
Report of the

Third Emergency Personnel Seminar

Crowne Plaza Hotel LaGuardia, New York, USA

April 27-29 2000

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background to EPS3

Emergency Personnel Seminar 3 (EPS3) was held in New York between April 27-29 2000. The purpose of this seminar was to build on the work of the previous seminars in the series, EPS 1 and EPS 2 held in Dublin 1997 and Brussels 1998 respectively. For further information on these events please see the summary paper by Simon Lawry-White (Appendix 1).

The background of eighteen months of mass mobilisations was considered to be a particular theme of the event. Between the end of 1998 when Hurricane Mitch struck the Honduras and February 2000 when flooding overwhelmed Mozambique, there had been a continuum of demand for humanitarian aid personnel. Mass mobilisation was seen in two forms. One form was the continual strong demand in the sector over a period of time. The other was the peaks of demand, as in the Balkans crisis, and Kosovo in particular, which was thought to have impacted other programmes.

The subtitle of the seminar, '*In Kosovo's Shadow*' was chosen to reflect the longer-term shadow or effect of mass mobilisation, rather than a focus on Kosovo itself.

As with the previous Emergency Personnel Seminars, RedR took responsibility for organising the practical aspects of EPS3. Invitations were sent to around 160 individuals and 120 organisations in a broad range of agencies involved with humanitarian aid and disaster relief, including NGOs, INGOs and official bodies such as the United Nations. There were 41 attendees, who are listed with contact details in Appendix 5.

USAID and DFID provided most of the funding for EPS 3. The remainder was provided through fees from agencies and individuals attending the seminar.

1.2 Aim, objectives and structure of EPS2

The aim of EPS3 remained the same as for the previous seminars: to improve the ability of participating organisations, both individually and as a community, to find, select, prepare and retain personnel for emergency operations.

Objectives identified by participants included:

- ✓ Sharing and developing best practice
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Individual collaborative opportunities
- ✓ Developing collaboration between agencies
- ✓ Improving systems for rapid recruitment and deployment of relief workers

The structure for EPS 3 was worked out by e-mail discussions and face-to-face meetings between members of the Steering Committee. The meeting was comprised of:

- An introductory session for those who had not attended an EPS before
- Review of progress against action point agreed in EPS2
- Presentations of research findings
- Group work
- Plenary discussion and decision making

The full agenda is included as Appendix 4.

1.3 Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to the members of the EPS3 steering group: Bobby Lambert (RedR), Alice Tligui (IHE) and Mechthild Nussbaumer (CINFO) for the creation of the seminar; to John Telford and Jim Good for their deft and professional handling of the event which made EPS 3 such a success and to Simon Lawry-White who carried out a research brief under severe time constraints. Particular thanks are due to Helene Boof-Reichenbach who stepped in at the last minute to help manage the event in New York when illness struck; to the

staff of the Crowne Plaza LaGuardia for helping to create and run the event long-distance; to USAID and DFID for substantial funding of the EPS 3 and to all participants at the seminar whose enthusiasm and ideas made the event a vibrant and productive occasion.

Section 2 Opening sessions and reports from EPS 2 action groups

2.1 Emergency Personnel Seminars: The Story so Far

Simon Lawry-White presented a short paper on the previous Emergency Personnel Seminars outlining the objectives, issues discussed and outcomes of EPS 1 and EPS 2. The aim of this session was to give all new participants a foundation from which to base their inputs and discussions at EPS 3, and to enable EPS 3 to progress discussions rather than cover old ground. There was around a 15% return rate to the seminar series, with 7% of people having attended both previous Emergency Personnel Seminars, and 70% new to the seminar series.

2.2 Reports from EPS 2 working groups

At the end of EPS 2 thirteen action groups had been set up to research:

- the training of humanitarian personnel
- the personnel pool and
- the future of the EPS series.

In the 18-month gap between EPS2 and EPS3, action was found to have been taken on most points, with three out of the thirteen action points showing no progress. The reports back from the EPS 2 action groups are summarised in tables below.

Follow-up on Action Points from EPS2

1. Training

What	How	Who	Report at EPS 3
1.1 Research agency practice on field staff well-being support issues	Gather information on how agencies ensure / promote physical and mental well-being for their staff (e.g. coping with stress)	Pascale Gilbert-Miguet (WHO) focal point Cathy Lennox-Cook (AAH) support and information sharing	A report by Pascale Gilbert-Miguet on physical and mental well-being of field staff is available via Xavier Leus at WHO EHA Department, email Leusx@who.ch
1.2 Clarify the common core competencies required for all emergency personnel	Carry out an extensive survey, and / or use the information gathered for the foundation training report for EPS2	Rory Downham (Bioforce) or Katy Dent (Merlin) possible focal points. <i>To be confirmed</i> Support from Geoff Loane (APSO), Cathy Lennox Cook (AAH), Ajit Phadnis (DROP)	Rory Downham, Alice Tligui and Lucy Markby (Merlin) met 3 times. Research was carried out and the findings presented to EPS3. (Presentation included in this report)
1.3 Foundation training quality control	Individuals to seek agreement within their own organisations on systems (protocols) for quality control of foundation training, and share this with the wider group of interested participants	Bob MacPherson (CARE) focal point	Information on basic training by OSCE is available via Sune Daniellson at osce.org . The HPN (ODI) agreed to send their publication on “Operational Security Management in Violent Environments” to all EPS3 participants InterAction’s web site has a new list of training opportunities “Disaster Response Training Database” See www.interaction.org or contact Jim Bishop Jbishop@interaction.org phone 202 667 8227 x104
1.4 Safety and security course curricula	Collate and compare existing curricula for safety and security training (content, duration, target audiences/level)	Koenraad van Brabant (RRN/ODI) focal point. Support from Selena Whitehead (VSO), Vladimir Mijovic (UNHCR), Bob MacPherson (CARE), Bobby Lambert (RedR). Information sharing - Joan Coyle (BRCS), Cathy Lennox-Cook (AAH)	Significant progress through RedR security training building on the Interaction curriculum, and in consultation with ODI. See www.redr.org for more details.
1.5 Support to HATI (Humanitarian Assistance Training Inventory)	Provide continued moral support and seek wide support from the rest of the EPS2 group	Tim Foster (RedR Int.) focal point	Humanitarian Assistance Training Inventory _ is maintained by Relief Web . Other sources are One World _ listing of courses offered by One World members and Medicus Mundi _ listing of postgraduate training programmes in international health. Further databases are planned by the International Health Exchange and the Humanitarian Practice Network

2. Emergency Personnel Pool

What	How	Who	Report at EPS3
2.1 Develop a common competency framework between agencies	Share ideas and proposals for a common framework	Susan Reihl (IRC) focal point, with backup from Bobby Lambert (RedR) and Paul Emes (IFRC) Joan Coyle (BRCS), Sangeeta Patel (HelpAge Int.), Agnes Delahaie (MSF-B), Karen Michels (MSF-H), Cathy Lennox-Cook (AAH), Ajit Phadnis (DROP) and Katy Dent (MERLIN) also interested	No working group as such, RedR developed a framework and e.g. post assignment assessment forms, and made it available to other agencies.
2.2 Linking registers to allow agencies and potential staff to have better access to each other	Provide a focal point for discussion between register providers and users on a shared register of emergency personnel	Bobby Lambert (RedR) focal point	There was a meeting of the register agencies in February 1999 for informal exchanging information. Informal contacts have continued. Bioforce and RedR; APSO and IHE - have informal referral arrangements.
2.3 Directory of aid agencies' employment opportunities to allow emergency personnel to make better informed career decisions	Bring together existing information on aid agencies' employment opportunities	Jane Herbert (Christian Aid) and Alice Tligui joint focal points Mechthild Nussbaumer (Cinfo) and Cathy Lennox-Cook (AAH) also interested	No action taken
2.4 Security and safety for emergency personnel	Provide a focal point for information on security for emergency personnel (other than training - see 1.4)	Koenraad van Brabant (ODI/RRN) focal point Bobby Lambert (RedR), Joan Coyle (BRCS), Bob MacPherson (CARE), Vladimir Mijovic (UNHCR) and Mechthild Nussbaumer (Cinfo) also interested	ODI have produced a paper on best practice. HSPN – is the VOICE in Brussels database/security network initiative –ECHO funded
2.5 Establish comparison of qualifications and registration of health professionals from different countries	Carry out research	Alice Tligui (IHE)	IHE producing the Health Recruiters Handbook due out Autumn 2000 and there will be a seminar in London around the same time - EPS3 participants will be informed.

2. Emergency Personnel Pool - continued

What	How	Who	Report at EPS 3
2.6 Develop field office human resources guidelines	Agencies to look at developing their own field HRM guidelines and share developments with other agencies Take draft MSF guidelines, circulate and adapt them as appropriate MSF to circulate their guidelines to interested people when they are ready	Karen Michels (MSF-Holland) focal point. Agnes Delahaie (MSF-Belgium), Karen Michels (MSF-Holland) Susan Reihl (IRC), Katy Dent (MERLIN), Jane Herbert (Christian Aid), Sangeeta Patel (HelpAge Int.), Helen Minikin (SCF(UK)), Alice Tligui (IHE), Cathy Lennox-Cook (AAH) also interested	MSF circulated their guidelines. IHE, together with WHO, are producing a local staff management guideline due out Summer 2000 – written by Jim Henry. EPS3 participants will be informed on publication
2.7 Establish information and opinions on staff associations for emergency personnel to determine possible developments needed	Investigate the current position Canvas opinion Suggest possible areas for development	Alice Tligui (IHE), Katy Dent (MERLIN), Sangeeta Patel (HelpAge Int.) Information to Cathy Lennox-Cook (AAH)	No action taken

3. Future Emergency Personnel Seminars

What	How	Who	Report at EPS 3
3.1 Make preparations for EPS3 and ensure continuity from EPS1 and EPS2	Establish a management group for EPS3 Secure funds, staff and other resources needed Provide focal point for linking with EPS1 and 2	Alice Tligui (IHE), Bobby Lambert (RedR)	EPS 3 happened!

Section 3: Current HR issues in Emergency Personnel

Simon Lawry-White, EPS3 researcher and independent management consultant, presented a research paper on Current Human Resource Issues in Emergency Personnel to EPS3. Part of the executive summary of the research report is reproduced here, while the main report forms Appendix 2.

“This study was commissioned by the Emergency Personnel Seminar Steering Group to provide an up to date view of human resource practice around emergency personnel in emergency response implementing and specialist recruitment agencies. The overall aim of the survey is to stimulate reflection and debate ahead of, and during EPS 3.

A quick survey approach was used to obtain feedback from agencies by e-mailing a list of thirty-two statements and inviting them to say to what extent they agreed with them. A further nine questions asked them to provide further details including their perceived successes and failures, their current top three concerns with regard to emergency personnel. Thirty-two completed questionnaires were returned, about half the number sent out. The responses came from individuals and may or may not represent the consensus in their agency.

The survey shows that the recruitment and retention of staff is still the number one issue for agencies working in emergency response. In this regard, little seems to have changed since the first Emergency Personnel Seminar held in November 1997. Agencies are particularly concerned about the difficulty they have in recruiting and retaining good emergency field programme managers.

Overall, agencies seem to be fairly upbeat about the current state of their emergency personnel human resource performance. Judging by the responses to the survey interviewing, briefing and de-briefing are all being well handled, insurance policies for emergency personnel are adequate, and adequate stress/trauma counselling is available. The majority felt that their salaries and benefits are competitive, although a significant minority did not agree.

The feedback seems to be contradictory in a few cases. For example, agencies generally consider that they have made advances in the recruitment, training and deployment of staff from within the region of operation, and yet this topic hardly features in the list of agency successes or in the top three emergency personnel issues. Also, while agencies are relatively happy that emergency personnel are well managed on the ground, this does not seem to fit with the stated difficulty of finding experienced field managers.

A few statements in the survey were specifically aimed at agencies' experience of the Kosovo crisis. For those agencies directly involved, there was a general consensus that their response to the Kosovo crisis weakened their existing programmes. They were equally clear view that Kosovo did not negatively affect their response to crises that came after Kosovo.

The survey indicates that, to some extent, agencies have evaluated their responses to recent humanitarian crises for lessons on human resources, and that the lessons learnt have affected their HR practice.

The results show that agencies are deploying inexperienced personnel, either as a matter of policy to develop the skills of new people, or because posts cannot otherwise be filled. This ties in with agencies' perceptions that they are in competition with other agencies for personnel from the same pool.

Section 5 of the main report includes a brief review of three inter-agency initiatives in Europe and North America - Sphere, People In Aid and InterAction PVO Standards, all of which potentially impact on human resource policy procedure and practice with regard to emergency personnel”.

Some strategic issues were highlighted in the presentation, which helped to stimulate discussion on topics for group work. These included:

- *How can the recruitment and retention of emergency managers be improved? Is an investment in permanent staff managers (with some career prospects) necessary or can agencies rely on the band of skilled people who have built their own careers as freelancers in emergency management?*

- *How can emergency personnel, and particularly those on first assignment, be given a more realistic view of what their working environment and experience is likely to be and be given proper supervision when on assignment, so that they are less likely to lose heart after one assignment?*
- *To what extent have in-region recruitment and personnel management systems been developed? Have agency HR management systems have been applied to national staff?*
- *Is there still life in a discussion about joint registers to reduce duplication and concentrate the management of such data into a few centres of excellence? Is there a form of information exchange or pooling of personnel details that can work to the advantage of all in a competitive environment?*
- *Has stress induced by poor management, and indeed stress as a whole, has become less of an issue for emergency personnel, or did it just not appear in the survey?*
- *In an industry this size, is this level of recruitment preparedness and risk taking over the quality of personnel really acceptable? Can any of the Sphere, People in Aid or InterAction standards be met in the current situation? Are there mechanisms that can increase the size of the labour pool and reduce the level of scrambling for personnel to staff up each new crisis?*

And, in relation to specific sector initiatives

- *Does Sphere need to be more explicit on HR, or will a commitment to achieving the standards necessitate improvements in HR practice anyway? Do pilot agencies see that it will impact on their HR policy and practice?*
- *Have those UK/Irish organisations within the pilot of the People in Aid Code benefited from the last two years experience with the Code and from the recent social audit?*
- *Do InterAction members consider that additional codes or guide are required to promote good practice in HR concerning emergency personnel?*

Section 4: Competencies, qualifications and experience

Alice Tligui (International Health Exchange) and Rory Downham (Bioforce) gave a presentation on baseline or minimum competencies for aid workers, based on a survey done of field staff who were early on in their careers as aid workers. For the full report, see Appendix 3.

The core competencies were distilled from the existing competency frameworks of the ICRC, IFRC and UNHCR for personal qualities; a brainstorming session of the working group provided the lists of technical competencies and the knowledge based competencies. Survey members were asked to rate competencies on a scale of 1-5, 1 being essential, 5 being not required at all.

The research focused on first/second mission aid workers. The questionnaire was mailed out by the agencies that had deployed the personnel. There were 39 responses from personnel who had worked for 16 agencies. Human Resources personnel attending EPS3 were also asked to complete a questionnaire to see how their rankings of competencies would compare with the field workers.

The main conclusion from the survey was that there seemed to be consensus amongst early career aid workers that personal qualities are more important than both contextual knowledge and generalised technical skills in contributing to doing their job well, and that contextual knowledge was more important than technical knowledge. The importance of personal qualities was further emphasised by the HR personnel feedback.

As rated by	Field workers	Human resources personnel
Top 5 Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoken English • Team working • Flexibility • Interpersonal skills • Security awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Teamwork • Motivation • Commitment to humanitarian values • Knowledge of humanitarian values
Bottom 5 Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local language(written) • vehicle repair • income/expense accounting • budget setting • salary administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local language (written) • vehicle repair • salary admin • dismissal • bookkeeping

Competencies rated below 2.0 were perceived as the most essential, competencies rated higher than 3.0 were seen as unnecessary. The most significant differences in competency rating between field workers and human resources personnel were:

Competencies	Field workers	Human resources personnel	Difference
Stress management	2.4	1.5	0.9
Knowledge of humanitarian values	1.9	1.3	0.6
Commitment to humanitarian values	1.9	1.3	0.6
Driving	3.0	2.3	0.7
Budget setting	3.7	2.8	0.9
Income/expenditure accounts	3.7	2.9	0.8

The presentation raised a number of points in discussion:

- Technical skills are important too –the presenters responded they were trying to unearth the essential skills
- If the order of questions had been slipped with technical skills listed first, this may have produced a different result
- If the scorings went from 1 to 5, then 3 should be seen as less necessary, not unnecessary
- Personal qualities and interpersonal skills were assessed together in the survey, though they are different
- What about the size of the agency – smaller organisations might rate technical skills higher
- Why was gender separated out – why not consider diversity as a whole?
- If people had been asked for the skills necessary to achieve operational objectives, rather than “doing their job well”, a different profile might have emerged.

A question arose as to whether it was possible to interview for the essential personal qualities. The majority of participants were convinced that it is possible to interview for these softer skills as well as technical skills.

Section 5: Small group sessions

Led by the EPS3 facilitators, the meeting undertook a ranking exercise to determine where there was the greatest consensus around topics the seminar wanted to explore further. The meeting split into three groups following the presentation of the first research paper to address the following topics:

- Preparedness for surges in demand
- New recruits and Local staffing
- Field Management and Stress

The initial question of ‘what can be done to help one another to...?’ was taken as the starting point for each group discussion. The results of the first group discussions were summarised by facilitators and carried forward into the more action-oriented ‘Operationalising Good Practice’ sessions on the Saturday afternoon, where a structured format for identifying ways to progress these issues was applied.

5.1 Group 1 - Preparedness for surges in demand:

Questions addressed:

What can be done to help one another to:

- *Reduce the negative impact of surge deployment (such as diversion from, e.g. from Kosovo to Sierra Leone)*
- *Better develop, use and maintain emergency registers and rosters*
- *Better integrate HR preparedness into operational preparedness*

The group discussed the shortcoming in HR systems highlighted by the Kosovo crisis and other disasters leading to a surge in demand. It then moved on to consider what had worked well in addressing surges in demand for staff; and how to resolve the question of maintaining a supply of staff in crisis situations.

Responding to a major crisis requires a combination of the right sources (registers - internal and external – and specialist recruiters) and the right human resource systems.

Shortcomings from the Kosovo crisis:

- No Human Resources plan in place
 - We were not ready for this scale of operation
 - a plan for HR was not included in the formulation of the operations plan
- TOR /contracts were not properly drawn up due to
 - lack of communication between HR/Engineers
 - speed of requests for people to go on assignment
- Systems were not in place to respond to the volume of requests, so the field took over recruitment, resulting in mistakes in salaries and contracts.
- Difficulties in tracking peoples’ movements (going to the field and returning)
- Communications issues between field and the UN for personnel requests
- Gaps in personnel
 - not enough IT people, and anyway their skills are too costly
 - some candidates did not meet required standards
- Lack of internal communication within organisation about human resources needs

Lessons learned from Kosovo and other mass mobilisations:

- ✓ Need to review requirements of job – are the qualifications, length of contract, realistic
- ✓ Circulated list of available people to agencies and contacted register members re: availability and language skills for Mozambique (RedR)
- ✓ If more time had been spent getting the right people at the beginning, rather than quantity, better results would have been achieved and fewer people overall would have been needed
- ✓ An HR person should be included in emergency response teams to deal with the induction and orientation of staff, explain benefits etc, deal with personnel issues and handle local recruitment.
- ✓ Assessments of projects need to incorporate human resources requirements into the project design, and establishing Terms of Reference

How to find the appropriate people:

Registers

It is possible to use either an organisational register or an agency register, or both.

- Christians Abroad have an on-line register and CARE Canada is developing an on-line register.

Internal and external registers can be complementary. A single register agency cannot meet all an NGO's human resources needs. On the other hand maintaining an internal register is time-consuming and needs constant updating. More and more agencies seem to be going to internal registers.

Register agencies need to know the culture of the hiring organisation and be able to evaluate whether a person will be able to work within a given environment. They need to prepare organisational profiles, showing organisational values but also pay scales and benefits, so that potential candidates know what to expect.

There is a need for a consortium of registers due to the specialisation of some rosters. Keeping international registers can help to ensure a cultural match between people and assignments.

Global Corps is updating their web site and will include information about other organisations

A recurrent theme was the difficulties in the recruitment and retention of *senior programme managers and co-ordinators*. They need to have knowledge of the organisation they are working with, either from previous experience with that body or through an induction /orientation, to ensure a mesh of values.

A priority is to *develop staff skills to move into a management positions* in an emergency context.

People may also be *labelled into certain positions*, limiting their promotional experience.

We can provide *opportunities to develop local staff* and give them the opportunity to move into international positions after their experience gained in a local emergency but there can be problems with this, such as getting visas for third countries.

How can younger/less experienced people be given a chance for field experience rather than relying on the same experienced people? Giving younger people initial field experience bonds them to an organisation. MSF make sure 30% of personnel are volunteers. The bigger the crisis, the more new people can be accommodated within it.

Mitigating surges in demand:

Possible strategies for meeting surge in demand:

- Rely on a succession of retirees/ex-staff who can be brought in at short notice for the short term
- Establish a telephone hot-line for people wanting to express interest or getting more information on whether they could be considered. British Red Cross have a telephone service and VITA in the USA handle such queries.
- For specialists, target professional networks more carefully
- Set up Emergency Response Units (e.g Red Cross network)
- Make better use of the Internet for posting vacancies and allowing people to register their interest.
- Conduct learning reviews after each major emergency
- Augment human resources capacity at HQ but especially in the field from the outset.

5.2 Group 2 - New recruits and local staff:

Questions addressed:

What can be done to help one another to:

- *Find them*
- *Prepare them*
- *Manage them*
- *Retain them*
- *Increase the pool of available aid workers*

New recruits were identified as people new to the sector, not just a particular agency. The group's discussion of issues and possible solutions is summarised in the table below.

Issue	Solution
Getting new recruits accepted by the agency, by both field managers and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress the benefit of new recruits to the field/ organisation, (e.g. lower salary levels) • Career movement within and between agencies – emphasise common interests, not the differences • Put new recruits with senior mentors in the field (shadowing, feeder schools)
Very high expectations on country directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-evaluate the role of country director • Go for reality based job descriptions, not the idealised • Break out CD roles to different personnel, if possible, to make the job more recruitable
Donor requirements e.g. citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate donors
Specialised skills (evolution of new areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised sourcing contracts, provider agencies acting as central information sources • Targeted selection
How to forecast staffing and personnel trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read (and analyse) donor requests • Integration of Human Resources in operations and strategic planning
Diversity, including local recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change personnel policies, go for affirmative action • Mechanisms to get locally recruited staff into the system • Decentralised recruitment systems • Share examples of local pay packages – bench-marking

5.3 Group 3 - Field Management and stress

Questions addressed:

Field Management:

What can be done to help one another:

- *Define of a good manager*
- *Improve field management through*
 - *individual managers*
 - *organisational level (systems, structure, culture)*
- *Recruitment and development strategies*
- *Who manages the managers?*

Stress

What can be done to help one another to:

- *Mitigate field-staff and HQ staff stress?*
- *Manage staff stress in the field?*
- *Address stress on return?*

(The issue of stress was postponed to the Saturday session on preparing and developing staff.)

Definition of Field Management = Create and lead the team

A lot has already been written on good management. Each organisation is not fundamentally and uniquely different – those who stick to this view suffer from Terminal Uniqueness Syndrome (TUS).

Factors to consider in looking at management styles:

- Leadership vs. management
- How much is agency specific?
- Technical skills (not just one person but the team)
- Staff management

Identified staff management qualities

It was recognised that these qualities do not have to be found in just one person, but should be present in a team. It was also noted that *different skills/style* may be required for different stages of an emergency response

- *hiring and firing, performance management*
- *team-building and develops team spirit*
- *diplomacy, public relations, good networker, developing partnerships with donors/other organisations*
- *conflict management*
- *communications skills, cultural/contextual awareness*
- *project finance control*
- *vision, analysis*
- *good at delegating– super people don't exist*
- *helps develop new managers*

Recruitment strategies for field management:

Catch-'99' operates for many (but not all) organisations, which are caught in the dichotomy of an organisational preference for managers experienced with that particular organisation and also in the field, but not enough people meeting those requirements.

Issue	Suggested solution
Insiders – the good people are recruited and assigned swiftly <i>BUT</i> Outsiders – by virtue of being outside an organisation they are not seen to be eligible for recruitment Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may not be able to represent the agency • They will see all the faults 	Middle position/ people from 'outside' the organisation Bring in potential No1s at No 2 level and promote them quickly Bring in outsiders at No 1 level immediately after the initial emergency – own people first, others soon after
'Ego' – Potential managers feeling they don't need training	Staff development within organisations – 20% training, 80% mentoring on-the-job Internal roster mechanisms
Operations budgets don't include HR costs	Allocating HR costs to projects – making sure training/holidays/security costs are factored into budgets from the outset

Other ideas

- ✓ Share definitions of job titles and specifications between agencies through - *Monday Developments (InterAction)*, Internal documents, Organograms vs job titles.
- ✓ Research/investigate how to extend "useful life" of managers – reducing stress and improving retention
- ✓ Investigate needs and practicality and current availability of common management training: to create the next generation.
- ✓ Research into why staff leave the sector
- ✓ Share training policies and non-monetary incentives
- ✓ Advocate against Terminal Uniqueness Syndrome
- ✓ Look for options for managers to get out/translate skills to other markets/fields

Section 6: Case Studies

Presentations on recent good practice initiatives were given by Tearfund, the British Red Cross and UNHCR.

6.1 People in Aid Code– Tearfund and British Red Cross

People in Aid was not directly represented at EPS3. Two of the nine UK/Ireland agencies that have been piloting the People in Aid *Code of Best Practise in the Management and Support of Personnel* (1998:9) shared their experience to date.

Tearfund (David Talbot – Personnel Officer, Disaster Response)

Tearfund has been implementing the People in Aid Code of Best Practice since 1997, when the code was first agreed.

The Executive Director and the Trustees gave a commitment to implementing the code. Internal audit processes have been implemented and an external social audit has recently been completed using social audit principles developed by the New Economics Foundation. The process has included:

1. A questionnaire was sent to all categories of international staff
2. Internal questionnaire to personnel managers and line mangers
3. Focus groups were set up with National Staff
4. Examination of existing documentation

Outputs:

1. An initial report with recommendations
2. Action plan
3. Final report to People in Aid
4. External audit was done in March 2000, report due in June

British Red Cross (Leanne Taylor, International Personnel Manager)

- The process of implementing People in Aid is on-going – it is not a one off event - time frames must be realistic
- The implementation has proved very time consuming
- Having operational and HR management together on the project team has been vital
- Following the publication of the report which examines the performance of all agencies piloting the Code, we will meet to review the usefulness of the Code itself.

Lessons learned:

About the code:

- Need to explain the vision to individuals
- Implementation is not easy
- Use as a guide to best practice rather than the rule.

About the process:

- It's time consuming
- Endorsement by the Executive Director was critical
- Worth looking for the current internal institutional knowledge
- Get started and keep going - don't lose momentum
- Ensure clearly defined work packages
- Appropriate reporting systems were developed
- Information is a spur to action – once the process was known it gathered its own momentum
- Project TEAM is critical, not just leaving it to a nominated individual
- Up to us to manage the implementation ourselves

- The process has led to more consultation with staff - we thought we understood the issues before but now have clear evidence of what the organisation does well and where it needs to improve in terms of its HR practice.
- The key issues that emerged from consultation were 1. Career development and 2. Security
- There are parts of the Code we are not responsible for, so here we advocate to the IFRC and the ICRC
- The process needs a senior champion
- It is too early to tell if the Code is improving operational programme quality

6.2 UNHCR – Michel Gaudé, Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section

- UNHCR has developed a “fire brigade” type arrangement using internal and external resources
- UNHCR has no choice but to respond to all refugee situations because of its mandate from the General Assembly of the UN
- The organisation has 5,000 plus staff and an office in most countries

There is a sequence of responses, depending on the scale of response required. (Please see diagram below).

1. Activate the local UNHCR structures.
2. Activate the Emergency Preparedness and Response Section. This includes 5 EPR Officers involved in operations, assessment and liaison, plus 2 Admin./finance officers and senior administrator to organise admin. and recruitment on the spot. There is a proposal to double the number of EPROs, but to bring people onto contracts where they will have 6 months employment in a 12 month period. The plan is to add IT/telecoms and logistics, plus possibly a full time trainer.
3. Roster of UNHCR staff. The roster has 30 names of volunteers, which stay on the roster for 6 months. They must be available within 72 hours and they will not be asked to serve for more than 2 months. Their supervisors must endorse their participation. In the last round, there were 120 volunteers from which 30 were chosen. They must attend a 10-day intensive training, mostly based around simulations. A geographical and gender balance is maintained. There are 5 seats reserved for outsiders on the training course. This roster is now open to local staff.
4. Pool of senior managers. UNHCR has been criticised in the past for fielding too many junior people. In response, directors and senior managers are now ready to be deployed if necessary but only for large or complex emergencies.

In addition, UNHCR deploys external resources. Again in order:

1. From the standby agreements with the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils and United Nations Volunteers. Other agreements are being considered. These are all on 72 hour standby.
2. A new roster of former UNHCR staff is being created, for those with 5 years' experience or more and who have left within the last 5 years.
3. Commercial service contracts for support on the spot – providing base camp catering, laundry etc.
4. There are now also a few contracts with governments.

6.3 RedR - Helene Boof-Reichenbach

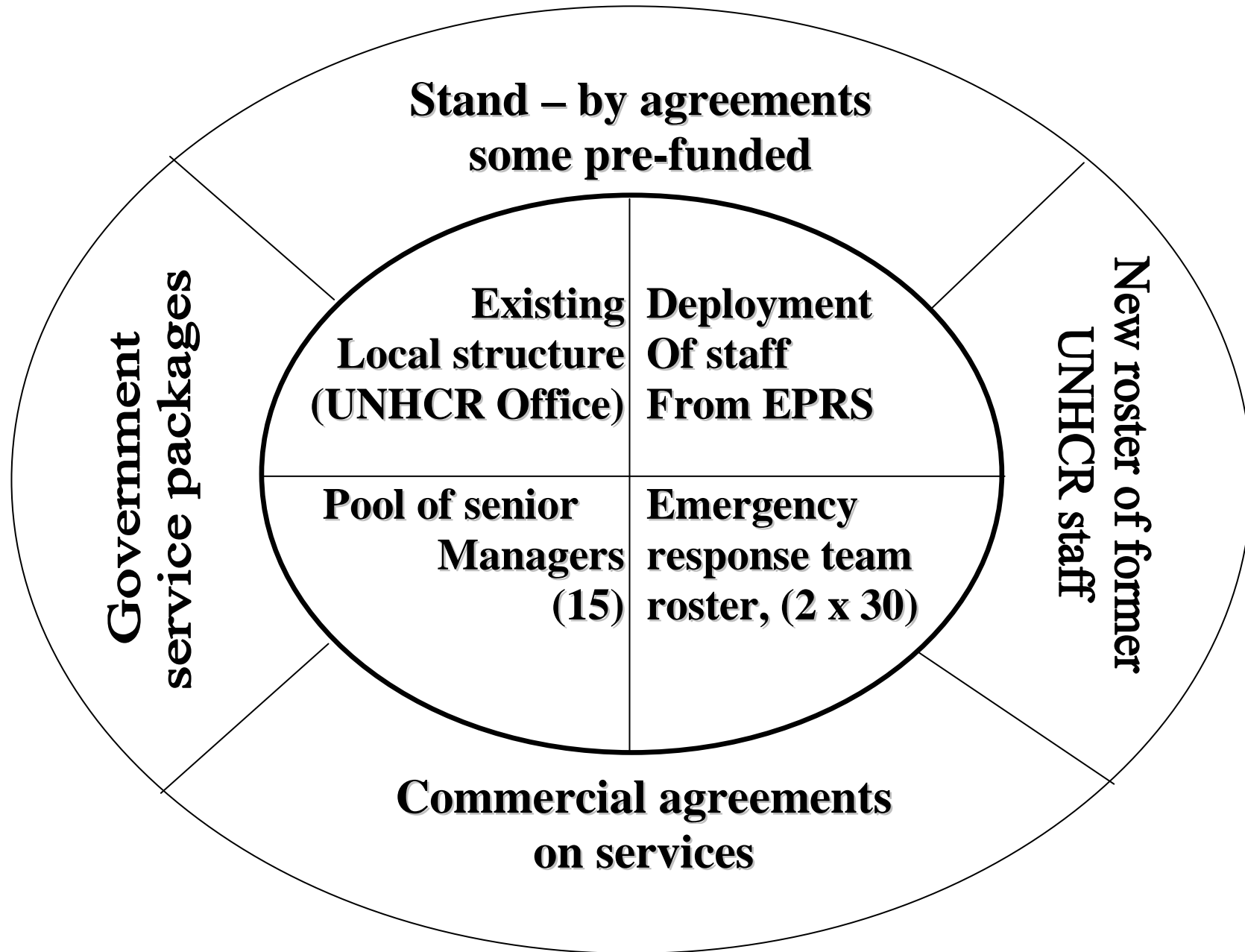
RedR holds a register of personnel pre-prepared for emergency response. RedR provides generic training but also now training on the mandates of the organisations that are RedR's main users. The idea of the register is that the investment by agencies is lower than they would normally have to make for recruitment and delays in response can be reduced to hours not days.

Up to now deployment has been purely reactive. The process is that an agency provides a job description, RedR searches its database for suitable matches and then checks the availability of the members. This system may not be fast enough. In two recent major emergencies, RedR has employed different approaches, which have yielded useful learning.

During the Kosovo crisis, RedR members were contacted to check their availability, then lists were circulated to agencies on a daily, and later a weekly, basis to inform them of who was available. This was very successful from the agency viewpoint and more than 70 members were deployed. From RedR's perspective, there were some limitations in that we did not know which agency members had gone with, and some members went without telling RedR.

In Mozambique, the approach was modified. Again members were contacted to check their availability but this time RedR did the matching of the needs against those who were available, rather than letting the agencies do this. This gave better quality control and this approach might be used again (bearing in mind that the Mozambique response was smaller than that for Kosovo).

Staffing in UNHCR Emergency Operations



6.4 Other Contributions.

Médecins sans Frontières Holland – Helen O’Neill

MSF-H has an emergency team of 12 people on office contracts, including finance, logistics, watsan, medical etc.. They are on minimum 12-month contracts. They are available for deployment within 24 hours. When things are quiet, they “gap-fill” in e.g. interim country manager posts, or they do exploratory missions or take holiday. Most have at least 3 years with MSF, with co-ordination experience. They are deployed for 6 weeks maximum.

Office for Disaster Assistance (USAID) – Sydel Maher

After Rwanda USAID became concerned about how to deal with the surge in the demand for personnel in major crises. This led to the development of the Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs). This allowed for pre-negotiation with other organisations to provide response teams within 72 hours while OFDA was gearing up. IQCs have not worked successfully, though the same organisations have been used to provide personnel.

OFDA has hired a recruitment firm, GlobalCorps to act as recruiter to Response Alternative for Technical Services (RATS) teams. This is a new idea. The aim is to put provide funds for up to 6 months deployment in the year, plus provide up to 20 days training. The model is not yet proven and there are currently no financial guarantees for these people. There have been 125 applications from which 12 slots will be filled for field generalists and 8 for admin., finance and logistics.

International Health Exchange – Alice Tligui

IHE faces different challenges because most of the personnel deployed by agencies using the IHE register have to have their release from their professional (normally medical) position signed off by their employer. In IHE’s case, this often the UK government’s Department of Health. Public via private is more difficult. And under staffed. Sourcing from the public sector is more complex than from the private sector.

Financing arrangements differ from RedR, which asks for donations. In some cases, IHE has commercial contracts to supply personnel, but not necessarily tied to the numbers of personnel. Therefore it puts a severe strain on the organisation when 80 people are needed, as for Kosovo, rather than the original understanding of 20 within the contract.

There is still an expectation that personnel supplied via IHE will be western expatriates.

Section 7: Operationalisation of Good Practice

This session continued many of the topics discussed during the small groups sessions on the Friday, except the focus moved from identifying the problems to developing ways of addressing and resolving issues.

Working groups were invited to look at the issues and develop proposals under the headings of What, How, Who and When.

Four main topics were debated:

- Finding new people: Developing the pool of resource people
- Selecting staff: Improving good practice in selecting staff
- Staff development: Preparing and developing staff
- The future of the Emergency Personnel Seminars

For each of the first three topics, the schedule of action points proposed by the working group and agreed by the plenary session is tabulated below. The final topic, the future of the Emergency Personnel Seminars, is treated as a separate section. (See Section 8).

7.1 Finding new people: Developing the pool of resource people:

What	How	Who	When	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop common PR/educational strategies 	Access websites: www.interaction.org www.cinfo.ch Contact Bioforce: info@bioforce.asso.fr	Tearfund and SCF to advocate potential of DEC for dissemination of educational information		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Suggestions should be country specific. ✓ VITA manages the greater bulk of public access questions about emergency response: www.vita.org ✓ Existing material can be sent as models. ✓ Global messages for public awareness - globally developed, locally adapted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communication between agencies over requests for personnel Use the web better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPS Agencies will circulate their list of vacancies to other organisations or post on their website Recruiters will refer candidates to these sites or organisations Links with websites Circulate vacancies bulletins 	All	Immediate and continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bobby Lambert will be focal point ✓ People who do not want to be included on the list will note that they do not want such a notification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mentoring guidelines Develop managers by recruiting to no 2 position and promoting to no 1 fairly swiftly (development of mentoring process) 	Each organisation needs to develop their own systems, guidelines and then shares these with other organisations and links with provider organisations	David Talbot (Tearfund) Christine Nylander (SCF UK) Alice Tligui (IHE)	End of 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MSF-Belgium research their 'apprenticeship' project (Gilbert Debroux – Belgium)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mechanism to get locally recruited staff into the system Decentralize recruitment for global registry (to increase local hiring) 	How you decentralise recruitment for global positions is organisation specific	Advocacy by all		Examples: Save the Children Tearfund World Vision Bioforce RedR IHE AHA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forecast, develop access and use specialised skills providers. 	Develop an initial inventory of registers and respective requirements	Nancy Miller (ARC) Rory Downham (Bioforce) Mechthild Nussbaumer (CINFO)	end of 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Annotate Bibliography ✓ List of participants to be put on RedR web site and distributed to everyone at EPS3
Resolutions:	Advocate HR system preparedness for surge capacity	Bring in outside managers (new to an organisation) just AFTER initial emergency		

7.2 Selecting staff: How we can help each other to improve good practice in selecting staff

What	How	Who	When	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How we can help each other to improve good practice in selecting staff? 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sensitise donors to the need to diversify staffing (not just or mainly 'donor/country staff') ✓ Senior level mandate needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify and share core competencies for emergency managers and co-ordinators and methods of interpretation of each others' terms/needs Develop reality based job descriptions and titles 	Web-based reference library	Helene Boof-Reichenbach (RedR) Susan Isaacs (CARE Canada) Christine Vincent (CANADEM)	EPS 4	✓ Timeline assumes there will be an EPS 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardise CVs and use electronic resume templates, available on websites 	RedR to share their format	Helene Boof-Reichenbach (RedR)	May 2000	RedR CV format is already available on the their web site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress value of new recruits to managers 	Organisations to document practice/policy case studies of freshers'.	All – Helene Boof-Reichenbach (RedR) to collate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will document case studies on 'freshers' and make available as ongoing project. ✓ Promote self-education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share screening/reference policies (background checks) including psychological information 	Reference policy of MSF – Holland, MSF – UK, MSF—USA, MSF – Canada	Edward de Ruiter (MSF—Holland)	Ongoing – by end 2000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define/agree on “good manager” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target staff selection to diversify staff sources (ethnicity), affirmative action/ positive discrimination Senior programme managers need core knowledge of own organisation (ex-staff or induction) Clarify scope of country director's role 	?	?	

7.3 Staff development: Preparing and developing staff

What	How	Who	When	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do people leave organisation/field or stay? – research and focus on field managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals investigate their own organisation and report back Establish contacts 	Susan Riehl? Theresa Keefe Alice Tligui	First step to be completed in six months (to October 2000)	✓Invites information from other agencies and will make collected findings available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-monetary and other incentives- survey of practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey practices Distribute 	Sydel Maher	Four months (September 2000)	✓To go beyond standards, health and medical benefits to look at examples of some other creative approaches to retaining staff – will collate and make available on request.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile short list of resources Contact other agencies to share information Post on web 	Susan Riehl Jan Theunissen	Six months (milestone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Can be posted on EPS website. ✓Good text from ICRC on stress noted. ✓HPN provides xxx to good documents, and requests assistance in targeting delivery of such materials eg to HR people, trainers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of national staff rosters for emergency personnel (WHO pilot project) 	Formalising current practices in the Balkans.	Jan Theunissen (WHO)	Pilot project complete in 6 months	
<i>Related comments:</i>	<i>Sensitise managers to value of training and that offering staff training options is positive</i>	<i>Move more HR functions to the field e.g. induction, orientation</i>	<i>Develop mentoring technique for staff development (e.g. feeder school)</i>	<i>Develop non-western candidates for management roles</i>
<i>Communicate, clarify mandate of organisation to managers</i>	<i>Develop staff – 20% training, 80% mentoring etc</i>	<i>Provide opportunity to develop local staff</i>		

Section 8 The Future of the Emergency Personnel Seminars

During the seminar, more than one participant urged that the purpose and objectives of EPS be clarified. In response, a group met during the Operationalising Good Practise session on the Saturday afternoon to look at the future of EPS.

The group discussed - EPS as a process, making its objectives more quantifiable, and who is the target group. Questions arising included - Information exchange is one key objective, but how should this be facilitated? And what level of collaboration between agencies was feasible? How formalised should it be?

The working group divided into sub-groups to work on:

- Objectives for EPS
- Evaluating EPS
- Alternative mechanisms for EPS

Objectives: The sub-group took as the starting point the initial statement of purpose from the 12-agency pre EPS1 meeting in 1997, and added in some modifications (in italics).

“The aim of the Emergency Personnel Seminars (changed to the Emergency Personnel Network) is to improve the ability of participating organisations, both individually and as a community to find, select, prepare, *manage* and retain personnel for emergency operations *in order to improve the effectiveness of disaster/humanitarian/emergency response*”.

Specific objectives should include:

- Further integration between Human Resources and Operations
- Identify areas and mechanisms for collaboration between agencies/ employees/sectors
- Achieving agreed standards and best practice within the sector
- Sharing information/ developments in agencies
- Identifying research needs and commissioning research
- Reviewing lessons from recent emergencies

Models: The sub-group discussed options for models for EPS, mostly based on the way other networks operate, from a loose networking approach to a formalised structure.

- A series of meetings, driven by a small group (i.e. current model for EPS)
- Loose network e.g. the Canadian Association of the Victims of Torture
Each organisation hosting the meeting a different year
- Tighter network e.g. NGO Nutrition Network Rotational Host (NGOs)
- No ‘formal’ continuity
- Co-ordination held by HR officer of agencies on rotational basis
- List-serv magazine/networks monitored by voluntary officer e.g. Mike Golden NGO-NUT
- InterAgency Network with paid focal point (new hire) but agency facilities support, e.g. SPHERE
- Merge EPS roles/functions with others, e.g. People in Aid, SPHERE

The group noted that EPS is and should be open to non-NGO members and that it should continue its transatlantic links.

The group identified some unresolved issues:

- How to increase participation in the steering group?
- How to divide up responsibilities and get agency buy-in?
- How to ensure the continuity of the administration of the Emergency Personnel Seminar/Network?
- Should the EPS expand beyond the issue of personnel only?

On feedback to the main plenary session:

- The Aim and Objectives were broadly accepted
- It was agreed that the purpose of the seminar should not be broadened beyond personnel issues

Section 9 Conclusion

In the closing session, the EPS3 working group formally stepped down and volunteers were invited to form a new EPN Management Committee. The new committee members are:

Name	Organisation	From	Type
Leanne Taylor	British Red Cross	UK	Operational agency/Provider to IFRC
Christine Vincent	CANADEM	Canada	Personnel register
Ann Wilson	Concern Worldwide	Ire	Operational agency
Alice Tligui	International Health Exchange	UK	Personnel register
Dave Eastman	International Medical Corps	USA	Operational agency
Bobby Lambert	RedR	UK	Personnel register
Christine Nylander	Save the Children (UK)	UK	Operational agency

The meeting then agreed that the new committee should :

- Undertake an evaluation of the outputs and impact of EPS, and without undue delay
- To propose alternative models for the future
- Refine the Aims and Objectives of EPN
- Create a business plan for the future of EPN, (inc. funding, co-ordination, and support,...) by December 2000.

A group headed by Christine Vincent (CANADEM) was established at the end of EPS 3 to undertake an evaluation of the EPS to date, with possible inputs from Geoff Loane (APSO) and Carol Sullivan (Two Rivers Project).

It was suggested/noted that the Ex-Comm meeting in Geneva in October would be an excellent opportunity to publicize the work of the EPN

The new committee held an initial meeting after at the close of the conference.

The meeting agreed that Emergency Personnel Seminars should be renamed Emergency Personnel Network, to reduce the emphasis on the meetings themselves and emphasis the on-going nature of collaboration.

It was agreed that the write up of the seminar should be posted on the RedR web site.

The meeting closed with thanks to the organisers and facilitators.

Appendix 1 – Summary Paper presented on Day 1 of EPS3

EMERGENCY PERSONNEL SEMINARS THE STORY SO FAR BRIEFING PAPER FOR EPS3

Inter-agency meetings on emergency personnel were initiated because several emergency response and personnel agencies felt they were facing similar problems with finding, selecting, preparing and retaining emergency personnel, but were not able to deal with some of these problems acting alone.

Of key interest was the emergency personnel 'pool' or 'reservoir', which all the agencies draw from and which emergency personnel move in and out of. New people need to enter the pool to replace those leaving, so that both the quality and quantity of the pool is maintained. At the same time, agencies experience peaks and troughs in demand for emergency personnel. It was felt that exchanging experience could benefit all those directly involved in the emergency response sector.

No particular mandate was been defined for the first emergency personnel seminar EPS1. The idea has been for agencies to come together in an informal way to collaborate on emergency personnel policy.

First Emergency Personnel Seminar (EPS1), Dublin, 12 - 14 November, 1997

The stated objectives of the seminar were:

- To increase the knowledge base of participants for decision-making.
- To identify areas and mechanisms for collaboration.
- To reach agreement on follow-up action.

There were 49 participants, mostly human resource personnel from European NGOs but also representatives of ECHO, UNHCR and WHO, consultants, returned relief workers, and facilitators. The seminar was comprised of presentations, workshops and plenary discussions in which human resource issues pertinent to emergency personnel were explored.

At the outset, participants were challenged on a number of issues, including

- the importance of retaining competent staff between assignments
- how to include the perspectives of relief workers in policy and practice
- the loss of learning because of short contracts and turnover
- why are pay and benefits for relief workers so low?
- how to create winning teams that relief workers want to be a part of.

The meeting agreed that collaboration between agencies could be useful, and was already going on. There were common challenges to be pursued. It was agreed that agencies can create an environment that embraces collaboration by defining their own organisational policies and practices and moving towards industry-wide quality standards, with a willingness to accept external auditing. There was both a will and an opportunity to collaborate. Future funding could and should be sought. There was a need to share information, set standards, criteria and codes and to pool management training opportunities.

Key issues raised during the meeting included:

- Personnel registers.** The common selection 'pool' - whether to use retention fees - exchanging feedback between registers on personnel - how to follow-up and monitor personnel on the registers
- Recruitment and selection.** Selection criteria – attitudes of candidates and competency appraisals – equality of opportunity for women in management.
- Release of Personnel.** Temporary release from employment, including communication and promotion to facilitate staff release

- **Employment Conditions.** Salaries, leave, family packages, staff development, training, and briefing – stress management.
- **Exit Strategies.** Termination of contract – debriefing – exit procedures and packages – re-integration – facilitation of future employment
- **People in Aid.** Delegates were briefed on the People in Aid Project, a collaborative effort of British aid organisations, resulting in the People in Aid Code, which sets out good practice in the human resource policy and practice.
- **Local Staff.** More use could be made of local NGOs to assist in the recruitment and placement of national and regional staff and refugees, including to senior positions - secondment of professionals through government bodies - clarity needed on the status and criteria for employing local or national staff and local NGOs.
- **Advocacy.** Develop better messages on the need and opportunities for professional people - gaining senior management support for further releasing people - better use could be made of existing networks.
- **Management Awareness.** The management of agencies needed to be made more aware of these issues - strengthening the delegates' position within their own organisations – a lack of influence by the HR functions.
- **Security and Insurance.** Gaps and complicated exclusions in insurance policies for relief staff, especially for smaller agencies - potential for an agency group to lobby insurance companies to remove exclusion clauses - personnel security and evaluation were major issues, including for local staff.

Collaborative initiatives

It emerged during the workshop that there were already several on-going inter-agency collaborative human resource related initiatives. Participants shared information on the following:

- Registers of relief workers (RedR, APSO, IHE, NRC etc.)
- Statements of shared values and ideals, as developed by CARITAS
- Personal Service Overseas (Dutch) sets staff terms and conditions for its member organisations.
- CINFO provides training, information on job vacancies and helps Swiss NGOs and ICRC to find qualified personnel
- Bioforce (France) provides two-year training courses for students
- European Partnership of Relief Organisations (EPRO) comprises five Christian European agencies sharing policy and procedures, training courses and knowledge.
- Indefinite Quantity Contract (USA) sponsored by OFDA(USAID) encouraged collaboration between IRC, CARE and IMC on rapid emergency relief deployment
- Partnership In Action, initiated by UNHCR to provide regional co-ordinating bodies for local NGOs
- Oxfam South/South Linking Project targeted at Oxfam partner organisations.
- InterAction (USA) is planning to develop joint security training courses for organisations and training-the-trainers courses.
- Action Churches Together (ACT) is involved in North/South collaborative activities.
- Red Cross/Red Crescent North/South collaboration to assist Southern societies to increase their share of delegates from 11% to 25%.
- ECHO works in partnership with NGOs, UN and international agencies under a formalised Framework Partnership Agreement. Training is provided via master's courses at seven European universities.
- Emergency Preparedness & Response Section of UNHCR has collaborative standby agreements for secondment of staff from the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils.

EPS1 Outcomes

The meeting agreed to form four working groups to follow up after the seminar on key areas of collaboration, with named members of agencies as “active participants” and others designated “for information and consultation” only.

- **Group 1 Training.** Training needs, supply, minimum standards, linking development and relief worker training, assessment of training, sharing of training courses
- **Group 2 'Pool'.** Processes to build on existing registers and reduce duplication, sharing current register frameworks, agree a competency framework (including terminology) and decide a protocol for register unification.

- **Group 3 Release Advocacy.** Define common release objectives, case study on successful lobbying for release, lobbying EU to change law relating to release, perceptions of relief work of different professions, identify key messages for a public or sector awareness campaign, advice and information sources on emergency relief work.
- **Group 4 Overall Seminar Follow-Up and Monitoring.** Plan a second Emergency Personnel Seminar; circulate report of Seminar proceedings to all participants and beyond; recognise and reinforce existing collaborative projects e.g. People In Aid; keep follow-up action HR focused, international and collaborative.

A Concluding Statement was developed and agreed by the Seminar, including the following:

“The meeting (seminar) was an opportunity to exchange information and to recognise and reinforce the value of interagency collaboration on a broad range of human resource issues, order to enhance the effectiveness of emergency aid.

The participants confirmed the emerging maturity of HR management in the sector, based on the substantial experience and expertise that has developed in this area.

Participants at the meeting expressed a firm commitment to establishing and promoting good practice in HRM through existing (e.g. People In Aid) and new initiatives.

A number of areas for collaborative work and information exchange were identified at the meeting linked to the development of the pool of human resources, including training and advocacy. There was also commitment to a follow up event.

The agencies represented at the meeting will seek to have this commitment supported and promoted at all levels, especially the most senior levels, within their own organisations and externally.”

Second Emergency Personnel Seminar (EPS2), Brussels, November 11-13, 1998

In response to the setting up of a working group at EPS1 on planning, follow-up and monitoring, RedR took responsibility for most of the practical aspects of organising the second seminar. ECHO provided funding for 75% of the costs. The remaining 25% came from contributions in kind from the agencies in the planning group (DRA, IHE, IRC, RedR) and fees paid by agencies for individuals. The stated aims of EPS2 were:

- To share knowledge and experience
- To monitor progress of the EPS1 working groups
- To propose and plan ways forward on issues of emergency personnel

Overall, the difference between EPS 1 and 2 was that EPS1 identified issues of importance to agencies (the *what*), while EPS2 focused on *how* to tackle the issues and *who* would take action. Attendance at EPS 2 was slightly up on EPS1 at 54 participants. Again these were mainly from European NGOs but also included ECHO, ICRC, IFRC, UNICEF, UNHCR and WHO.

Report back from EPS1 Working Groups

- **Group 1 Training.** The work of the Training Working Group led to the commissioning of research on minimum standards for foundation training, which was presented to EPS2. The group also identified a need for an inventory of humanitarian training courses, which led to the establishment of HATI (Humanitarian Training Inventory) and steps were taken to promote it via www.reliefweb.int. A study, *Review of Training in Health Care in Emergencies* was carried out for IHE by Marion Birch, with and was support from the working group.
- **Group 2 Advocacy.** The working group on Advocacy for the release of health workers did not produce specific results but gave impetus to the International Health Exchange (IHE) to involve other organisations such as VSO and MERLIN in advocacy.
- **Group 3 Register/Pool.** The working group on Register/Pool met three times with representatives of ten agencies. Twenty other agencies were invited to take part but there was a poor response.

There were no concrete outcomes from this group, partly due to conflicting agendas of the agencies in the group.

The meeting concluded that the functioning of the working groups could be improved by:

- Giving groups a clear mandate
- Setting up flexible working methods to suit the needs of different members of the group
- Choosing a core person to carry initiatives forward

The meeting noted that membership of the working groups tended to change frequently as people moved jobs.

People in Aid. EPS2 heard an update on the People in Aid Project, best known for two documents: *Room for Improvement*, 1995, research into aid worker stress, which identified management issues as a major source of stress and the *People in Aid Code*, 1998. It was reported that several agencies were testing the Code for reasons connected with performance, reputation and values. Some were having their compliance tested using social auditing.

Future Options

EPS2 participants developed a list of options for ways of making progress in collaboration.

- Working groups* - informal and flexible, e.g. EPS1 working groups
- Steering groups* - more formal, with a mandate agreed between participating agencies e.g. the People in Aid project
- Individual agency action* – for example, sharing experiences, sharing resources such as the emergency personnel pool
- Individuals' actions within their own agency* - one individual's efforts can contribute to a process of positive change in their agency's policy and practice
- Co-ordinating bodies* - existing co-ordinating mechanisms can be used to promote change, e.g. to define local employment practices in a particular field situation
- Research on specific issues* – for example, the IHE research on local staff encourages agencies to reflect on their practice and consider ways forward
- Informal networks* - these often already exist to share common concerns. Networks may help progress when more formal relationships are not successful.
- Electronic information exchange* – web sites and the e-mail are increasingly accessible for sharing information and ideas.

Research Papers

Two research papers were presented to EPS2. The first on *Foundation Training for Emergency Personnel* (John Adams/RedR) was designed to identify common areas of good practice by reviewing of 11 training courses. Foundation training was defined as non-technical training of emergency personnel of universal value, as distinct from agency specific induction or briefing programmes.

The research found agreement amongst agencies that foundation training for emergency personnel is needed. It was found that a number of agencies were using similar mixed training approaches using factual presentations, teamwork / case study work and exchange of ideas. Training needs to be tailored to the level of experience of the participants, so as to focus on the competence of the trainee not on delivering a standard format course for all. Residential training was generally seen as beneficial.

Discussion of the research led to a list of subjects recommended for inclusion in foundation training courses:

- The context of emergencies and emergency programmes
- Mandates / legal issues / human and humanitarian rights
- Attitude of the emergency worker
- Personal coping mechanisms and managing stress
- Security and safety, First aid, Personal health
- Adapting skills gained in other fields

- Project planning
- People management, Teamwork, and Cross-cultural issues
- Media awareness

There was agreement that foundation training courses should be a minimum of five days, and should be challenging – better for trainees to fail before the assignment than during.

Also arising from the discussion of the foundation course research:

- Competency focus.** It was agreed that agencies would be better to agree sets of competencies rather than to require a minimum level of foundation training, except for recognised foundation training modules.
- M&E.** Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of foundation training were proposed, based on feedback from trainees, facilitators and trainers. This was found to be common practice already. Other agencies or external reviewers could also be involved and that the results of evaluations could be shared between agencies.
- Funding.** Options considered for funding foundation training, included - trainees contribution (some thought this inappropriate) - the agency allocating a funding according to a proportion of project budgets, turnover, or salaries budget - donors could be encouraged to fund training - training might be available “hitching a free ride” with academic institutions.
- Management.** The question of the shortage of good managers for emergency programmes was discussed. More management training was seen as part of the answer. Managers and governors need convincing of the need for more training.

The draft of a second research report was presented, titled *Sometimes Maybe, Sometimes Not: The recruitment, employment and retention of locally employed staff in emergency situations*. (Jim Henry/IHE). The final report was completed in after EPS2. The report made three recommendations on the employment of local staff in emergency situations:

- Develop a Protocol, capturing good practice on HR policies and procedures at local level.
- Create regional focal points for advice to agencies and to develop local capacity through collaborative efforts in recruiting and training
- Maximise inter-agency involvement in career development initiatives, training, career development and local capacity building

Discussion groups then compared current practice between agencies and came up with the following recommendations:

- Have a platform which forces organisations to engage with each other on these issues
- Identify protocols at HQ level, but also be more specific at field level
- Be transparent about conditions of service and other policies for locally recruited staff
- Recognise the tension between ethical concerns and market forces when setting local salary scales
- Provide both training and resources to managers in the field
- Human resources management capacity and operations should exist in parallel at both HQ and field level
- Each individual investigates the potential for improvement in their own organisation
- Build the capacity of local NGOs to increase the pool of competent regional resources
- Have plans in place regarding the evacuation of locally recruited staff
- Include specific budget lines in programme proposals for security / evacuation
- A consortium of agencies to negotiate collectively with insurance companies on local insurance, via local or international brokers
- Collect baseline data for training programmes and career development.
- Break the glass ceiling for locally recruited staff - this will take time
- Rotate management-level locally recruited staff through headquarters
- Facilitate the development of staff associations and help give local staff a voice

Other observations included:

- Local staff salaries cannot be comparable with staff in other local sectors or expatriate colleagues
- Agencies must have transparent local staff policies, even if the operating context is complex
- It is imperative that staff associations form and grow for the well being of local staff
- Small and large organisations differ in their ability to develop locally recruited staff
- Agencies strengthen themselves when they develop the capacity of local staff and partners

- There is a danger of pushing local NGOs beyond their capacity, causing them long term damage
- Local staff terms and conditions are dictated by donors, so agencies face constraints on their salaries
- A number of security issues for local staff , including evacuation, need attention
- Agencies must be clear what provision they are making for local staff when they are part of a multi-agency security plan
- Field managers need guidance from their agencies on implementing all these ideas
- These issues are not new. Change depends on the will of organisations to examine their own culture and ethics. This is not easy.

An action planning session on Day 2 developed many of the issues discussed in to:

- commitments by some individuals to practical actions;
- commitment by others to support those actions;
- requests by others to be formally included in information-sharing groups.

EPS 2 agreed the following action points:

Action	Focal Point
Research agency practice on field staff well-being support issues	Pascale Gilbert-Miguet (WHO)
Clarify the common core competencies required for all emergency personnel	Rory Downham (Bioforce) Katy Dent (Merlin)
Foundation training quality control	Bob MacPherson (CARE)
Safety and security course curricula	Koenraad van Brabant (RRN/ODI)
Support to HATI (Humanitarian Assistance Training Inventory)	Tim Foster (RedR Int.)
Develop a common competency framework between agencies	Susan Reihl (IRC)
Linking registers to allow agencies and potential staff to have better access to each other	Bobby Lambert (RedR)
Directory of aid agencies' employment opportunities	Jane Herbert (Christian Aid) Alice Tligui (IHE)
Security and safety for emergency personnel	Koenraad van Brabant (ODI/RRN)
Establish comparison of qualifications and registration of health professionals from different countries	Alice Tligui (IHE)
Develop field office human resources guidelines (using MSF guidelines as a basis)	Karen Michels (MSF-Holland)
Establish information and opinions on staff associations for emergency personnel to determine possible developments needed	Alice Tligui (IHE)
Make preparations for EPS3 and ensure continuity from EPS1 and EPS2	Alice Tligui (IHE), Bobby Lambert (RedR)

Participants requested follow-up action to EPS2, through specific actions in the action plan, and through organising a third seminar (EPS3). It was agreed that a mechanism be set up to monitor action and ensure continuity between EPS2 and EPS3 so that the seminars were linked as part of an advancing process of collaboration, not just a series of individual events. The meeting agreed on the importance of not dropping issues that are discussed but then not acted on.

It was suggested that a formal mandate should be given to an EPS organising body.

Participant feedback on EPS2 showed that the sharing of knowledge and experience gave people confidence and ideas to move forward collaboratively and within their own organisation. While the presentations were found to be interesting, the chance to establish new contacts or develop established ones was valued more highly. It was noted though that EPS2 focused heavily on the concerns of northern agencies and expatriate staff, and not much on problems particular to southern agencies.

Simon Lawry-White
April 2000

Appendix II

PREPARATORY RESEARCH FOR EPS3
Quick Survey on
Current Human Resource Issues in
Emergency Personnel

Simon Lawry-White
April 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was commissioned by the Emergency Personnel Seminar Steering Group to provide an up to date view of human resource practice around emergency personnel in emergency response implementing and specialist recruitment agencies. The overall aim of the survey is to stimulate reflection and debate ahead of, and during EPS 3.

A quick survey approach was used to obtain feedback from agencies by e-mailing a list of thirty-two statements and inviting them to say to what extent they agreed with them. A further nine questions asked them to provide further details including their perceived successes and failures, their current top three concerns with regard to emergency personnel. Thirty-two completed questionnaires were returned, about half the number sent out. The responses came from individuals and may or may not represent the consensus in their agency.

The data is presented in tabular, graphical and text form in the appendices, and readers are invited to peruse these pages before reading the comments and analysis in the main body of the report.

The survey shows that the recruitment and retention of staff is still the number one issue for agencies working in emergency response. In this regard, little seems to have changed since the first Emergency Personnel Seminar held in November 1997. Agencies are particularly concerned about the difficulty they have in recruiting and retaining good emergency field programme managers.

Overall, agencies seem to be fairly upbeat about the current state of their emergency personnel human resource performance. Judging by the responses to the survey interviewing, briefing and de-briefing are all being well handled, insurance policies for emergency personnel are adequate, and adequate stress/trauma counselling is available. The majority felt that their salaries and benefits are competitive, although a significant minority did not agree.

The feedback seems to be contradictory in a few cases. For example, agencies generally consider that they have made advances in the recruitment, training and deployment of staff from within the region of operation, and yet this topic hardly features in the list of agency successes or in the top three emergency personnel issues. Also, while agencies are relatively happy that emergency personnel are well managed on the ground, this does not seem to fit with the stated difficulty of finding experienced field managers.

A few statements in the survey were specifically aimed at agencies' experience of the Kosovo crisis. For those agencies directly involved, there was a general consensus that their response to the Kosovo crisis weakened their existing programmes. They were equally clear view that Kosovo did not negatively affect their response to crises that came after Kosovo.

The survey indicates that, to some extent, agencies have evaluated their responses to recent humanitarian crises for lessons on human resources, and that the lessons learnt have affected their HR practice.

The results show that agencies are deploying inexperienced personnel, either as a matter of policy to develop the skills of new people, or because posts cannot otherwise be filled. This ties in with agencies' perceptions that they are in competition with other agencies for personnel from the same pool.

Section 3 of the report provides a brief commentary on each statement and question within the survey while Section 4 draws out strategic issues emerging from the survey and adds a number of questions, some of which may be picked up during EPS 3 discussions.

Section 5 of the main report includes a brief review of three other inter-agency initiatives in Europe and North America, Sphere, People In Aid and InterAction PVO Standards, all of which potentially impact on human resource policy procedure and practice with regard to emergency personnel. Questions are posed for possible exploration during EPS 3.

Introduction

The last Emergency Personnel Seminar (EPS2) was held in November 1998. In preparing for EPS3, the EPS Steering Group decided that some background research¹ was required to provide an up to date picture on HR practice amongst participating organisations as an input to the seminar.

Aim

The overall aim of the research as stated in the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1) was

“Preparing a research report on the emergency personnel response to the Kosovo crisis, 1999, covering recruitment agencies and some operational agencies, noting developments and changes (if any) and drawing out lessons still to be learned regarding emergency personnel”

In discussion with RedR², it became clear that the EPS Steering Committee was interested in how HR practice in recruitment and implementing agencies had been affected by the “mass mobilisation” of emergency personnel since EPS2, in response to the multiple crises of Kosovo, East Timor, Hurricane Mitch, Sierra Leone and so on. A secondary aim was to see what learning had been obtained from this experience with regard to emergency personnel matters. The research has therefore been refocused on the state of HR practice against the “*Shadow of Kosovo*” and other crises, rather than addressing the Kosovo crisis alone.

Methodology

Funding for EPS3 was only agreed late in the day, and therefore there was only a short period available to undertake this background study. Due to the short time frame, it was decided to gather information using a questionnaire which could be completed quickly using “Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, Disagree” format, with 32 statements for recipients to react to. Nine additional questions gave opportunity to those who wanted to provide more detail to do so.

Mostly, the questionnaires were completed by one individual from each organisation, and in a few cases in discussion between HR and emergency managers. In many cases, those completing the questionnaire are the same individuals who will be representing their organisations at EPS3. Of the 32 completed questionnaires³, 24 were from human resource professionals/managers, and 8 from senior and programme managers. The feedback may or may not reflect the consensus in each organisation.

The same questionnaire was sent to recruiting, voluntary, NGO and UN agencies. Respondents saw some of the questions as not relevant to their organisation but, for the main section of 32 questions, 91% of the questions were answered overall within the 32 completed questionnaires.

In addition to the questionnaires, phone and face to face interviews were held with non-operational agencies involved with emergency personnel with a view to uncovering background issues that could then be cross-referenced against the questionnaire responses, including RedR, International Health Exchange (IHE), APSO, People in Aid and Bioforce.

The reason for holding EPS3 in New York was to give more opportunity to US-based agencies to take part. An effort was therefore made to increase contacts with US-based agencies, and to elicit responses from them.

The analysis that follows should not be assumed to be scientific or statistically based and uses an intentionally discursive and questioning style to avoid any such impression.

Respondents

Representatives of the following organisations returned completed questionnaires:

- ◆ Africa Humanitarian Action

¹ This paper is titled a “Quick Survey”, as such a brief exercise cannot fairly be described as “research”.

² RedR have managed the commissioning of this study on behalf of the EPS Steering Group

³ One arrived too late for inclusion in the report

- ◆ American Red Cross
- ◆ American Refugee Committee
- ◆ Australian Red Cross
- ◆ British Red Cross
- ◆ CARE USA
- ◆ Christian Aid
- ◆ Christian Relief and Development Association
- ◆ Churches Action in Relief and Development
- ◆ Community Aid Abroad (Oxfam Australia)
- ◆ Concern Worldwide
- ◆ Danish Red Cross
- ◆ Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Agency
- ◆ International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- ◆ International Health Exchange
- ◆ International Rescue Committee
- ◆ International Training Programme for Conflict Management
- ◆ Merlin
- ◆ MSF Belgium
- ◆ MSF Holland
- ◆ MSF Spain
- ◆ Norwegian Refugee Council
- ◆ Oxfam GB
- ◆ RedR
- ◆ Save the Children UK
- ◆ Tearfund
- ◆ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- ◆ United Nations Volunteers
- ◆ Village Education Resource Centre
- ◆ Voluntary Service Overseas
- ◆ World Health Organisation
- ◆ World Vision International

By Country

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| ◆ Australia | | 2 |
| ◆ Bangladesh | | 1 |
| ◆ Belgium | 1 | |
| ◆ Denmark | | 1 |
| ◆ Ethiopia | 2 | |
| ◆ Holland | | 2 |
| ◆ Italy | | 1 |
| ◆ Ireland | | 1 |
| ◆ Malawi | | 1 |
| ◆ Norway | | 1 |
| ◆ Spain | | 1 |
| ◆ United Kingdom | | 9 |
| ◆ United States | | 6 |
- ◆ UN/International 4 (mostly Geneva based)

(Total 32)

Seven organisations replied but did not complete the questionnaire because they felt they did not have time, the questionnaire was not relevant or they were not prepared to respond on behalf of their organisation. No reply was received from a further 25 organisations to which the questionnaire was emailed.

Results

The results drawn from the completed 32 questionnaires are included as Appendix 2. A blank of the original questionnaire and covering e-mail letter is also included for reference.

Responses to Questionnaire Statements 1-28

Readers are encouraged to peruse Appendix 2 before reading this section and use the charts to think over where their own organisation sits in relation to other respondents. When returning to this section, please keep your finger in Appendix 2 so as to refer to the charts and text responses.

Comments are included below on each of the Statements section of the questionnaire.

1. *The competence of field staff is the most important element in delivering effective humanitarian relief.*

There was strong agreement with this statement. This would have been a better question for managers than HR professionals, who would be expected to answer in the affirmative, so it is worth noting that all the managers who responded put Agree.

2. *Securing good staff is the single most challenging step in mounting an effective relief operation*

This had a less clear endorsement than the first, with more Slightly Agree's than the first statement. A number of respondents wrote "one of" before the single most challenging, indicating that it is only one of a set of requirements that need to come together to provide an effective response.

3. *Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily trained pre-mission.*

While more people agreed than disagreed with the statement, more than twice as many put Slightly Agree as Agree, indicating some uncertainty about the level of training that personnel receive.

4. *Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily briefed pre-mission*

The majority of Respondents agreed with this statement, with more Agree than Slightly Agree's and 6 Slightly Disagree's.

5. *Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily briefed during their mission,*

There was more uncertainty here, perhaps because of a lack of first hand evidence available to the respondents who might not be in contact with personnel during missions. While only 3 disagreed with the statement, only 9 Agreed, with 16 Slightly Agree's.

6. *Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily de-briefed after their mission*

Only 3 disagreed with the statement. There were more Slightly Agree's than Agree's. This ties in with later comments that systems may not be reliable enough to ensure debriefings take place in all cases.

7. *Adequate stress/trauma counselling is available to those of our emergency personnel who need it.*

26 agree while 3 disagree. The graph shows that there is not full agreement however, perhaps because HR personnel are aware of cases where it has been missed.

8. *Emergency personnel coming to work with us from specialist emergency personnel recruitment agencies (e.g. RedR) have the foundation skills we need*

This was not relevant to all because some organisations don't use the recruiting agencies. 80% of those who did make a response indicated that they Agreed or Slightly Agreed, indicating a relatively high level of satisfaction with personnel from the specialist agencies.

9. *Our emergency personnel are well managed on the ground*

This produced a lukewarm response with 20 out of 29 Slightly Agree or Slightly Disagree and only 9 Agree's.

10. *Our agency only deploys personnel with prior experience of emergency response*

This produced a very mixed response. While 18 organisations agreed, a significant minority did not. These responses probably reveal policy differences between implementing agencies. (See also Strategic Issues section below).

11. Our agency has retained effective emergency personnel between assignments and re-deployed them successfully to new operations.

This statement produced a fairly positive response when compared to the number of respondents identifying retention of staff as a major issue in later questions. With 13 Slightly Agree and 10 Agree, most agencies seem to be happy or quite happy that they are generally able to “recycle” skilled staff into other assignments. However, this does not tie up with the concerns expressed under Q41 below.

12. The gender balance amongst emergency personnel is adequate to allow male and female beneficiaries (refugees/IDPs etc.) to be equally well served by our agency

With 21 out of 30 in agreement, this seems to present a positive view of gender balance and its beneficial impact on beneficiaries. Looked at again, only a third of respondents put Agree, so there would seem to be room for improvement. One respondent said that female candidates were hard to find.

13. Our responses to recent humanitarian crises have been evaluated for lessons on our HR practice with regard to emergency personnel.

A positive 75% agreement with this statement.

14. Lessons learnt from recent crises have significantly affected our HR practice with regard to emergency personnel

Here again, there is a 75% agreement with this statement, with more Agree than Slightly Agree's. This could be seen as encouraging, especially when taken together with the response to Q13 above. One of the EPS Steering Group's main concerns was to find out the extent to which lessons are being learnt. The responses to Q13 and Q14 seem to indicate that a number of reviews have been undertaken which have impacted on HR practice with regard to emergency personnel. (But responses to Q32 might contradict this).

15. Our HR practice reflects the views of current and returned expatriate emergency personnel

75% agreement overall, but only partial, more Slightly Agree than Agree's.

16. Our HR practices reflect the views of local/in-region emergency personnel

Respondents are a lot less convinced that their organisations are listening to their local staff than to expatriate staff, with only 4 Agree's.

17. Our agency uses a competency framework as the basis for the recruitment of emergency personnel

17 out of 30 have responded with Agree. Of the remainder, half Slightly Agree, possibly indicating that they have a recruitment system that contains a competency element, while the other half disagreed with the statement, and put comments such as “want to find out what this is”.

18. Our agency interviews all new emergency personnel before appointment

Firm agreement with this statement, with only 2 Slightly Agrees and none in disagreement.

19. Our agency asks for and takes up references before engaging new emergency personnel

Almost as firm an agreement as for 19. 5 Slightly Agree's probably indicate that some agencies recognise that they have some recruitments where references are not taken up. One respondent referred to the unreliability of referees.

20. Our agency finds itself in competition with other agencies for the recruitment of personnel from the same pool

Strong agreement with this statement. Those few in disagreement seem to be the volunteer agencies and agencies based in developing countries.

21. Our agency has adequate insurance policies for emergency personnel

This surfaced in previous EPS as an issue but with 25 out of 29 replying Agree, this would seem not to be a problem any longer.

22. In the last 2 years, our agency has made significant advances in the recruitment, training and deployment of staff from within the region of operation.

Strong agreement with this statement, with only 5 disagreeing. Here again, previous EPS have shown in-region recruitment to be an important and growing issue. Progress seems to have been made in the 18 months since the last seminar.

23. Our agency has an adequate personnel security policy and procedures in place

With no one in disagreement, the picture seems to be positive, though there were more Slightly Agree than Agree's. Only two organisations indicated in later questions that security was a key issue.

24. Our agency has an adequate policy on local staff evacuation

A very mixed response to this statement, with slightly more in agreement than not. Several of those putting Disagree added that they do not evacuate local staff as a matter of policy. For them, it is not that the policy is inadequate, there is none. Another respondent distinguished between local (as in resident to that location) and national staff sent to that location for work. The first group is not covered by their evacuation policy while the second one is.

25. The skills and experience of HR professionals in our agency have made a positive impact on our agency's policy and practice on emergency personnel

A strong agreement with this statement, including 18 Agree's, shows that HR professionals, who are themselves most of the respondents, feel they have made an impact on their agency's HR practice. This is somewhat in contrast to the frustration about the lack of influence of HR personnel that come through in the record of the two previous EPS. Does this mean something has changed in the recent past to improve the situation, or is it just a new more confident set of people responding?

26. Our salaries and benefits are sufficient to attract and retain suitably qualified emergency personnel

Overall there was a broad spread of responses. Taken with the answers to the later questions, it appears that salaries and benefits are not a serious issue for the majority but there is a significant minority for whom it is a concern.

27. Our salaries and benefits are competitive with other similar non-government agencies working in emergency relief

Just under half the respondents put Agree to this statement, a higher proportion than those who considered that salaries and benefits were adequate for retaining personnel.

28. Our agency has already adopted and implemented the People in Aid Code of Practice

This might seem to be a simple Agree or Disagree choice in that agencies either have or have not adopted the Code. However, there were 7 Slightly Agree's, probably indicating an informal adoption of the Code rather than a formal sign up to compliance and external social audit. The Code is freely available on the People in Aid web site. Some of the Disagree's added that they did not know what this is – which is understandable given the UK/Ireland focus of People in Aid. (See more on People in Aid below).

Kosovo Specific Statements 29-32

This section put forward four statements specifically about the Kosovo crisis. As far as possible, only responses from those agencies directly engaged in the Kosovo crisis have been included.

29. *The Kosovo crisis was the biggest emergency personnel recruitment challenge for our agency in the past 2 years*

A strong agreement with this statement. Over 60% (17) of respondents replied with Agree to this statement and a further 20% (6) Slightly Agree.

30. *Our response to Kosovo weakened our operations in other on-going emergencies*

31. *Our response to Kosovo has limited our ability to respond to new major crises (Hurricane Mitch, Timor etc.)*

When taken together, the responses to statements 30 and 31 present a marked contrast. While two thirds agree that Kosovo weakened their on-going programmes, the pattern of responses to 31 is almost exactly the reverse, with two thirds disagreeing that their response to new emergencies was limited by the Kosovo crisis. The picture emerging here is that Kosovo led to a weakening of existing programmes, probably due to a diversion of personnel away from existing emergency and, sometimes from development programmes, while for new crises, personnel were found and deployed in addition to the Kosovo complement.

32. *The experience of the major deployment of personnel in response to the Kosovo crisis has resulted in a significant improvement in our emergency personnel recruitment and management systems*

This statement met with agreement from 15 out of 23 replying, though with more Slightly Agree than Agree's. This seems to indicate that recent crises have led some agencies to improve their recruitment and management systems. The remaining third did not agree that there had been a significant improvement in systems.

Questions 33 to 41

Appendix 2 also contains the assembled responses to questions 33 to 41⁴. Each block of bullet points indicates the response from one organisation, and blank lines separate the responses from organisations.

33. *Which categories of emergency personnel does your agency find it hard to recruit?*

Responses have been listed first by organisation and then sorted by type i.e. groups of jobs that agencies find it most difficult to recruit for. Top of the list comes senior management, leadership, and programme co-ordination posts together with administration and finance. Health related positions also present a challenge, though less so.

The difficulty in recruiting experienced managers seems to tie into concerns expressed in previous emergency personnel seminars about the shortage of skilled managers, especially for rapid deployment.

A number of respondents also identified language skills as a constraint. Interviews with Anglophone recruitment agencies indicate that they struggle to find sufficient candidates with French, Spanish and Portuguese, while Bioforce, which based in France, has difficulty finding enough competent English speakers.

34. *What are your key sources of recruits?*

36. *What is the average response level to newspapers/Internet advertisements?*

The recruitment pattern for emergency personnel clearly does not follow that of standard recruitment in other sectors. Of primary importance are the specialised agencies, RedR, DRA, IHE, APSO, and for the UN system, UNV. Another primary source is former employees or those who have had prior emergency experience with the agency in some capacity. A number of agencies maintain their own registers of personnel. These may contain details of individuals who have approached them unsolicited, and in some cases (probably fewer overall) those who have responded to advertisements recruiting to the register. In the process as a whole, word of mouth referral seems to be important, as well as networking between agencies.

Newspaper advertisements are just one avenue and seldom the most important. UK-based organisations referred to the Guardian publications, but no other newspaper was mentioned as being significant. The larger and better-known agencies get a large response to newspaper advertisements when they use them. The feedback on Q36 seems to indicate that smaller organisations get fewer applicants from their newspaper adverts, probably reflecting name lower recognition and salaries offered. From the responses to Q36, the Internet is becoming increasingly important as a source of CVs and recruits. *Are their specific Web sites, apart from the agency's own, that are most useful?*

35. *What is the average cost of recruitment for emergency personnel?*

Unfortunately, this question does not seem to have been well understood. A few organisations responded with costs per recruitment, which was the intended meaning of the question, while others responded with total cost of recruitment for the organisation, and others have stated monthly employment costs for emergency personnel. Recruitment costs per recruitment vary between US\$1,000 plus travel costs and US\$12,000, where this includes all associated costs including HR and management time, and deployment costs.

37. *What is the average time from decision to recruit to deployment of personnel?*

Responses to this question have been sorted approximately from fastest to slowest, and divide themselves roughly into three blocks for emergency recruitment: 1-2 weeks response time, 2-4 weeks and 2-4 months. Some agencies say that they can respond in less than a week. Not surprisingly, most agencies indicated that emergency recruitments operate in a shorter time frame than "normal" recruitment.

36. *In the past two years what proportion of emergency personnel came to you on secondment/release from another organisation?*

⁴ not in the pre EPS3 version of the report

There are three categories of response here: four organisations with no secondments in the past two years, several organisations stated that they have had few - up to 5% of posts filled by secondment, and a few organisations depending on secondments for a significant proportion of their staffing - 25-66%.

39. Does your agency hold a register of pre-screened emergency personnel ready for deployment? If yes, approximately how many records does the register now hold?

Three agencies said that they do not hold a register, because they do not need to, or because it is not appropriate for them to do so; a further twenty-one organisations said that they do have a database, or are developing a new one. Of those agencies with registers, the number of records varies from six to over 1,000. A number of respondents pointed out that the registers are not as useful as they might be because, in practice, people are often not available when required.

40. Overall, what do you consider the greatest successes and failures in recruitment and retention of emergency personnel to recent crises?

Responses show the individual successes and failures of the various organisations, and it is difficult to generalise from them. If there is a pattern, two types of success seem to be repeated. The first is a sense of achievement that the agency has been able to deploy large numbers of personnel rapidly and efficiently against the odds. The second set of successes are around the development of improved systems and strategy either in the development of registers, improvements in long-term retention of personnel, or in the development of regional capacity. The stated failures include the flip side of others' successes, particularly a failure to retain staff. Management of personnel in the field, inadequate salaries and a lack of pre- and post-assessment also feature.

41. What are your agency's top three most pressing concerns with regard to emergency personnel?

The number one challenge appears to be recruitment. Finding sufficient people of the right calibre, attitude and experience, especially for management positions comes out of this survey as the primary concern for a majority of agencies. Related to this is finding staff available for rapid deployment, and this, in turn, relates to perceived competition for the same personnel from a limited pool, as the Q20 response clearly showed.

A second, though less general area of concern, was continuity and retention of personnel between assignments, and the related issue of developing loyalty, improving skills, and providing a career path.

Health and security for emergency personnel was said to be an issue by a minority of agencies, while the development of local and in-region staff was only highlighted by a few organisations.

Statements Ranked by Level of Agreement

To provide an alternative view of the data, the statements 1-32 are listed below by their average ranking, calculated using 1,2,3, or 4 for Agree Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree and Disagree and then averaged across all responses to that statement. 1.0 would mean total agreement and 4.0 total disagreement. An assessment is also given of the level of consensus, High, Moderate or Low, as an indicator of variation between agencies. A low level of consensus means a diversity of response from agencies.

No.	Statement	Average	Consensus Level
18	<i>Our agency interviews all new emergency personnel before appointment</i>	1.1	H
1	<i>In our agency's experience, the competence of field staff is the most important element in delivering effective humanitarian relief:</i>	1.2	H
19	<i>Our agency asks for and takes up references before engaging new emergency personnel</i>	1.2	H
21	<i>Our agency has adequate insurance policies for emergency personnel</i>	1.2	H
2	<i>In our agency's experience, securing good staff is the single most challenging step in mounting an effective relief operation:</i>	1.5	H
20	<i>Our agency finds itself in competition with other agencies for the recruitment of personnel from the same pool</i>	1.5	H
25	<i>The skills and experience of HR professionals in our agency have made a positive impact on our agency's policy and practice on emergency personnel</i>	1.5	M
23	<i>Our agency has an adequate personnel security policy and procedures in</i>	1.6	H

	<i>place</i>		
29	<i>The Kosovo crisis was the biggest emergency personnel recruitment challenge for our agency in the past 2 years</i>	1.6	H
7	<i>Adequate stress/trauma counselling is available to those of our emergency personnel who need it</i>	1.6	M
22	<i>In the least 2 years, our agency has made significant advances in the recruitment, training and deployment of staff from within the region of operation</i>	1.7	H
4	<i>Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily briefed pre-mission</i>	1.7	M
5	<i>Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily briefed during their mission</i>	1.8	L
17	<i>Our agency uses a competency framework as the basis for the recruitment of emergency personnel</i>	1.8	L
8	<i>Emergency personnel coming to work with us from specialist emergency personnel recruitment agencies (e.g. RedR) have the foundation skills we need</i>	1.8	M
13	<i>Our responses to recent humanitarian crises have been evaluated for lessons on our HR practice with regard to emergency personnel</i>	1.9	H
14	<i>Lessons learnt from recent crises have significantly affected our HR practice with regard to emergency personnel</i>	1.9	H
6	<i>Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily de-briefed after their mission</i>	1.9	M
9	<i>Our emergency personnel are well managed on the ground</i>	1.9	M
15	<i>Our HR practice reflects the views of current and returned expatriate emergency personnel</i>	1.9	M
27	<i>Our salaries and benefits are competitive with other similar non-government agencies working in emergency relief</i>	1.9	M
3	<i>Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily trained pre-mission</i>	2.0	M
11	<i>Our agency has retained effective emergency personnel between assignments and re-deployed them successfully to new operations</i>	2.0	M
12	<i>The gender balance amongst emergency personnel is adequate to allow male and female beneficiaries (refugees/IDPs etc.) to be equally well served by our agency</i>	2.0	M
26	<i>Our salaries and benefits are sufficient to attract and retain suitably qualified emergency personnel</i>	2.0	M
30	<i>Our response to Kosovo weakened our operations in other on-going emergencies</i>	2.1	M
32	<i>The experience of the major deployment of personnel in response to the Kosovo crisis has resulted in a significant improvement in our emergency personnel recruitment and management systems</i>	2.2	L
16	<i>Our HR practices reflect the views of local/in-region emergency personnel</i>	2.2	M
10	<i>Our agency only deploys personnel with prior experience of emergency response</i>	2.3	L
28	<i>Our agency has already adopted and implemented the People in Aid Code of Practice</i>	2.3	L
24	<i>Our agency has an adequate policy on local staff evacuation</i>	2.5	L
31	<i>Our response to Kosovo has limited our ability to respond to new major crises (Hurricane Mitch, Timor etc.)</i>	3.0	M

Strategic Issues Emerging from the survey

In this section, some reflections are offered on the feedback gathered from the questionnaires and interviews. It is not designed to provide definitive analysis or answers but to stimulate thinking ahead of the seminar and discussion over the weekend of EPS3.

The key issues emerging from this survey can be neatly summed up by quoting from one of the responses – “Getting them and keeping them”. Recruitment and retention were the key issues raised, especially in the feedback on the failures and top three concerns. Given the volume of recruitment in the past two years, perhaps this is to be expected.⁵

All in all, the feedback from the questionnaires gives a fairly upbeat assessment of the state of HR management in the emergency personnel field and perhaps more optimistic than the tone of the previous EPS reports. The discussions in EPS3 will no doubt show more clearly whether this optimism is justified.

⁵ Only 5 agencies supplied base data on numbers or types of recruitments for 1998 and 1999. This was not enough to attempt any kind of analysis

Many of the issues emerging are the same as those seen in previous seminars. This could be due partly to the format of the questionnaire in that the first Statements section (1-32) sought to look at issues already known to be current. However, the later section of questions did not direct people in any direction and it is here that some themes familiar from EPS1 and 2 crop up clearly.

There was less in general on in-region and in-country HR matters than might have been expected and more on the issue of “right people, right time”, perhaps reflecting the pressure on recruitment experienced by most agencies since the last EPS seminar.

Quality of field management

As in previous seminars, the issue of finding the managers with the right experience and attitude has again surfaced through this questionnaire as an important issue.

In 1997, Francesca Taylor’s research⁶ for EPS1 pointed out that “the fundamental problem faced by those recruiting relief staff is the serious shortage of appropriately skilled and qualified personnel in particular competencies. There is a general consensus that the most difficult posts to fill are those at management level. Equally, the importance of these positions has escalated as emergencies have become more complex in nature.”

The average score of 1.9 (equivalent to Slightly Agree) against the statement “Our emergency personnel are well managed on the ground” confirms that there are still seen to be some question marks over the quality of field management.

The problem is partly one over-demand but also one of lifestyle. As personnel gain experience, they also become less inclined to take on the lifestyle of the roving short-term contract emergency worker. People moving into their 30’s need a more stable lifestyle.

Bioforce report that 50% of the personnel trained on their programme and placed by them are still working in International Solidarity five years after leaving their first assignment. This seems a fairly good proportion but there is no indication that their work is still emergency related.

One approach to reducing the problem of where to find experienced managers at short notice is to develop and retain your own. For example, Oxfam GB put the development of a pool of emergency managers as one of their key successes. These managers can deal with the early phases of a crisis while personnel are recruited or re-deployed to make up the “second wave”. Would this approach suit other agencies? Can organisations afford to do this?

Interview feedback suggested that one way ahead may be recognise that the expectations on one manager may be unrealistically high. The technical, project management and people management skills required to manage complex emergency programmes are high, so why not create one or more role, accepting that the people management skills and project management may not be available within one person. This then means developing a field management structure that puts HR management with, say, a deputy management position. This only works where a group of personnel are to be posted together in one location.

Questions

How can the recruitment and retention of emergency managers be improved? Is an investment in permanent staff managers (with some career prospects) necessary or can agencies rely on the band of skilled people who have built their own careers as freelancers in emergency management?

Retaining New Recruits

As described under Q10 above, the reaction the statement “Our agency only deploys personnel with prior experience of emergency response” was very varied.

It is clearly policy for some organisations to use inexperienced personnel alongside more experience staff to ensure there that skills are developed in new recruits. This approach recognises that there has to be a place for

⁶ Preparatory Research for an Interagency Emergency Relief Personnel Seminar, F Taylor, October 1997

first timers in emergency response because new people need to be trained and increase the body of skilled personnel. It is also realistic to acknowledge that without inexperienced personnel, some posts will not be filled because of demand.

As one respondent put it, the key may be to have experienced personnel supervising the inexperienced (this has to be done with care and skill). Another commented that they want personnel to move on, the new hands should replace the old hands, otherwise how is new thinking brought in to the organisation? (This assumes the old hands will not learn and change of their own accord).

More than one respondent referred to the “disappointment” experienced by field workers, especially first timers, when exposed to the realities of emergency work. There is a suggestion that disillusionment for first timers could be a major cause of loss of people from the emergency response sphere and their disappearance from registers. The specialist recruiting agencies are alive to this danger.

With this loss of personnel, the size of the pool potentially decreases. Recruitment is an expensive process, as the figures given in Q35 indicate.

Difficulties with retention do not seem to apply just to the voluntary agencies. Agencies with paid staff gave the same feedback on retention as a problem issue in the same way as the voluntary agencies. It may be as much the nature of the work than the nature of the pay.

Question

How can emergency personnel, and particularly those on first assignment, be given a more realistic view of what their working environment and experience is likely to be like and be given proper supervision when on assignment, so that they are less likely to lose heart after one assignment?

Regional and Local Recruitment

Locally recruited staff was the subject of a research paper by Jim Henry presented to EPS2⁷, the discussion from which generated a number of recommendations around protocols, training, transparency on conditions of service and related ethical considerations, and the development of the capacity of local NGOs.

The questionnaire feedback was very positive on regional staffing developments, with 80% of respondents fully or partially agreeing that they had made “significant advances in the recruitment, training and deployment of staff from within the region”. A few disagreed with the statement. There should be a lot to share during EPS3 on this topic, especially as regional and national staffing considerations were notable by their absence from the lists of the three major concerns (q41). One outstanding issue is shown up by the response to Q16 “Our HR practices reflect the views of local/in-region emergency personnel”, which had an average score of only 2.2, hardly a firm endorsement.

Questions

To what extent have in-region recruitment and personnel management systems been developed? Have agency HR management systems have been applied to national staff?

Personnel Registers

The questionnaire feedback shows that personnel are sourced from many channels. While RedR etc. are top of some organisations’ list of sources, they are not the first, and only one among many, for others. Word of mouth and ex-employees are both important sources.

While the specialist agencies, RedR, IHE, APSO, Bioforce, DRA etc. have continued to develop and extend their service to the sector since the last seminar, many operational agencies have been improving or developing their own databases of emergency personnel. It seems that these registers are varied in their size and sophistication. This may indicate that in a competitive world, agencies are making sure they keep their own records rather than becoming dependent on the recruiting agencies. A couple of respondents referred to the recruiting agencies being over-stretched during recent crises (but then who was not?).

⁷ “Sometimes Maybe, Sometimes Not”, The Recruitment, Employment and Retention of Locally Employed Staff in Emergency Situations - A Study by Jim Henry for IHE, November 1998

The question of combining registers was raised at EPS1 but seems not to have been on the agenda for EPS2.

Questions

Is there still life in a discussion about joint registers to reduce duplication and concentrate the management of such data into a few centres of excellence? Is there a form of information exchange or pooling of personnel details that can work to the advantage of all in a competitive environment?

Stress on Emergency Personnel

The questionnaire feedback was quite positive on the availability of stress/trauma counselling for those that need it. Interviews indicate that this picture may be over-positive. Perhaps the counselling is available but not always known about or used?

The Room for Improvement report that preceded the People in Aid Code highlighted stress for field workers resulting from poor management. This subject was raised at EPS1 in November 1997. In this survey, two respondents only highlighted stress for field workers amongst their key HR issues and none referred specifically to stress induced by poor management.

Question

Does this mean that stress induced by poor management, and indeed stress as a whole, has become less of an issue for emergency personnel, or did it just not appear in the survey?

Preparedness

Some organisations seem relatively well prepared for the rapid deployment of large numbers of people into emergency response programmes. The Red Cross/Red Crescent movement relies on a network of sources, mostly ten plus major western National Societies holding their own registers of nationals who can be deployed into IFRC, ICRC or national society programmes. UNV provides many of the personnel needed within the UN system, though UNHCR and WHO have their own recruitment systems in addition. Some of the larger implementing agencies consider that they have made strides in recruiting systems.

One of the themes of the feedback seems to be that, even through the somewhat chaotic rush at the outset of emergencies, several agencies feel satisfied that they have managed to field large numbers of personnel in reasonable time. There is a sense of achievement, especially given that the Kosovo crisis required a response at a speed and scale which caught all agencies off guard.

Nevertheless, emergency recruitment can still be a hit and miss process and posts can and do go unfilled. Feedback provided to IHE concerning recruitment for Kosovo shows how many of their clients had unfilled positions, or posts that could only be filled by transferring their personnel from elsewhere. This ties in with the feedback on the negative impact of Kosovo on pre-existing programmes (Q30).

The specialist recruitment agencies have grown up as a response to the need to provide a better qualified and "ready to go" contingent of personnel at least partially prepared for the demanding roles that emergency work often requires. Judging by the feedback in this survey, they have been at least partially successful both at meeting demand and providing adequately trained personnel.

All the same, even the better-resourced agencies may struggle to find the right personnel at times of high demand. Concerns were expressed in the survey about rushing the recruitment process. A recent IHE survey showed that some agencies do not have a short-listing process for emergency recruitments but recruit "as they go along" i.e. as soon as they find a suitable CV for someone who is available. Agencies are aware that programme quality may be at risk of compromise because of recruitment and retention problems.

Not that recruitment issues only arise with new programmes. The upside of the new is that each new crisis also brings new money. It can be the on-going chronic programmes, such as the Great Lakes where money becomes hard to find and replacement personnel still harder to locate.

The specialist recruitment agencies APSO and IHE both raised the issue of staff release to increase the pool of available personnel. Much of IHE's effort goes into getting health professionals released from their posts temporarily, in a way that fits with the career structures of the National Health Service. IHE feel that few of their client agencies understand the constraints on these health personnel.

APSO has the status of an official agency in Ireland and has the blessing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its effort to get other parts of the Irish Government to release personnel. At moment, this blessing seems to have limited benefit.

Questions

In an industry this size, is this level of recruitment preparedness and risk taking over the quality of personnel really acceptable? Can any of the Sphere, People in Aid or InterAction standards be met in the current situation? Are there mechanisms that can increase the size of the labour pool and reduce the level of scrambling for personnel to staff up each new crisis?

Parallel Initiatives to the Emergency Personnel Seminars

Developments in HR practice and the discussion in the Emergency Personnel Seminars are taking place against a backdrop of other interagency initiatives and codes of practice. Some of these are considered below.

The Sphere Project

In July 1997, the Sphere Project was launched by a group of humanitarian agencies. This project sought to develop a set of universal minimum standards in core areas (water supply & sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter & site planning and health services) of humanitarian assistance. The standards were completed and published last year.

Earlier this year 20 NGOs from around the world (not just Europe or North America) decided to participate in Sphere piloting - they have made a commitment to attempt to systematically incorporate the Standards into their agency policy and practice. Several of these agencies will be represented at EPS3.

The commitment does not seem to be to changing practice at this stage but to “thinking through how to implement the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in policy and practice”, with a view to developing organisation-wide commitment to Sphere and looking at changes to policies, training, and systems and procedures.

The emphasis of Sphere is not on human resources but on the standards of delivery of services to beneficiaries. The People in Aid Code (see below) was incorporated into the first draft of the Sphere standards but now is referred to in the notes on each set of standards. However, each chapter of the handbook includes one or more Human Resource Capacity and Training standard (with a subsequent list of indicators to help measure whether that standard has been met).

An example of such a standard is “Water supply and sanitation programmes are implemented by staff who have appropriate qualifications and experience for the duties involved, and who are adequately managed and supported.”

Guidance given with the standard states “providing training and support as a part of emergency preparedness is important to ensure that skilled personnel are available to deliver quality services... humanitarian agencies should ensure that qualified and competent staff are identified and properly prepared before eventual assignment to an emergency situation... When deploying staff and volunteers, agencies should seek to ensure that there is a balance in the number of women and men on emergency teams”.

The Sphere project has a fairly high profile on both sides of the Atlantic. Interviewees for this survey indicate a concern that the standards are not explicit enough about human resource issues and that they may be downplayed. The Sphere project manager has indicated that there are no plans to include new areas, including HR, in the standards.

Question

Does Sphere need to be more explicit on HR, or will a commitment to achieving the standards necessitate improvements in HR practice anyway? Do pilot agencies see that it will impact on their HR policy and practice?

The Sphere Project is base at the IFRC in Geneva. For further information, see <http://www.sphereproject.org>.

People in Aid

The People in Aid Code of best practice in the management and support of aid personnel was developed in the mid 90's, initially under the auspices of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network at the Overseas Development Institute, London. The code, which is designed for aid interventions in general, not just emergencies, covers seven principles of HR practice.

- ◆ The people who work for us are integral to our effectiveness and success
- ◆ Our human resource policies aim for best practice
- ◆ Our human resource policies aim to be effective, efficient, fair and transparent
- ◆ We consult our field staff when we develop human resource policy
- ◆ Plans and budgets reflect our responsibilities towards our field staff
- ◆ We provide appropriate training and support
- ◆ We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff security and well-being

In 1997, 11 agencies in the UK and Ireland made a commitment to testing the People in Aid Code. The agencies were free to decide what parts of their operations would be included. Most have chosen to focus on expatriate and HQ personnel.

An interim report in August 1999 highlighted that progress had been made on the first three standards Corporate Strategy, Policy, Fairness and Effectiveness but far less on the remaining four - Consultation, Projects, Training, Safety and security.

Two agencies have dropped out of the pilot but the remaining nine have all been audited recently by an external auditor using a social audit methodology. The auditor's report is due in June 2000. The future will involve the engagement of more agencies signing up for the Code, which implies a willingness to be externally audited, something not built in to the Sphere Project standards, which is less demanding, at least so far.

In this survey, five respondents who are not part of the People in Aid pilot agreed fully with the statement "Our agency has adopted and implemented the People in Aid Code of Practice". A further nine said that they Slightly Agreed with the statement, presumably because they have adopted it partially, informally or have adopted the principles in some way into their HR policy and practice. The Code is available on the People in Aid web site.

For further information, see <http://www.peopleinaid.org>.

People in Aid are based at the British Red Cross in London. They will be represented at EPS3 by Board members who are also representatives of other agencies.

Question

Have those UK/Irish organisations within the pilot of the People in Aid Code benefited from the last two years experience with the Code and from the recent social audit?

InterAction PVO Standards

InterAction is a coalition of 170 plus US based agencies working in relief and development. It is a membership organisation and membership involves a commitment to compliance with the InterAction Standards for Private Voluntary Organisations. As membership is valued by members, there is an incentive for them to keep to the standards.

The PVO Standards include a section on management practice and human resources, which involve commitments to clear definition and communication of; written policies and procedures; clearly described and communicated benefits; and clear definition of the organization's expectations of employees. Members are required to have policies and procedures to promote gender equity, pluralism, diversity, and affirmative action. Specifically, "members shall endeavor to recruit and retain staff that combine professional competence with a commitment to service."⁸

⁸ At the time of writing, it was not possible to confirm whether InterAction has published standards specific to emergency response or emergency personnel.

For more information see <http://www.interaction.org/>

Question

Do InterAction members consider that additional codes or guide are required to promote good practice in HR concerning emergency personnel?

Conclusion

The author would like to thank those organisations that took time to provide the base information for this brief survey, analysis and discussion. The aim of the paper is to reflect back to EPS participants some of the issues raised by some of the participant organisations. The hope is that this will further stimulate the debate at EPS3 and beyond.

Simon Lawry-White

For EPS Steering Group

April 2000

**Preparatory research
for
Emergency Personnel Seminar 3, April 27-29 2000**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Objective of the research

The purpose of the research is to provide, in a succinct fashion, the information needed to bring participants up to speed with the issues being addressed in the EPS fora and allow them to participate fully in EPS3.

The research will consist of:

- 1) Compiling a participant briefing paper, including an executive summary of the documentation arising from and relating to the two previous conferences for those arriving at the third Emergency Personnel Seminar in New York at the end of April 2000.
- 2) Preparing a research report on the emergency personnel response to the Kosovo crisis, 1999, covering recruitment agencies and some operational agencies, noting developments and changes (if any) and drawing out lessons still to be learned regarding emergency personnel
- 3) Presenting both of these papers at the Emergency Personnel Seminar in New York on April 27-29, 2000.

Timeframe

15 days has been allocated for research.

A draft report on the information collected to be ready for dissemination to agencies participating in the seminar in good time for the seminar. This is envisaged to be not less than two weeks before the start of the seminar on April 27 2000.

Background

There have been two previous Emergency Personnel Seminars, held in Dublin in 1997 and Brussels in 1998. The idea behind EPS 1 was for agencies to come together in a fairly informal way to collaborate on policy with a focus on finding, selecting, preparing and retaining emergency personnel. The term emergency personnel 'pool' or 'reservoir' was used to describe the personnel resource which all the agencies draw from and which emergency personnel move in and out of for a variety of reasons. It is necessary constantly to prepare people entering the pool to replace those who have left so that both the quality and quantity of the pool is maintained.

Demand for emergency personnel is stochastic, i.e. agencies can expect peaks in demand, but can not know when, or how big, the peaks will be. This requires preparation to ensure that agencies have the capacity to meet demand when it arises. The three day EPS1 in Dublin generated a statement for advocacy and also affirmed, for those who recruit emergency personnel, that it is impossible to find the perfect candidate for the field.

The aim of EPS2 was to build on the work of EPS 1, to improve the ability of participating organisations, both individually and as a community, to find, select, prepare and retain personnel for emergency operations.

More specific objectives included: to monitor progress of the EPS1 working groups and to propose and plan ways forward on issues of emergency personnel.

The time between EPS2 and EPS3 has been a period of major activity for humanitarian aid agencies globally. From December 1998, when Hurricane Mitch struck the Honduras, to February 2000 when there was catastrophic flooding in Mozambique, there has been repeated demand for emergency personnel, through immediate mass mobilisations such as those seen for Kosovo and East Timor or constant demand in response to sequential crises in the Great Lakes and West Africa.

EPS 3 provides a timely opportunity to reflect on lessons learnt by the repeated demands on the pool of emergency personnel, in terms of availability of such personnel and management and replenishment of the shared 'pool' of relief workers. EPS 3 is being held in the United States to bring in more US-based agencies.

Guidelines for data collection

The research will focus on readily available data from key agencies, including:

- a reasonable selection of key operational agencies
- agencies involved specifically with personnel, including RedR, APSO, IHE, DRC, NRC, Bioforce.

Suggested information to be collected:

- Basic data on each agency: e.g. total number of personnel deployed in 98/99/00 (so far) and per emergency/year
- The manner in which human resources issues are dealt with in evaluations of the agency's responses to the recent major crises
- Problems associated with recruitment of personnel to posts.
- How such data influences operational and policy decisions
- Examples of changes made as a result of such evaluations;
- How such data influences future planning
- Summary views on:
 - a) what worked well;
 - b) what needs to be improved &
 - c) other comments

SURVEY RESULTS

QUICK SURVEY RESULTS

Average from scoring Agree(A)=1, Slightly Agree(SA)=2, Slightly Disagree(SD)=3, Disagree(D)=4

1. In our agency's experience, the competence of field staff is the most important element in delivering effective humanitarian relief:

A	SA	SD	D	Average
24	7	0	0	1.2

2. In our agency's experience, securing good staff is the single most challenging step in mounting an effective relief operation:

A	SA	SD	D	Average
15	13	0	0	1.5

3. Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily trained pre-mission

A	SA	SD	D	Average
7	16	5	1	2.0

4. Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily briefed pre-mission

A	SA	SD	D	Average
14	10	6	0	1.7

5. Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily briefed during their mission

A	SA	SD	D	Average
9	16	3	0	1.8

6. Our emergency personnel are satisfactorily de-briefed after their mission

A	SA	SD	D	Average
12	14	1	2	1.9

7. Adequate stress/trauma counselling is available to those of our emergency personnel who need it

A	SA	SD	D	Average
17	9	1	2	1.6

8. Emergency personnel coming to work with us from specialist emergency personnel recruitment agencies (e.g. RedR) have the foundation skills we need.

A	SA	SD	D	Average
10	10	3	1	1.8

9. Our emergency personnel are well managed on the ground

A	SA	SD	D	Average
9	15	5	0	1.9

10. Our agency only deploys personnel with prior experience of emergency response

A	SA	SD	D	Average
10	8	5	7	2.3

11. Our agency has retained effective emergency personnel between assignments and redeployed them successfully to new operations

A	SA	SD	D	Average
10	13	1	4	2.0

12. The gender balance amongst emergency personnel is adequate to allow male and female beneficiaries (refugees/IDPs etc) to be equally well served by our agency

A	SA	SD	D	Average
11	10	6	3	2.0

13. Our responses to recent humanitarian crises have been evaluated for lessons on our HR practice with regard to emergency personnel.

A	SA	SD	D	Average
12	12	4	2	1.9

14. Lessons learnt from recent crises have significantly affected our HR practice with regard to emergency personnel

A	SA	SD	D	Average
12	10	5	2	1.9

15. Our HR practice reflects the views of current and returned expatriate emergency personnel

A	SA	SD	D	Average
10	13	4	2	1.9

16. Our HR practices reflect the views of local/in-region emergency personnel

A	SA	SD	D	Average
4	14	5	0	2.2

17. Our agency uses a competency framework as the basis for the recruitment of emergency personnel

A	SA	SD	D	Average
17	6	4	3	1.8

18. Our agency interviews all new emergency personnel before appointment

A	SA	SD	D	Average
26	2	0	0	1.1

19. Our agency asks for and takes up references before engaging new emergency personnel

A	SA	SD	D	Average
24	5	0	0	1.2

20. Our agency finds itself in competition with other agencies for the recruitment of personnel from the same pool

A	SA	SD	D	Average
21	5	2	2	1.5

21. Our agency has adequate insurance policies for emergency personnel

A	SA	SD	D	Average
25	3	1	0	1.2

22. In the least 2 years, our agency has made significant advances in the recruitment, training and deployment of staff from within the region of operation.

A	SA	SD	D	Average
16	7	2	3	1.7

23. Our agency has an adequate personnel security policy and procedures in place

A	SA	SD	D	Average
12	15	0	0	1.6

24. Our agency has an adequate policy on local staff evacuation

A	SA	SD	D	Average
7	8	3	8	2.5

25. The skills and experience of HR professionals in our agency have made a positive impact on our agency's policy and practice on emergency personnel

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
18	9	2	1	1.5

26. Our salaries and benefits are sufficient to attract and retain suitably qualified emergency personnel

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
9	11	6	2	2.0

27. Our salaries and benefits are competitive with other similar non-government agencies working in emergency relief

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
13	7	6	2	1.9

28. Our agency has already adopted and implemented the People in Aid Code of Practice

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
9	7	2	8	2.3

Kosovo Specific

29. The Kosovo crisis was the biggest emergency personnel recruitment challenge for our agency in the past 2 years

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
17	6	1	3	1.6

30. Our response to Kosovo weakened our operations in other on-going emergencies

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
10	8	5	4	2.1

31. Our response to Kosovo has limited our ability to respond to new major crises (Hurricane Mitch, Timor etc.)

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
2	6	8	10	3.0

32. The experience of the major deployment of personnel in response to the Kosovo crisis has resulted in a significant improvement in our emergency personnel recruitment and management systems

<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Average</i>
7	8	3	5	2.2

Appendix III
Baseline Survey on Core Competencies

Appendix IV Agenda for EPS 3 – In Kosovo’s shadow

27-29 April 2000

Crowne Plaza Hotel LaGuardia, New York, USA

Thursday 27 April 2000 - INTRODUCTION

Registration from 15.00

15.00 -- 16.30	Arrival, registration of first-time participants
17.00 -- 18.00	EPS 1 & 2: The Story so Far -- To update participants on previous EPS <i>Simon Lawry-White</i>
18.00 -- 19.00	Registration of other participants
20.15	Dinner

Friday 28 April 2000 – STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

09.00 -- 09.40	Welcome and introduction Overview of agenda and working method
09.40 -- 10.30	Action groups from EPS 2 Reports on specific progress since EPS II
10.30 -- 11.00	Coffee
11.00 -- 12.15	“Quick survey” paper on current HR issues in Emergency Personnel <i>Simon Lawry-White</i>
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 -- 15.30	Small group sessions on issues arising from morning sessions
15.30 -- 16.00	Coffee
16.00 – 17.30	Reports from small groups
20.00	Dinner

Saturday 29 April 2000 -- APPLICATION

09.00 -- 09.15	Review of progress so far & any adjustments to programme
09.15 -- 10.30	Competence, qualifications and experience – what do we need? <i>Alice Tigui , Rory Downham</i>
10.30 -- 11.00	Coffee
11.00 -- 12.30	Operationalizing good practice in Emergency HR management
12.30 -- 14.00	Lunch
14.00 -- 15.30	Operationalizing good practice in Emergency HR management
15.30 -- 16.00	Coffee
16.00 – 17.00	The Future of the Emergency Personnel Seminars
17.00	Close of seminar

Appendix V: EPS3 Participants Contact List

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3	Laura Lea Clinton	CARE USA Recruitment Manager	151 Ellis Street Atlanta Georgia USA 30303	(1) 404. 681. 4579 ext 191	clintonl@care.org
4	Edward de Ruiter	MSF – Holland Recruiter	PO Box 10014 1001 EA Amsterdam Holland	(31) 20. 5208975	Edward_de_Ruiter@amsterdam.msf.org
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14	Susan Isaac	CARE Canada Recruitment Officer	P.O. Box 9000, 6 Antares Drive, Ottawa ON K1G 4XG CANADA	(1) 613. 228.5613	Susan@care.ca
15	Anne-Louise Jacquemin-Landry	Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders, USA Director of Field Human Resources	6 East 39 Street - 8th floor New York, NY 10016 USA	(1) 212. 679. 6800	Anne-Louise_Jacquemin@newyork.msf.org
16	Nina Juell	Norwegian Refugee Council Personnel co-ordinator	Grensen 17 Pb 6758 St Olav's Place N-0130 Oslo Norway	(47) 23.10.9800	Nina.Juell@nrc.no
17	Thea Kayne	Catholic Relief Services Emergency Recruiter	209 W. Fayette Street Baltimore MD 21201 USA	(1) 410.625.2220 ext 3351	Tkayne@catholicrelief.org
18	Theresa Keefe	Christian Aid Emergency Capacity Building Officer	PO Box 100 London SE10 7RT UK	(44) 207. 620.4444	Tkeefe@christian-aid.org
19	Bobby Lambert	RedR UK Director	1 Great George Street London SW1P 3AA UK	(44) 207. 233. 3116	Bobby@redr.demon.co.uk
21	Simon Lawry-White	Vine Management Consulting Researcher/Management Consultant	18 Westlecot Road Swindon SN1 4HB UK	(44) 1793 330381	swhite@gn.apc.org
22	Geoff Loane	APSO	29/30 Fitzwilliam Square Dublin 2 Ireland	(353) 1 661441	Geoffloane@tinet.ie
23	Sydel Maher	USAID	1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington DC20523 USA	(1) 202. 712. 41796	smaher@usaid.gov sydmaher@yahoo.com
24	Donna McSkimming	Community Aid Abroad Oxfam Director Human Resources	156 George Street Fitzroy Victoria Australia 3065	(61) 3 928.994.44	Donnam@caa.org.au
25	Enid Menamkat	United Nations Volunteers Recruitment Assistant	PO Box 260111 D53153 Bonn Germany	(49) 228. 815. 2309	Enid.menamkat@unv.org

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26	Anita Menghetti	USAID NGO Coordinator	1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington DC20523 USA	(1) 202. 712. 4946	amenghetti@usaid.gov
27	Nancy Miller	American Refugee Committee Recruitment Coordinator	2344 Nicollet Avenue South Suite 350 Minneapolis MN 55404 USA	(1) 612. 872. 7060	nancym@archq.org
28	Mechthild Nussbaumer	CINFO Director	Rue Centrale 121 Case Postale 7007 CH-2500 Bienne7 Switzerland	(41) 32. 366. 54.13	nw@cinfo.ch
29	Christine Nylander	Save the Children UK Senior Personnel & Training Officer – Emergencies	17 Grove Lane London SE5 8RD UK	(44) 20 7703. 5400	c.nylander@scfuk.org.uk
30	Helen O'Neill	MSF – Holland Personnel Adviser - Emergencies	PO Box 10014 1001 EA Amsterdam Holland	(31) 20. 5208975	
31	Barry Parkinson or contact Mark Glauser	Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	Regional Security & Peacekeeping Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0G2	(1) 613. 992. 5457	Barry.parkinson@dfait-maeci.gc.ca Mark.glauser@dfair.maeci.gc.ca
32	Valerie Peck	International Rescue Committee Emergency Recruiter	122 E 42nd Street New York New York USA	(1) 212.551.3082	Valerie@intrescom.org
33	Susan Riehl	International Rescue Committee Director, Human Resources	122 E 42nd Street New York New York USA	(1) 212. 551. 3082	SusanR@intrescom.org
34	Robin Sindicich	World Vision International HR – Relief Staffing Coordinator	800 W Chestnut Ave, Monrovia, CA 91016,USA	(1) 626. 303. 8811	Robin_sindicich@wvi.org
35	Carol Sullivan	Two Rivers Project Director	1308 Princeton, SE Albuquerque NM 87106, USA	(1) 505. 255. 5223	Dorcamat@worldnet.att.net
36	David Talbot	Tearfund Personnel Officer (Disaster Response)	100 Church Road Teddington Middlesex UK TW11 8QE	(44) 20 8943. 7713	David.Talbot@tearfund.org
37	Leanne Taylor	British Red Cross International Personnel Manager	9 Grosvenor Crescent London SW1X 7EJ UK	(44) 20 7201.5188	Ltaylor@redcross.org.uk

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40	Alice Tligui	International Health Exchange Director	134 Lower Marsh London SE1 7AE UK	(44) 207. 620. 3333	Info@ihe.org (general) alice@ihe.org.uk (direct) patrick@ihe.org.uk (recruitment)
41	Christine Vincent	CANADEM Executive Director	1 Nicholas (#1102) Ottawa ON K1N 7B7 Canada	(1) 613 789 3328	Vince61@ibm.net
42	Ann Wilson	Concern Worldwide Human Resources Officer	52/55 Camden Street, Dublin 2, Ireland	(353) 1. 417. 7723	ann.wilson@concern.ie
43	Dave Eastman	Recruiter International Medical Corps	11500 W. Olympic Blvd. Ste 506 Los Angeles, CA 90064-1524	Phone: (1) 310 826 78 Fax. (1) 310 442 6622.....	david.eastman@imc-la.org

Appendix VI Useful Web site addresses

ACT International	www.act-intl.org
Action Against Hunger	www.aah-uk.org
American Refugee Committee	www.archq.org
Bioforce	www.bioforce.asso.fr
CARE	www.care.org
Catholic Relief	www.catholicrelief.org
Christian Aid	www.christian-aid.org.uk
Cinfo	www.cinfo.ch
Community Aid Abroad – Oxfam	www.caa.org.au
Concern Worldwide	www.concern.ie
EMMA Ltd	www.emma.ie or www.emma.com
GlobalCorps	www.globalcorps.com
HelpAge International	www.oneworld.org/helpage
ICRC	www.icrc.org
IFRC	www.ifrc.org
IHE	www.dircon.ihe.org.uk
IOM	www.iom.int
IRC	www.intrescom.org
NRC	www.nrc.no
RedR	www.redr.org Includes EPS1,2 and 3 papers
Humanitarian Practice Network	www.oneworld.org/odi/rnn/
Save the Children UK	www.savethechildren.org.uk
Shanti Volunteer Network	www.jca.apc.org/sva
Tearfund	www.tearfund.org
USAID	www.info@usaid.gov
Vine Management Consulting	www.vinemc.co.uk
VSO	www.vso.org.uk
World Vision International	www.wvi.org

Appendix VII Evaluation and recommendations for EPS4

The following points were made by participants on an evaluation sheet which was handed in to the organisers at the end of the seminar. Where more than one person made the same point a symbol for each additional person appears against the point.

Organisation and management of EPS3

Positive points

- Organisation, presentation, content facilities good
□□
- Good opportunity to network □□
- Useful bringing agencies together for collaboration
- Concluding session was well managed
- Facilitation was excellent
- Scope and organisation was good
- A lot of interest and commitment from participants
- Appreciate work done on competencies

Negative points / could have been done better

- Too little discussion on Emergency Rapid Response Teams □□
- Not enough on competencies □□
- Too little time to agree concrete actions and outputs □□
- Better setting and larger room needed □□
- Too little on uses of registers
- Need more on best practices
- Individual networking received too little time
- Too few non-expat staff
- Too little feedback on EPS 2 and EPS 3
- Too much on HR management
- Too little on costs of recruitment/or retention
- Not enough on profiles of new recruits
- New recruits workgroup focused on managers only
- Review/assessment rushed
- Too little discussion on sharing of registers
- More comprehensive research
- More inclusive progress

- Too many new participants
- Too many presentations, too few group discussions
- Missed opportunity for research and influencing senior management

Recommendations for EPS4

- . Focus on fewer topics
- . Less focus on the meaning of EPS
- . Ask some recently returned relief workers to attend the seminar to off-set human resources perspective.
- . The seminar should not be co-opted by programme managers
- . Stream new/previous participants
- . Longer duration – at least five days
- . Keep personnel as the primary focus of the seminar. Tie Operations in to the seminar, but do not alter the focus.
- . Change approach to avoid talking heads syndrome
- . An introduction from participants over what they do as regards recruitment would be useful
- . Send a clear agenda to participants before arrival
- . More on what works well for other agencies, e.g. finding qualified staff, recruitment, etc
- . More output which could be of use to donors
- . Investigate organisations needs from the EPS and try to incorporate this
- . Increase participation of donors and international organisations
- . Have a three year cycle with more facilitation of actions and networking in-between events-- EPN
- . Seminar should focus on NGO personnel issues

SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORMS

EPS 3 - April 2000

Number of forms returned: 27

Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree scale	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree to Agree scale translated into percentages	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	% ave.
Subject matter was adequately covered			5	21	1	71%
Content was suitable for my background and experience			7	9	12	82%
Programme was well-paced			2	16	7	74%
Papers were relevant		1	2	17	7	77%
Participants were encouraged to take an active part			1	6	19	89%
The programme met my individual objectives		1	6	16	4	70%
Programme was relevant to my job		1	4	13	9	77%
I would recommend this programme to my colleagues			4	12	9	74%
	1	2	3	4	5	
Poor to Excellent scale translated into percentages	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Overall rating of seminar		2	5	19	1	68%
		Too Short	Correct	Too Long		
Was the seminar length correct/too short/too long?		6	20	0		
		Too Few	Just enough	Too Many		
Were there just enough participants/too few/too many?		8	17	0		