

Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework case study

Lutheran World Relief

Competencies framework integrated in rapid response team's policy and guidelines

Background

[Lutheran World Relief](#) (LWR) helps communities cope with and recover from emergencies in ways that promote lasting improvements in people's living conditions. The organisation was founded in 1945 and in 2015 reached over four million people in 36 countries.

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

Guided by LWR's recently revised emergency operations objective strategy and the agency's 2020 vision plan for growth, LWR's emergency operations unit has put forth an ambitious and rigorous emergency capacity building programme in 2015. As part of this initiative, LWR's next step is to establish a surge capacity team that will operate under the name of LWR rapid response team (RRT). LWR is currently finalising the policy and guidelines to facilitate effective implementation of the RRT.

The RRT guidelines are intended to give LWR staff an orientation to the surge capacity concept and to help build common understanding around the purpose, role, and operationalising procedures of the RRT within LWR's existing structure.

Process

One of the challenges faced by LWR's emergency operations unit is identifying a user-friendly framework which offers guidance in streamlining the core behaviours needed for the RRT members. LWR decided to use the core humanitarian competencies framework because the organisation believes all staff should have appropriate behaviours during a response which uphold the rights of people and promote dignity of people in all the organisation's actions.

Since they started using the core humanitarian competencies framework, LWR staff have found it useful and relevant. For LWR, there is no need to develop core competencies from scratch when a set of competencies is already readily available. With senior management's consent, the competencies framework now complements the RRT guidelines.

Outcomes

The inclusion of the competencies framework in the RRT guidelines is quite new but LWR has a strong belief that it will result in positive learning.

Next steps

One of the concerns raised by LWR is the unclear link between the core humanitarian competencies framework and the [Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\)](#) and Sphere standards. Therefore, efforts are underway to contextualise this framework to suit LWR's needs while linking it to the CHS and Sphere standards.

Additional information

As part of continuing efforts to strengthen 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.