

# Engaging Tomorrow's Global Humanitarian Leaders Today

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### ActionAid



ActionAid works with and supports the poorest and most vulnerable people to fight for and gain their rights to food, shelter, work, basic healthcare and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. ActionAid also works closely with local groups to help promote long-term stability and prosperity.

ActionAid International can be found in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

### Christian Aid



Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes

### Save the Children UK



Save The Children UK is an independent children's rights organisation.

Save the Children UK is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, transforming children's lives by working to ensure children get proper healthcare, food, education and protection in more than 100 countries.

Save the Children UK works to save lives in emergencies, campaign for children's rights, and improve their futures through long-term development work.

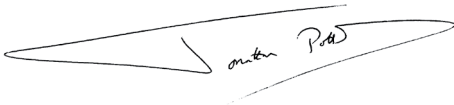


## Foreword

This research, generously funded by ELRHA, gives insight to one of the key challenges facing humanitarian organisations today: leadership. Without doubt, effective leadership in the humanitarian context is critical, and while we each have a responsibility to model leadership behaviours, the role of our leaders requires special consideration.

Working in partnership, People In Aid and Cranfield University, School of Management have asked important questions about the needs and motivations of tomorrow's humanitarian leaders and the challenges they face. This report presents a clear picture of how humanitarian leaders can be engaged more effectively.

I am delighted that the collaboration between People In Aid, the global network dedicated to improving people management in the humanitarian and development sector, and Cranfield University, School of Management, a recognised leader in the field of management and leadership, has been strengthened through this project. The research findings and the implications for all our organisations make for stimulating reading, and I encourage you to pick up the report and get to grips with the issues raised.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a hand-drawn, elongated oval shape. The signature appears to read 'Jonathan Potter'.

**Jonathan Potter**  
Executive Director  
People In Aid

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In a time when humanitarian crises around the world seem as devastating to the fabric of societies than ever before, this work on leadership and people management in international NGOs (INGOs) is both timely and relevant. Many international aid agencies struggle to cope with the magnitude, scale and complexity of these crises. Hence developing leadership and human resource management capabilities for inter-agency collaboration are insistent needs.

There is insufficient research on critical success factors for leadership development, capacity building and human resource practices in humanitarian aid agencies and even less so in respect of what is needed to enhance collaboration and partnership between agencies operating internationally. This research fills a vital gap in this regard. The findings provide important lessons for leaders and managers in the sector. This research identifies key leadership skills, human resource and performance management practices and the kinds of social network skills required for personal leadership effectiveness as well as for organisational and inter-organisational effectiveness.

From crisis comes the prospect of collaboration. The array of complex humanitarian crises throughout the world and especially in developing countries which lack basic resources and infrastructure, and often ravaged by violent conflict, underpins the need for applied action-oriented research. This research project aims at making a difference to the work and lives of leaders and employees in this sector. This also at a time when INGOs are coming under increased scrutiny for the effectiveness of their organisational outcomes through joined-up efforts.

I am particularly pleased that this research aims not merely at academic rigour which it does admirably, but aims to improve the practice of leadership and performance management of INGOs to affect better service delivery in crisis-stricken parts of the world.



**Professor Frank M. Horwitz**

Director

Cranfield University, School of Management

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## Executive summary

Today's international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) widely agree that they must improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of their humanitarian response, but this goal has to be achieved against a backdrop of climate change, global insecurity, scarce resources and increasing scrutiny from a wide range of stakeholders. Furthermore, historically INGOs (and the humanitarian sector more widely) have little understood the needs and aspirations of their managers and leaders, and the higher education sector has struggled to adequately develop and train high-calibre leaders and managers for the humanitarian sector. In this report, we argue that understanding and enhancing the quality of leadership and international human resources management are key to successfully achieving this goal and responding to the challenges identified by Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA). In summary, the need to engage with tomorrow's humanitarian leaders has never been greater. People In Aid's partnership with Cranfield University, School of Management, an internationally respected institution with an excellent reputation for delivering high-quality research in this area, will enable a number of key human resources questions facing the humanitarian sector to be answered.

Our hope is that this report deepens our knowledge and understanding of humanitarian leadership and contributes to ensuring that all those involved in humanitarian assistance, particularly leaders, can successfully meet the challenges of the next decade.

### What we did

Based on the issues mentioned above, we developed research questions to ensure that the data we gathered deepened our understanding and enabled us to share insights, recommendations and tangible ideas for inter-operability and working in partnership. The questions included:

- What are the key motivations of humanitarian leaders?
- What are the core competencies required by humanitarian leaders?
- What career or job satisfaction is there for global humanitarian leaders?
- In what ways could international human resources management be improved?

Our methodology was straightforward, and involved identifying three case study organisations – ActionAid, Christian Aid and Save the Children UK – and interviewing an HR representative along with current and potential humanitarian leaders from each. Moreover, we interviewed a number of external experts and surveyed current and potential humanitarian leaders through a web-based questionnaire.

### Engaging humanitarian leaders

Chapter 1 seeks to explore the meaning behind 'leadership' and briefly explores the future challenges in the sector by addressing the following questions:

- What do we mean by 'leadership'?
- What do we mean by 'humanitarian leader'?
- What are the future challenges humanitarian leaders will face?

The chapter also looks at the competences and core behaviours required by tomorrow's leaders.

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## What engages humanitarian leaders?

This chapter seeks to identify the factors that engage humanitarian leaders and addresses the following questions:

- What are the key motivations of humanitarian leaders?
- What career or job satisfaction is there for humanitarian leaders?
- What factors encourage humanitarian leaders to stay with their organisations?

The findings identified three types of factors that generally motivate leaders to join or stay with their organisations: their mission, the job or organisation itself, and people management, illustrated by figure 1 in the main report.

## How can humanitarian leaders be engaged more effectively?

This chapter focuses on one of the factors affecting the engagement of humanitarian leaders, that of people management, and addresses the following questions:

- What human resources management (HRM) strategies, policies and practices do INGOs use to engage and retain humanitarian leaders?
- In what ways could HRM be improved?
- What could be done to increase employee engagement, staff retention and staff performance of global staff?
- How could international career paths be developed/improved?

The role of HR is perceived to be for capability-building or for more generally supporting managers within the organisation. Topics such as talent management, resourcing, funding constraints, career management and performance management are seen as critical areas which require further discussion and review within humanitarian organisations.

## Collaboration

During the course of the research, particularly in the interviews with humanitarian leaders, the importance of collaboration was repeatedly emphasised. This chapter considers the quality of existing collaborative relationships and highlights individual experiences of collaboration within the case study organisations. Overall, while the need to co-operate is seen as high, the data points to substantial room for improvement in terms of the quality of existing collaborative relationships and a need to hone adequate skills in the sector.

## Where do we go from here?

The research found that many of the ideas and opinions voiced by the interviewees could be structured into three interlinked areas: the personal mission of individuals, the context of job and organisation, and the people management approaches and quality in their organisation. The first area – personal mission of individuals – sees the key drivers for individuals to join humanitarian agencies as the desire to make a difference and their dedication to a cause.

In terms of the organisation and the job context, broad factors that led to higher levels of engagement were organisational culture and climate and job design. Individuals sought primarily participation, autonomy, a meaningful job and recognition and valued the reputation of their employing organisation.

In the area of HRM and leadership in humanitarian organisations, individuals appreciated the high workload of HR departments in relation to resourcing. In turn, they presented many ideas or wishes with respect to career management, succession planning, training and development as well as rewards.

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Many of those interviewed also expressed the need to seek more inter-agency collaboration or co-operation with organisations and corporations from other sectors.

The key recommendations from the research are as follows (expanded and explained further in chapter 6 of the main report):

1. INGOs should identify and develop critical leadership competencies with an emphasis on the core behaviours required over the next decade.
2. Humanitarian agencies need to create an employer brand that engages with the drivers of talented individuals and should be proactive in bringing their message across.
3. Humanitarian organisations should try to develop a participative culture with regular meetings and communications, as this is also important to humanitarian workers.
4. Humanitarian workers have been shown to find issues such as autonomy important, so this should be considered in job design.
5. Organisations should invest in structured leadership development programmes that are specialised to the humanitarian sector.
6. Organisations need to look at their rewards package and the intrinsic rewards that they offer.
7. HR functions in humanitarian organisations should move towards becoming strategic partners of the leadership teams.
8. With respect to specific HR policies and practices, resourcing could be done using more sophisticated approaches. We would recommend here that better training of interviewers, clearer decision structures and criteria in the selection process and the use of more sophisticated selection instruments would be beneficial.
9. There is a need for more robust and structured talent management processes within INGOs.
10. Organisations should examine their performance management processes, and install structured appraisal processes, personal development plans and disciplinary procedures etc. in order to manage performance.
11. Career management should be understood in a more intrinsic way, concentrating on the job content, responsibilities and learning opportunities. Additionally, it may be linked to project work, international mobility or (temporary) inter-agency moves and collaborative activities.
12. Organisations need to find ways to introduce flexibility in several ways, including in job roles, the hours that people work, the locations that people work from, the leadership/team structures and work 'hand-over' patterns.
13. INGOs should be specific, intentional and honest about the collaborative opportunities they pursue and take steps to clearly identify, elaborate and reward appropriate collaborative behaviours. INGOs should also increase the diversity of their collaborative partners to include a wider range of actors or stakeholders, for example private sector firms, public sector institutions and civil society organisations.



# 1 Introduction

**Leadership has long been recognised as one of the most critical factors related to organisational effectiveness, and this is certainly true in the humanitarian sector, where leadership initiatives abound and both donors and international non-government organisations (INGOs) themselves are investing considerable sums in current and potential leaders.**

The investment in leadership coincides with an acknowledgement by INGOs that they must improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of their humanitarian programmes. This is a challenging goal, and one that has to be achieved against a backdrop of climate change, global insecurity, scarce resources and increasing scrutiny from a wide range of stakeholders. The scale of the challenge is also exacerbated by two major shortcomings: firstly, there is a sense that historically, INGOs (particularly those in the humanitarian sector) have little understood the needs and aspirations of their leaders and managers, and secondly, there is little evidence that the higher education sector has adequately developed and trained high-calibre leaders.

For People In Aid, the global network of INGOs, and Cranfield University, School of Management, the internationally acclaimed academic institution, it was time to address these shortcomings because, bluntly put, the need to engage with tomorrow's humanitarian leaders has never been greater. By joining together and producing this research, we hope that we have gone some way to closing the gap in informed, evidence-based practice when it comes to understanding the needs and aspirations of humanitarian leaders and managers, and how organisations can engage those individuals more effectively.

It can be argued that employee engagement consists of an employee's commitment to, as well as involvement and satisfaction with, his or her work. Employee engagement is related to job satisfaction and commitment research, where commitment is seen to link into attitudinal, effort and continuance dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Harter and Schmidt's (2003) meta-analysis of employee engagement can be useful for understanding its organisational impact.

Our hope is that this report deepens our knowledge and understanding of humanitarian leadership and contributes to ensuring that all those involved in humanitarian assistance, particularly leaders, can successfully meet the challenges of the next decade.

## Background and context

At the outset, ELRHA identified a number of core challenges which this research partially addresses. While principally focusing on human resources (HR), our research has generated some insights into the structure of the humanitarian INGO and will, we hope, serve to increase the preparedness and future planning of agencies.

However, before we proceed any further let us set out some additional points relating to the overall context for our research and the problems we are tackling.

Of overriding significance are the substantial and increasing challenges being faced by those working in the humanitarian sector. The need for INGOs to provide a rapid and high-quality response to regional and national political crises, global and local climate change patterns, natural catastrophes and other emergencies is paramount, and today, any humanitarian response has to address current urgent and future long-term issues.

Take the issue of climate change, for example: the Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Guide demonstrates the inexorable increase in the incidence of hydro-meteorological related disasters, and work by renowned research institutions such as the Humanitarian Futures Project and the Feinstein Centre support the premise that the operating environment is becoming more complex and increasingly challenging. Evidence of inter-agency collaboration (for example the Emergency Capacity Building Project – [www.ecbproject.org](http://www.ecbproject.org)) lends weight to the growing emphasis on preparedness and future planning, often under the auspices of DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) programmes.

Overall, the problems we tackle in our research could be summarised as follows:

- An increased urgency for improvements in inter-agency cooperation and organisational innovation, responsiveness and efficiency (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1998; Dickmann, Müller-Camen and Kelliher, 2009). This coincides with the dual challenge of a predicted increase in emergency operations (according to INGOs such as World Vision) and a potential decrease in available funding from governments, the public and third parties due to the global financial crisis.

- An immediate and pressing need for in-depth understanding of the needs and aspirations of the sector's managers and leaders (Sparrow, Brewster and Harris, 2004; Toomey and Brewster, 2008). INGO staff often need to work in remote and dangerous places, on difficult issues, separated from their families and sometimes isolated from their colleagues. With these demanding work patterns, effective global leadership and human resources management is essential, as is the commitment of staff to the visions and missions of their agencies (i.e. employee engagement). Looking to the future, good global leadership will be essential (Dickmann, Brewster and Sparrow, 2008). While some models of cross-cultural competencies exist (Kühlmann and Stahl, 2002), these might vary according to the industry and region (Oke, 2008). The distinct drivers and career anchors (Schein, 1992) of leaders and managers in the humanitarian sector need to be understood, for although research in the not-for-profit sector generally has shown that employees of such organisations have a strong commitment to the organisation's cause (Light, 2002), little is known about the most effective way to manage people in this sector (Parry and Kelliher, 2009). There is some evidence to suggest that staff in not-for-profit organisations are motivated by different factors to employees of for-profit firms, and this therefore raises unique challenges for people management (Akingbola, 2006; Mann, 2006).
- A lack of clarity within humanitarian agencies about who their managers of tomorrow are, and a lack of consensus on what set of international capabilities (core competencies) they are likely to need (People In Aid, 2006–09). These capabilities would include a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, social networks, motivational drivers and experience (Dickmann and Harris, 2005; Dickmann and Doherty, 2008).
- A need for more sophisticated international human resources management (IHRM) policies and practices in the humanitarian sector. Insights from the commercial sector require adaptation or contextualisation, according to the context of organisations and their strategic and operational vision, mission and goals. As examples: Bartlett and Ghoshal clearly point out the importance of sophisticated IHRM in creating an organisation that is highly responsive, efficient and innovative (Dickmann and Baruch, in press), and one

that is characterised by effective leadership practices. Key to this are leading-edge IHRM policies and practices in liaison with intensive knowledge management processes (Evans, Pucik and Barsoux, 2002; Lazarova and Cerdin, 2007; Bonache and Dickmann, 2008). Our research can adapt the lessons from such studies for the humanitarian sector.

## What we did

A detailed description of our methodology is in Appendix 1. To summarise, we set out with a number of aims:

- Increase our understanding of the competencies required by tomorrow's humanitarian leaders and managers;
- Provide insights to the motivations, engagement and aspirations of global humanitarian leaders and managers;
- Identify the future human resources related challenges INGOs are likely to face;
- Identify ways in which international human resources management in the humanitarian sector can be improved.

Our methodology was straightforward and involved identifying three case study organisations; interviewing an HR representative along with current and potential humanitarian leaders from each of the three case study organisations; interviewing a number of external 'experts'; and surveying current and potential humanitarian leaders through a web-based questionnaire.

Recognising the plethora of leadership projects currently underway in the sector – including a number of important pieces of work being undertaken by People In Aid, many in partnership with others such as the Center for Creative Leadership, Roffey Park, ALNAP (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action), University of London, Tulane University, the Humanitarian Futures Programme, RedR – we endeavoured to avoid duplication.

The focus of this research undertaken by People In Aid and Cranfield University, School of Management was simple; our starting point was the questions that we knew a number of INGOs were asking themselves already:

- What leadership capabilities will we need tomorrow?
- Who are tomorrow's leaders, and where are they today?

- 
- How can we ‘unlock’ our talent and ‘engage’ the potential we already have?
  - How can we improve our human resources management structures and policies to better support leaders?

Based on these issues, we developed research questions (below) to ensure that the data we gathered deepened our understanding and enabled us to share insights, recommendations and tangible ideas for inter-operability, and working in partnership. The questions included:

- What are the key motivations of humanitarian leaders?
- What are the core competencies required by humanitarian leaders?
- What career or job satisfaction is there for global humanitarian leaders?
- In what ways could international human resources management be improved?
  - What could be done to increase employee engagement, staff retention and staff performance of global staff?
  - How could international career paths or systems be developed/improved that address both the needs of individuals and their organisation?

In this report, we will next proceed to set out the nature of the issue in more detail (chapter 2), before moving on to share what engages humanitarian leaders (chapter 3), and how organisations can engage humanitarian leaders more effectively (chapter 4). Chapter 5 sets out the challenge of collaboration, and chapter 6 contains our conclusions in the form of a summary and a set of recommendations or next steps.





## 2 Engaging humanitarian leaders

**This chapter will seek to explore the meaning behind leadership and briefly explore the future challenges in the sector by addressing the following questions:**

- **What do we mean by ‘leadership’?**
- **What do we mean by ‘humanitarian leader’?**
- **What are the future challenges humanitarian leaders will face?**

To understand where our research is coming from, it is helpful to understand who we mean by ‘humanitarian leaders’, and what we mean by ‘engaging’ them. And looking ahead to tomorrow, it is vital that we understand the nature of the challenges leaders will undoubtedly face over the coming years.

### What do we mean by ‘leadership’?

Leadership has many definitions<sup>1</sup>, but one we use at People In Aid<sup>2</sup> and adopted for this project is this:

Leadership is about ‘*seeing the overall goal within the changing context and taking responsibility to motivate others to work towards it, independent of one’s role, function or seniority*’.

### What do we mean by ‘humanitarian leader’?

For the purposes of this research, we used the term ‘leader’ fairly loosely. We took it to mean middle or senior people managers who had risen through the ranks in their organisation and who would likely continue on that trajectory. Almost all the leaders we interviewed fell into this category, that is they had experienced consecutive promotions in their career to date, and were likely to continue being promoted and end up in very senior or top management roles, whether in their organisation or elsewhere.

Interviewees suggested that leadership is about:

*“wanting to drive things, wanting to make them happen rather than sort of taking a back seat, wanting to have a key role in steering things and to drive that change, to make that difference and to be a key player in that.”*

*“see[ing] the bigger picture... how these small bits of work would contribute to the larger work....keep an eye on where you want to reach.”*

*“If you don’t have the vision and you can’t see what’s needed and you can’t see the bigger picture then you haven’t got a chance of addressing it.”*

A number of respected institutions have defined what a leader is in terms of competencies, and recently, in some work facilitated by People In Aid, a consortium of British humanitarian agencies agreed that core humanitarian leadership behaviours can be helpfully articulated through three dimensions:

1. Self-awareness  
(Self-awareness, commitment to personal development)
2. Motivating and influencing others  
(Relationship building, communication, develop individuals and teams)
3. Critical judgement  
(Problem analysis, judgment, handling ambiguity and decision-making)

Most of the leaders we interviewed appeared to have these characteristics in common: exceptional self-awareness, clear ability to motivate and influence others, and demonstrating high levels of critical judgement.

When we asked the leaders themselves to highlight the competencies they felt crucial for completing their current job effectively, they suggested the following:

- Strategic skills and strategy development
- Relationship building; networking
- Communication skills
- Adaptability
- People management
- Financial literacy
- Ability to handle organisational politics
- Decision-making
- Time management
- Fundraising
- Innovation

<sup>1</sup>This working definition of leadership was endorsed by the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) in August 2010, as part of the work facilitated by People In Aid under Objective 1 of the Humanitarian Capacity Building Programme

<sup>2</sup>People In Aid facilitated Objective 1 of the Humanitarian Capacity Building Programme for the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (2010)

- International management
- Project management
- Planning.

Tomorrow's leaders will need additional competencies – over the next ten years the priority competencies identified by interviewees included:

- Agility
- Resilience
- Change management
- Collaboration and partnership
- Managing complexity
- Communication and negotiation
- Advocacy
- Emergency management
- Forecasting and planning.

### The future challenges for humanitarian leaders

It goes without saying that tomorrow's humanitarian leaders will be facing tomorrow's challenges. Plenty has been written on this topic and for a full analysis we would like to direct the reader to the Humanitarian Futures Programme ([www.humanitarianfutures.org](http://www.humanitarianfutures.org)). However, it is interesting to note what our respondents felt to be the biggest challenges currently experienced by humanitarian leaders, and what the biggest challenges over the next ten years might be.

The most commonly cited current challenges were:

- Career management
- Attracting and retaining employees
- Collaboration and communication with overseas offices (within the same organisation)
- Managing activities and achieving goals with restricted resources
- Fundraising
- Embedding good HR practice within the organisation
- Buy-in from managers with regard to their role in managing people
- Performance management
- Leadership development and succession planning
- Workload or work/life balance.

The most commonly cited challenges for the next ten years were:

- Retention of field workers
- Responding to new types of emergencies (e.g. urban)
- Access to funding
- Increased complexity in the world; economic and political context
- Accountability of the sector
- Increased needs for humanitarian support
- Clear vision
- Professionalism
- Competition for talent
- Effective managers/leadership
- Mission creep.

### Learning points

1. Core humanitarian leadership behaviours include:
  - Self-awareness (self-awareness, commitment to personal development)
  - Motivating and influencing others (relationship building, communication, developing individuals and teams)
  - Critical judgement (problem analysis, judgment, handling ambiguity and decision making).
2. Over the next ten years leaders will need excellent skills [competencies] in the following areas:
  - Adaptability and agility
  - Resilience
  - Networking, collaboration and partnership
  - Managing complexity.
3. The biggest challenges facing tomorrow's humanitarian leaders are:
  - Access to funding
  - Increasing need, complexity and new types of emergencies
  - Effective management and leadership
  - Competition for talent and retention of field staff
  - Accountability and professionalism.

Understanding the needs and aspirations of tomorrow's humanitarian leaders – in other words what engages them – and the challenges they face is absolutely essential; that is the subject of chapter 3.

### 3 What engages humanitarian leaders?

**This chapter will seek to identify the factors that engage humanitarian leaders and therefore will address the following questions:**

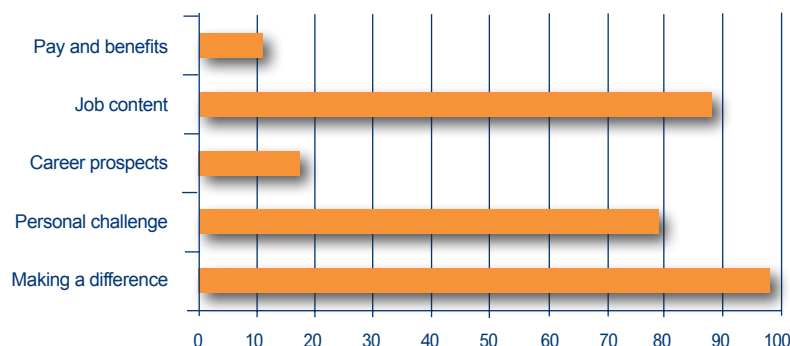
- **What are the key motivations of humanitarian leaders?**
- **What career or job satisfaction is there for humanitarian leaders?**
- **What factors encourage humanitarian leaders to stay with their organisations?**

Our survey of humanitarian leaders asked respondents to indicate how important a number of factors were in their decision to join the humanitarian sector and their specific organisation, and in their decision to stay with their current organisation. Respondents were also asked to indicate which factors affected their job satisfaction. An examination of the responses to these questions allows us to build up a picture of the factors that might play a role in the engagement of humanitarian leaders.

Respondents were asked how important a number of factors were in their decision to join the humanitarian sector (see chart 1). The factor that was seen as most important was “making a difference” with almost all of the respondents (98%) stating that this was important or very important to them. Job content (88%) and personal challenge (79%) were also important but career prospects (17%) and pay and benefits (11%) were much less important.

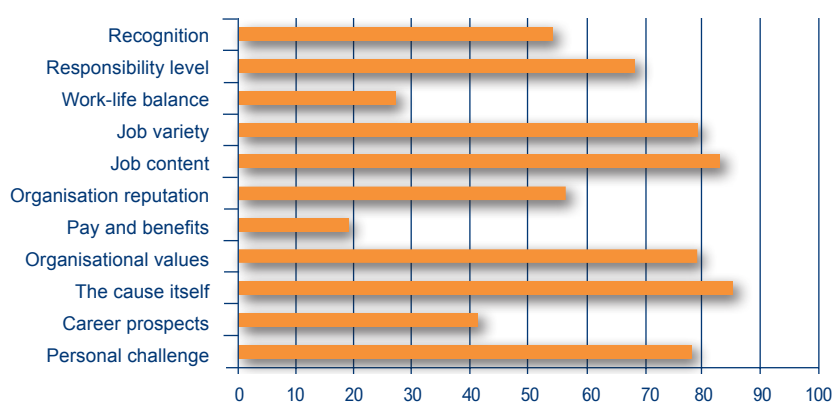
Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of factors in their decision to join their current organisation (see chart 2). Here, the cause itself was seen as the most important (85%), followed by job content (83%), job variety (79%), the alignment of the organisation's values with your own (79%) and personal challenge (78%). Pay and benefits was seen as the least important reason for joining an organisation (19%).

**Chart 1: Importance of factors in the decision to join the humanitarian sector**



*Note: Percentage of respondents stating that each factor was important or very important.*

**Chart 2: Importance of factors in deciding to join current organisation**



*Note: Percentage of respondents stating that each factor was important or very important.*

**Chart 3: Importance of factors in deciding to stay with current organisation**



*Note: Percentage of respondents stating that each factor was important or very important.*

Moving away from motivation to join the sector or organisation, respondents were also asked how important a number of factors were in their decision to stay with an organisation (see chart 3). The most important factors were the alignment of organisational values with your own (91%), making a difference (91%), autonomy or freedom at work (88%) and organisational professionalism (86%). Least important were hierarchical position (27%), pay and benefits (37%), career opportunities (44%) and work/life balance (50%).

Survey respondents were asked to suggest any additional factors that would encourage them to stay in their current organisations. The factors that were most commonly suggested were:

- Greater professionalism, particularly in human resource management (HRM)
- Learning or personal development
- Leadership in terms of vision, organisational growth or general improvements in leadership.

Respondents were also asked what they perceived to be the most common reasons for people leaving the organisation. The most commonly suggested reasons were:

- Improved career opportunities
- Burn-out
- Pay and benefits

- End of short-term contracts or funding constraints
- Lack of effective leadership, vision or clear goals.

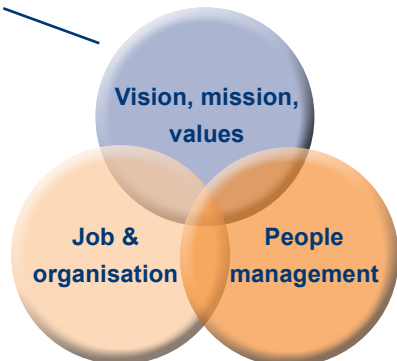
When asked what the main factors were that influence their satisfaction at work generally, respondents listed a number of factors. These included:

- Colleagues or co-workers
- Freedom or autonomy
- Making a valued contribution
- The humanitarian cause itself or the values of the job.

If we examine the responses to the above survey questions, we can see that the factors that affect an individual's motivation to join or stay with their organisation, or that affect their general job satisfaction, can be divided into three types: firstly, those factors related to an individual's "mission" or personal values; secondly, those factors related to the job or organisation itself; and finally, those factors related to the people management practices within the organisation. These three domains are summarised in the model below.

### Vision, mission values:

Dedication to cause  
Making a difference  
Values fit



### Job & organisation

Reputation  
Approach  
Culture  
Job content  
Resources  
Roles & responsibilities

### People management

Leadership & management  
Structures – org & team  
Rewards  
Performance management  
Talent management  
Career management  
Training & development  
recognition  
Work-life balance

Interviewees identified a number of issues that they saw as important within each domain. We will therefore now examine each of the three domains in more depth, using the results of our qualitative interviews.

## Vision, mission, values

Interviewees discussed a number of issues relating to their decision to join or stay with their organisation that could be described as being related to their mission or personal values.

In accordance with the survey results, one motivational factor that was commonly discussed was the desire to “make a difference”. For example one interviewee explained:

*“I think my fundamental motivations are still the same in that ... we are working to make a difference to people’s lives during emergencies or conflict. Getting feedback from the countries where we are working from people who are out in the field, that’s really quite rewarding and that kind of inspires you to keep motivated”.*

A number of interviewees were committed to a particular cause. For example:

*“Justice, that’s also part of our vision, isn’t it? Poverty and injustice, the whole eradication of that is what we’re here for. I think people are drawn to our vision, people in the organisation.”*

Finally, it appeared to be important to a number of interviewees that the values of the organisation should fit with their individual values. For example, one individual explained that:

*“The values and principles of [the organisation] are in line with how I try to live my life so that has been an inspiration and the motivation to join.”*

## The job and organisation

Interviewees discussed a number of characteristics of the job or organisation itself that affected their motivation to join or stay with an organisation and their general job satisfaction.

Firstly, several interviewees suggested that the external reputation of the organisation was important in their decision to join that organisation. For example:

*“It’s a big organisation, so it gets good exposure ... and it’s very good working with the really poor and excluded in the very remote parts of the world. And of course their activities, their credibility in terms of what they have done over the years.”*

A number of interviewees also commented that they had been attracted to, or encouraged to stay with, their organisation because of their particular approach to working. One interviewee suggested:

*“One of the key motivations of joining [the organisation] is basically because of their approach to the way [they] work with people and with different issues.”*

Other interviewees had been attracted to or stayed within their organisation because they liked the culture or climate within that organisation. For example:

*“People within [the organisation] are friendly and dedicated, so that sort of environment probably too helps attract people to the organisation.”*

However, the culture within the organisation could also lead to dissatisfaction among employees. One interviewee complained:



*"We never sit still so we have great documents doing something and getting the change, and then we implement that change. Before we even had time, probably, to put that change into practice, we're looking again at changing it."*

For other individuals, the content of the job itself was more important than characteristics of the organisation. In particular, job variety seemed to be important. For example, one interviewee said:

*"I also like the travel, it's an experience of working with different people and having preconceptions challenged ..... I have a really good balance of headquarter-type stuff and also field-based, and that's very motivating."*

However, one interviewee also identified the content of their job as a cause of dissatisfaction.

*"It's quite difficult to move forward within the current job because we are completely bogged down with all the stuff coming from London..... what really bugs me is the fact that I'm spending 60–80% of my time just answering bumph from London, sending reports and putting in, you know, and asset registers."*

A number of interviewees emphasised the importance of having autonomy in their jobs. This was particularly important in retaining people within an organisation, rather than attracting them to that organisation in the first place. For example, one interviewee explained that they stayed with their organisation because:

*"[The organisation] does give space for people to set up their own agendas, of course within a bigger organisational agenda."*

Interestingly, one leader that was interviewed suggested that it was the role of leader that made them particularly satisfied in their job.

*"One area I particularly enjoy, the whole management leadership side of things.....it is quite important to me to be reasonably senior because I have got a lot of experience, which I guess is related to wanting to have a say in things. I also get involved in a wide range of things."*

However, another interviewee explained that the leadership role was difficult given current resource constraints. The interviewee then went on to express their dissatisfaction with this situation:

*"I had my budget reduced from, whatever, a million pounds last year to half a million this year so you had to make very, very serious cuts including staffing, and the only way I could keep on [...] staffing I've actually gone onto half salary myself so I'm paying back half my salary."*

## Case Study

### Communication approach at ActionAid International

Communication has an important role to play in the engagement and motivation of individuals. Especially in globally operating organisations communication is key to creating organisational advantage (Pucik, 2005; Gratton, 2007). While much of the effect hinges on the informal communication of leaders and co-workers, an open information policy of the organisation can support transparency and can create positive outcomes.

ActionAid International's communication policy strives for substantial openness to all stakeholders. In the document the organisation outlines its communication approach (Open Information Policy, Appendix 5). For instance, a large range of information of various categories is to be shared freely, openly and proactively in a timely fashion. These include fundamentals (including ActionAid International's vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, strategies), information on governance and key functionaries, some organisational policies (e.g. key decision-making processes in the areas of recruitment, appraisals, staff development and promotion, reviews and evaluations, ethical policies and gender policies), international, regional and country-specific strategies, three-year plans and annual work plans, and organisational performance data (including lessons learnt, achievements, successes and failures). Further openly available data is in the areas of staff (for instance, staff numbers, gender and ethnic composition of the workforce), absolute income figures, key relationships, issue-based positions and feedback as to the stakeholders' views of ActionAid International. The organisation uses a range of communication channels including its website, presentations to stakeholders (obviously including staff), other electronic means and informal communication.

## People management

Interviewees' motivation to join or stay with their organisation and their general job satisfaction were also affected by the nature of people management practices within the organisation. In particular, individuals were affected by the financial rewards that they received from the organisation. This appeared to be a "hygiene" factor in that, while it was not the primary motivation for an individual joining an organisation, most interviewees admitted that it did play a part in their decision to join or stay with an organisation. One interviewee explained that:

*"I don't think monetary factors are that important but obviously I think if you are older and you have got a family and children and all that sort of thing, you can't ignore that in any role, but it is not, I mean it's not a particularly motivating factor in your day-to-day role but it will obviously affect which jobs you apply for and what jobs you'd consider for, because you've got to earn enough money to take care of your family and children really."*

Financial rewards can also act as a negative factor in job satisfaction or retention, as the interviewee below suggests:

*"We didn't get a cost of living increase obviously because of the recession, I think everybody understands but again, it's little bits, the word is not annoying but that's a little bit de-motivating."*

Outside of financial rewards, interviewees were also affected by the recognition that they received generally from the organisation. One interviewee explained that their satisfaction was promoted by:

*"My work being recognised for the value it is contributing to the organisation and the team."*

Leaders also expressed a need for career development in order for them to feel satisfied and remain with their organisation. One individual suggested:

*"I am progressing, and feeling like I am improving and developing and growing, finding new challenges and opportunities" "Also learning opportunities is massively important so skills development and yes, learning."*

## Case Study

### Principles-driven resourcing at Christian Aid

Christian Aid formulates HR policy and procedure approaches using statements of intent, guiding principles, procedure flow charts and measures. In terms of permanent resourcing, the organisation strives to recruit high-calibre people who identify with its values and who have a passion for justice and ending poverty (Resourcing – permanent – Policy Document, Christian Aid). As with other international NGOs, the organisation complies with the relevant employment legislation and links its staffing decisions to deliver its goals and strategic objectives. Other key guiding principles relate to its selection decisions and its focus on objective evidence assessed against competences, skills and relevant experiences for the role to be filled. Inclusiveness, transparency and diversity are further core principles.

Interviewees' job satisfaction was also affected by the way that they were led by their managers. One interviewee explained:

*"There needs to be really clear direction and clear leadership and that can be really inspirational so when that doesn't happen that can be quite dissatisfying .... making sure there are really clear objectives and that everyone is working to a kind of strategic plan rather than doing lots of random things."*

Finally, interviewees explained that their high workload or the lack of work/life balance that they achieve can have a negative affect on their job satisfaction and intention to stay with the organisation. For example:

*"There is always a difficulty, you know, especially for humanitarian community perhaps, it is the whole work pressure. We enjoy the work that we do and we always try to strike the work/life balance, but... when there are pressures to reduce running costs, to always try to have few people doing lots of work ...we find that we have hardly any time to give to our families, we are always responding and with the increasing numbers of disasters."*

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### Case Study

#### **Principles-driven pay and benefits at Christian Aid**

Christian Aid outlines how it aims to provide its staff with fair, equitable, transparent and consistent pay and rewards arrangements that have the power to attract, motivate and retain individuals (Pay and Benefits Policy Document, Christian Aid). It is well known that rewards systems can have a powerful influence on the motivation of individuals and that fairness and long-term justice is important (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2005). It uses an approach including fixed pay, core financial benefits and non-financial benefits that applies to all of its people wherever they are located, but where pay is adjusted using cost of living data. In its guiding principles Christian Aid outlines that its rewards will be competitive in relation to the relevant marketplace and that its reward decisions will be consistent and based on objective assessments of the organisational needs. Christian Aid recognises the importance of aligning and continually reviewing its reward framework to its corporate strategy.

- Employers can also engage with humanitarian leaders through people management activities. Financial reward, while not driving recruitment and retention, is a hygiene factor for individuals when making career choices. Career development, leadership and work/life balance are also important.

### **Summary and implications**

- Leaders are generally motivated to join or stay with their organisation by three types of factors: their mission, the job or organisation itself and people management.
- Individuals working in the humanitarian sector are likely to be primarily engaged or motivated by a desire to make a difference, dedication to a cause or their personal values. Employers are unlikely to be able to have an impact on these factors but should account for this in their recruitment and retention activity by promoting these messages.
- Employers can engage humanitarian leaders through consideration of job design, and the culture or climate of the organisation. The promotion of autonomy and a participative culture are two factors that may promote retention and job satisfaction.



## 4 How can humanitarian leaders be engaged more effectively?

This chapter will focus on one of the domains identified in chapter 3 as affecting the engagement of humanitarian leaders: that of people management. This chapter will therefore aim to address the following questions:

- What human resource management (HRM) strategies, policies and practices do INGOs use to engage and retain humanitarian leaders?
- In what ways could HRM be improved?
- What could be done to increase employee engagement, staff retention and staff performance of global staff?
- How could international career paths be developed/improved?

In order to address these questions, we have collected data in five areas: firstly about the role of HRM within organisations; secondly about the effectiveness of HRM; thirdly, about career development; fourthly about training, and finally about performance management within the organisation.

### The HR role

Interviewees were asked to explain what they thought the role of the HR function was within their organisation. A number of participants felt that the HR function's main role was to build capacity within the organisation by ensuring that the organisation had staff with the necessary skills and experience. For example, one interviewee explained the role of the HR function in ensuring that training needs were addressed:

*"I think HR has a role to play in providing relevant training, defining the needs of the staff, training needs and making sure that the training programmes that they offer fit those needs."*

Another part of building capability endorsed by interviewees was to ensure that employees were retained, while other interviewees suggested that the role of the HR function was to manage poor performance in employees. For example:

*"I think HR's role is to kind of offer some kind of cohesiveness and ensure that people are happy in their jobs and that poor performance is addressed where it is identified because often you find, particularly with senior people, poor performance just drags on and on and it's often not, it never really comes to a head, it's just consistently poor."*

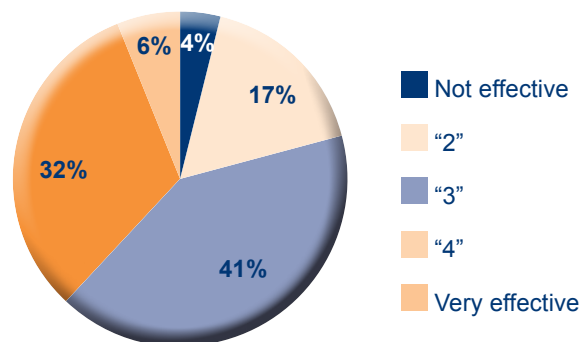
Other interviewees perceived the role of the HR function to be more of a generally supportive role. One interviewee explained:

*"So try to really support the manager, support the team and problem-solve rather than just acting as tea and sympathy department."*

### HR effectiveness

Our survey respondents were asked to rate how effective they felt human resource management (chart 4) was in their organisation and to provide suggestions for how this could be improved.

**Chart 4: Perceived Effectiveness of Human Resource Management**



*Note: Percentage of organisations*

38 % of respondents felt that HRM in their organisation was effective or very effective while 21 % felt that it was not effective or not very effective. A number of suggestions were provided of how this could be improved. The most common suggestions were:

- A better system for identifying skills gaps and developing the capabilities to fill these
- An international HR department and/or alignment of global HRM strategies
- Better recruitment
- Career planning and development
- Qualified HR staff
- Effective performance management
- Funding for training and coaching.

Interviewees were also asked about the role and challenges for HRM in their organisation and how HRM could be improved. A number of interviewees felt that the HR function generally was not strategic enough in the work that it was doing.

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For example, one interviewee explained:

*"I think some of the aid agencies have relatively professional HR people. I think most of them are still running fairly old-fashioned personnel management, so it's sort of command and control systems orientated.....if they had the right people and the right..... the right atmosphere, the right motivation or whatever, they are in a much better position to run strategic HRM than a lot of private sector organisations."*

Resourcing, especially for particular programmes, is obviously problematic as several interviewees commented on the difficulties that the HR function faces in finding and retaining the necessary employees. For example, one interviewee commented on the importance of recruitment within the humanitarian sector:

*"In terms of recruitment we need to make sure that we're recruiting people into the organisation who understand the journey we're about to take, who are prepared to stay with us and flexible and adaptable enough to move around the organisation."*

It is obvious that humanitarian organisations work within a number of constraints when resourcing their activities. For instance, the nature of the funding cycle appears to cause difficulties with retaining employees as organisations are only able to offer short-term contracts. One interviewee explained:

*"I think a key thing of this is looking at the short-term contract issue which is so prevalent within the sector, and how that can stifle development and reduce the amount of time that people stay with [the organisation], because there is so much turnover."*

Resource constraints also make it difficult for humanitarian organisations to manage their talent effectively, as the interviewee below suggests:

*"I think the challenge for ourselves and probably other organisations is being able to really think strategically about the type of people we need in the organisation that will grow into management and leadership roles, and how we develop them without taking away opportunity from other staff, and working within the parameters of, in reality, how much money do we have to put to throw at this, how much staff do we have to support it, how are we going to get the organisation to understand it and buy into it. Practically how is it going to work and how are we going to measure it."*

Other interviewees discussed the difficulties inherent in managing an international organisation. Firstly, it is difficult to ensure consistent standards across the organisation, as suggested by the interviewee below:

*"I think we need to have much more effective HR management nationally and regionally to try to push through some of these standardisations of processes and standards, really driving standards up."*

Secondly, there are challenges in managing international staff who are frequently away from home. One interviewee explained:

*"For the international staff but I think it is quite challenging for them as well because they are away quite a bit, they are away from their homebase and so on. So our ability to support them in that and to motivate them, making sure loved ones are cared for is a real challenge."*

Away from the constraints on the organisation, interviewees suggested a number of areas of human resource management that needed to be improved. The first of these was performance management, with interviewees feeling that their organisation did not manage performance effectively. For example:

*"So, there's an element of masking performance, there's an element of not addressing issues going on, that's swept up into some of these things. Again, I find that quite typical across this sector as well."*

Secondly, work/life balance was seen as a significant issue within the humanitarian sector. One interviewee explained that:

*"This self-sacrifice kind of culture, really trying to improve this 24/7 work ethic and giving our leaders the right resources to try and reduce that."*

Thirdly, a number of interviewees felt that diversity was an issue that should be addressed by the HR function. In particular, it was suggested that there was a need to attract more women into humanitarian leadership. For example:

*"The other thing we try to do, any other areas of work, is increase the leadership of women and we've got specific training programmes focused on women and we are, you know, identifying maybe twenty or thirty top women leaders who will give extra support."*

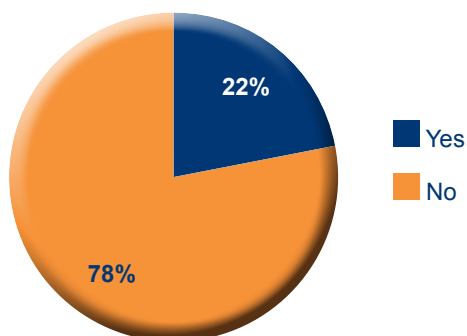
Finally, some interviewees questioned the responsiveness of the organisation and the role of the HR function in effectively mobilising the workforce to respond to a crisis. One interviewee explained:

*“When Haiti happened, we were poorly resourced in the first place and it felt, from my perspective, although I wasn’t really involved, but it did feel as though there was a lot going on that was quite chaotic .....there is something about, when a crisis happens, how do we mobilise the entire organisation behind it, so even the campaigning messages are adapted? ...I think a weakness of an organisation that is crisis-led is, when the next crisis comes up, all the learning from the previous crisis gets forgotten.”*

## Career development

We have seen from our survey and interview results that career development or the existence of a career path might be important for organisations to attract and retain employees. We therefore investigated this area in more depth through both the survey and interviews.

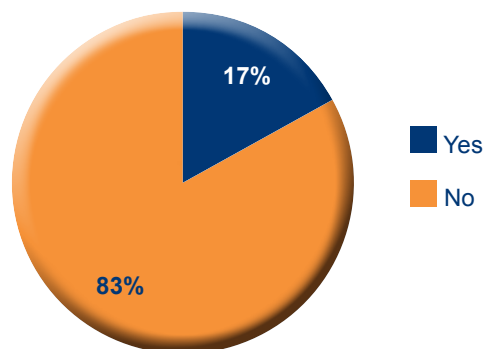
**Chart 5: Existence of a clear career path in the organisation**



*Note: Percentage of respondents answering yes or no.*

Respondents were asked firstly whether a clear career path existed within their organisation (chart 5) and secondly whether an international career path exists within their organisation (chart 6). Less than a quarter (22%) stated that any clear career path existed within their organisation and only 17% stated that there was an international career path.

**Chart 6: Existence of an international career path**



*Note: Percentage of respondents answering yes or no.*

Interviewees were also asked to discuss their opinions of the career paths within their organisations. It was generally recognised that career paths within humanitarian organisations tended to be relatively flat and that it could be difficult for an individual to work their way up through the organisation. One interviewee explained:

*“It’s a problem probably for people in terms of the career structure that we have in what tends to be quite a flat organisation and you know the humanitarian teams are relatively small, so, you know, there’s only limited probabilities for advancement.”*

Another added to this explanation:

*“You sometimes have to sort of zigzag between organisations to get further up the ladder because obviously there’s not the promotion as there would be in the corporate sector.”*

One organisational interviewee explained that this was due to the size of the organisation:

*“We have to be realistic about the fact that we are still a small organisation, geographically dispersed and we have quite specialist roles in lots of our country operations, so quite often in a country office there’s one programme manager and there’s one finance manager, there’s one HR, there’s one IT person, if that’s so it can be very difficult to be, you know, to find opportunities and to move up because in effect those jobs just don’t exist because we’re so small.”*

However, it was clear from our organisational interviewees that some organisations are trying to address this difficulty. For example:

*"We have now got a whole kind of career path going from being an intern to being a full-fledged kind of emergency response team leader..... they start off as a humanitarian skills development intern for a year where they work here for six months and they work in an emergency programme for six months.....After that they can become an emergency response project officer so they work alongside a field manager in an emergency, then they become a field manager, then they...can become a kind of programmes manager, operations manager and kind of hopefully the next kind of team leader. So it is getting better."*

### Case Study

#### International knowledge and learning approach in ActionAid International

ActionAid International has a formal international secondment policy for overseas work between three months and one year (International Secondment Policy, Appendix 1). The policy distinguishes between individual and organisational purpose. The envisaged benefits for the organisation include staffing considerations (a skilled individual for a specific position) and knowledge, information and learning goals. In turn, ActionAid International strives to provide the individual with an opportunity to play a meaningful role in another part of the organisation and to enhance the individual's personal development. The policy document clearly states that secondments will be driven by organisational needs, which fits well to the typology originally outlined by Edström and Galbraith (1977). However, these authors depicted a further reason – international control and coordination – as prominent drivers of expatriation which received less emphasis in the policy document. This is in contrast to many multinational organisations which stress the social and cultural coordination of their subsidiaries increasingly in their strive to be worldwide innovative and globally effective (Dickmann et al., 2009). Considering that ActionAid International's approach may encourage polycentrism (Perlmutter, 1969), it is not surprising that the costs of the secondment are primarily borne by the host country.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of career development activities was provided by their organisation (chart 7). The most commonly provided activities were regular appraisals or performance reviews (89%) and seminars or conferences (86%). 70 percent of respondents stated that their organisation provided funding for external training, while 58% said that their organisation provided internal off-the-job training and less than half (48%) had a formal leadership development programme. Only 12% stated that their organisation offered formal career planning.

Interviewees were also asked about the career development needs and provision in their organisation. There was a general feeling among interviewees that there was not a very structured career development offering available and that development tended to be on a more ad-hoc basis. One interviewee explained:

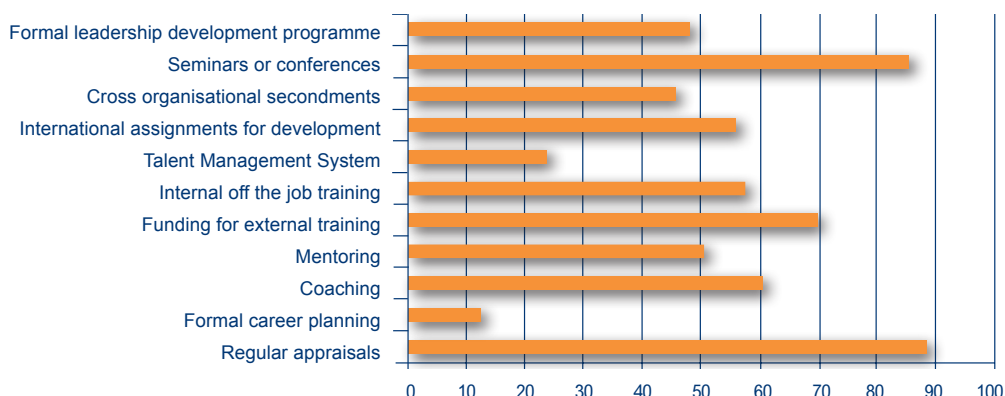
*"[We need] some kind of formal training programme, some kind of structure to career development because I don't really see that at [the organisation] at the moment, there's no, I mean there's sort of ad-hoc training here and there and I am doing training this week on project management but there's no kind of formal structure behind that in terms of how you progress... some kind of formal training programme and mentoring schemes, for example."*

It was suggested by a number of interviewees that career development, particularly for leaders, tended to be self-led rather than managed by the organisation, in that employees were responsible for finding their own career development opportunities. For example:

*"As for taking on leadership roles, I am finding that these are things you will have to care about yourself, you will have to look at opportunities where you can play a more directing role, present areas where you can take the lead and hopefully there will be a favourable response among your upper management ... I did ask for more capacity development there, but I made a proposal but it was not something that was accepted because it was going to take me a long time away from the organisation, and cost-cutting reasons as well. So what I've had to do is, you have to do your own self-learning."*



**Chart 7: Organisational provision of career development activities**



*Note: Percentage of respondent stating that each career development activity was provided by their organisation.*

However, interviewees did suggest a number of career development opportunities that were available in their organisations. For instance, potential leaders are offered the opportunity to interact with personnel from different countries:

*“Individual staff members have opportunities to interact with, you know, with the cultures of different countries and regional meetings and workshops and so on, so people actually have the opportunities to acquire an international flavour of the work that they do.”*

Other employees have been taken on overseas visits in order to improve their knowledge of the organisation:

*“I think it’s important that we as managers build the experience of the youngest staff so some of my support staff I took with me on my monitoring visits to India and Pakistan and Asia .... I took them with me so they could see what was happening on the ground, understand some of the problems, and they were much, much better when they came back and also had that experience.”*

Survey respondents were also asked to suggest ways in which career development in their organisation could be improved. The most common suggestions were:

- Better career development planning
- More structured and integrated talent management
- Clearer career paths
- Succession planning
- International assignments
- More funding for career development
- Leadership development programmes.

### Case Study

#### Career development at Save the Children UK

Career development ethics and career discussions are seen as an important part of people management at Save the Children (Career Development Policy, Save the Children). Amongst the more structured career development initiatives are three for managers and leaders: the Leadership Development Programme (LDP), the Senior Management Development Programme (SMDP) and the Management Development Programme (MDP). Attendees have to be nominated and the nomination process can be explored and discussed during the performance appraisal conversations or at other suitable times. All programmes aim to develop both soft skills – including personal effectiveness, communication and feedback capabilities – and hard skills linked to the next grade of responsibility. However, there are other career development opportunities next to the formal development programmes. For instance, some staff are encouraged to go on secondments or to join the Emergency Standby Team.

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## Training and development

Interviewees were also asked about the mechanisms for competency development in their organisations. There was some evidence from interviewees that training courses were provided:

*"I have been on a number of internal courses, as I said I've got one this week on project management and one next month I think on emerging leaders, I've also been on some external courses on humanitarian specific training, so training on different sectors of emergency response, like the training we did for our country in Asia and I attended that training as well, and I've done courses on presentation skills and that kind of thing."*

There was also some evidence that some innovative methods of training and development were being used within the sector.

*"A lot of our training and learning opportunities are about experiential learning and simulation-based training, which I know is now quite common across the sector. I am part of an action learning set, which I don't know if you are familiar with that kind of learning, but it is kind of like coaching, active listening is another word for it, so it is with an external group of people from within the not-for-profit sector and we meet once every six weeks and work through key issues."*

However, there was some feeling from interviewees that the humanitarian sector was not providing sufficient investment in training, particularly in relation to the private sector:

*"Somehow the charity sector has to cough up for getting the best people, somehow miraculously and magically these best people need to have the best skills without investing in them, so when I compare my friends who work in the for-profit sector, I actually admire their work practices, the amount of building of capacity and training, training even on interpersonal skills that they invest in ..... I have friends who work for, you know, from GlaxoSmithKline to things like Selecta which is not really a huge marketing company and 'Oh we have gone to the States for this training' and I can see the difference between them as people and me who have spent all my life almost on a self-learning course, it is different, of course they are more polished, no wonder they are."*

One factor that was discussed a lot by interviewees was the need for effective talent management within humanitarian organisations. It was recognised that organisations needed to identify potential leaders within the organisation and develop them accordingly. Some organisations were taking steps to address this area. For instance:

*"[We are] doing a lot of competency mapping and identifying the strengths of each individual, understanding where the person wants to go and how the organisation can gain from that person's competence, at the same time support that person to build it further...identifying budding leaders who can take up challenges within the organisation also in the sector, so thinking a little beyond organisation and contributing by promoting such leaders to the larger sector."*

*"We are just getting talent management on the agenda, and we are starting discussions. Certainly at [the organisation] this has happened, in terms of who is our emerging talent, who falls into the various people we absolutely need to cuddle and keep, and nurture and develop, right through to those people who seem to be dipping below required performance levels, and then action plan behind that..... I think every director should know who their talent is, and equally they should know who they need to be moving out of the organisation at some point, or improving the performance of. And frankly they don't at the moment. They take those decisions in a very subjective basis. So, a very robust, simple talent management system, I think, is the first thing. And I think, hopefully the work that's happening at the moment around emergencies and conflict will come up with a good core leadership programme, with a career path underpinning that."*

## Case Study

### Learning and development at Save the Children UK

Extensive attention and substantial investment in learning and development are associated with highly successful organisations and more satisfied staff (Cappelli, 1999; Becker et al., 2001). Save the Children UK argues that it has a comprehensive Learning and Development Programme aiming at improving the efficiency, quality and capacity of its activities (Learning & Development Policy and Guidelines, Save the Children). The outlined initiatives aim at strengthening core skills, transferable skills and specialist skills, and support continuing and professional development. There are a multitude of formal internal and external programmes sponsored, including higher education qualifications. Depending on the form and specific sponsorship by the organisation, the recipients of the support may have a return of service obligation. The longest return of service obligation applies to professional certification courses, continued professional development courses and higher education qualifications. Learning and development is linked to careers at Save the Children.

### Performance management

Interviewees were also asked about the performance management systems within their organisations. All three organisations had some kind of appraisal process, although it was felt that these might not actually be very effective at managing performance. For example:

*"We have, every staff member is meant to have, regular one-to-ones with their manager and we also have a yearly appraisal process every January or February... the appraisal process is always a bit of a ticking-box exercise really."*

In particular, it was felt that performance management might not be performed particularly effectively on an international level. For example, one interviewee suggested:

*"I think probably in the UK it works reasonably well. I think probably internationally it's a bit hit and miss, I don't know how far it really is cascaded down to national staff, or how effective it is, or if it's just a tick-box exercise. I suspect there's pockets of good practice but possibly not consistent across the organisation for all staff."*

## Case Study

### Principles-driven performance management at Christian Aid

In its statement of intent, Christian Aid outlines that it is committed to having a workplace where staff understand their role within the organisation and what is expected of them (Performance Management Policy Document, Christian Aid). Moreover, the goals of individuals are directly linked to the values and objectives of Christian Aid. The guiding principles include that clear accountabilities and responsibilities are established and communicated, that the organisation uses stretch goals that are challenging but achievable and that the achievements in relation to the set objectives are regularly reviewed.

In addition, the need for agreed objectives for managers in order to maintain or improve performance was discussed by our interviewees. For example, one interviewee explained:

*"One of the key things in improving performance in the global staff is to give them very... to come to a mutual agreement in terms of what needs to be achieved every year or whatever. But these are the outcomes mutually agreed upon and accepted, and then kind of monitor how that is being achieved by the individuals."*

A number of interviewees felt that performance management was the responsibility of individual line managers.

*"It's really just a relationship between you and your line manager."*

Other interviewees felt that performance could be managed more informally in a small team.

*"We have performance agreement because we're... because we're a small team whose performance agreements are not... are not as critical as if I was working in a large division in London and waiting to see if my line manager wants to know why and all the rest of it. They're not so critical. I speak to my team every day. We have weekly meetings. We have programme meetings. So we can touch and ..... give direction and they can feed back as well."*

## Case Study

### Performance management at Save the Children UK

Save the Children is aware of the importance of performance management and provides its leaders with an extensive guide to support them in their day-to-day performance management and their periodic performance assessments (Guide to Save the Children UK's Performance Management System, Save the Children). The performance management system has four principal elements: personal objectives, a learning and development plan, performance monitoring and an annual performance review and rating. The personal objectives are based on the SMART approach, i.e. being set & agreed in a way to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-framed. The learning and development plan – as indicated above – can include formal learning initiatives, informal on-the-job learning, job swaps, mentoring, e-learning, work shadowing or other forms. There is the aim in Save the Children that the performance of individuals will be monitored on an on-going basis and that people receive honest, open and accurate feedback in a timely fashion. Where improvement possibilities are identified, this feedback is meant to be delivered in a supportive way and coaching (or other help mechanisms) to be instigated. Moreover, there is a mid-year and an end-year performance review. In December and January, managers carry out the annual performance appraisal using a rating of 1–4. 1 stands for outstanding performer, 2 for good performer, 3 for developing performer (where further development is needed) and 4 for unsatisfactory performer. Where an individual is rated 4, an action plan should be developed which may include a high frequency of 1:1 meetings, coaching and a detailed learning and development plan.

there is still some way to go before the standard of these systems is similar to the private sector.

- The funding constraints and international focus of humanitarian organisations makes human resource management particularly problematic. However, it should be noted that these difficulties are not unique to the humanitarian sector and that lessons may be learned from private or other not-for-profit sector organisations with similar issues.
- It was generally perceived that there was a lack of career paths and career opportunities within humanitarian organisations, and that individuals needed to be responsible for their own career management. While some organisations are aware of these issues and are taking steps to address them, there is a need for more work to be done in this area.
- Performance management is seen as somewhat ineffective by our interviewees, especially across international borders. There is therefore a need for organisations to develop more robust performance management systems and to train line managers to perform this function effectively.

### Summary and implications

- The role of HR is perceived to be for capability-building or for more generally supporting managers within the organisation.
- Interviewees were generally quite critical of human resource management within their organisations, with particular areas of improvement or concern being talent management or resourcing, work/life balance and diversity. It should be noted, however, that some organisations are taking steps to improve their talent management in particular, although



## 5 Collaboration

**During the course of our research, particularly our interviews with humanitarian leaders, the importance of collaboration was repeatedly emphasised. This chapter considers the quality of existing collaborative relationships and highlights individual experiences of collaboration within the case study organisations.**

The imperative to collaborate is not new, but it is certainly gathering momentum.

The trend among institutional donors to fund fewer, larger organisations or programmes is clearly established, and the prevalence of consortia-run programmes and collaborative partnerships is widespread. And INGOs themselves are waking up to the inefficiency of duplication:

*"...There are just too many of these damned agencies... they're competing with each other .....many of them are overlapping. Many of them are competitive, indeed. And there's been a lot of criticism."*

Separating the collaboration rhetoric from the reality is itself a challenge, as our interviewees highlighted:

*"If you went to a group, a meeting of people in aid, and talked about this, they would all go no, no, we coordinate all the time, we do nothing but talk to each other, we're always talking to governments and talking to each other and so on and so forth, and I think you'd actually have to say, well, how many of you have actually given some staff to another agency or withdrawn from an area because one of the other aid agencies is doing a better job there or whatever? And the answer would be, zero."*

*"In crisis situations – Haiti and so on – you do have automatic coordination mechanisms, so... but they tend to be forced to coordinate. You can't just go and do your own thing.... the emergency aid stuff does work better because it's very centralised, generally."*

But whatever one's feeling, collaboration and the need to collaborate is here to stay for the foreseeable future.

The body of literature on collaboration is growing fast, and we do not seek to replicate that here, but what we can do, however, is highlight some of the views expressed by those we interviewed and by survey respondents.

### The quality of collaboration

In fact generally, co-operation was not seen as being of high quality. When we asked respondents to rate the quality of various types of co-operation with external agencies, the highest quality of co-operation was seen as being 'operational co-operation in an emergency', but only 37% saw this as of high or very high quality. Co-operation in relation to staff changes was seen as of particularly low quality (9%), as was operational co-operation in an urban context (14%), co-operation in relation to gaining funding (17%) and long-term general co-operation. The challenge for leaders is evident – there is substantial progress to be made with regard to 'walking the talk'.

### Mixed motives?

Our research also confirmed that the motivation for collaboration is often a mix of 'strategic foresight' and 'pure pragmatism':

*"Collaboration is the main theme about the whole organisational strategy going forward. But I think all organisations are starting to collaborate more, simply because we don't have the resources to do everything on our own because of the way that some of the big donors and institutional organisations are giving funding, you know, it's just too big for any one agency to be involved in and they want to spread the risk .....the drivers for that are saving money, utilising resources, sharing knowledge, spreading risk, pushing quality."*

An increase in the number of collaborations also reflects the fact that resources for INGOs are perhaps more constrained than ever before, while the scale of humanitarian response required has reached unprecedented levels:

*"I think it's about just recognising that nobody has everything ... nobody has got all the skills and all the competencies to do it themselves. Clearly the kind of scale of the challenge that we have will necessitate us to talk to each other and to go across boundaries and to go across sectors."*

*"So many of the bigger agency approaches have failed largely because of cost, largely because of huge administration and huge amounts of resources in order to keep the machine going, whereas if they had linked up perhaps with the other agencies ... if for example, World Vision, Save, Oxfam had linked up and done it as a joint effort, they probably would have yielded better results than they have independently, so most of the bi- agency efforts have not to date worked."*

But as one interviewee put it, the biggest problem regarding collaboration is simply “operationally making it happen”.

*to keep happy, the ethics you have to consider, the cross-cultural issues you have to look at... it's mind-boggling.”*

## Collaboration – making it happen

Modelling collaborative behaviour is the responsibility of all leaders. In fact, it is so important that in recent work facilitated by People In Aid, ‘developing and maintaining collaborative relationships’ was recognised as a core humanitarian behaviour<sup>3</sup>.

Interviewees shared practical ways in which collaboration could be undertaken:

*“In terms of working with other agencies, supporting them on collaborations, so talking to other agencies and other HR departments about, you know, seconding staff to one another so career development, or seconding staff to one another because actually you're working on a joint contract..... share staff development with other agencies in terms of secondment and mentoring and things like that, which is something we're going to start looking into. Also we work with a lot of agencies, a lot on sharing information, making sure that we don't spend lots of money on consultants and that we leverage our knowledge with each other, and we share information on salaries and benefits and policies and how we deal with different situations.”*

They also acknowledged that trust and humility were at the heart of the collaborative relationship:

*“Whenever you collaborate with others it means you're not going to win every time, you're not going to be in control and you're not going to be top dog, and there's a lot of top dogs in the sector. And [collaboration] is about top dogs learning to sometimes be the underdog and sometimes having to compromise, having to give [up] your ideas because somebody else's idea is better or because for the sake of the relationship, you have to let some battles go and you let somebody else win that one.”*

Collaboration takes courage, as well as hard work:

*“It's bloody challenging because not only is it challenging yourself going to respond in a disaster, when you're doing it with a partner it doubles the questions you have to ask, the people you have to check, the people you have*

## The role of the humanitarian leader in collaboration

Clearly, and as the strength of the quotes above shows, humanitarian leaders have a greater responsibility than most when it comes to identifying and establishing collaborative relationships.

But as the insights of our interviewees imply, collaboration is not an issue for leaders alone. We are all implicated, as the success of any collaboration depends upon collaborative leadership behaviours that are modelled consistently by all humanitarian professionals.

Our research has underlined the importance of collaboration and leadership, and in our view, this is an area that would benefit from deeper investigation.

## Learning points

- The imperative to collaborate is gathering momentum and donors and INGOs are pushing this agenda.
- There is a wide gulf between the rhetoric of collaboration and the reality – in reality many collaborations are not of high quality, and are born out of mixed motives.
- Making collaboration happen is by far the biggest challenge. While leaders have a unique role to play, all humanitarian professionals have a responsibility to develop and maintain collaborative relationships, and working collaboratively is considered a leadership behaviour.
- Further research into collaboration and leadership would be very valuable.

## For further reflection

- How would you describe the quality of your collaborative relationships?
- What is the motivation for your collaboration?
- What collaborative behaviours do you encourage in your leaders, and in your workforce more widely?

<sup>3</sup>This core humanitarian behaviour was agreed as one of several in a framework endorsed by the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies in August 2010, as part of the work facilitated by People In Aid under Objective 1 of the Humanitarian Capacity Building Programme.

## 6 Where do we go from here?

### Conclusion and recommendations

**The world seems to enter a phase in which humanitarian crises – be they urban or rural – are likely to be severe and frequent. In the time after the deep financial crisis of the first decade in the third millennium, the leadership of INGOs will determine the effectiveness of humanitarian organisations in pursuing their visions and missions. This study set out to shine more light into what engages global humanitarian leaders today and in the future, as well as to investigate the views of key staff and experts on human resource effectiveness and inter-agency collaboration.**

The research found that many of the ideas and opinions voiced by the interviewees could be structured into three interlinked areas: the personal mission of individuals, the context of job and organisation, and the people management approaches and quality in their organisation. In a humanitarian agency, staff and organisation are strongly interlinked and – quite likely more so than in most for-profit companies – individuals seek a close fit with their own personal ethics and individual capabilities. The reason can be linked to our findings that the key drivers for individuals to join humanitarian agencies are the desire to make a difference and their dedication to a cause.

Humanitarian agencies, in turn, could resource talent that has a close match to their own vision and mission. However, our research found that a close person/organisation fit and current competency levels are not enough. Our study has shown that key challenges in the future include the ability to gain access to funding, the creativity and flexibility to deal with the increasing need, complexity and new types of emergencies, a highly effective management and leadership style, the insights to successfully compete for talent and retention of field staff, as well as high levels of accountability and professionalism of staff. The key capabilities humanitarian leaders will require are adaptability and agility, resilience, networking skills, collaboration and partnership capabilities.

In terms of the organisation and the job context, there were a multitude of factors that individuals linked to their own engagement and satisfaction. Broad factors that led to higher levels of engagement were organisational culture and climate and job design. Individuals sought primarily participation, autonomy, a meaningful job and recognition and valued the reputation of their employing organisation.

Human resource management and leadership in humanitarian agencies were seen by many interviewees as having substantial room for improvement. Individuals appreciated the high workload of HR departments in relation to resourcing. In turn, they presented many ideas or wishes with respect to career management, succession planning, training and development and rewards. Moreover, they voiced that stronger leadership, for instance with respect to performance management, and a better work/life balance would lead to higher levels of engagement in the future.

Given the range of pressures on humanitarian work, several experts, gatekeepers and organisational interviewees expressed the need to seek more inter-agency collaboration or co-operation with organisations and corporations from other sectors. However, this study presented a sobering picture as to the perceived quality of current collaboration initiatives. Below, we build on these points to suggest recommendations and to develop conclusions.

#### Our recommendation in terms of leadership competences:

1. A number of respected institutions have defined what a leader is in terms of competencies and recently agreed that core humanitarian leadership behaviours can be helpfully articulated through three dimensions: exceptional self-awareness, ability to motivate and influence others, and critical judgement. INGOs should therefore identify and develop critical leadership competencies with an emphasis on the core behaviours required over the next decade.

#### Our recommendations in terms of organisational approaches and job design:

2. People are primarily motivated and engaged to work in the humanitarian sector by their personal values, dedication to a cause, or desire to make a difference. This is not something that can be developed in individuals but organisations should take this into account when developing their organisational branding or recruitment marketing campaigns. The issue is in targeting suitable, highly talented people – by communicating with them in appropriate

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places (e.g. charity events, university recruitment fairs) and through appropriate channels (events, internet, press conferences). What is clear is that humanitarian agencies need to create an employer brand that engages with the drivers of talented individuals and should be proactive in bringing their message across.

3. Humanitarian organisations should try to develop a participative culture with regular meetings and communications, as this is also important to humanitarian workers. Obviously, the culture needs to focus on the mission of the organisation but should facilitate the co-operation of individuals across functions and work groups. This could improve the internal workings of the humanitarian agencies while overcoming the perceived 'silo problem'.
4. Humanitarian workers have been shown to find issues such as autonomy important, so this should be considered in job design. We recommend balancing the humanitarian leader's need for autonomy with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities and sophisticated process design. These last two recommendations should tie in well with the generational patterns observed in the workforce. Generation Y workers are more driven by their values, they want more autonomy than earlier generations, and they express a high need for integration in decision-making.
5. The nature of leaders makes a difference to people's job satisfaction – it is therefore important that effective leaders are selected and developed. Organisations should invest in structured leadership development programmes that are specialised to the humanitarian sector. This is also a recommendation for academia – to develop leadership programmes specific to the humanitarian sector.
6. People may be attracted by personal values but they still have instrumental needs for financial rewards and job security, and they want career opportunities and a satisfying job. Organisations therefore need to look at their rewards package and the intrinsic rewards they offer.
7. The human resources department was seen to be in need of going beyond strategic alignment into transforming itself into a fully integrated organisational function. However, in all case study organisations, the gap perceived between the status quo of a fairly administrative function concentrating on resourcing and a becoming a core part of the organisation was extensive. Our recommendation is that the HR functions in humanitarian organisations move towards becoming strategic partners of the leadership teams, work towards understanding, facilitating and communicating the need for and the aims of major change initiatives, refine their capabilities as people management experts and act as coaches and facilitators in their organisations.
8. With respect to specific HR policies and practices, resourcing could be done using more sophisticated approaches. Above, we alluded to the need for employer branding and talent sourcing strategies and activities. Moreover, we would recommend here that better training of interviewers, clearer decision structures and criteria in the selection process, and the use of more sophisticated selection instruments would be beneficial. For instance, if resilience, endurance, creativity, the sourcing of funds and collaboration are important for the future, this can be assessed using competency-based interviewing techniques and psychometric tests.
9. There is a need for more robust and structured talent management processes within INGOs. There is obviously some concern about having the necessary leadership capability in the future. As INGOs might not be able to compete with private sector organisations on rewards etc. to attract effective leaders, they need to focus on attracting individuals at earlier stages in their careers that already have the motivation/engagement to work in the humanitarian sector and have some potential to be a leader later on. Crucial would be then to develop these talented individuals, provide career options which they can actively pursue and to manage their performance.

The last recommendation leads us into the HR territory which will be explicated to a wider extent below.

### **Our recommendations in terms of people management:**



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10. Performance management is essential for ensuring that humanitarian organisations have effective leaders and employees, but this is seen as somewhat ad-hoc in nature. Organisations therefore need to examine their performance management processes and install structured appraisal processes, personal development plans and disciplinary procedures etc. in order to manage performance. It is important that these should be implemented at an international level so that people receive consistent performance management across locations – therefore there is probably a need to train overseas programme managers in the approaches, underlying goals and in how to use the systems. Crucially, performance management must be seen as a day-to-day activity of all leaders in the organisation in which the focus is on development, engagement and motivation of staff and which is linked to recognition and (not necessarily monetary) rewards.
  11. Career management is a contentious area for many of the interviewees and survey respondents in the humanitarian agencies. Recent career research has outlined that the career proactivism of individuals is needed in a time of dynamic changes. Especially with uncertain funding situation, the need for staff to work on their skills, knowledge and insights, work-related networks and to understand their inner drives is paramount. Given the few hierarchical layers within most humanitarian agencies and the wish of staff to be highly involved in the decision-making processes, it is not easy for organisations to create elaborate career paths with frequent advancement opportunities. Moreover, this would run counter to the culture and organic functioning of many existing humanitarian agencies. Therefore, career management should be understood in a more intrinsic way, concentrating on the job content, responsibilities and learning opportunities. Additionally, it may be linked to project work, international mobility or (temporary) inter-agency moves and collaborative activities.
  12. Workload and work/life balance is obviously an issue – and one that is difficult to address. In turn, work/life balance is related to the needs of individuals, and long hours will be felt as less challenging if learning opportunities exist or a high degree of flexibility about how, from where and when work is to be done. While this is obviously a complex issue which varies with the responsibilities of individuals and

the current work context, organisations need to find ways to introduce flexibility in several ways, including: in job roles, the hours that people work, the locations that people work from, the leadership/team structures and ‘hand-over’ of work patterns.

### **Our recommendations in terms of collaboration:**

13. As discussed in the earlier section, the imperative for organisations to collaborate is gathering momentum, and donors and INGOs are pushing this agenda. According to our research, there is a wide gulf between the rhetoric of collaboration and the reality. Our recommendation here is that INGOs should be specific, intentional and honest about the collaborative opportunities they pursue, and take steps to clearly identify, elaborate and reward appropriate collaborative behaviours. INGOs should also diversify their collaborative partners to include a wider range of actors or stakeholders, for example private sector firms, public sector institutions and civil society organisations.

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## 8 Appendices

### Methodology

The project aimed to address the following research questions:

- What are the key motivations of humanitarian leaders?
- What are the core competencies required by humanitarian leaders engaged in cross-cultural work?
- What are the core competencies required by humanitarian leaders engaged in international inter-agency cooperation in crisis situations?
- What career or job satisfaction is there for global humanitarian leaders?
- What international HRM strategies, policies and practices do specific humanitarian agencies pursue?
- In what ways could international human resources management be improved?

The research questions above were addressed using three main strands of research.

#### 1. Case studies

The first stage was conducted within three case study organisations – ActionAid, Christian Aid and Save the Children UK. These organisations were selected as examples of organisations conducting humanitarian aid work on an international basis. The purpose of this stage was to provide a detailed analysis of the structure, human resource management and career management practices within international humanitarian organisations. Access to the case study organisations was achieved via the contacts of the research team.

A senior manager or human resource (HR) manager in each organisation was interviewed in order to obtain background about each organisation. In each case this main contact ('gatekeeper') was asked to provide any documentation or written policies about the organisational structure, recruitment and retention, leadership development or talent management, career development or communication (both within and outside of the organisation). These documents were then analysed along with the information provided during the interviews with these main contacts in order to build up an analysis of the policies and practices in each organisation.

#### 2. Interviews

Two series of interviews were conducted in order to address our research questions. Firstly, employees within each case study organisation were interviewed to obtain their motivation for working in the humanitarian sector and their organisation; the factors affecting their job satisfaction and engagement; experiences of human resource management and leadership and of collaboration between humanitarian organisations. Individuals selected were both leaders and non-leaders within their organisation and had international experience. These individuals were generally senior managers, HRM specialists and field managers in these agencies. Twenty-eight individuals were interviewed in total. Secondly, a number of "experts" in the fields of international human resource management or humanitarian organisations were interviewed. This was to investigate their overarching views of the challenges and issues facing the sector with regard to leadership and human resource management. Four interviews with experts were conducted.

An interview protocol was developed for each of these two sets of interviews based upon the literature in this area and the knowledge of the research team. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Each interview was analysed in order to draw out themes.

#### 3. Survey

A survey was developed based upon the interviews conducted at stage 2 of this project and on the literature on international HRM and humanitarian organisations. This survey was designed to investigate employees' motivations for joining the sector and organisation, the factors affecting their job satisfaction and engagement, experiences of human resource management and leadership and of collaboration between humanitarian organisations.



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Participants for the survey were drawn from the mailing list of People in Aid and other contacts of the research team, and so it covered a wider number of agencies. The survey was conducted online and was analysed in order to summarise the results using the SPSS software package.

### **Sample information**

A total number of 81 individuals completed the survey. Of these 41 (51%) were male and 40 (49%) were female. Most respondents were at fairly senior levels in the organisation, either at Board level or at Department head level. This is reflected in the fact that 91% of the sample had some responsibility for managing others.

16% of the sample's roles focused on humanitarian assistance, 27% focused on development and 40% focused on both (the rest did not answer). 72% of the sample felt that their role had a strong international focus.

## **Interview questions and protocols**

The interview questions and protocols used for the individuals from the case study organisations:

### **Protocol:**

#### **Introduction/Background**

The purpose of the project is to examine the core competencies, careers, motivations and job satisfaction of humanitarian leaders involved in cross-cultural work and inter-agency co-operation in crisis situations. In addition, this project will analyse the international HRM strategies, policies and practices that INGOs pursue, and their impact on the organisation's responsiveness to crises, quality of service delivery, intra-agency co-operation and worldwide learning, with a view to improving HRM in the sector, ensuring that the competencies needed for the future are available and motivating and retaining humanitarian leaders.

As a first stage in this project we are interviewing key personnel from three INGOs (ActionAid, Christian Aid, Save the Children UK). We will be interviewing a wide range of employees in these organisations. In addition, we will also be interviewing a number of key experts in the field.

We would therefore like to ask you a series of questions about the above areas. Please be assured that all of the information that you give to us will only be used in aggregate with other information and that you will remain anonymous.

### **Interview questions:**

#### **Motivations**

1. What were your key motivations when you joined this organisation?
  - a. Have these changed over time?
  - b. If so, why?
  - c. [Probe for the motivational drivers/career anchors of (1) technical/functional competence, (2) managerial competence, (3) security and stability, (4) entrepreneurial creativity, (5) autonomy and independence, (6) dedication to a cause, (7) pure challenge, (8) lifestyle, (9) internationalism]
2. What do you think are the key motivations of people when they join your organisation?
  - a. [Probe for the motivational drivers/career anchors (1) technical/functional competence, (2) managerial competence, (3) security and stability, (4) entrepreneurial creativity, (5) autonomy and independence, (6) dedication to a cause, (7) pure challenge, (8) lifestyle, (9) internationalism]
  - b. Do you perceive a change of these key motivations over time? [if yes] What would trigger this change?
  - c. How are these expressed or can these be noticed?
  - d. What differences exist between the key motivations of humanitarian leaders and other staff?
  - e. How can HR support your motivation?

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### ***Career Success and Satisfaction***

3. What career or job satisfaction is there for you as a global humanitarian leader?
4. What does career success mean for you?
  - a. What role do monetary factors play?
  - b. How important is hierarchical advancement?
  - c. What non-monetary and non-hierarchical factors are important to you? [Probe for individual subjective factors such as autonomy, work/life balance, fulfilment, learning & skill acquisition, and leadership].
  - d. What are the key things that your organisation should tackle to improve the careers of its humanitarian leaders? How should it do so?

### ***Career Instruments and Processes***

5. Do international career paths exist for global staff?
6. What support in terms of coaching, mentoring, talent management or career management do global employees receive?
7. What could be done to improve the career planning and management for internationally operating staff in your organisation?
8. What professional development have you received from your organisation?
  - a. How could this be improved?

### ***Job Satisfaction***

9. What makes you satisfied with your job?
  - a. What makes you satisfied with your role and responsibilities?
10. What are the key factors that lead you to feel dissatisfied? How could these be addressed?

### ***Engagement and Commitment***

11. What does your organisation do to increase the engagement of global staff i.e. people who work across borders or abroad?
  - a. How successful are these activities in your opinion?
  - b. What activities or approaches could your organisation draw up to increase employee engagement?

### ***Performance Management***

12. How is the performance of global staff in your organisation managed at the moment?
  - a. Do you perceive any problems with the current approach to performance management?
  - b. [Probe] Culture, PM system, training issues
13. What could the organisation do to improve the performance of global staff?

### ***General***

14. How do you perceive HR's role within your organisation?
15. In what ways could international human resources management be improved in your organisation?

### ***Close***

Thank you for your time in answering these questions. Your comments will be analysed and combined with those from our other interviewees so that we can write our final report. We will let you see this report at the end of our research.





# Engaging Tomorrows's Global Humanitarian Leaders Today

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