

Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework case study **CARE International** **Competency based learning programme**

Background

[CARE International](#) (CARE) is a global confederation of 12 national member organisations working together to end poverty. It operates each year in more than 65 countries, reaching more than 50 million people. CARE helps tackle underlying causes of poverty so that people can become self-sufficient. While CARE is a large international organisation with more than 14,500 employees worldwide, it has a strong local presence: more than 90% of staff are nationals of the countries where programmes are run.

The [core humanitarian competencies framework](#) (CHCF) was first developed in 2011, by representatives from a cross-section of humanitarian organisations under the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (now the [Start Network](#)) led by ActionAid and facilitated by People In Aid (now the [CHS Alliance](#)). The competencies framework recommends a set of core competencies that organisations could adopt to systematically build the skills of their employees and thereby improve their efforts to assist people adversely affected by crisis throughout the world.

Rationale

CARE uses the core humanitarian competencies framework and [guide](#) to build the capacity of its humanitarian staff through a competency based learning programme. The framework was a key reference point when designing CARE's Humanitarian and Emergencies Operations Training Programme in 2011.

Process

Prior to attending the training course, all attendees must carry out a self-assessment against the core competencies. The framework serves as a checklist and increases participants' self-awareness on expected behaviours. Participants take ownership of their own development. Several modules in the training develop these specific competencies and allow the attendees to refer back to their progress against specific relevant competencies. They also received feedback from their managers based on the framework.

The framework and guide are also used as a point of reference when screening and hiring CARE's roster members and emergency response staff in the field. Recruitment is often based on a competency approach and the humanitarian-specific points listed in the guide are a useful reminder.

Outcomes

During an emergency response, the tendency can be to focus on recruiting for technical competencies and operational skills; but an emphasis on workstyle, values and principles can be even more crucial for a successful selection process. The competencies framework has helped refocus on key aspects of this 'soft skills' side when CARE looks at humanitarian professionals.

Despite staff turnover in CARE, reference to the framework and guide has continued since it was first introduced. To date, the framework and guide is a useful starting point that is contributing - amongst other things - to the improved quality of staff deployed and more effective response.

Additional information

As part of continuing efforts to strengthen the competencies of employees, the **CHS Alliance is undertaking a review of the competencies framework as part of the [Start Network Talent Development project](#)**. The review will engage as wide a cross-section of organisations and individuals as practically possible to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in implementing the framework. The review process has involved an online survey as well as focus group discussions in Asia, Australia, Africa, and the United Kingdom with participation from aid and development organisations as well as affected communities. The conclusions from the review process will be shared later in 2016.