

Humanitarian HR Africa 2015



Nairobi, Kenya

8 June 2015

Conference Report

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Conference Overview

The 2015 Humanitarian HR conference took place at the Silver Springs Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya on 8 June. There were 52 participants from 36 organisations representing 14 countries. The theme was Strategic HR and the conference provided a unique space for HR professionals and line managers to reflect, learn from what others are doing, gain fresh insights and generate practical solutions to current HR and people management issues.

List of conference speakers

Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG)

- George Ngere

ES Coaching

- Susana Fernández Casla, Psychologist, Business Senior Coach and International Speaker

HIJRA

- Grace Lintari, Human Resource Manager

Living Goods

- Rebecca Peel, Director of Talent

Oxfam

- Anita Kattakuzhy, Regional Humanitarian Campaigns and Policy Advisor

People In Aid

- Maxine Clayton, East Africa Representative
- Emmanuelle Lacroix, HR Services Manager
- Jonathan Potter, Executive Director

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Welcome

Maxine Clayton, People In Aid's East Africa representative, welcomed participants to HHR Africa 2015 – the eighth HHR Africa event. George Ngere, from the Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG) joined Maxine in welcoming participants. Maxine outlined the agenda and gave participants a chance to get to know each other and share their hopes for the conference.

Opening Address

Strategic HR: Approaches in the sector – Jonathan Potter, People In Aid Executive Director

In his opening presentation, People In Aid's Executive Director, Jonathan Potter, gave a brief overview of previous HHRs and strategic themes covered:

- Importance of national staff
- Leadership and talent
- Duty of care
- Change
- Professionalisation
- Return on Investment (RoI) and metrics

Jonathan discussed the [CHS Alliance](#) – the new organisation formed following the merger between HAP and People In Aid. The work of the CHS Alliance is centred on the [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability \(CHS\)](#), but people management is still a key aspect of the organisation's work. Humanitarian HR events will still take place and the organisation will still have a representative based in East Africa.

He then went on to discuss the future for INGOs, and what this means for strategic HR.

Future for INGOs	Strategic Future of HR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations will become more dispersed and virtual • Workforce – will come from the community • Focus on knowledge and relationships, less on operational employees and money • Mission not brand • Catalyst not service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of social media • Focus on agility • Big data • Relationships • <i>“Connecting HR activities to external stakeholder expectations”</i> and <i>“tracking and measuring the impact of HR”</i> are the two activities with the highest business impact but are the least well done • ‘Human’ rather than ‘resources’

Keynotes

Reimagining talent: designing for resilient and adaptive systems - Rebecca Peel, Director of Talent, Living Goods

Rebecca discussed how important it was for HR departments to redesign and rethink their recruitment and talent management strategies in order to deal with the changing trends and challenges that organisations face. She outlined her experience at Living Goods that faced challenges such as rapid organisational growth, challenging hiring conditions and the need for quality staff to deliver projects not just now, but in the future.

Living Goods has a recruitment process that it runs usually once a quarter. The whole team is involved in the process, and a result of the process, the organisation has found quality candidates.

Redesign sourcing and selection

- When it recruits it gets a high number of applications, and often from people who may not be suitable. To deal with this it responds to applicants asking them a few specific questions such as why they want to work for Living Goods, and what their salary expectations are.
- Those that do not respond (most of the initial applicants) to these questions are taken out of the selection process.
- Those that do respond are invited to interview – this is usually around 50 people. At the interview candidates are given some tests (e.g. financial skills).
- Based on the results, the number of candidates is again reduced – usually to approximately 20 people.
- Following this there are group simulations and games, and finally the organisation has 1-1 interviews with a smaller number of candidates – usually 5 to 8 individuals.

Archetype profiling

Living Goods refined its profiling so they have archetypes for each profile. When new staff have been with the organisation for three to six months, they are measured against selection criteria and competencies. If they match them then the organisation knows it has selected the right people, if there is a big trend in the staff not matching the profile competencies then they know that the selection process needs to be redesigned. After nine to 12 months, staff are measured against the role profile. This can lead to redefining profiles and changes in the team's hypotheses testing. The system is adaptive and resilient. For example, there are wildcard archetypes because they know there are risks in stereotyping. If someone is hired based on a wildcard archetype and is successful then this archetype could be added to the profiles.

Rebecca's discussion got participants thinking of interesting, and disruptive, ways of recruiting.

The 3 Mistakes in HR - Susana Fernández Casla, Psychologist, Business Senior Coach and International Speaker

Susana joined us by Skype and highlighted what she has found are the three mistakes in HR:

“Hidden under each competency (behaviour) lives the motor (talent). The key is to find out the talent that has not yet been reflected in a competency.”

1. Thinking competency and talent are the same

According to Susana, competency is about behaviours. It is the knowledge, skills and abilities that a person is able to demonstrate. Talent, on the other-hand, refers to a person’s potential. For example, what someone feels that they are good at, what they love doing and what others consider relevant.

2. Expecting different results by using the same tools

We need to change the way we work and the tools we use if we want to see better or different results. She talked about the difference between competency-based management approaches which look at knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours, and talent-based management approaches which aim to innovate.

2. Being blind to the context

Organisations need to understand the context and adapt strategies accordingly. For example, a competency-based approach may be suitable for one set of challenges and a talent-based approach may be suitable for others. The table below outlines dimensions to compare both approaches.

Competency based		Talent based
Stability	- Context -	Instability
Staff needs planning	- Process -	Tolerance for uncertainty
Operational	- Scope -	Strategic
Training/mentoring	- Suggested methodologies -	Coaching / counselling / design thinking / facilitation
To ensure replication or knowledge	- Goal -	To innovate
The right person in the right job/position	- Leitmotiv -	Talents in the service of a common goal

Skills Session

Strategic HR: Implications and Opportunities for HR Professionals - Emmanuelle Lacroix, HR Services Manager, People In Aid

Emmanuelle started the session discussing strategic HR and its link to the CHS. By applying the CHS, people management will not be seen as only a HR issue, but something that is central to organisations’ operations and programmes.

She then outlined some reasons for developing an HR strategy as well as issues to think about and include when developing your strategy.

Reasons to develop a HR strategy	Issues to consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling the delivery of the corporate strategy • Clarifying or establishing the role of the HR function and the resources needed to fulfil that role • Clarifying HR’s relationship with other parts of the organisation • Communicating what the HR function intends to deliver and how it intends to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation to understand the HR contribution • Getting buy-in • Alignment • Resourcing • Monitoring and evaluation • Agreement on what to include • Developing country programme strategies • Adapted and relevant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a basis for measuring the HR performance 	communication
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Impact of HR

Results Chains – Grace Lintari, Senior HR Manager, HIJRA

Grace outlined the experience of introducing a results chain tool at HIJRA Uganda to measure impact. This was developed with People In Aid and is currently being used by HIJRA to measure the impact of HR on the lives of beneficiaries.

Grace outlined some of the challenges HIJRA faced when first introducing the tool, and how these were dealt with. For example, the project started at a busy time of year when staff did not have sufficient time for the project. As well as this staff did not fully understand what was expected of them and how this project would impact their work. To deal with this HIJRA ensured there was regular communication and training with staff both in person and by phone or skype to clarify responsibilities and support needed from staff.

In terms of lessons learned, Grace mentioned the importance of having buy-in from senior management, involving staff in the process from the beginning and the inclusion of measurable key performance indicators (KPIs).

Innovative Resourcing Strategies

The afternoon saw participants break into three interactive group sessions to discuss innovative people resourcing strategies.

1. Learning from the HHR Europe Conference

Emmanuelle Lacroix led this session by looking at key learning from the Humanitarian HR Europe conference that took place in Antwerp, Belgium, 3-5 June 2015. The theme of HHR Europe was Innovative Resourcing: The talent challenge in a shifting humanitarian landscape.

Some key points from discussions:

- **Issue of innovation** - what is normal for one organisation may be innovative for another e.g. flexible working hours. It is important to think of the context your organisation works in and what is suitable there.
- **Recruitment and retention** - how to get the right talent into the business? It is important to think of talent within your organisation, as well as recruiting externally.
- **Beneficiaries** - Emmanuelle shared a case study from Retrak, an organisation working with street children, which involved street children in the process of interviewing candidates, which got participants thinking about how and/or if this kind of approach could work for their own organisations.

Emmanuelle shared some tools and videos from HHR Europe which can be found [here](#).

2. People Resourcing - Surge Capacity

This session was led by Jonathan Potter and discussions focused on areas of HR which agencies could collaborate on, particularly around surge capacity. There were some interesting examples of collaboration happening at programme level:

- One agency running a field hospital allowed other agencies' staff to be treated there rather than be evacuated;
- Training programmes were shared – for example costs were shared when a consultant was recruited;
- Participants had heard of agencies sharing employee lists and finding people on more than one payroll;
- Different organisational entities recruiting for technical gaps in the overall organisation's response capacity. Private sector partners sometimes loaning staff.

The discussion ended with some heart-felt thoughts about reference checking. It was agreed this was an important area for collaboration. Suggestions included:

- Not offering a job until references were received;
- Not accepting individuals suggested by the candidate but asking previous employers for the reference;
- Accepting that sometimes the candidate will be unfairly discriminated against in a reference;
- A professional body to guarantee references;
- Letting candidates for consortium jobs know that their names will be circulated to the consortium for reference.

3. Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF)

In this session led by Maxine Clayton participants reviewed the CHCF, which was designed in 2011 by People In Aid and the CBHA (Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies, now referred to as Start Network), as a tool for trainers and recruiters. The tool is in the process of being redesigned and feedback is being gathered on how to improve it.

After a brief overview of the framework, discussions took place on the need for increased attention on sharing the framework, especially in terms of consultation on the revisions and the final version.

- Participants from Save the Children International (SCI), World Vision and ActionAid mentioned that there is some work to be done within organisational alliances, ensuring that UK offices in the consortium are encouraged to work with their global teams on consultation, revision, buy-in and roll out of the tool. For example, Save the Children UK may have adopted the CHCF however there has been limited adoption within the wider alliance.
- SCI mentioned that they are currently working with the CHCF, developing an updated Competencies Framework (CF).
- Norwegian Church Aid mentioned that the framework was really useful and would like to have discussions back in the office on the potential uses.
- There were requests for the next revision to think about providing suggested tools, good practice or new/creative practice in the roll out.
- There were suggestions in making the CHCF lighter and easier to use, and to think through how it can be used in sudden onset emergencies. For example, thinking about the rapid recruitment in the Ebola crisis and South Sudan, a lighter competences framework was needed.

Other points raised:

- Think about applicability within development contexts;

- Work with agencies that have revised their own CF over the years since the development of the CHCF to see what they have taken out and/or included to build on this work;
- Have wide consultation within the revision which facilitates buy-in from agencies.

Advocacy Tactics and Tools

How can we use advocacy tactics and tools to 'win a seat at the table' - Anita Kattakuzhy, Regional Humanitarian Campaigns and Policy Advisor, Oxfam

Anita explained that there are multiple approaches to advocacy and you need to employ more than one if you want to be successful. She outlined the six principles of persuasion that are used in advocacy:

- 1. Authority** - People follow the lead of credible people and experts;
- 2. Reciprocity** - The idea that an obligation exists once something has been given;
- 3. Commitment** - If people commit, orally or in writing, to an idea or goal, they are more likely to honour that commitment because it has become congruent with their self-image;
- 4. Consensus** - People will look to the actions of others to determine their own;
- 5. Liking** - based on the idea that if you like and trust someone, you will trust his or her opinion and make a decision based on that;
- 6. Scarcity** - Based on the idea that if you have something that is scarce there is more demand for it. This principle is more useful for the corporate sector.

Anita then shared a useful tool to help plan advocacy work. She advised starting with the problem, identifying the power dynamics - who has power to influence change, what are key messages they need to know, how will you get messages to them and what is the best time to influence them.

Conference Evaluation, Announcements and Close

The day ended with reflections on what participants had learned with a reminder that People In Aid's work, including HHRs, will continue with the launch of the CHS Alliance.

Resources

- [The 3 Mistakes in HR](#) - Susana Fernández Casla, Psychologist, Business Senior Coach and International Speaker
- [Advocacy Approaches for HR Personnel](#) - Anita Kattakuzhy, Regional Humanitarian Campaigns and Policy Adviser, Oxfam
- [Developing an HR Strategy](#) - Em Lacroix, HR Services Manager, People In Aid
- [The Result Chain Experience](#) - Grace Lintari, HR Manager, HIJRA
- [Reimagining Talent](#) - Rebecca Peel, Director of Talent, Living Goods
- [Blog – Highlights from HHR Africa 2015](#)

Additional Resources

- [Developing a Human Resources Strategy](#)
- [Overview and resources from HHR Europe 2015](#)
- [Video interviews from HHR Europe 2015](#)

Conference presentations, blog posts, photos and videos can be found at the following link: <http://www.peopleinaid.org/hhrafrica2015>

You can also visit our Facebook and YouTube channels to see additional videos and photos:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Youtube](#)

People In Aid update

Since HHR Africa 2015 People In Aid has merged with HAP International to form the CHS Alliance. We are currently transitioning our brand and activities and have developed a new website. The People In Aid website will remain live with current resources until end of 2015, after which all resources will be found on our new website. For more information on the CHS Alliance visit www.chsalliance.org.

