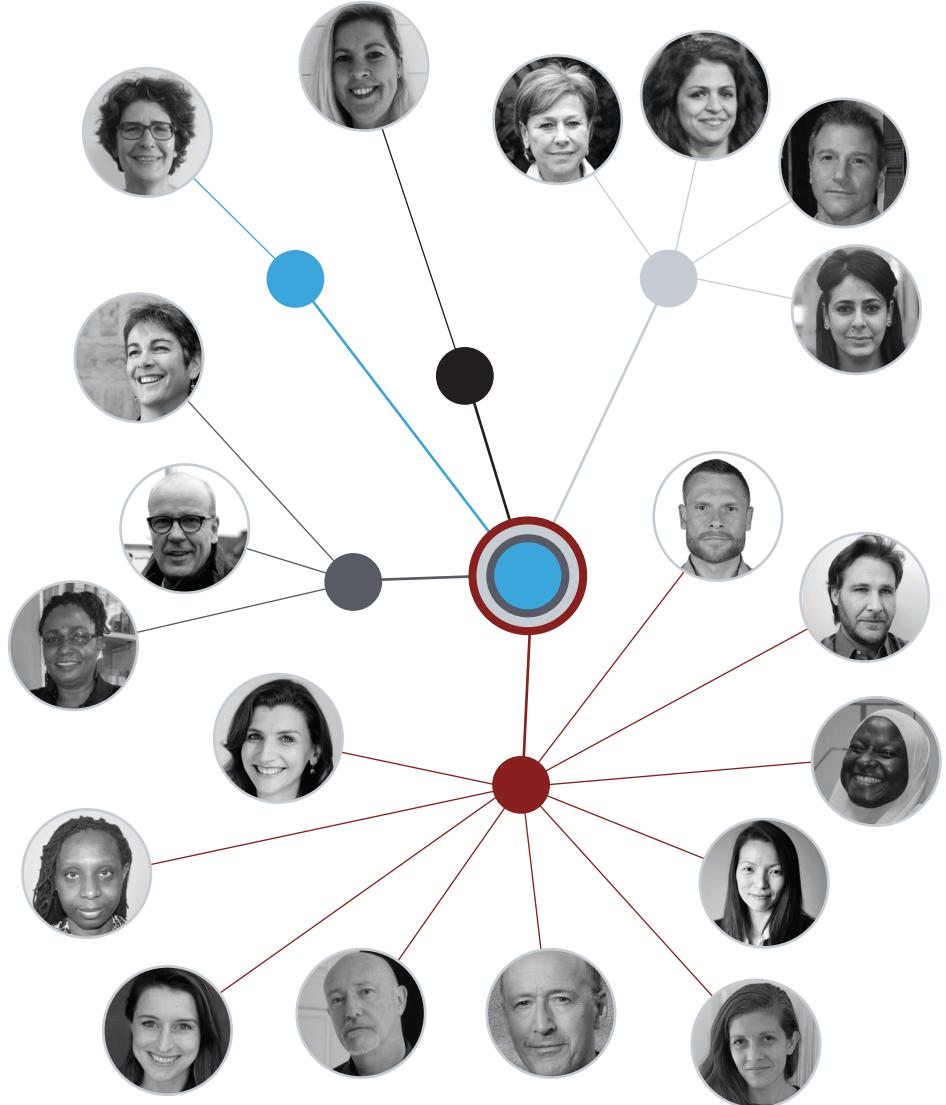
3 new Directors:

Maria Emilia Correa, Daniel Hitzig, Elizabeth Wakilo

"I was attracted [...] to encourage **mutual respect** between organisations audited by HQAI and the communities they serve."



Efehi Ubebe
Auditor, HQAI



↑ Playtime: Trying to link pictures with names? Use the colour coding first. Names are listed in alphabetical order. Corresponding pictures are sorted clockwise starting on the top of each colour group.

Time to speak up

by Kate Halff, HQAI President

HQAI turned five years old in 2020. As a founding member and now the President of HQAI, I am proud of all that HQAI has achieved in this short period. As demonstrated by the impressive facts and figures and the enthusiastic substantial quotes provided in this report, HQAI has achieved a lot!

With its independent audits of aid organisations' work against the CHS, HQAI has shown that a systems audit approach has its place within the humanitarian endeavor. It brings an independent rigorous assessment of an NGO's performance against a

standard which articulates Nine Commitments to people and communities who face extreme destitution or whose lives have been turned around by crisis.

HQAI's work helps organisations improve their **performance** in terms of quality and accountability; helps build **trust** between these organisations, the people they serve and their financial supporters; contributes to putting small local organisations on the same **level playing field** in terms of performance as bigger international ones, and contributes to **reducing duplication** and increasing efficiency by using CHS certification to harmonise and simplify due diligence and partner assessments.

Despite these achievements, we are still far from achieving the **transformation** that underpins the vision behind the CHS and the creation of HQAI: achieve **sustainable quality and accountability** aid outcomes at scale; ensure financial support to organisations based on demonstrated performance regardless of their size and origin; and harmonise and simplify due diligence requirements.

It is time for CHS-certified organisations and humanitarian and development donors committed to these aims to embrace and publicly promote CHS certification.

↑ © TPO Uganda. A beneficiary sharing her story with TPO Uganda staff in 2020.

"I have found that interviewing community members individually, [remotely] can provide a **rich source of information**, as their comfort level may be higher than speaking out within a group. The downside is that due to time constraints, we speak with less people providing a smaller sample size."



Catherine Blunt
Senior Auditor, HQAI

"The **lack of recognition** by donors weakens the appeal for organisations to engage in their verification journey. Too much time, money and goodwill are lost, although the appropriate **tools exist to reduce duplication** and lighten the burden."



Pierre Hauselmann
Executive Director
HQAI

"DANIDA encourages colleagues to make independent quality assurance against the CHS **mandatory**. Experience has shown that it **increases the speed to reach critical mass** of CHS-verified organisations and raises the bar for more quality and accountability."



Mille Døllner Fjeldsted
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of Denmark/DANIDA

- certainly not the end -

HQAI warmly thanks its [donors](#) for their generous support in 2020.



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**
Danida



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



When we measure, organisations improve



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