Human Resource Management in the Humanitarian Sector

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The humanitarian sector, like many others, relies upon professional staff and volunteers, with both international and local backgrounds. Human resources (HR) deals with individual and collective management of this diverse set of people who have different skills, abilities, knowledge, levels of commitment and motivations that may or may not be appropriate to the needs of national and international organisations.

Managing people can be a complex endeavour, especially in international settings with intertwining cultural, economic, technological, social and political differences that result in an intricate set of human relations. One may add to these points the specificities of the humanitarian sector, characterised by, amongst other factors, security risks, difficult living and working conditions, a relatively short span of action and a need to rapidly adapt to changes in terms of the nature of the work from one context to the next or within the same context (natural disasters, conflict situations, protracted crises, etc.).

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section introduces some of the major ways of thinking about human resource management (HRM), referring to theory and practice from both the private and the humanitarian sectors. The second section presents the developments in HRM within the humanitarian sector, including the main external and internal trends that have affected the way humanitarian organisations manage people. Section 3 provides an overview of HR activities.

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1 Introduction

The concept of HRM first appeared in the 1980s. HRM has by and large replaced what was up to this date commonly known as 'personnel management' and can be defined as 'a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation's most valued assets—the people working there … who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives'.[1]

The Society for Human Resource Management defines HRM as 'the formal structure within an organisation responsible for all decisions, factors, principles, operations, practices, functions, activities and methods related to the management of people'.[2] HRM involves a wide array of activities ranging from, *inter alia*, recruitment and selection, learning and talent development, provision of contracts and equal opportunities, employee well-being, security and safety to ethics and knowledge management.

Many models of HRM have been developed over the years. They try to answer the fundamental questions related to the management of people and an organisation's effectiveness, taking into account factors such as the different skills, abilities and knowledge available or required within an organisation; the commitment and motivation of employees and volunteers; whether they are underutilised or overworked; and how to match actual performance with an organisation's needs.

Two models are briefly described below, the hard HRM model, typified by the Michigan School, and the soft approach, which is explained through the lens of the Harvard model. These two models are the best known of the early interpretations of HRM. They are a good basis for understanding the fundamental differences and ambiguities associated with HRM.

The Michigan model, also called the matching model or best-fit approach, posits that HR systems and an organisation's structure should be managed in a way that is consistent with its organisational strategy. Employees are considered to be resources in the same way as any other resource, and the role of human resources is limited to a reactive, organisational function. In this model, the human resource cycle consists of four generic processes or functions: selection, appraisal, rewards and development. This model has often been equated with *hard HRM*, an approach that is based on the quantitative, calculative and business-strategy aspects of HRM, the premise being that human resources are acquired, deployed and dispensed in order for organisations to gain a competitive advantage.

The Harvard model considers employees as a fundamentally different type of resource that cannot be managed in the same way as other resources. Employees are

[1] Armstrong (2006), p. 3.

[2] Lockwood, N.; Williams, S., Research Quarterly, third quarter 2008, Selected Cross-Cultural Factors in Human Resource Management, Society for Human Resource Management, p. 1, http://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/documents/september%202008%20research%20quarterly%20-%20selected%20cross-cultural%20factors%20in%20human%20resource%20management.pdf.

significant stakeholders in an organisation, having their own needs and concerns, just like other groups such as stakeholders and customers.[3] According to the Harvard Framework, there is a need for a longer-term perspective in managing people and considering them potential assets rather than merely a variable cost. The framework is based on the belief that 'without a central philosophy or a strategic vision – which can only be provided by general managers – HRM is likely to remain a set of independent activities'.[4] The emphasis is on the fact that HRM should be the concern of management in general rather than of a personnel function in particular. This model is in line with what has been coined 'soft HRM'. Soft HRM focuses on communication, motivation and leadership based on the notion that all potential must be nurtured and developed. The Harvard Map or model outlines four HR policy areas:

- *human resource flows*—recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, appraisal and assessment, promotion, termination, etc.;
- *reward systems*—pay systems, motivation, etc.;
- *employee influence*—delegated levels of authority, responsibility, power; and
- *work systems*—definition/design of work and alignment of people.

In recent years, greater attention has been given to issues confronting organisations operating in an international environment. The notion of International Human Resource Management (IHRM) thus emerged to respond to the specificities linked to multi-country operations.

IHRM explores the added complexity in HRM as a result of diversity in national contexts of operation, such as broader external influences, risk exposure, as well as mixed workforces of expatriates and nationals.[5] IHRM is concerned with HR policies and practices in the international sphere and the social, cultural, legal, economic, political and historical characteristics that impact human resources within and across different countries.

IHRM is of particular interest for humanitarian organisations because it addresses the weaknesses of a restrictive HRM approach, which has often been criticised for being culturally bound based on Western-centric models grounded in concepts of individualism and capitalism. IHRM thus provides analytical tools that can help organisations operating at the international level understand culture more comprehensively as a central element of human and working relations. It recognises the multicultural profile of organisations operating across borders and the fact that culture is a fundamental component of HRM.[6] International humanitarian organisations are intrinsically multicultural. An understanding of IHRM can therefore help humanitarian organisations develop strategies, processes and tools that are better adapted to the composition and background of their staff and volunteers.

[3]The Harvard Map of HRM, http://www.hrmguide.co.uk/introduction_to_hrm/harvard-map.htm.

[4]Armstrong (2006), p. 9.

[5]Peltonen, 2006 Dowling, P., and Welch, D., International Human Resource Management 2004.

[6]Harzing, A.-W.; Pinnington, A., International Human Resource Management, 4th edition 2015.

1.1 Comparative Human Resource Management

Organisations operating across national and cultural borders need to bridge the divide between being globally coherent and consistent in their HRM policies and practices on the one hand and the imperative of taking into account local variations in national, cultural and institutional requirements on the other.

Comparative HRM tries to make sense of these different factors and of the interrelations between national and organisational cultures and their impact on how people react. It studies what happens within organisations, that is, the internal context (for example, organisational size, structure and demography) and the external context (covering national cultures and values, as well as elements of the institutional environment such as legal regulations, the respective industry and type of economy).

In developing, implementing and evaluating HR systems, organisations operating in more than one country are confronted with an important set of questions: can HRM in different contexts be conducted in a similar fashion, or does it have to adapt to the respective circumstances? Is there one best model for HRM, or is it necessary to take into account specific contextual issues in order to achieve the best outcomes?

In an increasingly globalised world, the presumption is that HR policies and best practices are exportable and applicable to an organisation's operations worldwide. While a degree of adaptation is common and inevitable, the best practice approach, usually emanating from head offices, tends to predominate. Even when mechanisms are expressly established to ensure that HR policies and practices take into account national and local factors, in many cases country information tends to be stereotyped, inadequate or non-comparable. One may add the fact that it is often extremely difficult to be on top of the details of HRM expectations and common practices in each local context. HR managers are usually highly dependent on the information obtained from their expatriate managers and the (usually local) HRM practitioners in each country—who may have different agendas and understandings.

1.2 Culture and Cross-Cultural Management

Culture influences both who we are and how we interact with each other. The Society for Human Resource Management, going back to J.H. Bodley, refers to culture as 'a set of values and beliefs with learned behaviours shared with a particular society [that] provides a sense of identity and belonging'.[7] The literature on culture and its implications for IHRM abound. Table 1 succinctly illustrates

[7]Lockwood, N.; Williams, S., Research Quarterly, third quarter 2008, Selected Cross-Cultural Factors in Human Resource Management, Society for Human Resource Management, p. 1.

Table 1 (a) Different views on culture, (b) Sample questions for the analysis of a culturally influenced situation

Positivist views 'Culture and values'	Interpretive views 'Culture and meanings'	Critical views 'Culture and power'
(a)		
• Researchers search for laws and regularities	• Researchers search for meaning: how people make sense of their situation	• Researchers' investigation reveals silenced voices and hidden structures of inequality and domination
• Instrumental knowledge, predictions, developments and test of models	• Knowledge on sense-making and cognitive processes, as well as on social constructions	• Knowledge that questions and challenges exposing power relations and inequalities
Example: Cultural dimension constructs such as 'Power Distance' or 'Assertiveness', value-dimensions valid across many countries	Example: Meaning systems associated to notions such as 'leadership', 'job description' or 'competence'; local and specific knowledge	Example: Talks about 'cultural differences' used to masquerade another issue (of power); unveils structures of domination with local and specific examples
(b)		
How does culture influence this situation? Which are the cultural dimensions that can explain people's behavior? Which are the cultural dimensions' score differences between the countries/organisations? What are the characteristics of an environment scoring high/low on these dimensions? How does it apply here?	What does this situation mean to those involved? What do they associate with the situation/elements of the situation? What does the situation remind them of? Which terms, which metaphors do people use when talking about it? What are the arguments advanced, how do they make sense for the participants involved?	Is there a struggle between two camps? Who is in a position of power? Who is silenced? What is at stake? Are people collaborating? What are the risks for each camp? What is said to be 'normal' (status quo or stated situation)? Who decides? Is culture talked about explicitly? Which stake/camp does talking about cultural differences serve?

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three of the main approaches used in cross-cultural management research. As shown, the different approaches can help to answer very specific questions. The answers to these questions can, in turn, help to define the HR policies and strategies based on a better understanding of the cultural context.

The positivist analysis helps to answer a set of essential questions: what are the value discrepancies that can be identified in a given situation? What are the external influences of culture to what is happening? The positivist approach is especially useful for identifying culture as a central consideration in any analysis of IHRM.

Culture is seen as providing answers to the basic needs that human beings have to fulfil; this is the foundation for what are known as cultural dimensions. The underlying premise is that some aspects of culture are universal, that is, they are valid and coherent across countries. This means that the influence of some dimensions on IRHM practices can be compared across countries.

Very interesting work undertaken by Hofstede and House, amongst others, has analysed the relationships between culture and various aspects of management, such as motivation, reward allocation, hierarchy, preferred forms of training and leadership. Table 2 shows a sample of the kinds of dimensions analysed.

The interpretive view is based on the premise that people act and interact in a way that makes sense to them, and it is the actor's point of view that is seen as most relevant to explain behaviour. The emphasis of this approach lies on the

Table 2 Sample of argued representative behaviour linked to hofstede's cultural dimensions and examples of country positioning

Dimension	High score	Low score
Power distance It is the extent to which the less powerful members of a society expect and accept unequal distribution of power.	• Centralised decision structure, more concentration of authority • The ideal boss is a well-meaning autocrat or good father, sees himself or herself as a benevolent decision-maker. • Subordinates expect to be guided. • Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, France	• Decentralised decision structure, less concentration of authority • The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat, sees himself or herself as practical, orderly and relying on support. • Subordinates expect to be consulted. • Denmark, New Zealand, Sweden, Canada
Individualism Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between the individuals are loose. Collectivism pertains to societies in which people are integrated intro strong, cohesive in-groups.	• Employees are supposed to act as 'economic men'. • Hiring and promotion decisions should be based on skills and rules only. • Employer–employee relationship is a business deal in a 'labour market'. • USA, Australia, Netherlands, South Africa	• Employees act in the interest of their in-groups, not necessarily themselves. • Hiring and promotion decisions take employees' in-group into account. • Employer–employee relationship is inherently moral, like a family link. • Ecuador, Panama, Indonesia, Pakistan, Peru
Long-term orientation Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards.	• Persistence, perseverance • Leisure time not so important • China, Hong Kong, Japan, Brazil, India	• Leisure time important • Quick results expected • Pakistan, Nigeria, Canada, USA

interpretations of individuals and the significance of the local context in the development of these meanings. While there are variations within societies between individuals, social groups or genders in the ways they make sense of situations, it is possible to identify similar national patterns of interpretation within countries. These are referred to as 'frames of meanings'. Meanings around notions of 'good work', a 'good organisation' or even a 'good boss' are very useful to know about since they influence what is perceived as desirable behaviour. Knowing what local meaning systems are associated to organisational practices is primordial. Inability to understand or take into account local meanings can lead to resistance, failures or difficulties in the transfer of HRM practices from one country to the next or from head offices to field offices.

Critical perspectives can contribute to diversity in management by encouraging questioning IHR managers regarding their views on diversity. Respecting cultural diversity for IHR managers goes beyond the consideration of *traditional* forms of diversity (such as gender, age, people with disability) to include, for example, religious belonging or professional training. Critical scholars pay attention to power imbalances between organisational members and sometimes highlight surprising results. For example, some assert that the discourse of IHR managers on diversity may reflect dominant views and reaffirm management practice and underlying inequalities. Critical perspectives can thus help IHR managers to realise they may involuntarily be reproducing the inequalities they intend to address. A critical approach to culture and power urges us to pay attention to how discourses are constructed and how *cultural difference* can be used to hide other aspects or to mask issues. Pre-expatriation training, for example, may implicitly reproduce stereotypes about non-Western cultures, thereby justifying the transfer of HRM practices from headquarters to subsidiaries in developing countries.

A concrete example of how these approaches can be used is reflected in a 2008 study on selected cross-cultural factors in human resource management; the study classifies organisations into four different ideal types of corporate culture based on their focus on tasks/relationships and the extent of hierarchy.[8] The four models depicted below are the result of an analysis of the approaches to work, authority, problem solving and relationship building (Table 3).[9]

Discussion
How can HR facilitate the maintenance of corporate culture identity while still ensuring that, on a local level, it is modified to be culturally relevant and appropriate?

[8] *Ibid*., p.3.

[9] For a broader introduction into international human resources management, see Brewster et al. (2011), Foot and Hook (2008), and Pankhurst (2008).

Table 3 Examining cross-cultural factors in HR management

Model	Characteristics
The Family	Leaders set the tone. This model gives high priority to doing the right things rather than doing things right. Pleasing one's superior, for example, is considered a reward in itself. Some HRM policies, such as pay for performance, are viewed as threatening to family bonds. Countries that often use the family model: Japan, Italy, France, Spain
The Eiffel Tower	Roles and functions are prescribed within a rigid system. People are viewed as capital and cash resources. HRM strategies focus on workforce planning and performance appraisal. For example, Germany
The Guided Missile	It is described as egalitarian, impersonal and task oriented. Focus is on achieving the end goal – 'do whatever it takes'. The value of employees is in how they perform and to what extent they contribute to the overall outcome. Focus of HRM strategies is on management by objective and pay for performance. For example, United States, United Kingdom
The Incubator	The fulfilment of the individual is more important than the organisation. Egalitarian, personal and individualistic structure. Goal is innovative products of services. HRM strategies focus on rewards for innovation. For example Silicon Valley, Scandinavian companies.

Table developed by the author, Sophie Borel, based on information from and citing Lockwood, N.; Williams, S., Research Quarterly, third quarter 2008, Selected Cross-Cultural Factors in Human Resource Management; reproduced by kind permission of the Society for Human Resource Management, p. 3 (2008), http://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/documents/september%202008%20research%20quarterly%20-%20selected%20cross-cultural%20factors%20in%20human%20resource%20management.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2017)

2 Humanitarian Organisations and How They Manage People

'. . .[I]f you're not a professional in this game, you have no right to descend on someone in their moment of crisis and do on-the-job training. Saving human lives is no place for amateurs. Why is that? Because the poor, dispossessed and disaster-prone should have at least one basic right left to them: to be protected from incompetence.'[10]

External factors influence employment practices in general. One of them, culture, has already been mentioned above. It acts as the backdrop that shapes human relations within an organisation and should be taken into account at all levels of HRM. Against this backdrop, other external factors to be considered include the following:

[10]Egeland (2009).

- the political system and the dominant political tradition, notably the strength of organised labour and the nature of employment regulations; and
- the legal system, itself partly a product of the political system, which not only frames or constrains the range of options open to management when devising procedures in areas such as employee representation but also plays a part in conditioning the expectations of organisational actors.

In the humanitarian sector, additional external factors include, *inter alia*:

- situations and contexts of conflict that are increasingly politicised, constraining access and impacting the security of aid personnel;
- tensions around conflicting cultures and guiding principles, with some host governments expressing frustration about INGOs and their perceived lack of deference to national authority and sovereignty;
- increasingly assertive aid recipient governments, a new generation of aid donors and more progressively decentralised traditional donors who are setting the aid agenda at the country level, impacting the political, legal and practical landscape that shapes HR;
- donor policies characterised by restrictions on overhead costs, which has led to cuts in HRM budgets for most organisations; and
- private donors, including the general public, who are keen to see that their funds *go to field*, that is, are spent on concrete activities and projects. They do not consider overhead or administrative costs an efficient use of their money.

Internal factors also influence—and are shaped by—human resource policies and strategies (or the lack thereof). In general, HR has not been perceived as a strategic priority, nor does planning involve input from HR. Few organisations have HR specialists either at headquarters or in the field. A survey undertaken by People in Aid in 2004 found that allocating resources to HR was considered expensive and difficult to fund.[11] Very little funding was available to pay HR staff (at headquarters) a decent wage, and due to the funding situation, career planning was often not possible. The same survey found that HR staff often feels overburdened, undervalued and under-resourced. In addition, evaluating HR is not a priority in most organisations, and evaluations tend not to look at HR as a useful sector, in terms of what it can contribute to an organisation's effectiveness as a whole. There is, therefore, scant information on how and whether its HR practices are adding value to work with communities and beneficiaries.

Additional internal factors include the following:

- *Recruitment and recognition*: humanitarian organisations continue to struggle with surge capacity, an insufficient number of *surge* staff, which causes delays in programme delivery or impacts on quality. In addition, around 90 per cent of frontline aid workers are local/national staff or subcontractors, with many not recognised as humanitarian workers. National/local staff tends to find the international

[11] People In Aid (2004a, b).

humanitarian workplace disadvantageous in terms of career paths as they rarely have equal development opportunities or reward packages. Hence, most national staff feels that they are more exposed and under a greater burden of risk than their international counterparts, leaving significant room for improvement. The great majority of victims of attacks on humanitarian workers in 2012 (82%) were national staff, although the attack rate for international staff was actually more than twice as high.[12]

- *Staff turnover*: rapid turnover of expatriate staff has been cited by partners and local staff as being demotivating, having a negative impact on quality of programmes and making it difficult to cultivate a professional workforce.[13]
- *Remuneration and rewards*: applying clear, fair and consistent rewards and benefits remains difficult.
- *Motivation*: staff who enters the sector tends to be highly motivated, with strong beliefs in their organisation's values. However, keeping them engaged remains a challenge. A 2013 People in Aid study found that, in the short term, employees tend to deliver *above average* levels of performance despite (not because of) the organisation. Eventually, however, 'frustration with organisational practices, burnout and stress come to the fore'.[14]
- *Legal frameworks*: there seems to be general difficulty in reconciling the nature of humanitarian operations—that is, emergency work—with labour laws. In 2015, for example, the French Red Cross was accused of breaching labour laws by making employees work long hours. The Red Cross justified its actions by saying that it was 'dedicated to saving lives',[15] adding that 'in emergency and first-aid operations and in responding to disasters in France and internationally, our missions demand a high degree of mobilisation and availability of our employees and charity workers, regardless of the time of day or night [...] emergencies give no warning'.[16]
- *Management*: organisations (particularly major international organisations) are not good at handling poor or inadequate job performance.[17]

Despite and because of the above, HRM has been increasingly recognised as an essential component of humanitarian operations, including at the strategic level. In 1997, People in Aid developed the 'People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the management and support of aid personnel'.

In 2011, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) endorsed five Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP), of which a commitment to leadership and governance includes major elements of HRM. In 2012, ALNAP

[12]Humanitarian Outcomes, Aid Worker Security Report, 2013, http://aidworkersecurity.org/sites/default/files/AidWorkerSecurityReport_2013_web.pdf.

[13]People in Aid (2013).

[14]*Id*., p. 48.

[15]The Telegraph (31 May 2015), http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11641827/French-Red-Cross-faces-huge-fine-over-illegal-overtime.html.

[16]*Ibid*.

[17]James (2008).

identified six factors of effectiveness: timeliness, human resources, preparedness, coordination, leadership, as well as monitoring and evaluation. For OECD DAC, the major factors influencing achievement or non-achievement of objectives include aspects of human resources, such as staff competencies, management and leadership.

The work undertaken by People in Aid, IASC and ALNAP, as well as the inclusion of HRM concerns in the Sphere Standards, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), is not only symbolic of the increasing importance that HR has acquired for humanitarian organisations; it has also provided the sector with much-needed guidance and support in this area. The Code of Conduct in particular was developed with the express intention of improving agencies' support and management of their staff and volunteers. Figure 1 illustrates the main codes, standards and guidelines developed in the area of HR to date.

The push for greater professionalisation, be it through increasing the number of educational and training courses offered in humanitarian action or through other initiatives addressing the recognition and transfer of competencies, skills and knowledge in the sector, is also an explicit acknowledgment of the fact that it is humanitarian workers (national and international staff and volunteers) who make the difference. Three initiatives in particular should be highlighted.

First, in 2010, the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) renamed itself the Start Network[18] and developed the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework. The framework provides a set of core humanitarian and leadership competencies, with the intention to improve human resource efficiencies, contribute to professionalisation in the sector, reduce the cost of staff turnover and assert an operational perspective in the design of academic and non-academic training programmes.[19] Together with the framework, CBHA developed a practical guide to support agencies in using it, based on an employee life cycle, and addressing different HR activities.[20]

Second, the European Universities on Professionalization of Humanitarian Action (EUPRHA),[21] recently renamed European Humanitarian Action Partnership (EUHAP),[22] worked extensively on a qualification framework for humanitarian

[18]The Start Network is a consortium of 24 leading NGOs working together to strengthen the humanitarian aid system. The consortium works in three areas: Start Fund (financing for emergency response); Start Build (strengthening civil society capacity); and Start Beta (creating platforms for partnerships and learning).

[19]HAP (2013), p. 39.

[20]CBHA (2011).

[21]EUPRHA is a network of 30 European universities, including 10 universities of the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA), two important associations—the Sphere project and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, a global network of non-governmental organisations—and the NOHA Alumni Community, a significant body of humanitarian professionals.

[22]EUHAP is a partnership of four humanitarian sector stakeholders represented by academia (NOHA and 9 other European Universities), training providers (RedR and Bioforce), employers (Aktion Deutschland Hilft) and employees (humanitarian professionals represented by the NOHA Alumni).

IASC Commitment 1

Leadership/Governance demonstrate their commitment to accountability to affected populations by ensuring feedback and accountability mechanisms are integrated into country strategies, programme proposals, monitoring and evaluations, recruitment, staff inductions, training and performance management, partnership agreements, and highlighted in reporting.

(IASC, 2011)

IASC Commitments, Accountability to Affected Populations (2011), http://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/IASC%20Principals%20commitments%20on%20AAP%20%2528CAAP%2529March%202013.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2017)

HAP Benchmark 2 – Staff Competency

The organisation ensures that staff have competencies that enable them to meet the organisation's requirements.

Requirements:

2.1. *The organisations shall clearly define and document the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that staff need to meet its commitments.*

2.2. *The organisations shall have in place a staff code of conduct which refers to:*

1. *not exploiting and abusing people, including sexual exploitation and abuse;*
2. *being sensitive to local culture; and*
3. *the responsibility of staff to report abuses*

2.3. *The organisation shall ensure that staff understand the code of conduct and their responsibility under the accountability*

Sphere – Code Standard 6

Humanitarian agencies provide appropriate management, supervisory and psychological support, enabling workers to have the knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes to plan and implement an effective humanitarian response with humanity and respect.

Key actions:

- *Provide managers with adequate leadership training, familiarity with key policies and the resources to manage effectively*
- *Establish systematic, fair and transparent recruitment procedures to attract a maximum number of appropriate candidates.*
- *Recruit teams with a balance of women and men, ethnicity, age and social background so that the team's diversity is appropriate to the local culture and context.*
- *Provide aid workers (staff, volunteers and consultants, both national and international) with adequate and timely inductions, briefings, clear reporting lines and updated job descriptions to enable them to understand their responsibilities, work objectives, organizational values, key*

Fig. 1 Examples of HR codes, standards and guidelines

framework.

2.4. The organisation shall regularly and consistently review and act on staff performance relating to knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes needed to meet commitments.

2.5. The organisation shall continually develop its staff so that commitments are met more effectively.

2.6. The organisation shall ensure that staff who interact with its partners understand the partnership agreements, the implications of the organisation's accountability framework for partners, and each partner's obligations.

2.7. The organisations shall work with its partners to agree the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that a partner's staff need to meet agreed commitments, and to ensure these are reflected in a staff code of conduct (as in requirement 2.2).

2.8. The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners implement and monitor their staff codes of conduct.

(HAP, 2010)

HAP International (2013) Guide to the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management. Geneva: HAP International, p. 31-32.

policies and local context.

- *Establish security and evacuation guidelines, health and safety policies and use them to brief aid workers before they start work with the agency.*
- *Ensure that aid workers have access to medical care and psychological support.*
- *Establish codes of personal conduct for aid workers that protect disasters-affected people from sexual abuse, corruption, exploitation and other violations of people's human rights. Share the codes with disaster-affected people.*
- *Promote a culture of respect towards the disaster-affected population.*
- *Establish grievance procedures and take appropriate disciplinary action against aid workers following confirmed violation of the agency's code of conduct.*
- *Carry out regular appraisal of staff and volunteers and provide feedback on performance in relation to work objectives, knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes.*
- *Support aid workers to manage their workload and minimize stress.*
- *Enable staff and managers to jointly identify opportunities fir continual learning and development.*
- *Provide appropriate support to aid workers who have experienced or witnessed extremely distressing events.*

(Sphere, 2011)

The Sphere Project, Core Standard 6: Aid Worker Performance, http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/core-standard-6-aid-worker-performance/,

Fig. 1 (continued)

http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/core-standard-6-aid-worker-performance/ (accessed on 14 April 2017)

Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability Commitment 8

(Additional HR components and issues are addressed in other sections of the CHS. Only the most relevant ones have been include in this table)

Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.

Quality criterion: staff are supported to do their job effectively, and treated fairly and equitably.

Key Actions

8.1 Staff work according to the mandate and values of the organisation and to agreed objectives and performance standards.

8.2 Staff adhere to the policies that are relevant to them and understand the consequences of not adhering to them.

8.3 Staff develop and use the necessary personal, technical and management competencies to fulfil their role and understand how the organisation can support them to do this.

Organisational Responsibilities

8.4 The organisation has the management and staff capacity and capability to deliver its programmes.

8.5 Staff policies and procedures are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant

Fig. 1 (continued)

with local employment law.

8.6 Job descriptions, work objectives and feedback processes are in place so that staff have a clear understanding of what is required of them.

8.7 A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.

8.8 Policies are in place to support staff to improve their skills and competencies.

8.9 Policies are in place for the security and the wellbeing of staff.

(HAP, People in Aid, the Sphere Project, 2014)

HAP International, People In Aid and the Sphere Project, Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, p. 17 (2014), http://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2017)

People In Aid Code of good practice in the management and support of aid personnel

Guiding Principle: People are central to the achievement of our mission.

Principle 1: *Human Resources strategy: Human resources are an integral part of our strategic and operational plans.*

Indicators:

1. *Our organisational strategy or business plan explicitly values staff for their contribution to organisational and operational objectives.*
2. *The organisational strategy allocates sufficient human and financial resources to achieve the objectives of the human resources strategy.*
3. *Operational plans and budgets aim to reflect fully our responsibilities for staff management, support, development and well-being. The monitoring of these plans and budgets feeds into any necessary improvements.*
4. *Our human resources strategy reflects our commitment to promote inclusiveness and diversity.*

Principle 2: Staff Policies and Practices: Our human resources policies aim to be effective, fair and transparent

1. *Policies and practices that relate to staff employment are set out in writing and are monitored and reviewed, particularly when significant changes in the legal or working environment take place.*
2. *The policies and practices we implement are consistent in their application to all staff*

Fig. 1 (continued)

except while taking into account relevant legal provisions and cultural norms.

3. *Staff are familiarised with policies and practices that affect them.*
4. *Appropriate guidance is provided to managers so that they are equipped to implement policies effectively.*
5. *The rewards and benefits for each role are clearly identified and applied in a fair and consistent manner.*
6. *Policies and practices are monitored according to how well they meet:*
   - *organisational and programme aims*
   - *reasonable considerations of effectiveness, fairness and transparency.*

Principle 3: Managing People: Good support, management and leadership of our staff is key to our effectiveness

1. *Relevant training, support and resources are provided to managers to fulfil their responsibilities. Leadership is a part of this training.*
2. *Staff have clear work objectives and performance standards, know whom they report to and what management support they will receive. A mechanism for reviewing staff performance exists and is clearly understood by all staff.*
3. *In assessing performance, managers will adhere to the organisation's procedures and values.*
4. *All staff are aware of grievance and disciplinary procedures.*

Principle 4: Consultation and Communication: Dialogue with staff on matters likely to affect their employment enhances the quality and effectiveness of our policies and practices.

1. *Staff are informed and adequately consulted when we develop or review human resources policies or practices that affect them.*
2. *Managers and staff understand the scope of consultation and how to participate, individually or collectively.*

Principle 5: Recruitment and Selection: Our policies and practices aim to attract and select a diverse workforce with the skills and capabilities to fulfil our requirements

1. *Written policies and procedures outline how staff are recruited and selected to positions in our organisation.*
2. *Recruitment methods aim to attract the widest pool of suitably qualified candidates.*

Fig. 1 (continued)

3. *Our selection process is fair, transparent and consistent to ensure the most appropriate person is appointed.*
4. *Appropriate documentation is maintained and responses are given to candidates regarding their selection/non-selection to posts. We will provide feedback if necessary.*
5. *The effectiveness and fairness of our recruitment and selection procedures are monitored.*

Principle 6: Learning, Training and Development: Learning, training and staff development are promoted throughout the organisation

1. *Adequate induction, and briefing specific to each role, is given to all staff.*
2. *Written policies outline the training, development and learning opportunities staff can expect from the organisation.*
3. *Plans and budgets are explicit about training provision. Relevant training is provided to all staff.*
4. *Managers know how to assess the learning needs of staff so they can facilitate individual development. Where appropriate training and development will be linked to external qualifications.*
5. *The methods we have in place to monitor learning and training ensure that the organisation also learns. They also monitor the effectiveness of learning and training in meeting organisational and programme aims as well as staff expectations of fairness and transparency.*

Principle 7: Health, Safety and Security: The security, good health and safety of our staff are a prime responsibility of our organisation

1. *Written policies are available to staff on security, individual health, care and support, health and safety.*
2. *Programme plans include written assessment of security, travel and health risks specific to the country or region, reviewed at appropriate intervals.*
3. *Before an international assignment all staff receive health clearance. In addition, they and accompanying dependents receive verbal and written briefing on all risks relevant to the role to be undertaken, and the measures in place to mitigate those risks, including insurance. Agency obligations and individual responsibilities in relation to possible risks are clearly communicated. Briefings are updated when new equipment, procedures or risks are identified.*
4. *Security plans, with evacuation procedures, are reviewed regularly.*

Fig. 1 (continued)

5. *Records are maintained of work-related injuries, sickness, accidents and fatalities, and are monitored to help assess and reduce future risk to staff.*
6. *Workplans do not require more hours work than are set out in individual contracts. Time off and leave periods, based on written policies, are mandatory.*
7. *All staff have a debriefing or exit interview at the end of any contract or assignment. Health checks, personal counselling and careers advice are available. Managers are trained to ensure these services are provided.*

In the case of staff on emergency rosters, managers should ensure that health clearance, immunisations and procedures for obtaining the correct prophylaxes and other essential supplies are arranged well in advance.

(People In Aid, 2003)

People in Aid, Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel, p. 7-20 (2003), http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DA4AA643ACE54425C1256C6B003B903A-pia-code.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2017)

Fig. 1 (continued)

action. The Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework (HAQF) aims to be a neutral reference point for all types of qualification in the humanitarian sector in order to assist in the identification of potential progression routes in the context of lifelong learning and to support workers' and learners' mobility within the humanitarian sector and across sectors.

Third, in March 2010 and March 2012, Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA) undertook two studies focusing on professionalisation.[23]

The first study informed the humanitarian sector of its uneven provision and fragmented and uncoordinated approaches to developing people and teams. It recommended, *inter alia*, the creation of professional pathways and progression routes into the humanitarian sector, formalising occupational standards for humanitarian work and quality marking of learning and development providers. It also recommended the formation of a dedicated and independent humanitarian professional association.

The second study further explored the state of professional development in the sector, looking at barriers and blockages, endorsement of core humanitarian competencies, the concept of a learning and development passport and the possible development of a professional association for humanitarian workers.

[23]Russ (2012) and Walker et al. (2010).

Discussion
Think about Egeland's statement at the beginning of this section.
In an emergency, who are the true first responders?
In the case of a lack of qualified locals, should our response be to bring in more expatriate staff or invest in equipping and empowering local potential?
How do we engage volunteers and professionalise amateurs?
How do we equip and empower?

3 Human Research Management Tasks

IHRM and HRM are not only important for HR managers. All employees are in one way or another affected by HR because HR policies, strategies and practices impact their work and lives; because they may have to manage teams; and/or because they may be involved in HR activities. This concerns line managers, in particular, because while an important part of their work may be devoted to managing people, HR is often not their primary function.

The division of HR tasks and responsibilities between HR specialists, line managers and other employees differs from one organisation to another. Smaller organisations may not have HR departments at all, with line managers taking up HR responsibilities. Even when there are fully fledged HR departments, the scope of work within these departments may vary, depending on the importance attributed to HRM, the extent to which HR specialists contribute to an organisation's overall strategy and whether their activities are restricted to an administrative function.

Table 4 shows the main activities falling under the responsibility of human resource practitioners, both specialists and line managers who are involved in one aspect or another of human resource management.

All HRM activities are generally rooted in an HRM system developed within the respective organisation. Some of these systems, or parts of them, will be explicitly laid out, especially in larger humanitarian organisations. This means that there is an established system that is translated into a set of manuals or written procedures, accessible to all staff. These include staff policies and internal regulations, as well as any other information impacting staff, taking into account both headquarter and country-level factors. Other systems, or parts of them, are implicit, stemming from the prevailing culture of the organisation and from the way it has grown and evolved. Good employment and HR management practices depend on a number of factors as discussed above, including culture, the legal systems and the political and social environment. While the private sector has witnessed a surge of very creative management and leadership practices, this development has not permeated through to humanitarian organisations. This is perhaps due to the complexity of the humanitarian field and the contexts in which humanitarian organisations operate. The sector is timidly accepting the need to invest in institutions rather than projects, especially where crises are chronic and international aid is receding. The demands of the sector, and the

Table 4 The main activities of human resource practitioners

Main areas of activity of a human resource management specialist	Examples of involvement of human resource management specialist	Examples of involvement of line manager
Recruitment and selection	Design policies and procedures for fair recruitment and selection Carry out interview or monitor and give advice on interview technique or in terms and conditions of employment	Prepare and carry out interviews Participate in selecting successful candidates
Learning and talent development	Involved in planning and learning and development opportunities for the whole organisation (for example, developing formal training courses, online materials or less formal approaches such as coaching or mentoring) Design and organise training courses Keep training records centrally and request information from line managers as part of planning exercise or for monitoring purposes	May also be involved in planning and provision of training and talent development opportunities, primarily for employees in their own department
Human resource planning	Likely to be involved to various degrees in contributing to the strategic plan Collection and analysis of data, monitoring targets Providing information to managers Conducting exit interviews and analysing reasons for leaving	Collect information on leavers and provide information on anticipated requirements for employees in their department
Provision of contracts	Provide and issue written statement of particulars for new employees Keep all employee-related records and documentation Advise on any alterations to contracts	
Provision of fair treatment	Design of policies and procedures to encourage fair treatment at work Inform and train people in these policies and procedures Monitor success of policies	Responsible for fair treatment of people in their own department Listen and respond to grievances as an initial stage of grievance procedure or informally Possibly make suggestions about design of policies
Equal opportunities	Design policies to encourage equal opportunities Inform and train managers and all employees in these policies and procedures Monitor the effectiveness of the policies	Ensure that employees under their responsibility do not suffer from any form of unfair discrimination at work

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Main areas of activity of a human resource management specialist	Examples of involvement of human resource management specialist	Examples of involvement of line manager
Managing diversity	Develop policies about diversity and promoting and ensuring a diverse workforce through the organisation	

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Table 5 Key steps in HR activities, good practices and recommendations

HR activity	Key steps	Good practices and recommendations
Recruitment and selection	Planning, issuing vacancy notices, collecting and assessing applications, conducting interviews and selecting the applicant	*Introduce use of rosters*: they are being used as a way to recruit talent fast. The START network aims to build shared surge capacity in a number of countries over the next 3 years.
		Introduce workflow forecasting: like cash flow forecasting, it encourages the HR function to gather information about future skills needs and ensure that the finances are available to support it. This gives time to upskill existing staff.
		Strengthen collaboration with other organisations: especially in terms of secondments, rosters, job training and talent exchange.
Retention and career development	Establishing management and leadership systems, including performance appraisal, staff development, staff retention, talent management	*Invest in national staff development* and consider the growing capacities of national governments to meet the needs of their own citizens in times of disaster, in advance of launching efforts.
		Invest in talent: how do humanitarian organisations deal with the talent shortage and access the right talent, and how do they unleash and leverage its human potential? This can be done through • collaborative work such as shared surge rosters; • using social media for recruitment;

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

HR activity	Key steps	Good practices and recommendations
		• greater pay equity (especially as talent shifts from expatriates to national staff, with diaspora recruitment also being a factor); • actively seeking talent within the organisation. *Consult with staff:* also about HR activities. *Value staff engagement*: more consideration should be given to the importance of staff engagement. The aid sector benefits from more motivated staff with a stronger belief in their organisation's values than the private sector. Cerus Consulting (2013) found that many charities' approach to measuring employee engagement is flawed. The study demonstrated that, in the short term, employees often deliver 'above average' levels of performance despite (and not because of) the organisation. However, this was at a price: 'eventually frustration with organisational practices, burnout and stress come to the fore (. . .)'. Consequently, organisational performance will suffer, as well as employee well-being. *Train more and better:* MOOCs, blended learning and serious games are new forms of training. Humanitarians spend 95 per cent of their time in action and five per cent in training—the inverse of professional military forces. Many aid organisations have developed without a culture of training, rely on flawed training of trainer models, are reluctant to invest in training for fear of increasing funds spent on administration or consume too much time writing proposals and reports. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of an organisation

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

HR activity	Key steps	Good practices and recommendations
		depends not only on its capacity to develop the skill set of its staff but also on its own ability to be a learning organisation.

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difficulties it faces in various aspects of HR processes, do make the case for a more creative and proactive HR management and engagement (Table 5).[24]

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