

Aid Works

Talent Development Project Mid-Term Review

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Prepared for: Save the Children, Lead Agency Talent Development Project

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Executive Summary

In 2013, the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) partnered with the Start Network to implement 13 of 14 projects. One of these is the Talent Development Project (TDP). The TDP is funded with £5,985,087 and brings together four pre-existing learning and development (L&D) courses with a capacity-building coaching component and a review of the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF). The aim of the TDP is to build the local capacity of 1,165 national aid workers in three regions that are frequently affected by natural disasters and emergencies.

The objective of the Mid-Term Review is to provide an assessment of the status of the TDP's implementation, which could provide insight before a final evaluation and inform planning for any future iterations of the TDP. Eight assessment questions were agreed on, covering five components:

- **Relevance/design:**
 - How appropriate are the courses in meeting the needs of the participants and what are the gaps?
 - In what ways have the courses evolved or been adapted during implementation, in response to feedback?
- **Effectiveness:**
 - What elements of the TDP have been most effective in affecting competencies and behaviours/practices of participants?
 - To what extent have participants actively applied their learning in their daily work? Has this learning affected their professional development and/or career path?
- **Efficiency/equity:**
 - What good practices exist in improving communication and outreach?
 - What evidence is available that courses are accessible and inclusive?
- **Collaboration:**
 - What evidence exists of benefits or detriments caused by collaborating in delivering the TDP?
- **Context:**
 - To what degree has contextualisation contributed to the success of the TDP?

The individual courses within the TDP started quickly, and there is evidence that individuals are learning and development needs are being met. Survey respondents related the positive impact the courses have had on their behaviours and practices. However, the consortium set-up and structure are complex and took time to establish. The consortium lacks key structural components and resources that would enable success. In-country collaboration is present but could be improved, as could cross-course learning.

While the objectives are not fully aligned within the consortium, when mid-term results are compared against the current logframe the project is likely to meet the outcomes and fulfil 80–100% of the outputs by end of the project. However, some work remains before the final evaluation to ensure that the consortium has articulated and agreed on its objectives, applied common tools for monitoring self-assessment competency data, and is capturing learning. The coaching element requires further review, of its utility as an effective learning and development course for coaches as well as a service provider to the other courses was called into question.

The TDP courses are reaching the full breadth of employment levels within the humanitarian sector. Participants, and their employing organisations, are able to articulate changes in skills, knowledge and behaviour based on the learning provided in the courses. Many of these link directly to the Core Humanitarian Competencies. The consortium requires further support as it is not adequately resourced to sustain the implementation. This is one of the main explanations for the lack of TDP-wide, standardised monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools, glossary, definitions, and reporting mechanisms, which would draw the different components of the TDP together and link to the logframe. This is because measuring four different L&D courses with different learning methodologies and target participants, a coaching element, and a framework review measuring these are incompatible in a single framework.

The main way that course effectiveness is currently measured is through self-assessment competency tools. While these paper-based tools enable some cross-TDP assessment, the courses share three competencies, and the tools have not yet collected data that would allow comparisons to be made.

This review conducted a survey that showed very successful indications of effective learning. Most participants indicated that the courses are delivered in a way that allows them to learn, and soft skills formed the largest learning cluster identified. Participants' recognition of the skills and knowledge they are gaining, daily work practices and feedback from line managers are evidence of effective contributions to the sector.

Project outreach is currently satisfactory and the incorporation of feedback from participants is evident throughout the TDP. Some people cited accessibility problems (e.g. poor internet connectivity, workload, course timings, traffic, etc.). Gender diversity is a goal of all the courses, but is not possible to measure as there is no diversity definition or goal. Despite this, participant survey results showed that respondents felt their courses were diverse, with both men and women actively engaging. Contextualisation has also not been defined and different stakeholders are applying different definitions. When a specific definition is applied with regards to relevance to the country, then participants feel the course has been contextualised because they see it as relevant to their country and can cite reasons why. Discussion about who the target audience is for these courses is ongoing, and this is linked to the debate over whether the courses should be delivered in English or a local language.

The project could benefit from strengthening the consortium structure and monitoring of TDP-wide activity through both agreed logframe and concept note objectives. This includes immediate recommendations to: 1) to strengthen consortium operations – specifically the coaching component; 2) use courses for cross-TDP promotion; 3) clarify key definitions; 4) share good practices identified in this report; and 5) standardise and complete competency data.

Strategic recommendations include: 1) revisiting the consortium structure; 2) revising the M&E construction; 3) strengthening feedback mechanisms; 4) conducting short, complementary studies related to the pedagogical course elements, economies of scale in delivery and value for money; and 5) revisiting the target audiences and language.

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Acronyms

CHC	Core Humanitarian Competencies
CHCF	Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CMT	Consortium Management Team
DEPP	Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
HTS	Humanitarian Trainee Scheme
L&D	Learning and Development
LfH	Leadership for Humanitarians
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (Start)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
Oxfam GB	Oxfam Great Britain
PM	Project Manager
TDP	Talent Development Project
TOC	Theory of Change

1. Background

1.1. Overview

Enabling the delivery of an effective and efficient humanitarian response through national capacity and preparedness systems in ten disaster-prone countries is one of the aims of the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP). The DEPP is a partnership that was set up by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Start Network, and Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network. The programme aimed to strengthen the link between the capacity of national responders and outcomes for disaster-affected people by prioritising learning and development (L&D) programmes for the national responders.¹

The TDP is one of 13 projects that the Start Network manages, funded by DFID's DEPP with £5,985,087 for a period of three years (November 2014–October 2017). The TDP aims to invest in the abilities of 1,165 humanitarian aid workers in Kenya, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Jordan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as well as coaches globally. The project incorporates four pre-existing L&D courses:²

1. **The Humanitarian Trainee Scheme (HTS):** an entry-level course, developed and run by Save the Children UK, through sub-grants to Save the Children International in East Africa (covering Kenya and Ethiopia), Bangladesh and Jordan;
2. **The Context Programme (Context):** two mid-level courses developed by Oxfam GB and sub-contracted to Bioforce Institute in DRC, MzN International in Bangladesh, and RedR UK Kenya and Jordan; and
3. **Leadership for Humanitarians (LfH) Training:** a senior-level course led by Relief International and implemented with Leadership for Humanitarians in Bangladesh, Jordan, and Kenya.

Additionally, the CHS Alliance provides two components that underpin the work of the four courses through: a) a **coaching network**; and b) a **review of the Core Competency Framework (CCHF)**.³

Each course uses different terminology to refer to key partners and stakeholders. For ease of reference, throughout this review operational partners will refer to the international non-governmental organisations contracted to deliver the TDP (i.e. Save the Children, Oxfam GB, Relief International, and CHS Alliance). The term 'implementing partners' will refer to any in-country staff who deliver the courses. Local partners will refer to organisations who work with the TDP partners to support course delivery.

¹ DEPP Talent Development Concept Note, 27 June 2014.

² For ease of reference, the term 'project' refers to the entire TDP including all its course components. Each component is referred to by its name, or as a 'course' or 'component'. The various adult learning methods delivered on each course are referred to as 'elements'.

1.2. The Humanitarian Trainee Scheme

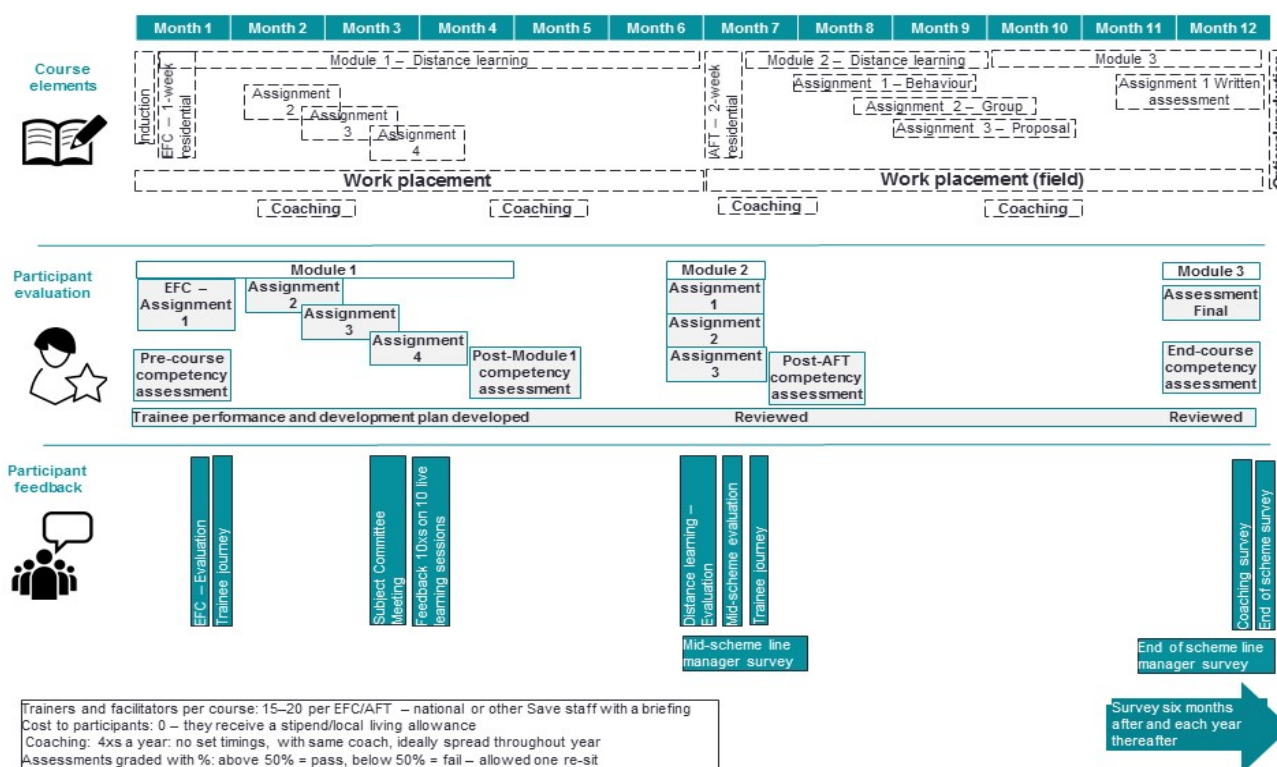
Save the Children UK sub-grants to Save the Children International in East Africa (for Kenya and Ethiopia), Bangladesh and Jordan to conduct an entry-level HTS ‘apprenticeship scheme’. This is an intensive, 12-month scheme designed for people who are new to the humanitarian sector and seeking a long-term career.

Each course group is called a ‘cohort’ and all seven cohorts planned have started; one has already finished. The TDP Concept Note indicated that 175 trainees were to have completed the course by October 2017. The logframe set the number at 90 per cent of that, or 157 trainees to have completed the course by October 2017. Some 15 trainees have completed the course in Kenya with 152 currently enrolled. HTS estimates that the attrition rate will be 17–20 per cent and that 150 trainees will complete the course by October 2017, equivalent to 95 per cent of the logframe target.⁴

The course elements, participant evaluation and feedback points of the HTS are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Humanitarian Trainee Scheme description⁵

Humanitarian Trainee Scheme – Entry level, one year, administered by SCI



⁴ Email, Save the Children HTS PM, 10 November 2016.

⁵ Talent Development Project (TDP) Request for Proposal Mid-Term Review; Info Pack for Kenya Humanitarian Trainee Scheme; Interviews; Validation Meeting, 9 November 2015; Email, Save the Children HTS PM, 10 November 2016.

1.3. The Context course

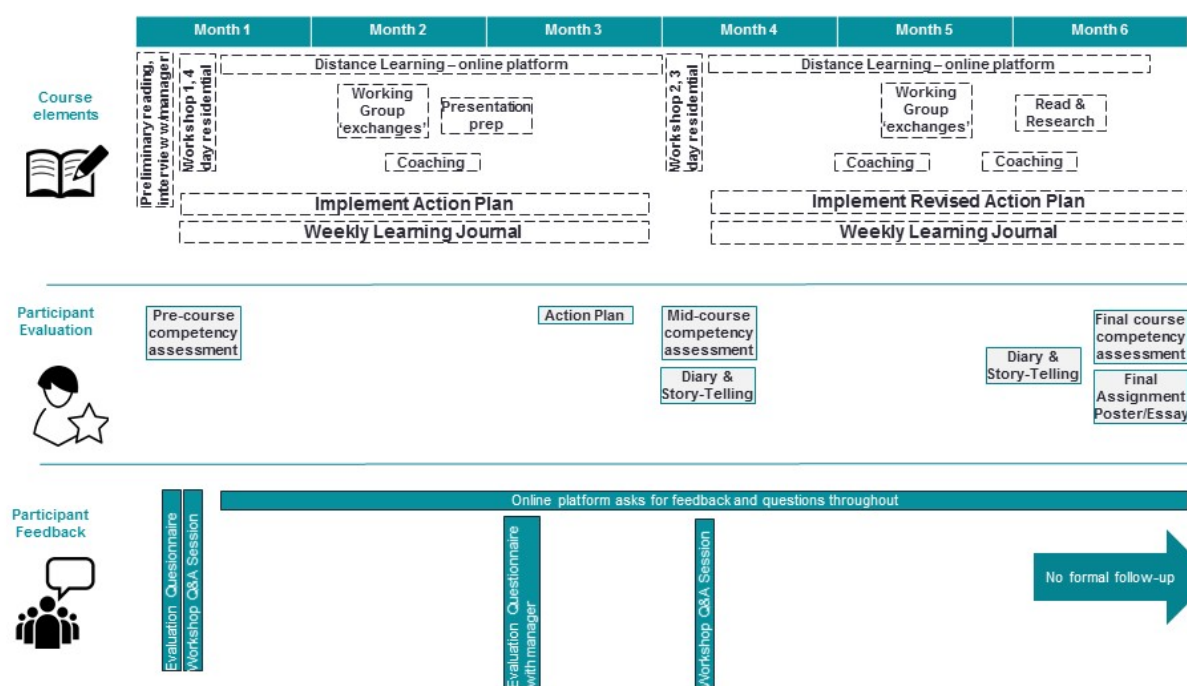
Oxfam GB sub-contracts Context implementation to Bioforce in DRC, MzN in Bangladesh, and RedR in Kenya, Ethiopia, Jordan and Lebanon. Although designed by Oxfam GB, Context materials are open source and have been updated to the most recent Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS).⁶ Two courses are delivered through Context – Core Skills, and Management and Leadership Skills – but both are designed for mid-level, employed sector staff and require inputs from participants' line managers.

To date, 26 iterations of the two courses have been initiated, 36 cohorts will run until the end of the project. The course goal was for 640 participants to have completed the course by October 2017 and it is expected that all the participants will complete the course.

The course elements, participant evaluation and feedback points for Context Core Skills and Context Management and Leadership are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Context, Core Skills course description⁷

Context – Core Skills – Mid-level, 6 months, administered by Bioforce, MzN, RedR



Trainers / Facilitators per course: 2-3 – usually local partner staff/trainers
 Cost for participants: Jordan INGOs 330 JD pp & Lebanon \$480 USD pp. Scholarships for INGOs but 100 JD and \$150 USD respectively if they drop out
 Coaching: Ideally, 3 – 1 in the first 3 months and 2 in the second
 Assessments: Reviewed, not graded – complete/incomplete recorded.

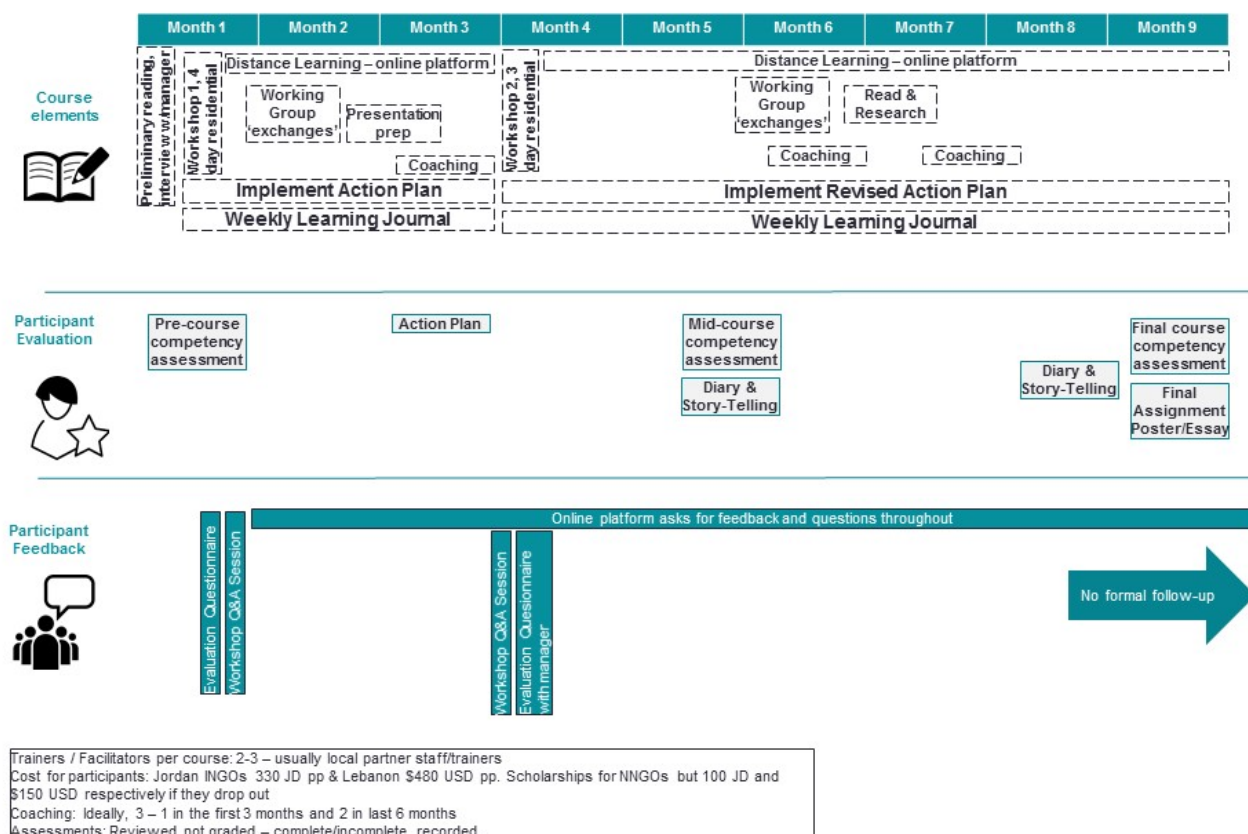
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⁶ CHS is not open source as the other Context materials are. The copyrighted CHS materials are held by the CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project.

⁷ TDP Request for Proposal Mid-Term Review; www.contextproject.org/; CB-PM review.

Figure 3: Context, Management and Leadership course description⁸

Context – Management & Leadership – Mid-level, 9 months, adm by Bioforce, MzN, RedR



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1.4. Leadership for Humanitarians training

Relief International partners 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*.⁹ To date, seven iterations of the LfH course have been initiated and five remain to be conducted. The Concept Note indicated that 240 leaders were to have completed the course by October 2017. The original logframe set the target at 240 graduates, but this was revised to 90 per cent, or 216 participants, to have successfully completed the course by September 2017. Some 80 participants have successfully completed the course and it is expected that 124 more will enrol in courses yet to be conducted. Based on estimated enrolment and an attrition rate of 22 per cent, it is expected that 177 leaders will successfully complete the course by project end, equivalent to 81 per cent of the current logframe target.¹⁰

The course elements, participant evaluation and feedback points of LfH are shown in Figure 4.

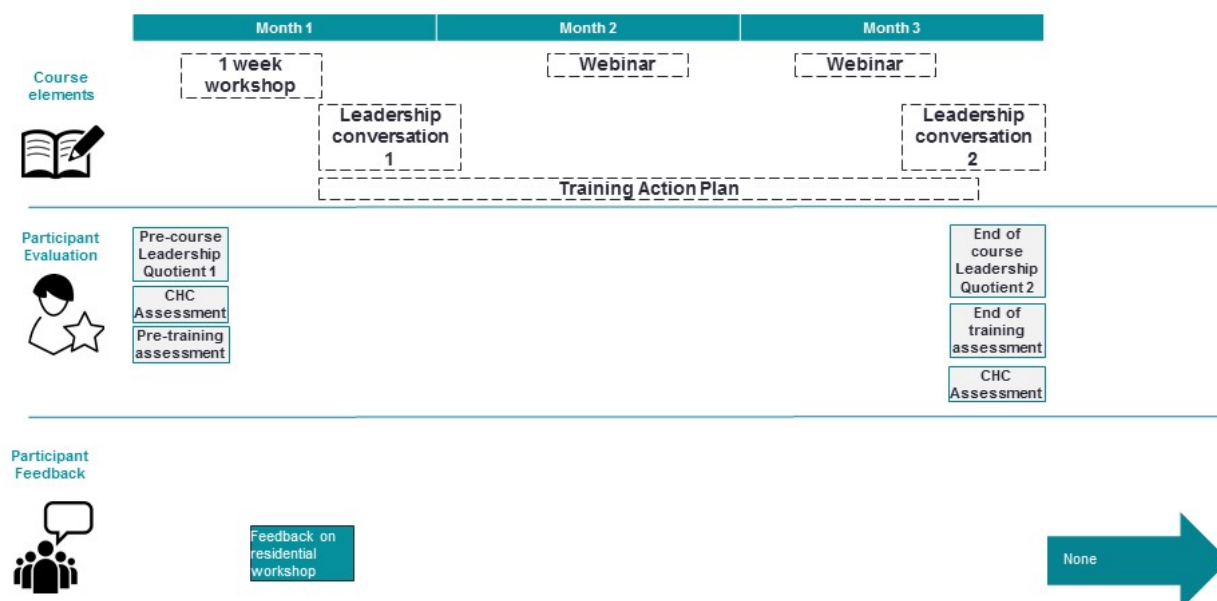
⁸ TDP Request for Proposal Mid-Term Review; www.contextproject.org/.

⁹ Stephen R. Covey (1989), *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

¹⁰ Email, Relief International PM, 10 November 2016.

Figure 4: Leadership for Humanitarians course description¹¹

LfH – Leadership for Humanitarians – Senior level, 3 months, administered by LfH



Trainers / Facilitators per course: 2 – normally international
 Cost for participants: None – but residential workshop
 Coaching: 1 session (just started)
 Assessment: Complete/incomplete – not graded

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1.5. Coaching and Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework Review

The CHS Alliance delivers two components of the TDP: 1) the CHCF Framework Review; and 2) coaching to the HTS and Context, Core Skills courses. This makes the CHS Alliance a service provider as well as an L&D course. The aim of the coaching network was to build a global resource of coaches, primarily for use within the TDP but later for the humanitarian community.¹²

There are two cohorts of coaches: in-house and independent. In-house coaches receive a coaching toolkit, a two-day training from coaching consultants, and three ‘Coaching the Coach’ sessions over the course of a year.¹³ The in-house coaches are not compensated for coaching, but gain coaching experience. 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 only the toolkit and email communication from CHS Alliance. Independent coaches are paid £90 for each coaching session after they fill out a brief, online description of the session, which is kept in a database, as well as an invoice to CHS Alliance.

¹¹ TDP Request for Proposal Mid-Term Review; PM review.

¹² TDP Concept Note.

¹³ Coaches’ toolkit SSC (Rev October 2016).

Some 115 coaches have been trained in total, but 14 have been non-responsive in their availability for coaching. 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.¹⁴ This will result in a projected 141 coaches being active before October 2017, meeting the Concept Note and logframe projections.¹⁵ Table 1 shows the coaches by region.

Table 1: Coaches by region

Region	No. of coaches
East Africa	48
Asia	15
Middle East	16
Central Africa	8
US/Europe	14
Active coaches	101
Of which:	
In-house	40
Independent	61
New cohort being trained	40

The review of the CHCF took place between January and July 2015 and was conducted by an independent consultant who engaged in consultation and revision. The final report was accepted in August 2016. A dissemination plan has been developed and is scheduled for implementation between September 2016 and August 2017.¹⁶ The plan suggests that the CHCF will be shared online as well as piloted through practitioners for dissemination.

¹⁴ Coaching Information, 17 October 2016.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) Annex 9 – Proposed One-Year Dissemination Plan

2. Introduction to the Mid-Term Review

2.1. Objectives of the Mid-Term Review

Eight assessment questions were agreed on for the Mid-Term Review, covering the five components of relevance/design, effectiveness, efficiency/equity, collaboration and contextualisation. Table 2 summarises the questions and provides a more detailed description of our understanding of the work.

Table 2: Scope of work

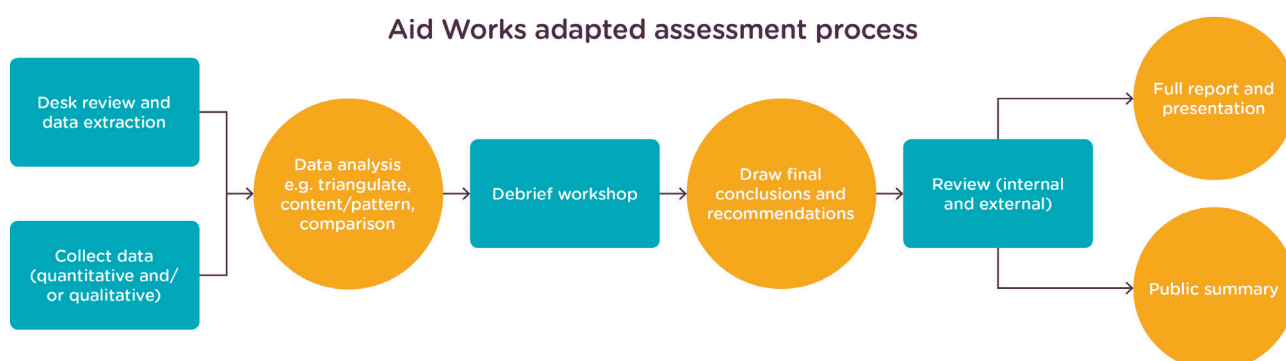
Learning area	Question (Q)	Our understanding
Relevance/design	1. How appropriate are the courses in meeting the needs of the participants and what are the gaps?	In this question, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explain the TDP and each associated course's learning and development scheme; – Identify initial objectives of each course's intended results with actual results; – Corroborate course success in meeting participants' needs; and – Look for gaps in information and reporting that undermine the knowledge base needed.
	2. In what ways have the courses evolved or been adapted during implementation, in response to feedback?	In this question, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describe course delivery approaches for each TDP component; – Outline changes in each component's content or delivery from inception to date; – Review feedback mechanisms between participants and course implementers; and – Look at primary feedback received and compare against changes in delivery.
Effectiveness	3. What elements of each course have been most effective in affecting: a) the competencies and b) the behaviours/practices of the participants completing the courses?	In this question, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – List the different competencies each course or component seeks to meet/measure; – Analyse and compare competency framework data results against/among various course components; – Identify positive behaviours and practices for each course component; and – Correlate identified behaviours and practices to effective course aspects.
	4. To what extent have participants actively applied their learning in their daily work? Has this learning affected their professional development	In this question, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify which learning elements participants identify as useful and practical; – Determine whether learning has affected/changed participants' professional development/career path; and

	and/or career path?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explain which learning elements appear to have less/no impact on participants and their professional development/career path.
Efficiency/equity	5. What good practices exist in improving communication and outreach?	<p>In this question, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Determine and describe how each course/component markets to, and recruits, participants in each country; and – Investigate participants' knowledge of the TDP juxtaposed with the course/component in which they participated.
	6. What evidence is available that courses are accessible and inclusive (e.g. in terms of gender, affordability, access, social inclusion)?	<p>In this question, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review data on gender and identify gaps in terms of ability to report comprehensively in all course components; – Query participants' reflection on each course component's diversity (e.g. gender, ethnicity (tribe), socio-economic background, age, religion) and access (e.g. learning style, time away from work, and cost)
Collaboration	7. What is the evidence of benefits or detriments caused from collaboration delivering the TDP?	<p>In this question, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explore the rationale of the consortium, its relationships with actors, how the consortium has worked, communicated and collaborated, as well as areas of weakness in these; – Compare initial objectives of the consortium against actual practice; and – Look at how courses effectively collaborate in-country.
Contextualisation	8. To what degree has contextualisation contributed to the success of the courses?	<p>In this question, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Determine and describe what contextualisation would mean/what would be required in each course component (e.g. translation, project examples, etc.); – Review examples of contextualisation delivered in each course component; – Query participants' perception of contextualisation in relation to course component success.

3. Approach and Methodology

3.1. Approach

Figure 5: Process for completing the Mid-Term Review



The learning review process followed the above approach to carrying out assessments, reviews and evaluations. An extensive desk review was conducted of 141 relevant project- and course-specific documents, quarterly reports, other supporting documentation, and emails to and from key stakeholders.¹⁷ Twenty-one key informant interviews were conducted with members of the Consortium Management Team (CMT), project managers (PMs) in country, course trainers, local partners, coaches, participants and other key stakeholders identified by the CMT. These interviews were conducted anonymously and are referenced only as ‘interviews with stakeholders’ within this document.

Two surveys were conducted: one in English, with a response rate of 183 of 476 participants; and one in French, with a response rate of 24 of 49 participants. The surveys provided qualitative and quantitative data. Data analysis drew out key findings from the primary data (survey and interviews) and triangulated them with secondary data (desk research) and follow-up emails and information CMT members provided. A validation workshop was held with members of the CMT and Steering Committee to present initial findings and discussion points. This report presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations and was reviewed internally to check their alignment before being reviewed by the TDP consortium.

Table 3: Summary of methods and data collection tools

Activity	Completed	Data collection tool
Document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 141 project documents provided or accessed on Box software.¹⁸ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports Specific course/component documents 	Key findings template
Key informant interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 interviews conducted in English and French, covering CMT, PMs, trainers, local partners, participants and other stakeholders 	Semi-structured interview guides
Participant survey (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey disseminated to 476 current and former participants of all four TDP courses in every country except DRC; 183 respondents 	Survey template

¹⁷ See Annex 1.

¹⁸ Box is file sharing and storage software used by TDP managers; www.box.com.

Participant survey (French)	– Survey disseminated to 49 current and former participants of the Context Core Skills and Management and Leadership courses in DRC; 24 respondents	Survey template
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3.2. Data collection

Most primary data was collected through the participant surveys – respondents were given 14 days to complete the surveys – supplemented by interviews. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected on both surveys. The English language survey was sent to 476 current and former participants in all countries and for all courses except Context courses in DRC; were 183 respondents. Breakdown by respondent country, course, gender and age are included in Annex 2.¹⁹ The survey used closed questions (5), closed questions with open-ended explanatory boxes (10), multiple selection (2), Likert scale (2) and open-ended questions (9). There was a 38.45 per cent response rate, providing a confidence interval of +/- 5.7 at a confidence level of 95 per cent. The French survey was sent to the 49 participants of the two Context courses in DRC and there were 24 respondents, providing a confidence interval of +/- 16 at a confidence level of 95 per cent.

Key informants were selected in discussion with the CMT partners at the inception meeting rather than randomly. Aid Works added extra interviews during the research period to ensure that they covered the breadth of TDP countries and courses. Interviews were conducted by Skype and on agreement that they would be anonymous. Interviews were conducted both in French and English using a semi-structured interview guide.²⁰ A summary of key informant interviews is found below in Table 4.

Table 4: Key informant interview summary

Course	Country	Interview	Male	Female
HTS: 6	Kenya: 3	Participants: 4	6	15
Context: 7	DRC: 3	PMs (country offices): 3		
LfH: 5	Jordan: 4	Local partners: 3		
Coaching: 3	Bangladesh: 3	Trainers: 4		
	International: 8	Coach: 1		
		PMs (international): 5		

Secondary data was provided directly by the CMT members and related either to the TDP consortium or to specific components or courses. Consultants were also given access to Box folders and select documents, which CMT members posted there.

Tools were designed based on the learning areas, gaps and issues identified during the desk review. Aid Works used SurveyMonkey as the survey platform, and designed the survey to load quickly for participants who had poor internet connectivity. Aid Works associates translated the survey into/out of French for participants in DRC. Advice was sought from consortium partners on appropriate wording for both the English and French surveys.

¹⁹ TDP English Language Survey Data – Mid-Term Review.

²⁰ See Annex 3: Interview Guide Summary.

3.3. Analysis and reporting

The Mid-Term Review team analysed the primary data collected, drew out trends, and triangulated findings between secondary and primary data. The main data analysis methods employed were:

1. Triangulation of surveys with key informant interviews and secondary data;
2. Comparison analysis, mainly focusing on planned versus actual results, where appropriate to the question (see Table 5); and
3. Findings, conclusions and recommendations framework.

A debrief meeting was held with the CMT and representatives from the Steering Committee to present initial findings and discussion points. This report represents the findings, conclusions and recommendations that will help the TDP make short-term alterations to the project before the end, as well as to inform the design of future activities.

Table 5: Identified areas of consultation

Question	Participant	PM	Local partners	Trainers	Coaches	CMT
1. Are projects appropriately meeting the needs of participants? What are the gaps?						
Project description detail	–	X	–	–	–	X
Intended results	X	X	–	–	–	X
Actual results	–	–	–	X	X	X
Information/data collection and reporting gaps	X	X	–	X	–	X
Corroborate successes	X	X	X	X	–	X
2. Project Change and evolution in response to feedback						
Project delivery approaches and methods	–	X	–	X	–	X
Feedback mechanisms	X	X	–	X	–	X
Changes based on feedback	–	X	–	X	–	X
3. Effective impact on competencies, behaviours, practices						
Competency framework knowledge and practice	X	X	–	X	X	X
Corroborate success stories	X	–	–	X	–	X
4. Learning and development in practice/sector						
Learning elements adopted/successful	X	X	–	X	–	–
Changes in profession/career path	X	X	–	X	–	–
Non-impact learning elements	X	X	–	X	–	–
5. Good practice in communication and outreach						
Marketing, recruitment and outreach	X	X	X	–	–	X
Knowledge of other TDP course projects	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Accessibility and Inclusiveness						
Diversity observations	X	X	X	X	X	X
Access observations	X	X	X	X	X	X

7. Collaboration						
Consortium – rationale and relationships	–	X	X	–	–	X
Consortium – in-country relationships/engagement	–	X	X	X	–	X
Consortium objectives and results	–	X	–	–	–	X
8. Contextualisation						
Course contextualisation delivered	X	X	X	X	X	X
Examples of good practice	X	X	–	X	–	X

3.4. Limitations

The Mid-Term Review was a rapid assessment, conducted over a five-week period. Aid Works would normally recommend that a project of this size, geographic spread and complexity be conducted over an eight- to ten-week period. To mitigate this, three associates worked simultaneously on the review.

Course participants had 14 days to complete the survey. Best practice with surveys is to allow respondents 30 days, especially given internet connectivity problems, field locations, and participants' demanding work schedules. However, the timeframe in which the review was conducted did not allow for additional surveying days. Also, while it was originally envisaged that the two surveys would be presented together, the difference in the confidence interval made this unviable, so these are presented separately to maintain the statistical relevance of each. The results of each survey have been compared to each other to determine if there were differences between the two. Where significant differences exist these are noted in the text of this review. Otherwise, it can be assumed that mention of the survey in this review refers to findings in both. The English language survey results are attached as Annex 2 and the French language survey results as Annex 4.

To effectively analyse the coaching component different data collection tools were required. The lines of inquiry within this review were limited in relation to the coaching component, as the survey and several main questions did not relate to it. For example, coaches are not measured against competencies or evaluated against the application of learning in their daily work (effectiveness). The self-assessment competency data does not relate to coaching. Coach training was not measured in terms of meeting coaches' needs (relevance/design). There is no evidence that coaching was designed, or intended to be, contextualised (contextualisation) or had diversity as a goal (efficiency/equity). Where the lines of inquiry applied to the coaching elements, the consultants have included findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The survey was also limited in providing findings for the coaching component. The survey agreed on was constructed for participants of the HTS, Context, and LfH courses and did not apply to coaches. A different survey would have been needed to be developed to ascertain findings from the coaches' learning. Findings about coaching from the survey related to coaching as a service delivery component of the TDP.

The TDP logframe suggests that results from the survey would be based on a 'representative sample', which would be collected during the Mid-Term Review. Random sampling – and therefore representative sampling – was not possible due to data protection issues, whereby only TDP implementing partners could access participants' details. All primary data was therefore convenience sampled, relying heavily on the

CMT for interviewee selection. The consultants mitigated this through volunteer sampling participant interviews and avoiding extrapolation of results whenever possible in the report narrative.

These were not critical limitations because the Mid-Term Review is designed to validate key results collated by the project and compare them with interviews and the survey; it is not an evaluation of the programme.

3.5. Team composition

Table 6: Team members and identified roles

Team member	Role
Kelsey Hoppe (lead consultant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leading interactions with Save the Children and other CMT members – Preparing inception report – Conducting desk review and analysing data – Leading development of English survey – Developing relevant assessment tools – Collating findings and presenting them in a validation workshop – Writing report
Malka Older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leading interviews for DRC – Leading development of French survey – Analysing French survey responses
Mo Ali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supporting lead consultant – Supporting final deliverables – Supporting administration for lead consultant – Primary analysis of self-assessment competency data – Providing technical support and quality control – Supporting final product development

4. Findings

4.1. Relevance/design

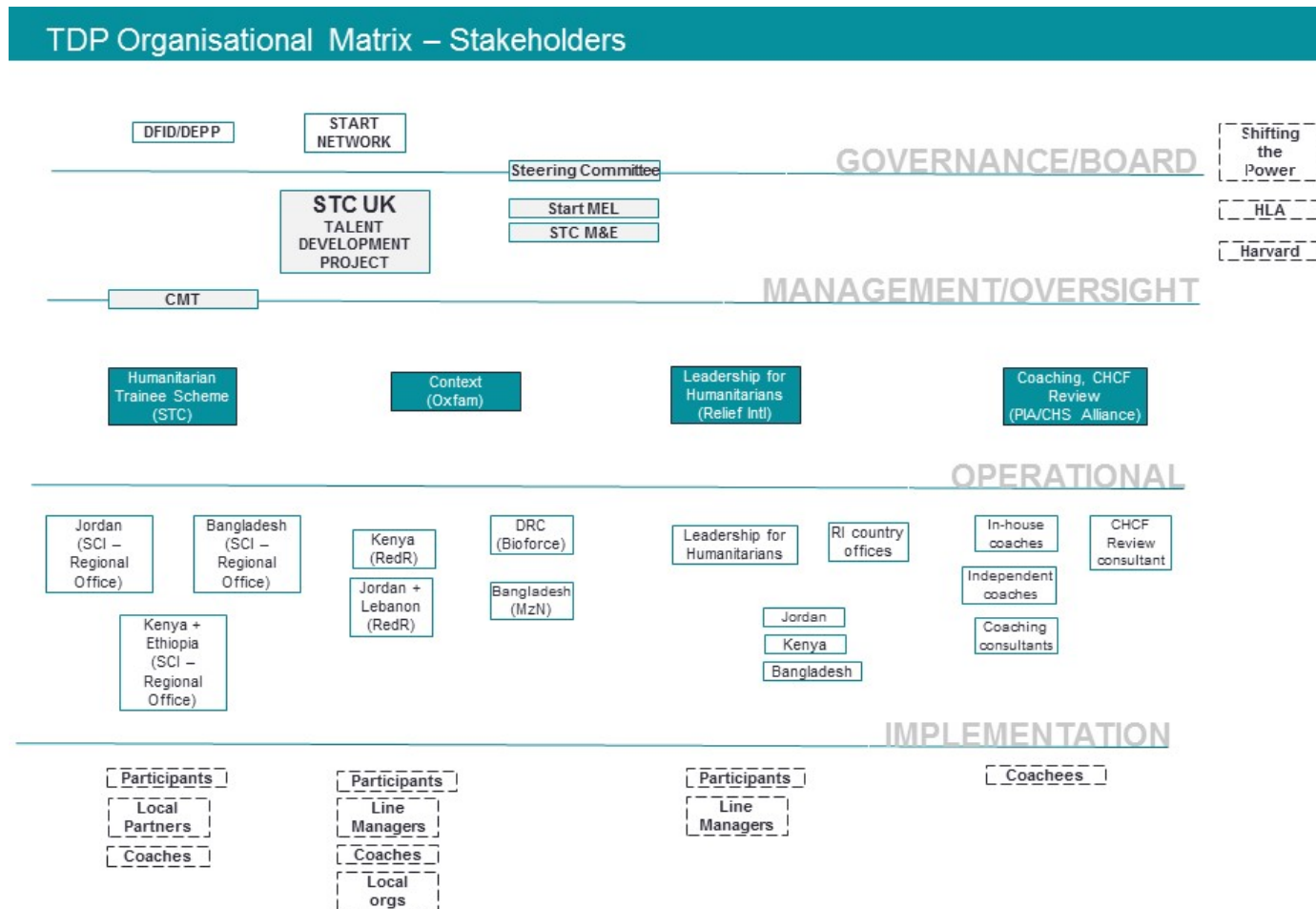
Overview of the TDP

The TDP is a complex consortium operating at several levels. Courses and components are delivered through a multi-faceted matrix of relationships, which have been established and are functioning well. The consortium has, in effect, one full-time person on the project (in fact two part-time people: a part-time PM and part-time member of the MEL, both from Save the Children), with support from the Start Network's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) department. Courses are being delivered in five countries, two more than originally envisaged. While the Concept Note indicated that courses would be delivered in Pakistan, they have not been, and evidence of this decision is not present in the documentation reviewed.²¹

To clearly understand the TDP matrix several figures were developed. The first, Figure 6, shows the different stakeholders and the level at which they operate – either governance/board, management/oversight, operational, or implementation. Figure 7 shows the interplay and relationships between these different stakeholders, and identifies the nature of the relationship if it exists in written form. Figure 8 shows the resources that are available to each of the different stakeholders.

²¹ Concept Note, p.1.

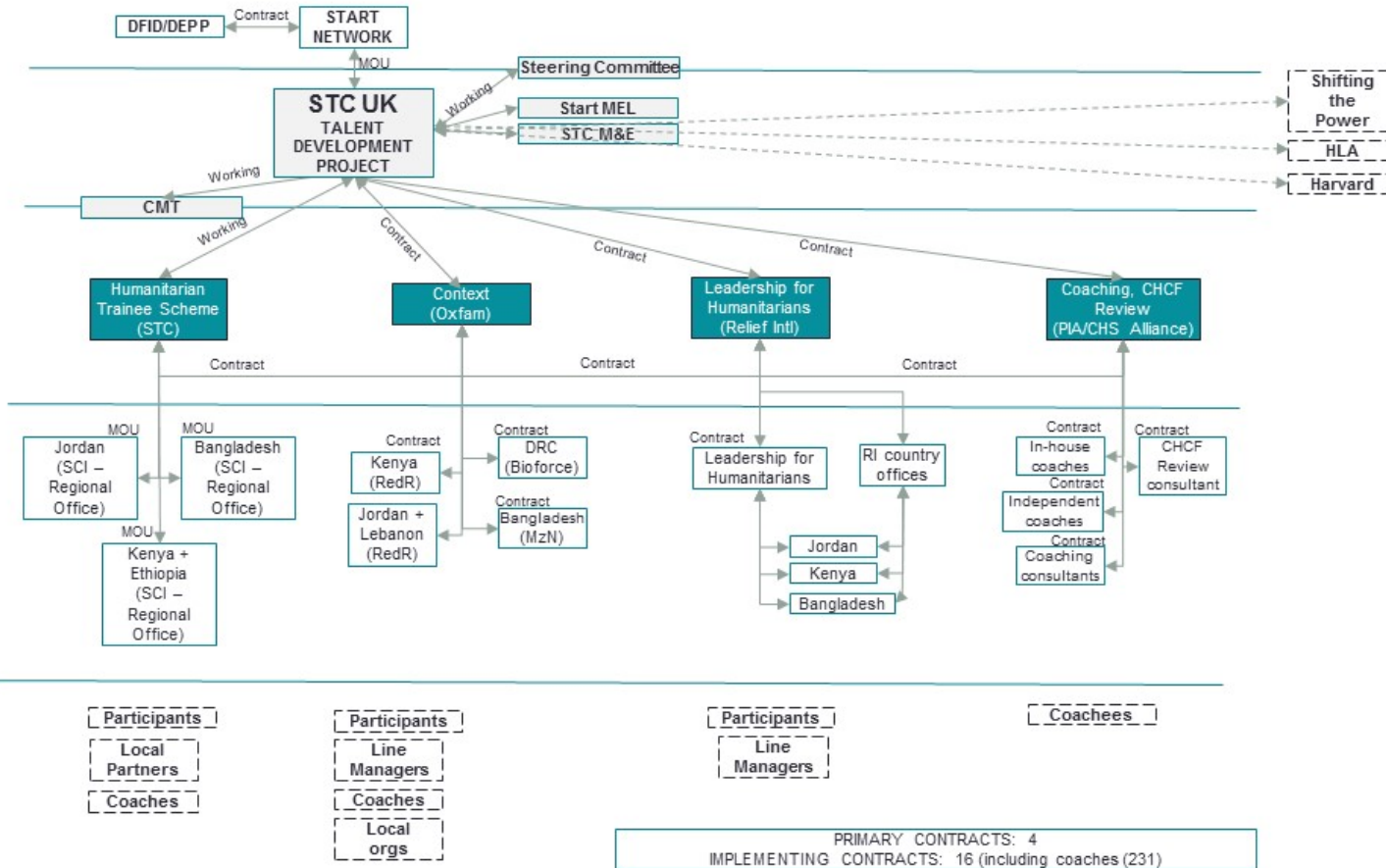
Figure 6: TDP Organisational Matrix – Stakeholders



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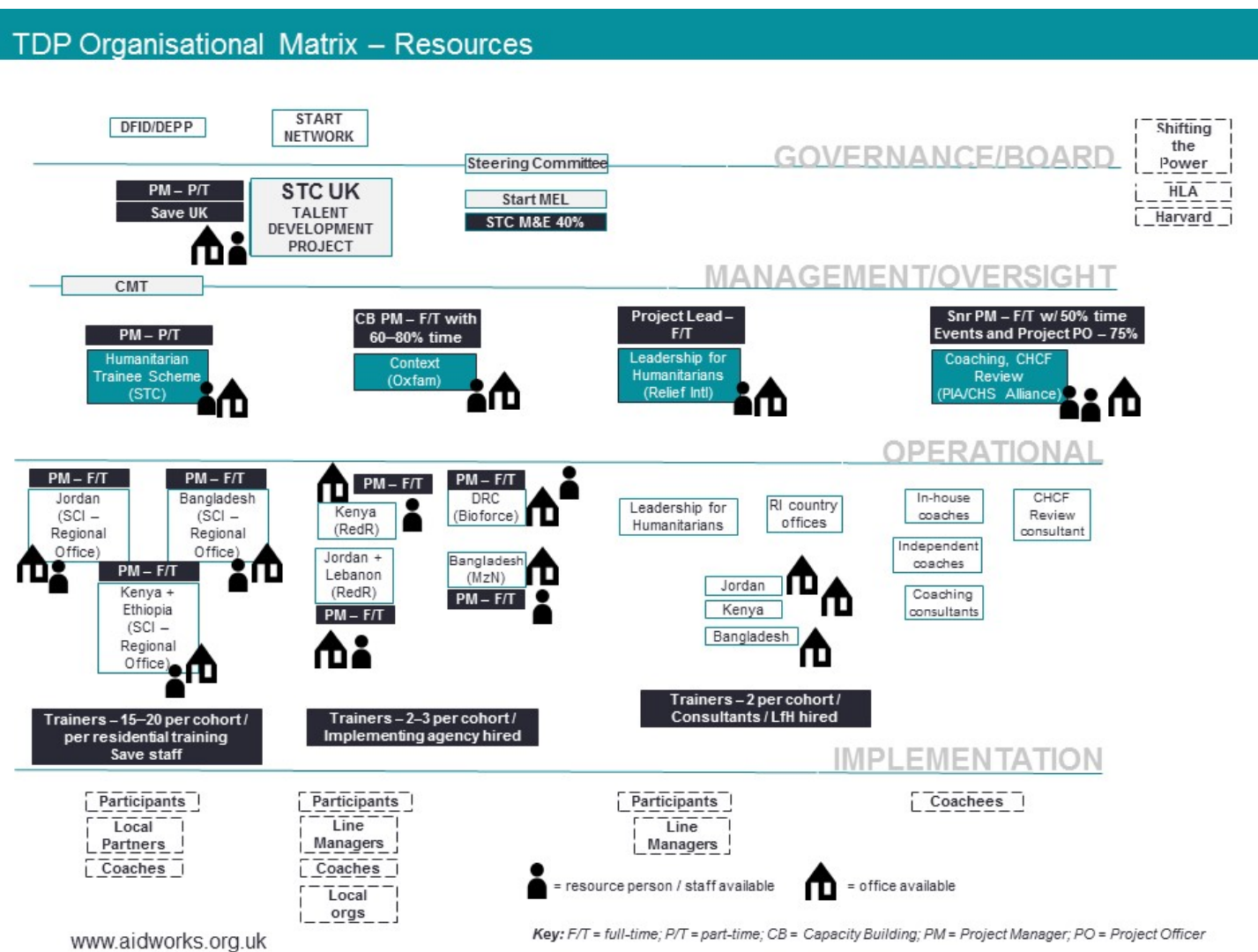
Figure 7: TDP Organisational Matrix – Relationships

TDP Organisational Matrix – Relationships



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Figure 8: TDP Organisational Matrix – Resources



Across the matrix and courses, terminology was found to be a barrier. Stakeholders refer to different courses, components and elements using differing terminology, which is confusing and means they are speaking at cross purposes. For example, the TDP is sometimes referred to as a programme and a project. Each of the courses and components of the TDP are also referred to as programmes, projects, schemes, as well as courses, or by their names. The term 'partner' has different meanings within each project component as well as to different stakeholders. Actions taken on courses are not commonly defined between project components, (e.g. completion, graduation or successful completion, applied and enrolled, or drop-out and attrition). The term 'Leadership for Humanitarians' could be referring to the course or to the implementing partner that delivers the course. Stakeholders also noted there was sometimes confusion between Oxfam's Context's Management and Leadership course and Relief International's Leadership for Humanitarians.²²

Many key informants interviewed stated that the coaching component of the TDP had been difficult.²³ PIA (now CHS Alliance) was pressured to contract coaches very quickly, but then many of the coaches were not used for a year or more.²⁴ 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.²⁵ 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.²⁶ In some locations they asked coaches from one course to coach another course; in others, some cohorts did not receive coaching. While there has been work in correcting these issues, some participants are still not receiving coaching or have been disappointed with the coaching they received.²⁷

Certain terminology has not been comprehensively defined across the project, and, as a result, it is sometimes unclear how it should be measured. Specifically, the terms 'contextualisation' and 'diversity' are not defined.

TDP objectives against results

Stakeholders sometimes disagreed over the metrics of the project and the targets stakeholders are measured against.²⁸ Some stated that they would be measured by the logframe alone and others felt they were responsible for delivering against both the logframe and the Concept Note.²⁹

The Concept Note implied that the review of the CHCF would provide an element against which all courses could measure participants' competencies and that this would occur earlier in the project than it did. Stakeholders identified this as a delay in finalising the logframe.³⁰ Courses began running six months into

²² Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Participant Survey question (Q) 18.

²⁸ Ibid.

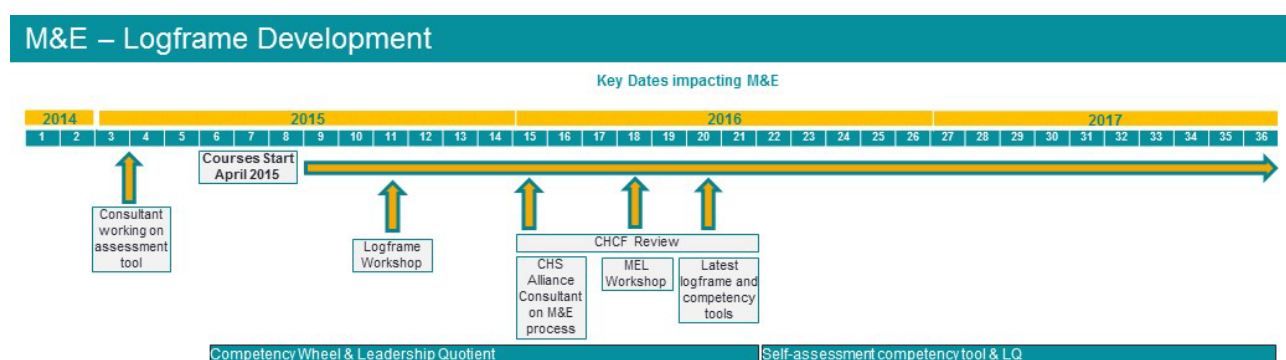
²⁹ There was no proposal, per se; the Concept Note to the Start Network acts as the proposal.

³⁰ TDP Concept Note, p.3; Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

the project timeframe, but the CHCF review came during months 15–21 (July 2016).³¹ The logframe evolved over the first 20 months of the project. It involved several iterations and was not under the ownership of any one party. All operational partners were involved in redesigning the logframe, as well as Save the Children's M&E unit, Oxfam's M&E unit, and Start's MEL.³²

The current logframe was developed more than halfway into the project. This meant that course participants were either measured by different metrics (i.e. the competency wheel or the leadership quotient) or had their metrics changed during their course. The logframe attempts to hold four L&D courses, each of which targets participants at different learning levels, seeks different results and assesses results in different ways. In addition, there is a coaching component and also a document review, which includes wide stakeholder consultation. From October 2015, tools were developed by the operational partners and used to measure cross-TDP results.³³ These tools, however, do not allow comprehensive monitoring of competencies and this is discussed in Section 5.2, Effectiveness. Figure 9 shows the TDP timeframe, with key dates that have impacted the M&E components.

Figure 9: Monitoring and evaluation – Key dates in the development of metrics



Results against the logframe

The current logframe being used across TDP courses and components was developed in May 2016 and is attached as Annex 5. A review of the logframe was conducted and key findings are:

1. A logframe measures a theory of change (TOC), but no TOC is apparent across the four courses and two components, which leads to disparities between outputs and outcomes.³⁴
2. Indicators in the logframe are not defined.
3. Many of the targets mention multiple sources. Good practice suggests having one source per target. The purpose of a source is not to triangulate data.
4. Each organisation is using its own tool based on Context's competency assessment tool to produce results against the target.
5. There is no reporting tool that consolidates individual organisation reporting against targets into a TDP report

Annex 6 shows mid-term results against the logframe.

³¹ Q4 Talent Development Quarterly Narrative Report for July–Sept. 2015 Final.

³² Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

³³ Q4 Talent Development Quarterly Narrative Report for July–Sept. 2015 Final.

³⁴ The DFID logframe definitions suggest that outcomes should be a combination of outputs.

Results against the concept note

The concept note is less actively used for measuring results against objectives. However, the project makes several commitments in the concept note that need to be reviewed. Annex 7 shows the mid-term results against the concept note. The project meets a number of primary objectives stated in the concept note in terms of where the project operates, who it reaches, how it is contextualised and what it aims to accomplish.³⁵ It then goes on to make a number of commitments that have yet to be incorporated into the project such as a communication plan, sustainability plan, impact and effectiveness assessments, learning across the project and dissemination of that learning, and engagement with Shifting the Power and Age and Disability.³⁶

Course success in meeting participant needs

Despite difficulty in capturing results against the logframe and concept note, participants surveyed and interviewed felt that the course was meeting their needs. Some 92 per cent of survey respondents agreed that the course was meeting their learning needs; and 97 per cent said their participation had given them skills or knowledge that helped them better contribute to the humanitarian aid sector.³⁷

Survey participants were also asked what they had expected to learn but had not, and the answers were manually sorted. Most items listed related to expectation management (e.g. to learn Microsoft programmes, get a master's degree, or first aid course certification) rather than operation or course content.³⁸

Gaps in information and reporting

Reporting is primarily accomplished through quarterly narrative reports, which are collected from implementing partners, consolidated by operational partners, and further consolidated by the CMT PM to send to the Start Network. Quarterly financial reporting also occurs at operational and management levels before being sent to the Start Network. All reporting to date has been timely, but reports are not standardised in their reporting requirements (e.g. against the logframe, or including gender or contextualisation).³⁹ In addition, several other helpful reports have been produced on participants' evaluation of coaching, the review of the CHCF, Context's learning, and the TDP project's Consortium-Building Workshop.⁴⁰

Coaching was raised by stakeholders as an area where there are gaps.⁴¹ Stakeholders in interviews questioned whether coaches were populating the database of coaching sessions, which is the primary monitoring mechanism for coaching and the basis for payment. While the database might be filled in by

³⁵ Annex 7, pp.1–2; Concept Note, pp.1–2.

³⁶ Annex 8, pp.3–7; Concept Note, pp.8, 9–10, 12–14.

³⁷ Participant survey, Q19 and Q23 respectively.

³⁸ Annex 9: Survey Q20 – Participant expectation not met disaggregated by course.

³⁹ TDP Quarterly Reports Q1–Q7.

⁴⁰ Review and Development of Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework Report, September 2016; Coaching M E final report, September 2016; Context Review Report – FINAL; Report from Talent Development Review and Consortium-Building Workshop 19–21 January 2016.

⁴¹ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

many coaches it is not regularly reported to other TDP CMT members who are paying for the service.⁴² It is also unclear how the qualifications or references of these coaches are checked.⁴³ Feedback is received from participants through their courses, which is passed onto CHS Alliance. It is unclear how feedback is processed or if changes are made based on this.

To report successfully against either the logframe or Concept Note a few tools are necessary. While most of these are present, several others would enhance information management and reporting. These are:

1. **Self-assessment competency data summary spreadsheet:** this tool would collect data from operational organisations and aggregate it monthly for a TDP-wide picture of competency improvement.
2. **TDP overview spreadsheet:** this tool would provide the project with a regular, consolidated 'snapshot' of enrolment and expected completion disaggregated by course, country, gender, and organisation type.⁴⁴
3. **Consolidation of data needed and used:** the different courses – but specifically HTS – are collecting large amounts of qualitative and quantitative data and its use is unclear. HTS alone collects information (either evaluation or feedback) 25 times from participants within an 18-month period and 24 of those occasions fall within the first 12 months. This data is used to inform reporting.
4. **TDP anecdote tracker:** to achieve logframe output 6.2 it is necessary for TDP to report anecdotes. However, the anecdote tracker is Start Network-wide and there is no way to measure what TDP-specific anecdotes are currently being submitted.
5. **Meeting tracker:** reporting on meeting attendance is necessary to achieve logframe output 6.3. This is currently missing.
6. **Telescoping quarterly reporting:** to simplify quarterly reporting and provide common headings and definitions across all courses/components.

Course delivery and feedback mechanisms between participants and course implementers

All courses incorporate a variety of adult learning methodologies in their delivery approaches. These are shown in detail for each course in Figures 1–4. While these vary by course, they include: workshops; presentations; group work; videos; lectures; role play (simulation); work placement/internships; peer-to-peer learning (buddy groups); distance learning; coaching; self-reflective learning (action planning, journaling); reading and research (essays); and online learning (webinars and e-learning platforms). These methods are enabling participants to engage well with the course reflected in 81 per cent of survey respondents agreeing, or strongly agreeing, that their course was delivered in a way that made it easy for them to learn.⁴⁵

All courses have feedback mechanisms by which they engage with participants and receive positive and negative feedback. The HTS has seven feedback points; Context, Core Skills has three; Context, Management and Leadership has two; and LfH has one. No regular reporting is required on feedback-led

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Email. CHS Alliance 1 November 2016.

⁴⁴ See Annex 10: TDP overview spreadsheet example

⁴⁵ Participant Survey Q14.

changes to the courses, so all changes were either reported anecdotally through stakeholder interviews or summarised by operational partner PMs. All courses indicated that they have evolved based on feedback from participants. Interviews suggested that facilitators/trainers took time and made an effort to tailor facilitation to course participants based on the feedback they received during workshops and training times.⁴⁶

Some of the main changes to courses were:

- HTS⁴⁷ has made the application process (interviews to assessment days) more rigorous and incorporated several mechanisms to address attrition. In Bangladesh, participants get the presentations before trainings to allow for better preparation. The length of modules 1 and 2 has been extended from six to seven and a half months. Additional webinars have been added on writing assignments and example assignments provided, as well as additional teaching on the Harvard referencing system. Assignments in the first module have been reduced to three, and module 3's assignments have been changed to better reflect trainees' work placements. The residential trainings and live learning sessions have been changed based on each cohort and to make them regionally specific. Residential elements, which used to rely on UK facilitators, are now run by regional facilitators. Induction and early confidence building on the Learning Management System has been expanded during the Emergency Foundations Course.
- Context⁴⁸ has extended the number of days of workshops to allow more time to cover all subjects, as well changing workbooks to enable participants to have more space for reflection. A consultant was hired to integrate the new CHS definition into all modules for workshops and adapt materials. Context is also now being run in Lebanon, with special permission from the Start Network, in addition to other countries. Context has tried to get more 'local engagement' on each course by using a local and international facilitator. Guest speakers have been used, or their use increased, to give participants the opportunity to engage with humanitarian actors. Qualitative tools, such as learning diaries, peer review and storytelling have been changed to improve the M&E framework. Also, the final participant evaluation now incorporates an essay. Online elements have increased relationship strength and allowed for greater follow-up with participants.
- LfH⁴⁹ has incorporated webinars and the PM is more involved with participant selection. Greater efforts are made to follow up with participants and encourage them to complete the course, including additional questionnaires and a weekly newsletter. Webinars have been added to increase engagement and an element called 'Leadership conversations' also added. While a networking event has always been a course element this has been changed to incorporate previous participants and their experiences, and show how they have implemented their learning. The pre-training and end-of-training assessments have been revised throughout the project.

The coaching component operates differently to the courses, so feedback loops are more complicated. Coaching is a mandatory element of the HTS and Context, Core Skills courses and participants are matched

⁴⁶ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁴⁷ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders; Email, Save the Children HTS PM, 10 November 2016.

⁴⁸ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders; Email, CB-PM, 11 November 2016.

⁴⁹ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders; Email, Relief International PM, 10 November 2016.

with coaches by the implementing partners' PMs. Participants do not get to choose their coach and most have limited or no previous experience with coaching.⁵⁰ Further, many of the coaches used in this new network have no coaching experience, except what they gain from the project (in-house).

Some stakeholders, including more experienced coaches, questioned the ability of in-house coaches to deliver coaching with limited experience and training.⁵¹ A few suggested that they could be reassured by careful monitoring of these coaches, which they did not feel was not yet adequate.⁵² The same group also had concerns that participants are not necessarily aware – or taught – what they should expect to receive from coaching and this could mean that they are unqualified to comment on the coaching they receive.

The CHS Alliance indicated that teaching sessions with practice exercises occur in the first workshop of each of the three courses, but it was unclear from course implementers if this occurs either regularly or comprehensively.⁵³ These elements of the coaching raised the question of fulfilment of duty of care towards participants. One stakeholder mentioned a hypothetical example where a coach's predatory behaviour towards a participant might occur but not be reported, or discovered, under the current monitoring system because it would rely on the victim, who might not be fully informed of what is appropriate in a coaching relationship, to identify and report it.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Email, CHS Alliance 01 November 2016; Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders

⁵⁴ Ibid.

4.2. Effectiveness

Self-assessment competency data findings

As mentioned previously, the reason for incorporating the review of the CHCF⁵⁵ appears to have been to provide a basis on which M&E tools could be developed.⁵⁶ However, in mid-2015, when project-wide tools had not yet been implemented, Oxfam created a paper-based tool, which HTS adopted and against which LfH could compare competencies. This is what is currently in use.

The competencies each course seeks to meet are defined by the Core Humanitarian Competencies (CHCs). A comparison is shown in Table 7 below.⁵⁷ It shows that:

- All courses share three competencies;
- Context and HTS share five competencies, with Context focusing its final competency on humanitarian leadership and HTS focusing on humanitarian values; and
- Context and LfH share four competencies.

The phrasing of the competencies varies slightly between the courses.

Table 7: Course core competencies

Context competencies	HTS competencies	LfH competencies
Understanding of humanitarian contexts and principles	Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles	
Achieving results effectively	Achieving results	Achieving results
Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships
Operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response	Operating safely and securely at all times	
Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment	Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment	Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment
Leadership in humanitarian response	Demonstrating humanitarian values and principles, and motivating others to achieve results in complex situations, independent of one's role, function or seniority	Demonstrating leadership in humanitarian response

All courses monitor participants' progress using a competency self-assessment tool unique to each course. Participants complete online and paper-based tools, which follow a similar scoring format, measuring their

⁵⁵ CHCF reviewed competencies.

⁵⁶ TDP Concept Note, page 3.

⁵⁷ Source: monitoring tools and guidelines produced for each course.

progress against specific statements. The scoring scale goes from 'Not confident' to 'Very confident'; the HTS scoring also includes 'I don't have this experience yet'.

Statements used in the self-assessment tool are related to competencies listed in Table 7. The number of statements and content varies between courses. Several statements are comparable between HTS and Context, but LfH statements are phrased differently to speak more directly to training content. The analysis later in this section focuses on participants' competencies, as defined by each course.

A key indicator for all courses in the logframe is the percentage of participants who complete the training course and the number of competencies they have increased. Each course has defined which statements relate to each competency, as shown by the example below from HTS and LfH.

All courses collect and store the self-assessment data, disaggregated at participant level, and have an Excel-based data file for each country that analyses this data. However, no Excel-based data file conducts the same calculation method for the indicator.

Table 8: Indicator definitions

Course	Output #	Indicator	Definition of numerator used at the mid-term point	Definition of denominator
HTS	2.3	By Sept 2017 80% of participants who have completed trainee scheme have an increased level in four out of six CHCs	Number of participants who have self-assessed to have scored more in <i>at least</i> four out of six competencies in the post-Advanced Field Training score ⁵⁸ [This includes anyone who has between four and six competency improvements.]	Number of participants who completed most recent self-assessment
Context	3.2	By Sept 2017 80% of participants who have completed training programme have an increased level in four out of six CHCs	Number of participants who have self-assessed to be scored more in <i>at least</i> four out of six competencies (comparing 'base' to 'end')	Number of participants in data file
LfH	4.2	80% of participants who have completed training programme have an increased level in three out of four CHCs	Number of participants who have self-assessed to have scored more in <i>at least</i> three out of four competencies	Number of participants in data file

⁵⁸ For the final evaluation, 'end of scheme' will replace 'the post-Advanced Field Training score'.

The consultants assessed the country-based data files provided for each course, which showed:

- The HTS data files are not complete at this point; only data up to Advanced Field Training is available as participants have not completed the course.
- The Context data files known as ‘competency wheels’ calculate change for all participants rather than individuals.
- The LfH data files are complete but only relate to the third Kenyan cohort as the self-assessment tool was not used for previous cohorts.

The consultants used available sample data disaggregated per participant to calculate and compare improvements in competencies. The definitions used for each output indicator used for the analysis are listed in Table 8. An additional Excel worksheet has been created so that the indicator can be produced with minimal changes to the data files. The worksheet also allows an analysis of the number of participants who have shown an improvement in a specific competency.

When calculating the data, several points were noted:

- HTS uses the median score for improvements.
- LfH uses the mean score.
- Context uses ‘domains’ to aggregate the statements in the tool. However, the domains can be linked directly to the CHCs.

Participants’ positive behaviours and practices

Survey questions 15 and 16 asked participants to self-identify positive behaviours and practices gained from participating in the course, as well as how they are applying those in the workplace. Some 96 per cent of respondents listed one or more skills. The consultants disaggregated these into categories to provide summary answers. Soft skills⁵⁹ were mentioned 123 times, hard skills⁶⁰ 53 times and the humanitarian competencies eight times.

In survey question 16, participants were asked to list at least one way that they were using their knowledge and skills gained on the course in their work. Some 91 per cent listed a skill and, again, soft skills were mentioned most often (76 times), followed by hard skills (51) and humanitarian competencies (3).

Examples of how participants are applying learning at work

‘I lead three emergency projects in Bangladesh after the training and focusing the CHS for implementing the projects.’

‘I have been able to adapt to new context and base stations faster after the course.’

‘I’m currently monitoring the drought situation and I can develop relevant sitreps.’

⁵⁹ Soft skills mentioned included: team player, adaptability, communication, planning, leadership, analysis, listening, coaching, working under stress, relationship management, detail awareness, confidence, being adaptable, negotiation, multi-tasking, collaboration, coordination, resilience, organisation, building trust, critical judgement, self-care, effectiveness, creating win-win scenarios, self-confidence, public speaking, time management.

⁶⁰ Hard skills mentioned included: proposal writing, logistics, safety and security, budgeting, advocacy, risk management, needs assessment, HR, M&E, context analysis, writing and referencing, project cycle management, gender and disability mainstreaming, quality and accountability.

While a definition of hard and soft skills was applied by the consultants, the survey data could be also be disaggregated by skills that showed humanitarian competencies. This was applied to survey question 16 and is shown in Figure 10.

In addition, 72 per cent of respondents said they had changed their regular work practices based on learning from their course.⁶¹ Of those who responded positively, 117 mentioned a work practice they had changed. The consultants broke these down by the same categories. Again, 81 per cent mentioned a soft skill they had applied and 11 per cent mentioned a hard skill.

Examples of line managers' comments to participants

'Works well with minimum instruction and doesn't let things slip through the cracks, showed the kind of active participation expected of our more senior staff.'

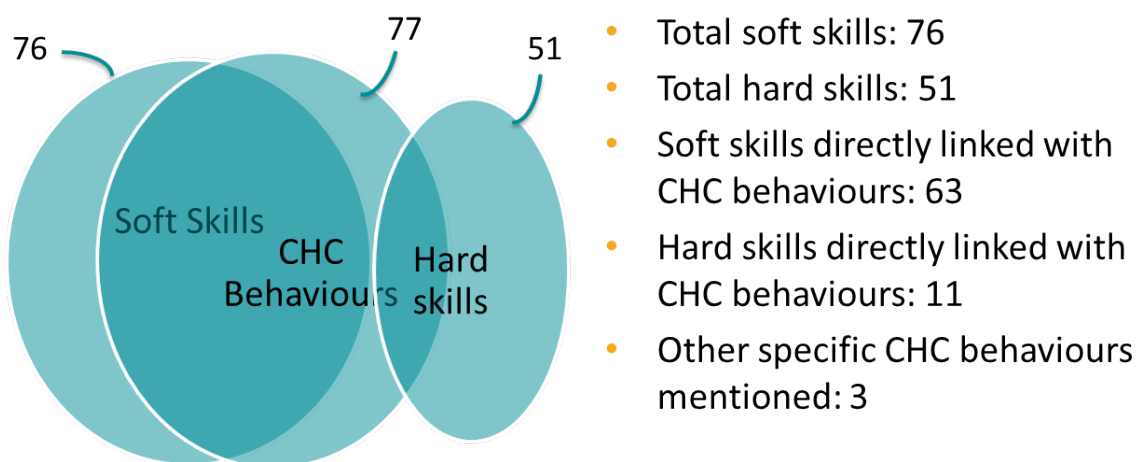
'My line manager acknowledged a great improvement in my skills and also interaction with people.'

'The line manager feedback was that I demonstrated good knowledge on humanitarian values and competencies, and it all was shown during brainstorming sessions on programme and project planning.'

Survey question 21 asked participants if they had received feedback from a line manager and 55 per cent respondents said they had. Of those, 96 per cent indicated that the feedback they received was positive.⁶²

When asked if they felt their course contributed to the professionalisation of the humanitarian aid sector, 99 per cent of respondents answered that it did.⁶³

Figure 10: Positive behaviours/practices gained linked to competencies



Course learning elements identified as 'most' and 'least' valuable

Participants were asked which course elements (e.g. module, workshop, distance learning, simulation, webinars, coaching, work placement, assignment, etc.) they found the most and least valuable, as an

⁶¹ Participant Survey Q22.

⁶² Ibid. Q21.

⁶³ Ibid. Q24.

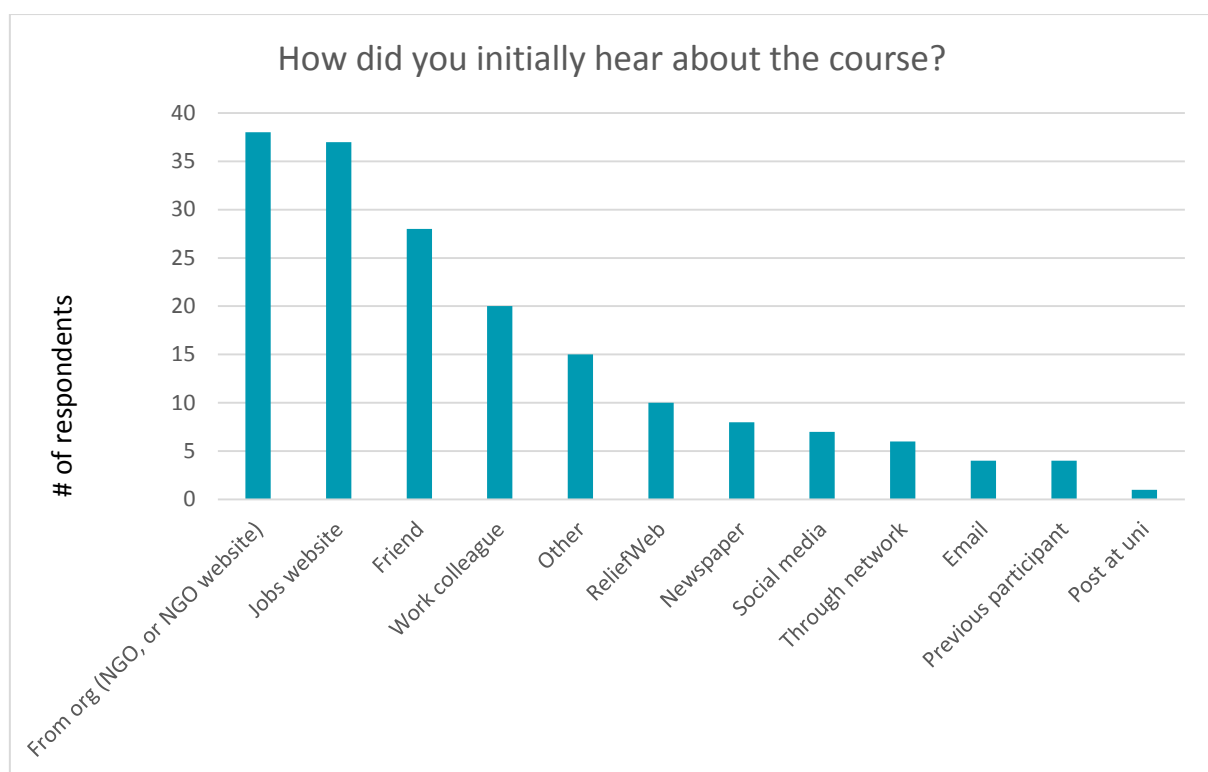
indicator of course effectiveness.⁶⁴ The survey asked participants to self-identify elements so results provided a range of answers. The consultants then disaggregated these by course:

- **HTS:** respondents identified the simulation, work placement and distance learning modules as the elements they found the most valuable; nearly half of the respondents identified the simulation as most valuable. Elements they found least valuable were coaching, work placement and distance learning; coaching was most frequently identified as least valuable.
- **Context:** respondents 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.
- **LfH:** respondents identified workshops as the most valuable, followed by webinars and modules. However, along with distance learning, webinars were also cited as the least valuable elements, constituting more than half of all least valuable responses.

4.3. Efficiency/equity

Course outreach and recruitment

Figure 11: Methods of course outreach



Given that each course and component target a different audience, each has its own methods of recruitment. Broadly, however, each course uses similar methods to reach potential participants.⁶⁵ These include posting upcoming courses on operational and implementing partner organisation websites, posting information on in-country job websites and posting on the United Nations humanitarian information website ReliefWeb. Additionally, some of the courses advertise through newspapers, social media, posting

⁶⁴ Ibid. Q17 and Q18.

⁶⁵ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

posters, and emails to former participants. When participants were asked how they initially heard about their course, respondents self-identified all the above and added through friends, colleagues, and previous participants.⁶⁶ The extent to which respondents heard about their course through each of these is shown in Figure 11.

All the courses indicated that they made changes to their recruitment outreach based on respondents' feedback, either by attempting to target different participants or by using additional methods.⁶⁷ Stakeholders associated with Context indicated that the names of courses caused some confusion, because more participants wanted 'management and leadership skills' and felt 'core skills' would be too basic for them.⁶⁸ Interviews with Context and LfH indicated there was some confusion between the 'Management and Leadership' course and 'Leadership for Humanitarians'.⁶⁹

Given that the courses/components were delivered as part of a consortium that packaged the courses together, participants were asked if they were aware of the other courses delivered through the TDP.⁷⁰ More than half (53%) of respondents said that they were aware. Of those, 64 per cent were aware of HTS; 55 per cent of LfH; 42 per cent of Context, Management and Leadership; and 35 per cent of Context, Core Skills. Respondents were also positive about recommending their course to others, with 93 per cent indicating they would recommend the course to others and 6 per cent undecided. Only one respondent indicated they would not recommend the course.⁷¹

Accessibility and inclusivity

Course accessibility and inclusion – specifically in terms of gender – were two priorities identified by the TDP. To measure accessibility, participants were asked to identify if participating in the course affected their workload.⁷² While 78 per cent of respondents said no, 22 per cent said it affected their workload. Both male and female respondents said they were affected and 21 respondents gave a reason; 17 of these were negative and included: 'work built up while I was away', 'I left my previous job in order to join the training scheme', and 'distance learning and assignments required more time than I thought'.⁷³

Similarly, when participants were asked if they had any difficulty accessing the course due to transport, timings or internet problems⁷⁴ 76 per cent said 'no'. Of the 24 per cent who said 'yes', women were more than twice as likely to identify specific problems as men; poor internet connectivity was mentioned most often (20 times), followed by transport and deployment to remote areas.

⁶⁶ Participant Survey Q5.

⁶⁷ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Participant Survey Q27.

⁷¹ Ibid. Q26.

⁷² Ibid. Q6.

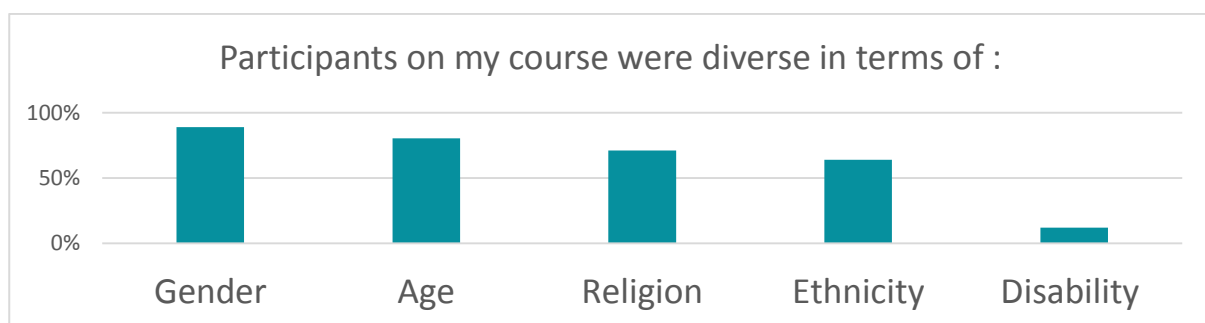
⁷³ Ibid. Q6.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Q7.

When asked if there were any course elements in which participants found it difficult to participate, 86 per cent said no.⁷⁵ Of those who identified an element in which participation was difficult, only two identified access issues (workload/time management), and the rest identified a specific assignment or piece of work with which they had difficulty.

In terms of diversity, participants were asked about gender diversity specifically, but were also asked to observe ethnicity, age, religion, and disability diversity on their courses.⁷⁶ Overall, participants said there was a high level of observable diversity in relation to gender, age, religion and ethnicity; but only 12 per cent of respondents observed disability on their courses. Key informant interviews also found that participants were satisfied with the overall diversity (including gender) on their courses, but all operational and implementing partners felt that gender diversity could be improved further.⁷⁷

Figure 12: Observable course diversity



Gender diversity was investigated by asking participants if they actively engaged in the course in terms of speaking publicly, leading work, and contributing their opinions and experiences.⁷⁸ Some 98 per cent of respondents felt they could do this, including women respondents.⁷⁹ When asked specifically if there were challenges in participating due to gender, 97 per cent of respondents said no.⁸⁰ However, the four respondents who indicated challenges based on their gender were all women in Bangladesh.

As mentioned previously, diversity targets were not defined for each course. There is no evidence or implementation of a gender and social inclusion strategy or plan to address diversity. The Concept Note suggested that the labour market in which course was conducted would determine the gender balance for those courses.⁸¹ All courses have concentrated on and made efforts to reflect gender diversity.⁸² Quarterly reports suggest that operational and implementing partners have continued to struggle with this aspect,

⁷⁵ Ibid. Q13.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Q8.

⁷⁷ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁷⁸ Ibid. Q9.

⁷⁹ 32 per cent of survey respondents were female.

⁸⁰ Participant Survey Q10.

⁸¹ TDP Concept Note, pp.16 and 17.

⁸² Note: Interviews with stakeholders

having been dissatisfied with the gender balances achieved.⁸³ Stakeholder interviews suggest that almost all courses are attempting to reach a 50:50 male to female ratio in the absence of a target.⁸⁴

4.4. Collaboration

Consortium rationale and engagement between actors

The establishment of the consortium was convenience driven, based on course commonality (L&D programmes) and recommended by an external stakeholder (Start Network).⁸⁵ This resulted in the consortium being formulated without clear roles and responsibilities being defined. The Concept Note suggested that these, along with many other strategic tasks, would be defined in the 'inception phase' which was later dropped. This has resulted in several consortium-level commitments mentioned in the Concept Note not having been fulfilled.⁸⁶ The dropping of the inception phase, as well as implementing the project in phases as mentioned in the Concept Note, was deemed a mistake.⁸⁷

While stakeholders recognise the need to operate as a consortium and commitment to deliver TDP as a unified project, no unit in particular has been assigned to this. Save the Children is the lead agency and the need for consortium management was recognised when it split the role of TDP PM and Save HTS PM into two roles, which added one working day to the two roles.⁸⁸ The CMT meets regularly either by Skype or in person in London, usually monthly. Relationship/personality clashes and differing organisational views within the CMT had previously resulted in consortium difficulties and these were likely to have been exacerbated by a lack of a clearly articulated structure and components (e.g. strategy, communications, M&E – including reporting, understanding of roles and responsibilities). Steps have been taken to address this situation – specifically through a consortium-wide workshop in January 2016 – and stakeholders stated that these past difficulties, and willingness to address them, have enhanced current working relationships. Administrative changes have been made to address consortium-wide collaboration (e.g. putting documents into Box), but few have been made at a structural level (e.g. establishing a 'consortium secretariat', extending the role of the TDP PM, creating M&E framework tools, etc.).⁸⁹

When stakeholders were asked why the structure of the consortium has not been changed to address this, several interviewees identified 'lack of time' as a reason.⁹⁰ Only one CMT-level PM works full-time on the TDP component; and all felt they were managing complex courses across a wide geographic area and that their primary objective was adequate delivery of these.⁹¹

Apart from in the Concept Note, there was little evidence of consortium-wide objectives either being noted or implemented. The Concept Note identified a few consortium-wide objectives for delivery including:

⁸³ Quarterly Reports 3–7; Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁸⁴ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ These are captured in Annex 7: Results against Concept Note

⁸⁷ Report from Talent Development Review and Consortium-Building Workshop, 19 January 2016, p.3.

⁸⁸ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

- Collecting and disseminating lessons learnt with the Start Network and PIA (now CHS Alliance);⁹²
- Developing a long-term sustainability plan including stakeholder analysis, opportunities, targets, cost benefits of programmes (courses), etc.;⁹³
- Sign-up and delivery of agreed core principles of the project;⁹⁴
- Considering recommendations from the previous assessment of the pilot programmes under the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies;⁹⁵ and
- Incorporating training content developed by other projects (e.g. best practice in age and disability response) into all courses⁹⁶

Consortium partners' in-country collaboration has developed organically in a few countries and a specific decision was taken early in the project not to impose a coordination meeting requirement on project countries.⁹⁷ Implementing partner PMs of individual courses initiate in-country consortium meetings, which are informal and often meeting notes are not taken. The aim of the meetings might be around a specific event (e.g. a DEPP board visit) or unstated. All field-level people who had initiated or participated in meetings felt this was 'not their job' and cited their 'lack of time'.⁹⁸

The Concept Note also indicated that consortium-related activities would take place at field (implementation) levels. These are:

- Referrals between the TDP and Shifting the Power project in countries of co-location – specifically, up to 20 people in each co-located country (p.12);
- Inviting Age and Disability focal points to deliver age and disability sessions (p.12);
- The TDP explores sharing a pool of local trainers or facilitators and resources (pp.12 and 13); and
- The TDP will attach its country or regional networks to those developed by other projects (e.g. Shifting the Power) (pp.12 and 13)

4.5. Contextualisation

Contextualisation is not defined by the project and therefore participants and stakeholders interviewed defined it differently. In general, people identified contextualisation as a concept that could occur at four different levels:⁹⁹

1. **Country:** the course was relevant to the country in which it was being conducted;
2. **Sector:** the course was relevant to the humanitarian sector and current emergencies;

⁹² TDP Concept Note, p.8.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ TDP Concept Note, p.9.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.9 and 10.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.12.

⁹⁷ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

3. **Workplace/situational:** the course was relevant to the situations in which participants would find themselves in their workplace; and
4. **Individual:** the course was relevant to the individuals/groups who attended the courses (e.g. their learning style and group dynamic).

One interviewee gave perhaps the closest definition to what was intended in the Concept Note, which is: To make sure that the material is linked to specific situations and emergencies in the region and area where the course is being delivered; adapting illustrations, scenarios and elements to enable the participants relate to these specifically.¹⁰⁰

Using country relevance to indicate contextualisation, participants were asked if they felt that the course was relevant to the country in which they were working,¹⁰¹ 94 per cent of respondents indicated 'yes', and of those 75 per cent listed a way the course indicated to them it was relevant.

How is the course relevant to the country in which you are working?

'We host over 200,000 refugees and are a regional hub for humanitarian organisations. We are involved in every regional response.'

Kenyan respondent

'Bangladesh is natural disaster-prone area. Floods, tidal surge happens a lot. Though Government is doing well to take care of the situation yet some help from NGO level makes it easier. So yeah, considering this situation this course is relevant to the country I am working in.'

Bangladeshi respondent

'Due to the number of refugees and refugee camps in Jordan today, I felt that the course is very relevant to the needs of humanitarian workers in Jordan.'

Jordanian respondent

Examples of contextualisation varied by country, course and interpretation. HTS is broadly applying the above definition of contextualisation and people interviewed could point to specific examples, such as facilitators' use of specific country/regional examples to the trainings. Context is also broadly applying the definition above and interviewees could point to specific examples such as bringing in guest speakers from the local context to speak to participants or references in workbooks being changed to the Middle East. Context is also the only project that appears to report quarterly on how it contextualises its courses.¹⁰² LfH indicated that it never intended to contextualise its material because it is principle based so works anywhere in the world.¹⁰³ LfH, rather, 'contextualises' according to learning styles and employs different learning methods. LfH can deliver in different languages, but felt it was inappropriate to make this a goal of the course.

During interviews a debate emerged related to contextualisation and language. A question interviewees raised was whether or not courses should be delivered in the most widely spoken local language (e.g. Bangla, Arabic, Amharic). The question was strongly linked in the minds of those who discussed it to outreach and the purpose of the course. Most interviewees agreed that if the purpose was to train a cadre of global aid

¹⁰⁰ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders

¹⁰¹ Participant Survey Q11.

¹⁰² Quarterly Reports Q2–Q7.

¹⁰³ Note: Interviews with Stakeholders.

workers who could work in humanitarian responses anywhere in the world then English was the appropriate language for course delivery. If, however, the purpose was to train national-level responders to better engage with communities while responding to emergencies in their own countries then local languages would be preferable. Stakeholders mentioned that, in almost all countries, only university graduates would be able to engage in the level of English required for TDP courses; and even then, in Jordan only certain university-level courses require English, so course eligibility is further narrowed.¹⁰⁴

Participants were asked in the survey if they would have preferred the course to be delivered in another language; 86 per cent replied 'no', indicating that English language delivery was sufficient.¹⁰⁵ Of the remaining 13 per cent who would have preferred it be delivered in another language, Bangla was identified 64 per cent of the time, followed by Arabic with 27 per cent, and Amharic and Kiswahili with 4 per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Participant Survey Q12.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

5.1.1. *Relevance/design*

The courses delivered through the TDP are successfully meeting participants' needs. Participants demonstrate knowledge and behaviour indicative of successful learning, and can identify their learning as enabling them to better contribute to the humanitarian sector.

Each course relies on a variety of adult learning methods and delivery approaches that enable participant learning. A majority of participants agreed that these facilitated their learning. Participants have a variety of ways to give feedback on their courses, and operational and implementing partners have made changes based on that feedback. There is no standardised feedback requirement across the TDP courses. Some are collecting a vast amount of feedback and data, but it is unclear how this is consolidated and analysed or if changes are made based on it.

While the courses are proving successful, the TDP consortium could be strengthened as could the coaching component. The TDP delivers courses and components through a complex matrix of relationships and contracts. It is resourced with, in effect, one full-time person – a part-time PM and part-time member of the MEL, both from Save the Children – and this leaves the consortium under-resourced to manage commitments and consortium-wide objectives. While CHS Alliance has worked to correct issues related to coaching delivery many residual issues remain.¹⁰⁶ Communication on reporting and accounting of coaching sessions through the coaching database could be improved, as could the monitoring and evaluation of the learning impact of involvement in the coaching component. The feedback loops between coaches, participants and CHS Alliance should be examined and strengthened.

These objectives are found in the most recent iterations of the logframe and Concept Note, but have not been clearly stated and reported on by operational partners. Without these commonly identified objectives, consortium-level reporting against them is missing. An additional complexity is added when considering how difficult it is to compare the different courses/components to each other. Doing so would require sophisticated methodologies and tools, which are lacking, as is a TOC. For example, assessing an entry-level, assignment-based, year-long course requires different tools than for measuring a senior-level, principle-based, three-month course. Both of these tools would be different again from measuring the service delivery coaching component.

Apart from this cross-TDP measurement, several gaps exist in the knowledge base, but these can be easily corrected with the application of a few tools. One of these gaps is that a lack of common terminology has caused confusion among stakeholders and led to people speaking at cross purposes, but this can be rectified with a common glossary.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

5.1.2. Effectiveness

The survey showed successful indications of effective learning and contribution towards professionalisation of the humanitarian sector. Content is being delivered in ways that enable most participants to learn and validate the adult learning methods of which the courses are comprised. Soft skills form the largest learning cluster identified and are a powerful learning outcome, because participants can take these into jobs in the humanitarian sector or future employment outside the sector. Effective learning is also evident in the impact on the daily work practices of participants.

Of the participants who received feedback, most of their line managers recognised their positive contribution the courses are making. Participants themselves felt they were gaining skills and knowledge that would make them more effective contributors to the sector. Participants self-identified a variety of 'hard skills' that they are now better able to use on the job, and line managers and participants linked increased ability to engage in work responsibilities with course participation.

The survey identified the most and least valuable elements of each course. Respondents placed a high value on meeting-based elements (e.g. simulations, workshops and webinars) and a low value on coaching and distance learning.

The main way that course effectiveness is measured is through use of self-assessment competency tools. The self-assessment competency tools are intended to provide a cross-TDP measurement rather than a clear indication of learning. The logframe requires these measurements, but determining measurements that could apply to all five components within a single logframe requires sophisticated tools and clarity about what can and cannot be measured comprehensively, making the current logframe unsuitable for its purpose.

All the courses share three competencies; Context and HTS, five; Context and LfH, four; and HTS and LfH, three. The data is incomplete because courses are ongoing. No single standardised method of collating or analysing the self-assessment data exists. Analysis showed that the TDP can output the indicators related to competencies for all courses and the outcome indicators, once indicators have been clearly defined. Improvements in raw data collection tools and storage are less important at this juncture and may be too difficult to achieve quickly before the end of the project. However, a standard calculation methodology is required between the courses; options have been suggested and templates shared with TDP.

5.1.3. Efficiency/equity

Course outreach is adequate and should continue until the end of the programme as it is currently being implemented. Key informants indicated that feedback on outreach has resulted in positive changes to course recruitment. Outreach uses a variety of methods, as indicated in participants' responses to survey question 5 and how they heard about the course. Use of online resources such as operational and implementing partner websites, job websites, and ReliefWeb are good practice in course outreach. However, given the number of participants who heard about the course through a colleague, friend, or

previous participant, a large opportunity is being missed in drawing in/advertising the course to, and through, current participants.¹⁰⁷

Almost one-quarter of survey respondents cited problems that inhibited their access to courses; these included workload, poor internet connectivity, electricity, traffic jams, difficulty with certain course elements and deployment to remote areas. While these are not major issues they should be considered in course design, especially in relation to the internet accessibility in countries. While all the operational and implementing partners have actively recruited women and attempted to improve gender diversity, they all also recognised that diversity needed to be improved and that no diversity objective was set for the whole project or any course. Neither has a plan for gender and social inclusion been developed or implemented. Survey results showed that participants felt their courses were diverse and that both men and women were actively engaging.

5.1.4. Collaboration

As cited in section 5.1.1, the TDP consortium lacks key structural components and resources that would facilitate success. While operational partners all stated their commitment to delivering courses/components through the consortium, the benefits of doing so are weakly evidenced. The primary benefit currently derived is the ability to access funding. The consortium's focus on objectives in the Concept Note is lacking. In-country collaboration is weak and lacks designated objectives and leadership, which is likely to be because there are few staff in country. While learning within each course is evident, there is no evidence of learning being shared between courses or at different structural levels of the TDP. Evidence also suggests that complex contractual negotiations at the outset hampered course delivery, and that consortium-level functioning and tasks were previously subsidiary to course delivery.¹⁰⁸ The coaching component needs specific examination because the viability of the coaching network has been called into question, as well as whether it will continue to be used past the completion of the TDP in 2017.¹⁰⁹

5.1.5. Context

Contextualisation has not been commonly framed throughout the TDP. Different stakeholders are applying different definitions of contextualisation. If a specific definition is applied with regard to relevance to the country, then participants state that the course has been contextualised because they see it as relevant to their country and can cite reasons why. Discussion about who the courses are attempting to reach is ongoing and this is linked to the debate over whether the courses should be delivered in English or a local language. If the courses are attempting to reach local responders evidence suggests it should be delivered in local languages. If courses are attempting to build capacity for international humanitarian response, then English is sufficient. While few survey respondents felt that course should be delivered in another language it was a point key informants repeatedly raised.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Participant Survey Q5.

¹⁰⁸ Notes: Interviews with Stakeholders.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

5.2. Recommendations for the future

Recognising that only 11 months of TDP implementation remain, the consultants have split the recommendations into immediate and strategic categories. Immediate recommendations are only those considered achievable within an 11-month period. Strategic recommendations are those that should be considered before the consortium reconstitutes for course delivery under a DEPP 2 submission.

5.2.1. Immediate recommendations

1. Strengthen consortium operations

- Using the logframe and Concept Note, discuss what objectives will be targeted for fulfilment before the end of the project.
- Consolidate agreed objectives into a single M&E reporting framework (i.e. table). If some objectives originally agreed on in the logframe or Concept Note are dropped, record this in an aide-memoire for the final evaluation and report.
- Create a quarterly reporting format that all courses can use, which reports against all objectives agreed on. Include:
 - A tracking element so partners can indicate the number of anecdotes they are submitting to the Start Network anecdote tracker;
 - Summary self-assessment competency data for each course;
 - Summary TDP figures for each course (see Annex 9 for an example);
 - Gender targets;
 - Changes made based on feedback;
 - Examples of contextualisation; and
 - A reporting annex on coaching monitoring from the CHS Alliance database
- Develop a meeting tracker and backdate it with meetings attended.

2. Use scheduled courses for cross-promotion

- For ongoing or courses yet to be conducted, include a component on the TDP and other courses within it.
- Include a call to action for current participants on how they can encourage TDP enrolment.

3. Clarify key definitions

- Define gender diversity for each course in each country. Use the International Labour Organization's 2016 Women at Work report, which gives percentages for women in the workplace in each country, as well as the number of women in skilled employment.¹¹¹
- Define contextualisation –consider the definition used in this review.
- Develop a glossary of terms that can be used uniformly in preparation for the next phase.

4. Share good practices identified by the Mid-Term Review

- Document the following lessons as best practice to share:
 - HTS collaboration with the government of Bangladesh;¹¹²

¹¹¹ www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/WCMS_457317/lang--en/index.htm.

- The experience of Danish Demining Group as an example of engagement with local partners;
- Use findings on soft skill acquisition and competencies to develop a case study in sector-wide impact; and
- Use findings on workplace impact/feedback to develop a case study on organisation-level impact.
- Conduct a review of the coaching component related to how it is structured and its impact as a service delivery component.
- Hold a cross-project learning workshop – like the Mid-Term Review that Context conducted for its own courses.
- Share the Mid-Term Review with implementing partners so they know what is working well, as well as where, and how, their courses are succeeding.

5. Standardise and complete the competency data

- Use a standardised approach for calculating the competency improvement indicators; a suggested approach of standardising the calculation method has been provided to the TDP in Excel format.
- Complete the data files with all available self-assessment data as soon as possible; the data will highlight specific competencies that are being developed more than others.

5.2.2. Strategic recommendations

1. Revisit the consortium structure

- Reconceptualise the consortium including:
 1. Structure, including how the coaching component is integrated;
 2. Frameworks and strategies, including a gender and social inclusion strategy; and
 3. Resources.
- This should be done at all levels (i.e. management, operational, and implementation).

2. Revise the monitoring and evaluation construction

- Develop a coherent TOC.
- Construct one or more logframes as appropriate.
- Clearly define sources and tools.
- Standardise data files.
- Hold TDP-wide, consolidated M&E reporting at the management/oversight level of the consortium and support the identified person/body responsible for this.

3. Streamline feedback mechanisms

- Standardise feedback mechanisms.
- Reduce to no more than one per three-month period to ease participant ‘feedback fatigue’.
- Only incorporate feedback mechanisms where capacity exists to consolidate and analyse these.
- Inform participants what will be done with their feedback.

¹¹² An initial case study developed by HTS is included as Annex 13.

- Revise the coaching feedback mechanisms to ensure that:
 - Coaches are interviewed and references checked;
 - All courses are incorporating teaching for participants on appropriate coaching behaviour and relationships and what to do if inappropriate behaviour occurs; and
 - There is reporting to courses using CHS Alliance coaches on the database as well as record of changes made to coaching based on participant feedback.

4. Conduct short complementary studies

- To complement this review and the planned final evaluation, review the pedagogical elements and delivery methods of the courses.
- Include follow-up on course elements participants identified as most/least valuable.
- Conduct a study on economies of scale in delivering courses through the current consortium structure; a value for money study should be conducted looking at qualitative/quantitative data across the courses to discover if the consortium could deliver more within its current construction.

5. Revisit the target audience and language

- Closely examine course elements that rely on the internet and internet availability for participants to increase course accessibility.
- Discuss who the TDP courses are seeking to reach, at what level, and the best language to deliver them in.
- If courses want to build the capacity of international and local humanitarian responders, consider delivering in English *and* a local language.

6. List of Annexes

Annex 1: Desk review summary

Annex 2: TDP English language survey data – Mid-Term Review

Annex 3: Interview guide

Annex 4: TDP French language survey data – Mid-Term Review

Annex 5: TDP logframe

Annex 6: Mid-term results against logframe

Annex 7: Mid-term results against Concept Note

Annex 8: Participant expectations by course not met

Annex 9: TDP overview spreadsheet example

Annex 10: CHCF revised competencies

Annex 11: Self-Assessment Competency Data Summary Spreadsheet

Annex 12: HTS Case Study on Bangladesh Government Collaboration