

Humanitarian Staff Development Project
An introduction

A comprehensive, dynamic staff development approach enabling organisations to recognise, refine and improve individual skills, strengthen behaviours in their staff, and raise standards and quality in future humanitarian responses.

Children whilst being taught about hygiene. Shikapur, Pakistan
Photo credit: Timothy Allen / Oxfam



Introduction

Context is a staff development initiative born out of the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA).

Context's two staff development programmes accelerate and improve the quality of emergency response by increasing the numbers and expertise of potential leaders, and enhancing the skills of all current personnel.

Context's materials will be freely available to the humanitarian sector from Spring 2012. They have been designed for easy information access, cost-effective use and - above all - simple copying for wider distribution and use. This includes material design, workbooks, tools, templates, posters, banners, leaflets and certificates.



Participants are selected

Month 0
Self-assessment against framework

Month 1
Workshop 1

Self Study
Buddy Groups
Coaching

Month 4
Workshop 2

Month 6
Core Skills Development closes



Participants are selected

Month 0
Self-assessment against framework

Month 1
Workshop 1

Self Study
Buddy Groups
Coaching

Month 4
Workshop 2

Month 9
M&L Development closes

Potential benefits of **Context** to staff and their organisations

Evidence from the 2011 pilot shows that **Context's** two programmes provide participants with positive affirmation about their roles in humanitarian work, help them feel better prepared for the future, and better able to see their own role in a wider context.

Delivery of the long-term learning programmes offers a credible, ready-made staff development and/or Talent Management facility for emerging leaders in the organisation. The inter-agency format allows inter-organisational comparisons, relationship building and networking.

This, in turn, makes participants:

- **More 'rounded' humanitarians with a 'broadened outlook' and an understanding of the 'big picture' of humanitarian work beyond the limitations of the usual technical inputs;**
- **More confident about 'doing the job' and their own abilities;**
- **More assertive and vocal, even in the most difficult situations;**
- **Brave enough to enter new spheres and take on new responsibilities;**
- **Less inclined to rely on red tape; and**
- **More able to provide good leadership.**

Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework*

Keeping crisis-affected people at the centre of what we do



Competency Domains	Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles	Achieving results	Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	Operating safely and securely at all times	Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment	Demonstrating leadership in humanitarian response
Outcomes	Understand operating contexts, key stakeholders and practices affecting current and future humanitarian interventions	Be accountable for your work and use resources effectively to achieve lasting results	Develop and maintain collaborative and coordinated relationships with stakeholders and staff	Operate safely and securely in a pressured environment	Adapt to pressure and change to operate effectively within humanitarian contexts	Demonstrate humanitarian values and principles, and motivate others to achieve results in complex situations, independent of one's role, function or seniority
Competencies and Core Behaviours for all staff in humanitarian response, informed by skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the humanitarian context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Demonstrate understanding of the phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery. > Apply understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis. > Demonstrate understanding of the gender and diversity dimensions of humanitarian situations. > Take into account the needs, skills, capacities and experience of crisis-affected people and apply these in the response. ● Applying humanitarian standards and principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure that programme goals, activities and staff behaviour uphold key national and international humanitarian frameworks, standards, principles and codes which your organisation has committed to. > Use your power responsibly, in line with accountability principles and standards. > Demonstrate understanding of your role and that of your organisation and others within the humanitarian system. > Demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring programme quality and impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Demonstrate understanding of agency project cycle management. > Actively participate in design and implementation of effective projects and programmes. > Maintain focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources. ● Working accountably <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Be answerable to crisis-affected people for your actions and decisions. > Collect, analyse and disseminate relevant and useful information and feedback with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders. ● Making decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Demonstrate flexibility to adapt in situations of rapid change, always informed by a focus on crisis-affected people. > Demonstrate understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others. > Consider the wider impact of your decisions in order to achieve results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listening and creating dialogue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Actively listen to new and different perspectives and experiences of crisis-affected people, stakeholders and team members. > Establish and maintain clear dialogue with crisis-affected people or other stakeholders. ● Working with others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Contribute positively in the team to achieve programme objectives. > Share useful information and knowledge with colleagues, partners and crisis-affected people as and when appropriate. > Actively participate in networks to access and contribute to good practice. > Challenge decisions and behaviour which breach the International Red Cross/Red Crescent and NGOs/individual agency Codes of Conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimising risk to communities, partners and stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pay attention to the safety of crisis-affected people and other key stakeholders Identify and communicate risk and threats and mitigate these for you and your agency. > Take measures to 'do no harm' and to minimise risks for your partners and the crisis-affected people you work with. ● Managing personal safety and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Build and sustain acceptance for your work in line with humanitarian principles and standards. > Reduce vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by your organisation and adapt them to the local context. > Champion the importance of safety and keep the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adapting and coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Remain focused on your objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment. > Adapt calmly to changing situations and constraints. > Recognise personal stress and take steps to reduce it. > Remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and challenging environments. ● Maintaining professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Take responsibility for your own work and its impact on others. > Plan, prioritise and perform tasks well under pressure. > Maintain ethical and professional behaviour in accordance with relevant codes of conduct. > Demonstrate personal integrity by using one's position responsibly and fairly. > Be aware of internal and external influences that affect your performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Show awareness of your own strengths and limitations and their impact on others. > Demonstrate understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness. > Seek and reflect on feedback to improve your performance. ● Motivating and influencing others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Communicate humanitarian values and encourage others to share them. > Inspire confidence in others. > Speak out clearly for organisational beliefs and values. > Demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration. > Influence others positively to achieve programme goals. ● Critical judgement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Analyse and exercise judgment in challenging situations in the absence of specific guidance. > Demonstrate initiative and suggest creative improvements and better ways of working. > Demonstrate tenacity to achieve results.
Additional Behaviours for 1st level line managers in humanitarian response, informed by skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the humanitarian context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Assess and analyse key issues in the humanitarian situation and formulate actions to respond to them. ● Applying humanitarian standards and principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Participate in the development of an organisational response based on an understanding of the operating context. > Respect international humanitarian law and relevant treaties. > Actively participate in disaster coordination and interagency cooperation, based on a clear understanding of your organisation's perspective and approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring programme quality and impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Set standards in your work and follow agreed operating procedures. > Clarify roles and responsibilities within your team to maximise impact. > Collaborate with stakeholders to avoid duplication and maximise resources. > Regularly provide feedback and information to achieve improved results. > Document lessons learned and apply them to future projects. ● Working accountably <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish processes through which crisis-affected people can participate in the response and share their expectations and concerns > Ensure efficient and transparent use of resources in accordance with internal controls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listening and creating dialogue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure feedback from crisis-affected people, partners and other stakeholders is incorporated into programme design, implementation and learning. ● Working with others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish clear objectives with teams and individuals > Monitor work progress and individual performance. > Establish agreed ways of working at a distance with partners and staff. > Work with your team to build trust with communities and stakeholders. > Foster collaborative, transparent and accountable relationships through partners to formalise and implement partnering agreements. > Use negotiation and conflict resolution skills to support positive outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimising risk to communities, partners and stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Undertake effective risk assessments with crisis-affected people and partners. > Demonstrate an understanding of wider UN/NGO security co-ordination and how your organisation participates in those mechanisms. > Develop contingency plans. ● Managing personal safety and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Monitor security risks and ensure organisational protocols are understood and consistently followed by staff. > Take appropriate action and provide direction and support to team members in the event of a crisis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adapting and coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Help others to recognise and manage their own stress by modelling appropriate self care and prioritising your workload. > Promote well-being and a 'duty of care' culture. ● Maintaining professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Set realistic deadlines and goals. > Enable others to carry out their roles and responsibilities. > Monitor commitments and actions transparently > Take time to learn from experience and feedback and apply the learning in new situations. ● Critical judgement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintain a broad strategic perspective at the same time as an awareness of the detail of a situation. > Act decisively and adapt plans quickly to respond to emerging situations and changing environments. > Take informed and calculated risks to improve performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motivating and influencing others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Inspire others by clearly articulating and demonstrating the values, core purpose and principles that underpin humanitarian work. > Provide regular and ongoing informal and formal feedback. > Recognise the contribution of others. > Adapt leadership style to the time frame and changing situation. ● Critical judgement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintain a broad strategic perspective at the same time as an awareness of the detail of a situation. > Act decisively and adapt plans quickly to respond to emerging situations and changing environments. > Take informed and calculated risks to improve performance.

*Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework 2012. Content subject to review.



Opportunity for the sector

Continuing from a very promising pilot we have the opportunity to take to scale a quality, long-term staff development initiative for national staff across the sector, by:

A building awareness of the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework and galvanising attitudinal change in staff development and,

B supporting countries to run Context, two quality learning programmes, for the widest range of staff responding to emergencies from NGOs, their local civil society partners, national government partners and the United Nations.

Aims

Context aims to develop i) core humanitarian competencies and ii) leadership and management competencies of existing staff at national level.

It comprises two learning programmes;

1. Core Skills Development Programme

A 6-month inter-agency programme providing continued professional development to national agency staff in their current roles; focusing on an introduction to the key concepts and skills of humanitarian programming.

2. Management & Leadership Skills Development Programme

A 9-month inter-agency programme providing continued professional development to national agency middle/senior management staff, in their current roles, that examines key aspects of management and leadership in emergency situations.

The learning programme format encourages and facilitates each participant's investment in applied and reflective learning whilst "on the job", as part of a coherent and high quality staff development programme.

For both programmes, learning methods include:

- > coaching
- > face-to-face workshops
- > learning on the job
- > self-directed learning
- > group work
- > practical course work

Throughout the staff member is actively supported by their agency and line manager. The individual owns their own learning.

These programmes are based on the **Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework**. This platform offers a unique opportunity to share best practice and establish a common, high quality learning experience for staff across humanitarian agencies and in different parts of the world.

Acknowledgements

The two learning programmes of CONTEXT were developed under the capacity building programme of the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA), with funding of UKaid from the Department for International Development. Development was led by Oxfam GB with the support of People In Aid, with agency staff from the CBHA and the ECB Project member agencies and with independent consultants.

Thanks are due to many people involved in the ideas, development, piloting and realisation of two learning programmes and their content. These include advisers, facilitators, coaches, the 2011 programme participants and staff from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Indonesia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan.

The Context initiative will be available from Spring 2012. Documentation is centered around a comprehensively written Programme Guide together with supporting material on both DVD and online.

Promotional material, including posters, banners, charts and prints have also been created to complement these programmes.

