

## Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework case study

### Oxfam GB

#### A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to support implementation of the CHCF

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## Background

[Oxfam GB](#) is a development, relief, and campaigning organisation that works with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering around the world. The [Context Humanitarian Staff Development Project](#), led by Oxfam GB, aims to develop core humanitarian expertise, as well as leadership and management skills for existing personnel at the national level.

The Context project comprises two learning programmes:

1. Core Skills Development Programme which is a six-month, inter-agency programme providing a stream of professional development to national agency staff in their current roles, focusing on an introduction to the key concepts and skills of humanitarian programming.
2. Management and Leadership Skills Development Programme which is a nine-month, inter-agency programme providing continuous professional development training for national agency middle/senior management staff, in their current roles, focusing on key aspects of management and leadership in emergency situations.

For both programmes, learning methods include coaching, face-to-face workshops, learning on the job, self-directed learning, group work and practical course work.

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. The CHCF was actively used during the Context programme.

## Rationale

Oxfam GB has developed a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for the Context programme in order to ensure effective implementation against the competencies framework.

“The behaviours listed in the CHCF are often not easily measurable, and the M&E framework was developed in 2015 to address the challenges of concretely measuring behaviour changes in individuals,” says Gael Rennesson, from Oxfam’s Global Humanitarian Team.

Dr Vivien Margaret Walden was instrumental in developing the M&E framework. She says: “Asking people at the end of the training doesn’t tell you much except what the participants say they have learned. How they used that knowledge is important. Documenting learning is critical – since learners will find it quite hard to remember how they put what they learned into practice especially if it’s a soft skill.”

## Process

The M&E framework contains six tools that help in measuring capacity building after a learning and development programme in a non-conventional way. These tools may be used at the different stages of the programme e.g. pre, during, or post workshops. The tools include a participant's questionnaire that is based on the CHCF domains but with questions that do not follow the order of the domains. The questions have been reworded so participants will not always know to which domain they belong. The second tool is a facilitator's questionnaire used to rate the participants which also will serve as a baseline. The third tool, a peer review tool, is a new version of the original questionnaire, developed to incorporate peer challenges at the end of the first workshop event.

After the first workshop, each participant will be asked to fill in tool four which is an action plan describing what they are planning to do following on from the workshop including the means and resources needed.

During the first workshop, participants will also be introduced to the other learning tools meant to document their learning, including a learning diary and story telling with a "buddy". An evaluation of the whole project could draw on these (anonymous) diaries and stories after the owners have given permission.

## Factors for success

Effective implementation of the M&E framework would require the users to be trained on the M&E tools. Users would also need to plan and allocate time to ensure these tools are adopted and used throughout the programme.

Charles Rowley from the Oxfam GB Global Humanitarian Team concluded: "From a capacity development perspective we are not very accustomed to effectively using M&E tools. On most occasions we limit ourselves to using pre-and post-questionnaires. Unfortunately there is often only limited funds and time available for effective and comprehensive assessment of capacity development interventions."

## Next steps

Oxfam GB is currently in the process of promoting and implementing the M&E framework and thereby supporting further mainstreaming of the use of CHCF.

## 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.