



## **Management response to the independent meta-evaluation of the stichting Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (SHO) 2010 Earthquake Response in Haiti**

### **Introduction**

The SHO is a partnership of 10 Dutch aid organisations that collectively raises funds after major humanitarian disasters to provide aid to victims. In January 2010, Haiti was struck by an earthquake of catastrophic magnitude killing approximately 220,000 people and affecting one third of the Haitian population. There was overwhelming destruction of already weak state institutions and local organisations. With 111 million euro raised, the Haiti SHO campaign was the second largest in SHO's history.

SHO funds are allocated to approved participant organisations after a disaster to allow them to carry out emergency relief and rehabilitation projects. Participating organisations can use the funds for direct, effective, lifesaving emergency relief in the area of the disaster and later for rehabilitation in their own area of expertise. The organizations have their own responsibility how they use the money; through partner organizations or international umbrella organisations or implementing themselves. SHO requires that at least 50% of SHO funds received by partner organisations be covered by external evaluations. For the Haiti response, these external evaluations were carried out between 2010 and 2015. In autumn 2015, SHO organised a meta-evaluation to evaluate the quality of the evaluations carried out by SHO members on their projects in Haiti, and to draw some general conclusions on the total results of the use of the SHO subsidy, including lessons learned.

### **Response to Key Findings of Meta-Evaluation**

The global response to the Haiti earthquake came under significant criticism for its tardiness, poor coordination, and exclusion of key stakeholders such as Haitian local organisations, communities and government institutions. The response in Haiti was new ground for the majority of SHO member organisations that had little prior experience working in urban disaster areas and in such a complex operating environment. We are therefore pleased to note that most SHO-funded projects respected the principles of beneficiary involvement and empowerment and that SHO funds were flexible to allow swift action to be taken for a timely response. We also note the many lessons learned and encourage member organisations to integrate any of these that have not already been addressed by their organisations.

The SHO board is pleased to note that 31 of the total 40 evaluation reports that were reviewed in the meta-evaluation were judged to be of “Excellent” or “Good” quality, covering at least 56% of the total SHO Haiti funds, and that all remaining reports were judged as “Satisfactory” quality; there were no reports that fell into the lowest category for quality. We are also pleased to note that there was a gradual improvement in the reliability, validity and usefulness of the evaluation reports over time, demonstrating the improving capacities of member organizations to organise quality evaluations of their work in the aftermath of a challenging humanitarian disaster.

We are also pleased to note that SHO interventions convincingly met the immediate needs of local earthquake victims, especially in the emergency and relief phases; that they coordinated in the field in the UN cluster systems, as well as with government institutions and local organizations on the whole quite successfully. As the meta-evaluation notes, “flexibility contributed to enhanced effectiveness” and whilst flexibility can mean it is more difficult to present a uniform presentation of the results of SHO funded projects, it does ensure that immediate life-saving projects can be implemented without delay. Furthermore, several SHO members are the Dutch members of international umbrella organisations whose own policies and modus operandi are already fully integrated with the prevailing humanitarian coordination policies in the field.. For these reasons we support the conclusion of the evaluators that diversity in the approaches of different SHO members should be seen as a strength rather than a weakness and that information provided in existing SHO reporting formats is sufficient for the needs of SHO and the general public.

We note that organizations struggled at first with the urban nature of the disaster, something that most organizations did not have experience working with and are satisfied that the evaluators find that despite such constraints, geographical coverage of projects was satisfactory to ensure that people in different areas received assistance.

As for the nature and functioning of the SHO as an organization, we subscribe the observation of the evaluators that the SHO, by design, cannot operate in a uniform manner and that this is a strength, rather than a weakness. Whilst SHO is a coordinating mechanism for fundraising in the Netherlands, it is not an implementing organization and does not have an entity or presence in the field. Indeed, the cluster systems are the primary coordination mechanism for all organizations involved in humanitarian response and conducting operations in the field.

With regards to learning from the evaluations, we are pleased to note that some organizations have clearly demonstrated how they incorporate learning from evaluations into their organizations, translating lessons learned into manuals, policies, learning materials, and applying these lessons in subsequent disaster responses. We encourage member organizations who were not able to clearly demonstrate this learning loop to ensure adequate attention is given to this important topic. We are pleased to note the improvement from the previous meta-evaluation with regards to the use of learning mechanisms within SHO member organizations to pass on learning from one emergency response to another.