

Launching the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF) Project

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Competent and well-managed staff are at the heart of an accountable and effective organisation, therefore they need to be equipped with the right skills and behaviours. The Core Humanitarian Competency Framework explains the link between the organisation's ability to deliver impact, and what it takes to be successful through personal and organisational excellence.

During 2010, the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA), (now the [Start Network](#)), supported by People in Aid (now the CHS Alliance), worked with 15 agencies to identify the core competencies which are critical in a humanitarian response. This resulted in a common core competencies framework for humanitarian action, which reflected a consensus-built, inter-agency approach.

The CBHA Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework was built on a number of previous initiatives, with the goal of drawing out the behaviours that are fundamental to all humanitarian positions and keeping crisis-affected people at the centre. The Framework was developed to reflect the reality of humanitarian work and be relevant for staff on the ground, focussing on delivery and accountability. Six areas of core competencies defined as “the essential behaviours required by all staff, influenced by their skills and knowledge”, were identified. The finalised framework was successfully embedded in many of the participating agencies' operations.

In October 2016, as part of the [Start Network/DFID-funded Talent Development Project](#), the CHS Alliance completed a review of the Framework. The main purpose of this review was to gather feedback from a wide range of stakeholders on the relevance and practical use of the CHCF in humanitarian organisations, and recommend any suitable revisions or improvements based on these stakeholder consultations.

The review affirmed that a majority of the stakeholders consulted found that the CHCF is fit for purpose, adds value and is highly relevant for staff development and humanitarian efforts in general. The review also indicated that the use of the framework is making a positive difference, especially among Start Network members, for example in entry- and mid-level training for aid workers. Moreover, stakeholders acknowledge the CHCF as a pioneering generic competency framework in the humanitarian sector that serves as a useful reference point for them.

However, the review indicated that there was only a low to moderate level awareness and hence corresponding lack of 'know how' of the CHCF among many humanitarian organisations and stakeholders in the Global South, which seriously impacted the mainstreaming and effective use of the Framework among these actors. According to the [review report](#), other challenges faced in implementing the CHCF were - links to career paths, how changes in behaviours can be identified and measured, and HR practitioners not being familiar enough with competency frameworks to guide project managers and field staff on how to adopt them.

Based on these findings it was decided by the CHS Alliance and the Talent Development Project team to further the CHCF's reach by promoting and disseminating the CHCF and its uses on a global scale. At this point a new collaborative partnership was created between the CHS Alliance and the Collaboration Centre for Recognition of Humanitarian Skills, Experience and Learning, a joint initiative of the [Humanitarian Leadership Academy](#), the [International Association of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection \(PHAP\)](#), and CHS Alliance.

The resulting CHCF project aims to assist communities at risk or affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers through the use of the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF) and tools. It is being jointly funded by the Start Network/DFID through the Talent Development Project and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy. It will run promotional activities primarily aimed at national NGOs in Kenya, Jordan Bangladesh, DRC and Philippines.

The key activities and outputs include:

- Human Resources professionals and managers will have the skills and tools to apply CHCF in order to improve the overall quality of their programmes with people affected by crisis and disaster.
- Learning institutes will be provided with tools and knowledge to be able to adopt the CHCF in the most appropriate way to suit their specific processes.
- Competency-based approaches to people management and career development will be promoted across the sector.

Through the continued support and funding from the Start Network/DFID through the Talent Development Project the following activities are being completed:

The Framework is being translated and printed into several languages; a suite of tools and instructions on the use of the framework is being developed by an expert in competency-based people management. Training will also be held to help small organisations in target countries with the implementation of the tools.

Through funding from the Humanitarian Leadership Academy the following activities will be completed:

An additional training course will be run in another target country; a specific webpage and promotional video will be created; the how-to guide will be translated; a report on other existing competency frameworks will be produced. Funding has also been provided for a part time dedicated Project Manager.

The CHS Alliance is very pleased to be leading this project. The CHS Alliance promotes the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) as a whole-organisation approach and a common reference standard for quality, accountability and effectiveness. The CHCF provides a complementary tool that works towards commitment 8 of the CHS, focusing on the need for competent and well-managed staff in humanitarian organisations to deliver quality responses. The dissemination of the CHCF framework will therefore work in tandem with the CHS, amongst CHS Alliance members and beyond.

Please get in touch with [Gemma Prescott](#) if you need further information.