

TorqAid Guiding Principles, Standards & Codes of Conduct for Effective Humanitarian Work

TorqAid – www.torqaid.com suggests that the following **Guiding Principles, Standards and Codes of Conduct** provide a useful, practical framework for effective humanitarian work.

Five Key Attributes (5KAs) of the Humanitarian or DRM Practitioner

Effective humanitarian response is more an Art Form than a Science, and ideally requires:

- A passionate heart, good relationships, and mutual respect
- A good understanding of the background context
- Clear objectives
- The ability to be a part of (and for leaders, to motivate and lead) teams; and to teach and transfer appropriate skills
- A reflective, flexible, creative, patient and generally relaxed practitioner. A sense of humour

Relationships/Respect

'If your intention is truly to help our people, then you must listen to them, respect them and treat them as equal partners, not as passive recipients of your aid'¹

Balance between Dependence/Resilience

- The challenge, on the one hand, between showing compassion, encouraging development, advocating people's rights; but yet, at the same time, not creating dependency...
- The challenge of building up people's resilience, rather than undermining it

Shared Responsibility

The Victoria Bushfires Royal Commission Report Summary² underscored the importance of *Shared Responsibility*, required from all key stakeholders in effectively preparing for, and reducing the risk from, potential natural disasters.

The policy approach also needs to recognise the underlying importance of 'shared responsibility'. ...Everyone, the state, municipal councils, individuals, household members, and the broader community; must accept greater responsibility for bushfire safety in the future, and that many of these responsibilities are shared³

¹ Xanana Gusmao, the former Prime Minister of Timor Leste as quoted in Kirtsy Sword Gusmao's, 'A Woman of Independence' <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3461391-a-woman-of-independence>

² State Government of Victoria, 2010, *Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report*. www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/Commission-Reports

³ Final report summary, p.6

Humanitarian Standards and Codes of Conduct

It is essential that humanitarian practitioners have an understanding of the key standards and codes of conduct which undergird international humanitarian assistance. The best single document for this is now the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)⁴, which is a set of Nine Commitments and Quality Criteria which humanitarian stakeholders ideally make to communities and people affected by crises. The CHS comprises earlier standards and codes of conduct such as the Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response⁵; the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief etc.



Chris Piper, CEO TorqAid
pipercm@iprimus.com.au
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⁴ <http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org> and www.chsalliance.org

⁵ www.sphereproject.org