

Talent Development Programme

Coaching Scheme Operating / Business Model Review

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ABSTRACT

Using data from the Start Network Talent Development Programme and prior evaluations, this forward-looking report makes recommendations for the enhancement of talent programmes incorporating coaching as a development modality.

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Executive Summary

This deliberately forward looking report reviews the operating model of the coaching element of the Talent Development Programme, captures strengths and weaknesses, and makes a number of related recommendations, grouped into eight related areas. As the Programme itself has now concluded the focus of the report has been on recommending ways in which the designers and managers of similar programmes could achieve greater returns on their investment in coaching. Within the scope of a short report on a programme that has now concluded and has been evaluated in some detail previously it has not been thought necessary to rehearse discussions about observed strengths and weaknesses that can be found, for example, in the “Start Network Talent Development Coaching: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Review”, Start, A. (November 2017). This report draws from the November 2017 report and recommends it as a complementary resource.

The recommendations concern enhancements that may be considered in each of the following areas:

- Selection of programme participants
- Alignment of selection criteria with the organisation’s strategic requirements
- What to assess and why
- How and why such assessment should inform programme design
- Securing top level management approval of - and commitment to - a programme of coaching
- Determining whether coaching or mentoring is required
- The importance of language and listening skills when voice over internet communication predominates
- Enhancing and sustaining coach commitment
- The value of continuing coach education as continuing professional development and for monitoring purposes
- Reliability and validity of self-assessment tools
- The additional value of multi-source feedback
- Matching coaches and participants¹
- The differing contributions of internal and external coaches
- The, often overlooked, manager’s role before, during and after a development programme
- Management, governance and the quality assurance of coaching
- The management and security of personal data

Some recommendations are made to enhance the engagement of, support for and development of the coaches themselves. These recommendations are made in the knowledge that in-house coaches, in particular, may not have a coach supervisor or yet appreciate the benefits of engaging one².

The net value of the additional investments recommended is judged likely to further enhance a successful model.

¹ For consistency, throughout this report “participants” is used to refer to those participating in programmes: they are also, usually, “coachees” but the one term is used throughout this report.

² See: Passmore, J, Brown, H, Csigas, Z and the European Coaching and Mentoring Research Consortium (2017) The State of Play in European Coaching & Mentoring – Executive Report. Henley-on-Thames: Henley Business School and EMCC International ISBN 978-1-912473-00-7

Introduction

Between February 2015 and September 2017, The Start Network Department For International Development (DFID) funded, Talent Development Programme (TDP) provided learning and development for 1165 national humanitarian workers, including 175 fast-track places to prepare humanitarian leaders of the future. Coaching was an integral part of the TDP³.

The coaching aimed to increase the confidence and the ownership of participants managing their own learning and performance, resulting in enhanced performance through the application of new skills and knowledge. Coaching was provided by employees of the organisations employing participants and by external coaches, the latter being paid for their coaching services.

Now that the TDP has finished, this report aims to:

- Review the operating model that was used for the coaching network
- Capture the learning from its strengths and weaknesses
- Make recommendations based on findings for improvement of the coaching network operating model

Given that the TDP has concluded, a reasonable question arises about to whom this report's recommendations are addressed. Prior evaluation reports have concluded that the TDP – partly by combining a range of learning methodologies including coaching - has provided high value outcomes. (See Appendix 1.) Therefore, this report sets out to provide recommendations about the ways in which the positive outcomes achieved through this type of Programme might be *further enhanced*. In doing so, this report aims to be a source of advice and encouragement to those, both now and in the future, called upon to design and/or manage talent development programmes. The report's recommendations are primarily addressed to programme designers/managers. It is understood that they may be i) working collaboratively with other organisations developing a global or regional talent initiative, ii) making key design or operational decisions about an in-country programme for participants from a number of organisations or iii) developing/leading a programme for talent from a single agency. Certain recommendations are particularly relevant for those designing and/or managing large programmes.

It is also recognised that funding constraints may well be the key determinant of recommendations they decide to implement.

³ The TDP was one of thirteen projects managed by the Start Network, funded by DFID's Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme with £5,985,087 for a period of three years (November 2014–October 2017).

1 Context for Coaching

The TDP aimed to build the capacity of national humanitarian workers in East Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Three organisations led on the learning and development schemes:

- The entry-level Humanitarian Trainee Scheme (HTS) was led by Save the Children UK but sub-granted to Save the Children International to deliver (in Kenya and Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Jordan) an entry-level HTS training scheme. This was an intensive, 12-month scheme designed for people new to the humanitarian sector and seeking a long-term career.
- The Context Management and Leadership Programme and the Core Skills Programme were both led by Oxfam GB. Oxfam GB sub-granted Context implementation to Bioforce in DRC, MzN in Bangladesh, and RedR in Kenya, Ethiopia, Jordan and Lebanon. Although designed by Oxfam GB, Context materials are open source and were updated to match the most recent Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). Two courses were delivered through Context – Core Skills, and Management and Leadership Skills – but both were designed for mid-level, employed staff and require inputs from participants’ line managers.
- Relief International led the Leadership for Humanitarians (LfH) Programme. Relief International partnered with LfH to deliver LfH training in Kenya, Bangladesh, and Jordan. The materials were developed based on Stephen Covey’s book *“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”*.

The CHS Alliance, formerly People in Aid, was involved as a technical partner and worked on two crosscutting strands: managing the coaching network and the revision of the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF). This report focuses on the coaching network operating (or business) model.

Overall, the number of lead partners, subcontractors, countries involved and the types and tiers of programmes – with their differing curricula and requirements for coaching - did create stakeholder engagement, contracting, sub-contracting, governance and management arrangements that were complex and difficult to sustain over the length of a three year TDP.

2 Summary of Coaching Operating Model

The coaching operating model was provided through the Start Coaching Network. This was a global network of in-house and independent coaches. The in-house coaches were national staff members of INGOs, NGOs and the public sector in the implementing countries. In-house coaches did provide coaching to participants who were not employed by the same organisation. The independent coaches were qualified coaches with a humanitarian background dispersed across various countries. In-house coaches received a Coaching Toolkit, a two-day training from coaching consultants, and three 'Coaching the Coach' sessions over the course of a year. The in-house coaches were not compensated for coaching, but gained coaching experience contributing to TDP's aim of building individual capacity. Independent coaches were chosen if they already had a coaching qualification, but some received a one to two-hour specialised coach briefing through CHS Alliance. Others received no induction, but were hired and began with the Toolkit and email communication from the CHS Alliance. Independent coaches were paid £90 for each coaching session⁴ after they filled out a brief, online description of the session, which was kept in a database - as were the session descriptions produced by the in-house coaches. Fees were paid to the external coaches on satisfaction of these conditions and receipt of an invoice addressed to the CHS Alliance.

Beginning March 2015, the CHS Alliance, working with a team of global coaching experts, trained and supported 93 in-house coaches and contracted 45 external, independent coaches, in Kenya, Ethiopia, Jordan, Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of Congo. There was an unfortunate delay between initial coach training and deployment - according to an interim report entitled "Aid Works: Talent Development Project Mid-Term Review" (Hoppe, K., Older, M., Ali M. (2016). This appears to have been as a result of initial pressure to populate the coach database quickly at the outset of the TDP and a subsequent hiatus before coaching sessions were actually required. Hoppe, Older and Ali stated, in November 2016, that: "14 [coaches] have been non-responsive in their availability for coaching. The CHS Alliance is now training another cohort of 55 coaches, with the goal of having 40 new coaches operating before the end of the project. This will result in a projected 141 coaches being active before October 2017." 93 in-house coaches were trained but only 75 were active. Some coaches were trained but never went on to actually engage with the programme or deliver sessions.

Throughout the duration of the TDP, coaches delivered coaching sessions to 416 participants across the three learning and development programmes in six countries. A further 131 participants were to receive coaching sessions but did not do so for various reasons. It would appear that almost one in four of participants due to receive coaching sessions did not actually do so.

3 Recent Evaluation

A recent evaluation, Start, A. (2017), concluded that the coaching process in general was perceived as having been carried out as intended. However, coaching, as a learning modality, was less effective for participants on the Humanitarian Trainee Scheme. This finding was in line with the interim findings of Hoppe, K., Older, M., Ali M. (2016). By contrast, the most significant indications of insight into their own learning process, and change in the adoption of workplace skills and behaviours were reported by participants on the Leadership for Humanitarians and Context Management and Leadership programmes.

A summary of the key findings of the Start, A. (2017) evaluation, which complements this report, is included at Appendix 1.

⁴ For the latest, European, assessment of corporate funded and individually funded coaching fee rates see: Passmore, J., Brown, H., Csigas, Z., et al (2017).

4 Coaching’s Envisioned Benefits

Coaching was envisioned as a supportive, thought-provoking and creative process that would help participants gain new perspectives on themselves and their situations.

During the TDP, coaches partnered with programme participants to help them to focus on exactly what they wanted to achieve, to apply the learning from recent workshops, to articulate the outcomes they wanted and to establish and measure their success. The coaching was tailored to the individual participants as they developed their humanitarian practice within their working context and as they were given new opportunities to practise their skills.

The provision of coaching was designed to produce benefits for the programme participants, for their organisations and for the coaches themselves.

4.1 Recommendations for enhancement

There will be opportunities to achieve higher value outcomes where talent are engaged in a programme of the TDP type as part of their own organisation’s strategic approach to talent management. The following table summarises related recommendations, the underpinning rationale and anticipated enhancements:

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
Target coaching resources with care on the basis of diligent assessment	To achieve the highest return on investment (ROI)	High ROI
Select participants using agreed and uniform criteria	Consistent attention to skills, ability and motivation	Decisions taken are justifiable and ROI is high
Use selection criteria that support growth in strategic capabilities	Investment targets future critical organisational capabilities	The future strategic capabilities required are developed
Communicate clearly with those selected and those not yet ready	Convey i) sense of privilege and opportunity and ii) that there will be future opportunities	Highest levels of engagement amongst those selected in and those considered not yet ready
Assess candidate’s experiences; knowledge/understanding; competencies and personal attributes/derailers	What they have done, understand, are capable of and who they are all important readiness indicators	High quality selection decisions are taken and an appropriate menu of development is created
Design an assessment-led programme of development	Both the content and the learning modalities are determined through results of individual and organisational assessment	High degree of relevance, impact (including ROI) and satisfaction for both individuals and the organisation

Ben Ramalingam’s “Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organisations”, available [here](#) is an excellent source book for use when creating the programme of development.

5 Expectations of The Coaches

The coaches engaged in the programme were expected to:

- Have existing coaching experience in varying contexts or have demonstrable experience of using questioning, listening and feedback skills in their current work role.
- Have experience of humanitarian work and constraints.
- Understand and appreciate the dilemmas and challenges of humanitarian work.
- Act as a catalyst in further developing a participant’s potential and performance. The coaching emphasis is on results, accountability and follow-through.
- Ideally have some experience of Skype or remote coaching.

Previous humanitarian coaching initiatives had often recruited external coaches able to coach in English but within the TDP considerable efforts were made to recruit coaches who would be able to converse in the first language of the programme participants.

In the TDP, developing/in-house coaches were to experience a process designed to enhance self-awareness, build relevant skills and increase their own confidence as a coach. It was planned that, as the value of a coaching culture was progressively established and recognised, so the opportunities for coaches to work more widely within their own organisations and with partners would also open up.

5.1 Recommendations for enhancement

The following table summarises related recommendations, the underpinning rationale and anticipated enhancements:

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
Obtain top-level management approval for, and commitment to, in-house and external coaching	This will facilitate wider management “buy in”, the recruitment of coaches and the diversion of high calibre in-house coaches from their usual work	Protection for high quality resources when budgets are under pressure and top management support for the release of in-house coaches
Decide early whether mentoring or coaching input (or, indeed, both) are required⁵	Misperceptions here can lead to participants having misplaced expectations as the Start, A (2017) report indicates	More productive working alliances are formed quickly based on accurate perceptions of coaching (and mentoring)
Be clear about the relationship between the coach’s role and the continuing role of the line manager	Avoidance of non-productive conflicts of interest and role between the line manager and the coach	Added value through the coach/participant working alliance which complements the manager/participant role

⁵ Space does not permit of a discussion of the similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring here. The Humanitarian Leadership Academy short course “[Introduction to Coaching and Mentoring](#)” has, however, been specifically designed to develop understanding of coaching and mentoring. It includes a helpful section comparing the relative contributions of mentoring and coaching and their use in emergency response contexts. See, also: Passmore, J., Brown, H., Csigas, Z., et al (2017).

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
Do not assume that visual communication between coach and participant will be available; focus on support for coaching modalities realistically available	Face-to-face meetings may be impossible and broadband capacity may not support the use of internet cameras; voice over internet coaching may predominate	Realistic, practical emphasis on high quality listening and effective use of language without visual communication to add context and content
Ensure coach profiles contain information about coaching language fluency and virtual coaching experience	To ensure appropriate matching and quality coaching experiences	Highest quality communication is established and sustained

6 Engagement With Coaching

Coaches were expected to provide different levels and types of coaching support to participants on the programmes. During the nine months of the Context Management and Leadership Programme, it was expected that each coach would provide three coaching sessions, the first one after the first workshop. During the Humanitarian Trainee Programme, a coach was likely to coach four sessions. During the Leadership for Humanitarians Programme, a coach was likely to coach two sessions to follow the five-day workshop. Within the first of these Programmes participants were also, following a suitable coaching skills workshop, given responsibility to coach participants on the Context Core Skills programme.

Coaches working with participants demonstrated different levels of coaching experience, capability, commitment and understanding. Some comments from participants (see Start, A. (2017)) draw attention to occurrences where coaches failed to make contact with participants or did not show up for sessions. There may, of course, have been numerous reasons for these incidents and misunderstandings may have played a part. It is also the case that Hoppe, K., Older, M., Ali M. (2016) found that, (page 18), early in the Talent Development Programme, People In Aid “was pressured to contract coaches very quickly, but then many of the coaches were not used for a year or more. Some coaches lost interest over that period and, in effect, had to be re-activated. The contracting of the coaches proved complicated, in terms of data protection as well as payment for independent coaches. All of this resulted in frustration among operational partners, who needed the coaching to be implemented at the appropriate times and a combination of different methods was used to fill that gap”. In some locations coaches from one course were asked to coach another course; in others, some cohorts did not receive coaching. While Hoppe, K., Older, M., Ali M. (2016) found “there has been work in correcting these issues, some participants are still not receiving coaching or have been disappointed with the coaching they received”.

6.1 Recommendations for enhancement

In a tiered TDP embracing differing levels of developmental education it is a positive advantage to have a pool of internal and external coaches (and possibly also mentors) having a range of coaching experience, cultural familiarity, capability and understanding. The following table summarises related recommendations, the underpinning rationale and anticipated enhancements:

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
Coach profiling must be sufficiently detailed to facilitate choice or matching processes	Need to give and receive information is met	Relevant, accurate information facilitates appropriate matching or individual choice
Consider whether all coaches can contribute equally well to all programmes	Coaches may well contribute very effectively to some programmes but not to others	More effective deployment and matching of coaches and participants
The coach recruitment and selection process should communicate expectations clearly	Unsuitable coaches may withdraw or can be excluded from the pool	Appropriate coaches apply and selection results in an appropriate pool of coaches
Ensure that coaches understand how humanitarian challenges can hamper even virtual session attendance	Growth in sectoral enculturation	Fewer surprises, more sympathetic understanding of the participant's challenges
Consider speed matching	This mimics personal human meeting and association processes, allows for exploratory dialogue and the choice is owned by the participant	Lays a strong foundation for the working alliance. See Appendix 2 for a practical guide to speed matching.
Invite coaches to participate in programme webinars and other online learning	Extends familiarity with sectoral challenges, contributes to coach professional development	Often proves to be a win: win for participants, programme managers and coaches
Consider asking appropriately skilled coaches (or mentors) to facilitate action learning sets	At its simplest, action learning is many-to-one coaching and many coaches have the skills needed to add value as action learning set facilitators	Rapid and effective transfer of learning. Real issues solved. Members become aware of their implicit assumptions, beliefs and attitudes. Peer learning facilitated.
Coach briefing and education is rapidly followed by engagement with participants	Minimal delay in applying learning guards against the decay of learning	Maximises coach commitment and their application of own learning

7 Resourcing Coaching

A “Coaches Toolkit” was produced to support coaches in their learning journey. It was intended as a starting point for coaching practice and the writers sought to ensure that coaches did not feel restricted by it. It was revised in July 2017 under the title: “Talent Development: Coaches Toolkit” (Swords, S., and Emmens, B. (2017). The toolkit defines coaching; lists coaching benefits; explains the use of coaching within the Programme; outlines the GROW coaching model and a number of other models; provides guidance and resources to support each of the three or four sessions that coaches were to conduct; provides question prompts, offers tips concerning listening and feedback and outlines the coaches required contributions to the matching, monitoring and evaluation processes.

The Toolkit also introduces the three ‘Coaching the Coach’ sessions provided during year one of the Programme for in-house coaches. These offered a space for coaches to reflect upon the content and process of their work; time to reflect on their own response and reactions to the participants’ situations and engagement with other tools and perspectives concerning the coaching.

7.1 Recommendations for enhancement

The following table summarises related recommendations, the underpinning rationale and anticipated enhancements:

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
Use “in-their-own-words” examples of participants’ misunderstandings about coaching to clarify expectations	The Start, A. (2017), evaluation reveals how commonplace these were	Working alliances are quickly built upon sound, shared understandings
Encourage managers to “check in” with participants to show interest	The relationship between participant and coach is time limited but the manager has the continuing interest in learning application. Good managers will have considerable interest in early learning application	Managers may open doors to opportunities; sponsor developmental projects and introduce participants to role models. Bounded dialogues enhance the scope for real life learning and development
Use self-assessment tools developed from agreed competency frameworks	Encourage self-awareness and participant’s management of their own learning and development	Participants reflect on which competencies they would like to develop further and undertake effective development planning
Ensure that self-assessment tools are well designed and have transparent linkages to development planning tools and relevant development resources	To encourage practical use	Self-management is encouraged. (Here is a well-designed self-assessment tool).

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
If resources allow, self- assessment tools can be replaced by, or used alongside, a reliable multi-source feedback tool	A recognised problem with self-assessment tools is that people have a strong tendency to over-estimate their capabilities (Chatterji, S. and Mukerjee, M., 1983). This may be modified in workplaces with a well-established, culturally appropriate feedback culture and regular practice in place. Ed Bastia provides some guidance on thinking about this here .	Greater assessment reliability, growth in a feedback culture, opportunity to track development through before and after use of the same, more reliable, tool
Use multi-source feedback at the beginning and after a programme of development to provide reliable impact data	At the end of a development experience the tendency of participants to overestimate their own capabilities will commonly increase	Participant’s initial development planning is based on more reliable data and impact data derives from multiple sources

8 Coach Matching and Preparation

Whilst other methods of matching coaches and programme participants were considered, including participants selecting their own coaches, it was decided that the in-country project managers would likely know and understand their participants well and would be best placed to match participants with coaches. Therefore, the names, personal profiles and the contact details of coaches were given to the in-country project managers by the CHS Alliance so that they could undertake the matching. The in-country project managers would then submit the matching sheets back to the CHS Alliance coaching project manager who would notify the coaches or their new participants.

8.1 Recommendations for enhancement

Generally speaking, “in-house coaches” or, perhaps more commonly, “internal coaches” is a term used to denote coaches that are employed within the same organisation as their client: the participant. In the case of the TDP this was not always the case: some participants worked with an internal coach employed by their own organisation but in other cases the internal coach was actually employed by another organisation. When making choices between an external and an internal coach some subtle insights as well as an awareness of costs is required. The following table highlights the generally applicable core advantages and disadvantages of the use of internal and external coaches respectively. (Some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with internal coaching, listed below, did not apply in the TDP as a result of the pairing of what were generally referred to as in-house coaches with participants from other organisations.)

	Internal Coaches	External Coaches
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to know the internal culture and/or typical issues • May be permanently “on hand” • Can help to promote a coaching culture in the organisation • May have direct experience of the problems and obstacles found in the organisation or the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bring an outsider’s perspective • Are very unlikely to have vested interests or agendas inside the organisation • Can provide external benchmarking criteria • Are more likely to have an independent coach supervisor • Are more likely to be honest about their opinions • Frequently find that maintaining confidentiality is easier • May have access to valuable external networks
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May experience potential conflict between their role as coach and their role as line manager or as human resources specialist • May be too much part of the organisational culture to be objective and innovative • Their confidentiality may be harder to ensure • Are unlikely to be acceptable to senior manager and leader participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive • May lack knowledge of the sector • Are usually less ‘known’ by the organisation and so may present a higher risk of being inappropriate

Where programme managers operate the matching process they need to be as familiar with these considerations as they may be with the participants on their programme.

9 Assessment

Once the matching was complete, coaches received – from the CHS Alliance Coaching Project Manager – details of their participant “allocations”. Coaches were required to contact their participants within two weeks and to set the dates for coaching and the best schedule for sessions taking account of learning needs, respective time zones, travel commitments and humanitarian deployments (on both sides). Participants were asked to send their coach any self-assessment diagnostic completed by them before the first workshop.

9.1 Recommendations for enhancement

Whilst the use of a self assessment may provide participants with some information helpful in setting the agenda for the initial meeting with the coach and framing the development planning activity, the available research indicates that, where a reliable form of multi-source feedback is used early in the process, this significantly strengthens self-awareness. See: Section 11.

Multi-source feedback produces the most valuable results where the programme participant receives assistance with interpretation, development planning, resources, and follow-up accountability processes. Coaches are well placed to provide this assistance. Further details and links to resources are in Appendix 3.

Multi-source feedback, where the same tool is used again at or near the end of the programme, also has the potential to provide reliable assurance of development or challenge to an erroneous self-assessment.

10 Coach Data

In order for the coach/participant matching process to work effectively and for the tracking and verifying of sessions to take place effectively, a database of coaches was created, housed in Nepal. The use of the database was, unfortunately, somewhat delayed as a result of the Nepal earthquake in April 2015 and concerns about data protection. All coaches did not actively use the database even with repeated encouragement from the CHS Alliance to do so. Consequently it became necessary for the Project Manager to resort to creating “tracking sheets” which were shared with each in-country programme team, though not with coaches themselves. Tracking sheets were rather laboriously populated by collecting data about sessions from coaches and participants.

10.1 Recommendations for enhancement

The advantage of any coach profile database is that it allows for the person doing the matching to view the biographical details of all the coaches. However, where someone else does the matching, e.g., a programme manager, it is possible that not all participants may feel they gain the right coach. “Speed matching” is a way of addressing the participant’s sense of an impersonal process owned by someone else. The advantage of speed matching is that it allows the participant to meet all of the coaches and, subject to the amount of time devoted to the event, spend some time getting to know them. This will, of course, be helped if participants have been encouraged to browse the coach database to gain some advance knowledge of each coach profile. See Appendix 2 for an outline of a speed matching event.

In any situation where personal data is to be collected it will be important to have regard to data protection and security. See Appendix 4 for detailed recommendations on both these aspects of personal data management.

11 Management, Governance and Quality Assurance

The TDP was a large programme delivered by consortium partners in several, non-adjacent, countries, by four main organisations and numerous sub-contractors, involving participants from approaching seventy agencies whose primary language was not necessarily English. The allocation of resources to overall coaching management was very limited over the entire term of the TDP and it was not helpful that the management of contractual arrangements with coaches was detached – organisationally and geographically – from the management of the tiers of development programmes within the TDP. The scale of the international coaching management task is well illustrated by considering just the following data:

75 in-house and 40 independent coaches were active, though originally 93 in-house coaches were trained and 45 independent coaches contracted. The active coaches delivered coaching sessions, in six countries, to 416 participants across the multi-cohort learning and development programmes.

During the nine months of an Oxfam Context Management and Leadership programme, the aim was for a coach to run three coaching sessions, the first one after the first workshop. During the Save the Children Humanitarian Trainee programme, each coach was likely to coach four sessions. During the Relief International Leadership for Humanitarians programme, a coach was likely to coach two sessions to follow after the five-day workshop. Given that the first of these sessions in each case would be a “getting to know each other and forming agreements” meeting, the amount of coaching work to be achieved in the following sessions was considerable. The reality of the TDP was that participant/coach meetings did not occur that frequently.

The management and governance arrangements for this scale of collaborative programme were, perhaps inevitably, complex. A significant challenge originated from the division of i) coach supply/matching/management and ii) programme management responsibilities. CHS Alliance Start Coaching sourced, supplied, matched and managed the coaching – working largely virtually - whilst programme managers on the ground managed the individual learning programmes. This created complex communication flows, significant operational issues and tensions.

For participants in long development programmes supported by coaches their relationship with that coach is commonly pivotal. In the case of the TDP the vision for coaching set out to deliver a supportive, thought-provoking and creative process that would help participants gain new perspectives on themselves and their situations. This type of vision should also encourage participants to place a high value on their relationship with their coach. Participant’s relationships with other faculty members (including subject matter experts and workshop facilitators) and with their peers and alumni are also important. However, the management arrangements for the TDP did not reflect the importance of these relationships nor provide for the fluent, joined up resolution of any coaching or related issues that arose. Certainly, the “fault line” in the overall TDP management arrangements, effectively separating coaching management and other programme management arrangements, did not facilitate joined up thinking and practice in respect to coaching.

It was acknowledged, from the outset, that the TDP must include arrangements to resolve any problems that might occur with the participant / coach relationship. If the coaching relationship was not working, then the coach was to inform the CHS Alliance Start Coaching Project Manager who would be in contact with the relevant project manager. If it was a participant who thought the coaching relationship was not working, they would inform their in-country project manager who would communicate this with the CHS Alliance coaching project manager, who would then jointly discuss what action to take / changes to make.

If other faculty members heard that the coaching was not working or that there was poor coaching they were to inform the programme manager who would contact the Start Coaching Project Manager.

Both these “resolution chains” were to be used in the case of in-house and external coach issues. In the case of concerns arising about in-house coaches the Start Coaching Project Manager might possibly need to bring about a resolution through discussion with the internal coach. If this were initially unsuccessful, delicate discussions with the manager(s) of the internal coach might follow. Where other faculty members had concerns about internal coaching they were to raise these, through the programme manager, with the Start Coaching Project Manager. In practice, of course, the Start Coaching Project Manager might then need to investigate the situation in the country concerned drawing on information obtained from the participant(s), the coach(es), the in-country faculty and – directly or indirectly – the manager(s) of the internal coach(es).

Where the concern was about the coaching provided by an external coach, the complexity of the investigation and resolution could be compounded by the existence of a contractual arrangement with the CHS Alliance involving delivery to a third party.

With goodwill on all sides these processes could be used and issues resolved but the resolution chains were undoubtedly long, daunting and complex. Overall, the number of lead partners, subcontractors, countries involved, the types and tiers of programmes – with their differing curricula and requirements for coaching – and the dispersal of responsibility throughout the management structure created a stakeholder engagement, governance and management set of arrangements of considerable complexity that was difficult to sustain over a three year TDP.

The “Aid Works Talent Development Project Mid-Term Review”, November 2016, report⁶, page 28, indicated that (then) current and former participants on the Humanitarian Trainee Scheme most frequently identified coaching as the least valuable element of their programme. Surveyed current and former participants on the Context programme identified the workshops and assignments as the most valuable, followed by coaching. Coaching, however, also led in the elements identified as least valuable, followed by distance learning and the humanitarian competencies.

11.1 Recommendations for enhancement

Where all the elements of a TDP are managed by one organisation many of the relatively complex challenges outlined above are unlikely to apply. The following table summarises related recommendations, the underpinning rationale and anticipated enhancements:

Recommendations	Rationale	Anticipated Enhancements
Agree early on an appropriate, simple and easily understood management, governance and quality assurance structure. Keep it as simple and coherent as possible.	To ensure that there is early consultation and agreement on the goals, processes, resources and quality assurance arrangements, that stakeholders effectively own the programme and that the governance arrangements are not too complicated	Quality assurance is built into the agreed design and management processes. There is appropriately timely stakeholder buy in. Participant-level issues are identified and resolved quickly and easily, without multiple levels of escalation.
A Steering Group establishes the aims of the programme, ensuring that these are in line with organisational goals.⁷ This Group will usually define its purpose and agree on the measurement needed to quality assure the coaching processes	Solely meeting individual development needs in isolation from addressing organisational development requirements is not sustainable. Coaching quality assurance sits within the context of other top-level decisions.	The programme supports the strategic goals of the organisation and the quality of the coaching is sufficient to contribute effectively to the achievement of individual and strategic goals.
The Group tackles any problems that may arise including complaints from	Membership of this Group will, typically comprise: the Director of Coaching, two or three internal stakeholders, a number	There is a single Steering Group to which the Director of Coaching reports.

⁶ Using primary survey data generated through use of a) an English language questionnaire disseminated to 476 then current and former participants of all four Talent Development Programme courses in every country except the DRC. Of the 476 invited to respond 183 participants responded; and, b) a French language participant questionnaire disseminated to 49 then current and former participants of the Context Core Skills and Management and Leadership courses in the DRC: 24 respondents.

⁷ See Section 5.

coaches, programme participants or line managers	of programme participants and coaches – both internal and external, as used in the programme.	
Appoint a Director of Coaching to manage this aspect of any programme with more than 20/25 participants per cohort	The recruitment of coaches, selection, matching, management and quality assurance together with individual participant assessment and development responsibilities require such an appointment. (He or she will have a peer responsible for directing programmed learning).	A thoroughly competent set of design, management and quality assurance processes benefiting individuals, coaches and the organisation
Be realistic about the amount of time needed to achieve a profitable working alliance between coach and participant	If the first and possibly even some of the second session is to be devoted to getting to know each other and forming agreements, it is necessary to be realistic about how much time the working alliance will take to deliver results	Better quality processes and outcomes for coach, participant and organisation

Quality assurance requires that there is a feedback loop of information about the impact of the coaching programme, using the coaches and programme participants as well as other organisational stakeholders as suppliers of the data. Here are examples of common practice in-programme quality assurance methods that will inform the Group’s decisions and add value, without creating additional burdens for coach or participant:

- Participants should be expected to complete an individual development plan, and to do so with the assistance of their coach, using the feedback obtained through a multi-source feedback process. Usually, the final draft plan will be agreed at or immediately after the second coaching meeting. The participant’s manager - who would be able to confirm the plan’s appropriateness - would then sign off the plan. The fact that such plans are being developed with coach assistance is an indicator of coaching adding value. Once plans are collected they can be assessed to determine frequently occurring development themes. This non-attributable data can then be used to ensure that the development curriculum supports the most commonly needed development.
- Both internal and external coaching are expensive resources so it is vital that participants and coaches are keeping to their appointments and engaging fully with the coaching programme. Coaches and participants can maintain a record of sessions arranged and taking place using, for example, a simple learning management system or other shared record.
- Participants and coaches can also record both agreed and completed ‘homework’ (such as tasks that are designed to try out a new behaviour) using the same system.

12 Conclusion

Coaching has been defined as: ‘a Socratic-based future-focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (coachee/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, active listening, summaries and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant’. In the spirit of this definition, this short report has drawn from, summarised, reflected on and asked questions of a number of evaluations of the TDP with a view to stimulating future good practice in the design and management of talent development programmes in the humanitarian sector. Recommendations have been presented that are relevant to the experience gained through the large scale, DFID-funded, Talent Development Programme. These recommendations are scalable and future focused: designed to be of practical value to leaders and managers crafting, evaluating and managing various forms of talent development programmes in the sector.

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13 Appendix 1: Findings Of Participant Surveys, Interview Responses And Feedback From Project Managers

Analysis of participant surveys, interview responses and feedback from project managers, produced six key findings, as follows:

1. The coaching process in general was perceived as having been carried out as intended. Set-up, coach matching and clear communication for the conducting of coaching sessions is important. The extent of previous humanitarian experience of coaches, the operational context in which participants work, and the commitment of both coach and coachee were found to be key determinants of a successful outcome.
2. For the majority who were unable to meet face-to-face, coaches and participants engaged in virtual sessions. Creative use of alternative media ensured that sessions could still be held when experiencing poor internet connectivity.
3. Appropriate selection of participants to be coached is important in order to maximise the learning outcomes of coaching as a learning modality.
4. Coaching helped most participants to apply knowledge and skills gained during the TDP and helped develop their humanitarian competencies. A skilled coach supports the participant in applying both technical and non-technical skills to real-life and current workplace situations.
5. Many participants were able to identify improvement in their workplace performance. Clearly defining their goals for the coaching experience encourages participants to focus on workplace outcomes with specific reference to improvement in humanitarian response practice.
6. Coaching has the potential to continue to be available to the sector, globally or regionally, following the end of the project. The experience and expertise of many humanitarian sector staff provides an opportunity to develop in-house coaching as an effective learning tool, irrespective of participants or coach ethnography or gender.

Source: Start, A. (2017). Start Network Talent Development Coaching: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Review.

14 Appendix 2: Speed Matching Event Outline

Speed matching is especially suitable for use where all programme participants and all coaches can physically gather in one location. Variations to the model, where this is considered impossible, could make use of video conferencing and achieve the same goals.

- Coaches are seated at their own tables.
- Each coach is then given three minutes to stand up and say something (to everyone in the room) about their experience, coaching approach, philosophy or anything else they think would be of interest.
- Once all coaches have had their 'say' a whistle is blown to signal 'start'. Everyone around each table then has an opportunity to ask the coach questions and listen to other peoples' questions (and the coach's answers).
- After a set period of time (say, 15 minutes), the whistle is blown as a signal for everyone to change tables. The programme participants have complete freedom to go to whichever table they want.
- The event continues for a pre-planned number of 15 minute time slots or until fatigue becomes obvious.

At this point, all the programme participants complete a voting form containing every coach's name. They mark on this a '1' for their first choice, '2' for second and '3' for third and hand it in. The programme organisers can decide in advance how to use the scoring system. The following table offers some possible approaches.

Policy	Advantages	Disadvantages
Give all participants their No 1 choice	All participants are satisfied with their choice	Coach-participant imbalance. Popular coaches get 'flooded' with coachees, others get few or none
Fill No 1 choices up to a maximum number of participants per coach; then allocate No 2 choices up to another maximum, etc.	Each coach receives an equal number of participants.	Not all participants satisfied with being allocated their Number 2 (or even Number 3) choice

Adapted from: D.E. Gray (2010)

15 Appendix 3: Feedback And The Role Of The Coach

It is recommended that, in programmes such as the Talent Development Programme, a more secure foundation for the initial sessions between the participant and their coach be laid by employing a reliable form of multi-source feedback⁸ related to the Core Humanities Competencies Framework (CHCF)⁹. The added value of multi-source feedback compared with the use of a self-assessment tool or supervisory assessments alone have been widely demonstrated in numerous field studies. Research, for example, by Clive Fletcher and Caroline Baldry (2000) examining individual differences and self-awareness found that managers showed considerable variation in their levels of self-awareness when this was compared to assessment by others. See also: Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Mount et al., 1998)

The influential Center for Creative Leadership has always held that multi-source feedback should be owned only by the feedback recipient and should only be used to guide development (Bracken et al., 1997; Tornow et al., 1998). This view is gaining wide acceptance and this author absolutely agrees that multi-source feedback should always be first and foremost a developmental tool. That said, the use of multi-source “development only” processes typically produce feedback that can be used in decision-making (e.g., as part of a broader talent management effort, in talent review or succession planning discussions, or to determine developmental experiences, including training; Bracken & Church, 2013). However, it is most important to be clear about the objectives that are being addressed through the use of multi-source feedback, from the outset, and never to change uses after a project has been launched, with all of the attendant confidentiality and anonymity assurances that are typically provided.

It is, thus, strongly recommended that design and implementation decisions in multi-source feedback should be derived from a “purpose statement” agreed on by all critical stakeholders (including the most senior leader sponsoring the effort). Many experienced, external coaches will expect to see this before they assist programme participants. Producing the draft “purpose statement” is a task ideally suited to the Director of Coaching and the Steering Group. See: Section 19.

Multi-source feedback processes produce the most valuable results where the programme participant receives assistance with interpretation, development planning, resources, and follow-up accountability processes. Coaches are well placed to provide this assistance. The report: “Executive Coaching: Does leader behavior change with feedback and coaching?” (Smerek, R. E., et al (2009) clearly shows how structured coaching sessions with multi-source feedback are winning combinations when the aim is to change managerial behaviours toward more effective interactions, especially as perceived by the boss and direct reports.

Programme managers should expect that individual development plans; informed by well designed multi-source feedback and the subject of discussion with a coach will be of better quality than other plans. Research by Smither, London et al (2003) showed that managers who worked with a coach were more likely than other managers to set specific (rather than vague) goals and to solicit ideas for improvement from their supervisors.

⁸ Multi-source feedback is a process for collecting, quantifying, and reporting coworker observations about an individual (i.e., a ratee) that facilitates/enables three specific data-driven/based outcomes: (a) the collection of rater perceptions of the degree to which specific behaviors are exhibited; (b) the analysis of meaningful comparisons of rater perceptions across multiple ratees, between specific groups of raters for an individual ratee, and for ratee changes over time; and (c) the creation of sustainable individual, group, and/or organizational changes in behaviors valued by the organisation.

⁹ If the CHCF is not thought to be a comprehensively appropriate source for the development of assessment items, programme developers will be able to select alternative frameworks or combine relevant parts of the CHCF with other behavioural indicators.

16 Appendix 4: Personal Data Management And Security

The recommendations in this Appendix have been framed with reference to good practice concerning personal data management established by the European Union (EU). It is not assumed that personal data concerning coaches or programme participants will necessarily be held in the European Union. However, since the EU has been a global front-runner in data management and security for several decades and since there may be European Union citizens whose data is contained within a programmes supporting systems it makes sense to apply good practice and assure compliance with globally accepted standards.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) is a regulation by which the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission intend to strengthen and unify data protection for all individuals within the European Union. *It extends the scope of the EU data protection law to all foreign companies (and other organisations) processing data of EU residents.* It provides for a harmonisation of the data protection regulations throughout the EU, thereby making it easier for non-European companies to comply with these regulations; however, this comes at the cost of a strict data protection compliance regime with severe penalties of up to 4% of worldwide turnover. Since October 2015, this EU law is considered to represent best practice in respect to the management of personal data internationally. Where EU-US personal data movement is envisaged the relevant framework is now the EU-US Privacy Shield.

The EU-US Privacy Shield is a framework for transatlantic exchanges of personal data for commercial purposes between the European Union and the United States. One of its purposes is to enable US companies to more easily receive personal data from EU entities under EU privacy laws meant to protect European Union citizens. The EU-US Privacy Shield is a replacement for the International Safe Harbor Privacy Principles, which were declared invalid by the European Court of Justice in October 2015.

Additionally, it is recommended that data be stored securely, under conditions of physical and cyber security that minimise the potential for a natural disaster or a malevolent human intervention to remove, destroy, damage, corrupt or otherwise render unusable the personal data associated with the management of a development programme.

17 Resources/Further Reading

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