The H2H Fund and the Get Ready Fund

Case Study: July 2021

This case study explores how the H2H's 'Get Ready Fund' activation in 2020-2021 contributed added value to humanitarian action. It examines how the H2H Fund activation and H2H Member projects made potential contributions to improving the humanitarian system. The Get Ready Fund activation is unlike other H2H Fund activations because it supports the development of Member services to strengthen the humanitarian system instead of the delivery of services to support a specific humanitarian response. In considering impact potential, a five-stage innovation process model is used, including recognition, ideation, development, implementation, and diffusion.[1] The study was conducted over a few days in June 2021 for the H2H Network by Itad MEAL advisers, using mid-term narrative reports from five grantees, six interviews with project managers, and one interview with the H2H Core Team. The study relies on self-reporting by the grantees (which does not allow for triangulation) and sometimes reflects the understanding of the analyst without further validation or review.

The activation

Problem: The H2H Fund believes that H2H Members provide technical services with the potential to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action, but many of them lack the capacities to contribute to an emergency response. In 2020, smaller H2H Members in particular were struggling to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic and new ways of working in humanitarian action. Without support, it was feared these services might not be available to support improvements in the humanitarian system.

Proposition: The H2H Fund's Get Ready Fund 'support package' aimed to 'support members to develop processes, systems and services that allow them to adapt and respond faster and more effectively in 2021 and beyond.' The H2H Fund sought to fund a range of projects with a relatively small amount of funding, focused on developing their 'core offer' with a view to becoming more sustainable. The logic was as follows: if the H2H Fund provided micro-funding to global service providers with insufficient response capacities, and grantees developed or adapted their processes to deliver technical services in emergencies, then their innovative work would be sustained, and their learning would contribute to systemic changes.

Support Package: The H2H Fund selected four projects of 11 submitted to develop a support package covering the H2H Network's four thematic areas:
- Data and information: CartONG and Groupe URD proposed a joint project to design and develop a ready-to-roll-out learning path, 'MEAL CHS - Quality and Accountability in practice.' It would be

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[1] Obrecht, A. and T. Warner, A. (2016) 'More than just luck: Innovation in humanitarian action'. HIF/ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.

delivered online to help field-based staff implement Quality and Accountability commitments in crisis responses.

- Community engagement and accountability: The CDAC Network and Translators without Borders proposed a project, 'Building bridges in surge capacity for Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).' It would involve developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and tools for humanitarian responders, individuals, and companies to act as 'centres of excellence and coordination'.
- Security, logistics and programme support: Field Ready proposed to develop a Mobile App, 'Humanitarian Making' for Everyone, by reviewing and publishing its procedures and tools for the local production of 'appropriate quality aid supplies'. The app would help people anywhere to make aid supplies for a humanitarian emergency.
- Quality and sector professionalization: RedR UK proposed a project, 'Rapid Onset Localization Team (ROLT)', the development of a team of experienced regional experts and fully trained trainers, able to engage in their region on short notice, with access to a knowledge base training modules aimed at incorporating local actors into humanitarian responses.

Added value: The Get Ready Fund provided rare and therefore highly valuable funding for the development of HGS services. Project managers noted that 'seed funding' dedicated to developing a service, a system, or a training package was very rare in the sector. HGS actors struggled to raise funds without promising tangible results on the ground or to cover management costs, especially when they work as sub-contractors to larger programmes.[2] One grantee reported joining the H2H Network to access to 'small packages of funding that fill a gap' not covered by other funding. Another welcomed the broad parameters of the funding, compared to 'innovation' funds which it considered too restrictive in their requirements or too much focused on novelty.

Funding inputs: The Get Ready Fund allocated relatively small amounts, but in a way that maximised its value, by being timely, efficient, and flexible. The Fund allocated a total of GBP 125,000 to the four projects for completion during December 2020 to May 2021. While this meant 'micro-funding' for each project, grantees appreciated that the funding was made available quickly and in advance; the simple and quick approval process, based on pre-approvals; and the supportiveness of the H2H Core Team in providing speedy professional support as 'peers' with an 'operational' understanding. To one grantee, this represented a 'trust-based' model that allowed recipients space to develop value instead of predefined commitments that hamper value creation.

Joint projects: The Get Ready Fund's promotion of joint projects achieved mixed success. The CartONG and Groupe URD project to jointly develop a training package worked quite well, but collaboration came at an additional cost. These organisations held regular Zoom meetings and took decisions jointly, and felt their collaboration really enriched the contents of the training course with complementary areas of expertise. But given their different ways of working, both sides underestimated the time needed for coordination and this explains why another month was needed to deliver. Meanwhile The CDAC Network and Translators without Borders project to build CEA surge capacity found collaboration more difficult. These organisations noted their joint proposal was made to satisfy the H2H Fund's prioritisation of joint projects, but would have worked well as individual projects, and the requirement added an unnecessary 'layer of bureaucracy'. 'In the proposal stage we wanted to do it together but we ended up having different needs,' explained one of the managers.

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[22] According to one Member, there are very few funding lines that encourage investment in the development of HGS organisations. In EU funding, said the manager, 'indirect costs' are allowed but restricted to 7-10% which covers audit, insurance and website management. Such funding practices barely cover management costs for an HGS organisation, and leave no resources for development. This may contrast with larger organisations who are able to negotiate up to 20% or 30% for such costs within larger grants.

Learning points: In practice, the Get Ready Fund benefited some of the H2H Network's more established members who could develop promising proposals more than it did those in greatest need of capacity development. Besides, the small amounts invested are useful to the recipients but unlikely to make very discernible impacts at the system level. The promotion of joint projects among H2H Member applicants may generate benefits for recipients, but it also implies additional efforts and may not be beneficial in all cases.

Project 1: Groupe URD and CartONG

- **Problem**: Groupe URD and CartONG recognised that humanitarian needs are rising substantially, Covid-19 is hindering international travel, and aid agencies are required to respond to these needs and adapt their operational methods, but training provision for quality and accountability is not yet available online. The localisation agenda has also increased demand for access to learning opportunities.
- **Solution**: Groupe URD and CartONG aimed to address this problem by developing an online training pathway focused on MEAL, which would provide guidance on putting quality and accountability in practice based on the Core Humanitarian Standard. The 10-week online course would be aimed at MEAL leads at field level, and strengthening the MEAL function. It also aims to support MEAL leads to meet the growing demands and opportunities of data analysis and information management (IM).
- **Activities**: Groupe URD and CartONG report carrying out a needs assessment to identify the needs of the target audience, a market survey, and mapping of learning services in the area of QA/MEAL and IM; identifying potential partners and local focal points; presenting the project and feedback to five network organisations[3] and online; developing the concept and translating it into learning content.
- **Achievements**: Groupe URD and CartONG expect to deliver the learning needs assessment and market survey report, communication plan and business model; consolidated training content designed and developed; and a ready-to-roll out online learning path (or 'package') available with an offer of flexible support services for different users.
- **Learning**: Groupe URD and CartONG understand that MEAL and IM content brings real added value to existing training provision; the scope of learning needs identified the complexity of tailoring content to different users; and that the business plan needs to charge the right prices to cover service delivery (but content development is covered by the Get Ready Fund grant).
- **Response utility**: Groupe URD and CartONG expect all MEAL focal points at field level, heads of MEAL services at organisation-level, and MEAL consultants to be able to benefit from the training package. They would have improved access to up-to-date and contextualised online learning modules and an online learning path and services available in English and French, enabling them to contribute to a more relevant and adaptable response. The Groupe URD and CartONG business plan could make the service sustainable.
- **Impact potential**: Field-based staff in all responses could access the training content online as open-source tools, and Groupe URD and CartONG could provide tailored training to client organisations and registered participants. As an innovation, this solution appears to be at an ideation and development stage with some diffusion underway, but not yet implemented or brought to scale.

Project 2: TWB

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[3] The Cop IM, the H2H network, the Accountability network, CHS Alliance and Sphere as joint owners of the CHS with Groupe URD, and the Training Providers Forum

- **Problem**: The Translators without Borders project recognised that the organisation lacked standardised procedures to respond to rapid-onset humanitarian crises. In responding to the Tigray crisis in 2020-2021, TWB realised it was slowed down by the absence of clear deployment processes, attributable to a lack of funding for management activities. TWB reasoned that other H2H members and HGS actors faced similar problems.
- **Solution**: TWB aimed to address this problem by developing SOPs for future response deployments, and sharing these with H2H Members to support their future deployments. It would do this by: (I) identifying gaps and missing policies and documents, both internally at TWB, and consulting similar H2H network members; developing the necessary tools and documents; and (iii) Negotiating further partnership arrangements with solid actors that are in position to advance the agenda of TWB and similar actors.
- **Activities**: TWB reports developing the SOPs covering programmatic and administrative areas for rapid engagement in a humanitarian crisis, such as simplified human resources and financial processes and programmatic tools, and templates for Results framework and basic research. It worked to bring together existing processes and practices into a single coherent approach and consulted other H2H Members.
- **Achievements**: TWB expects to deliver: SOPs developed with 11 different templates and process descriptions developed to facilitate quick setup of advisory services in a new humanitarian context; and this material package shared with H2H members after finalizing consultations and consolidating the final versions of the documents. These tools will provide logical sequenced guidance to TWB and H2H Members on responding to an emergency.
- **Learning**: TWB understands that its deployment in emergencies depends on reaching partnership and hosting agreements in advance with larger organisations that have a larger present in country. Such agreements remain to be reached.
- **Response utility**: TWB expects smaller H2H Members to use the tools and templates to guide their responses to future emergencies; and its own organisation to have a one-stop-shop of all its processes and procedures to enable quick and effective deployment
- **Impact potential**: TWB and other H2H Members could be able to activate more quickly and cost efficiently in sudden-onset emergencies. As an innovation, the solution appears to be at development stage with some limited diffusion, and should be ready for implementation next.

Project 3: CDAC

- **Problem**: The CDAC project recognised that humanitarian responses do not facilitate the integration of national experts, organisations, and private companies. In particular, responses struggle to mobilise CEA expertise and coordinate CEA activities, and also make little use of Individuals and companies with CEA and local expertise who do not normally operate within an international humanitarian response.
- **Solution**: The CDAC project/activities aimed to address this problem by providing training in CEA coordination and leadership to 6 individuals as well as humanitarian CEA operations training to a communications company. This is with the idea that they help lead CEA work in their home country/region, conduct training and piloting with a company to work in a CEA response, evaluate the training activities, and develop an MOU to integrate these CEA capacities in the national response. This would be done by training local individuals and companies with CEA expertise and those already with language and cultural awareness to integrate into humanitarian response mechanisms, applying a 'localisation mindset' that would feed into changes in approach within the international humanitarian community.
- **Activities**: CDAC reports developing the CEA National Coordinator training course with competencies assessment framework and self-assessment exercises, bi-weekly sessions from 23 March 2021, and training of a company in Burkina Faso.

- **Achievements**: CDAC expects these main outputs/outcomes: the trained national coordinators to be leading the development of coordination and partnerships between UN Agencies, INGO and local leadership in target locations to ensure a rapid-onset response includes CEA-informed assessments and activities from day 1; at least one critical partnership established per target country on behalf of H2H members; four Training of Trainers (ToT) tools prepared which can be delivered by a trainer over the Internet; individuals and companies identified in a specified region who with additional support can be used in a CEA surge capacity within a humanitarian response; 4-6 focal points (individuals/companies) developed into 'nodes of excellence'; and SOP/MOU developed to integrate these new capacities into response structures.
- **Learning**: CDAC understands that the solution depends on having an established CEA presence in country or in the region.
- **Response utility**: CDAC expects this pool of trained CEA actors to be available at regional level for new humanitarian responses and as CDAC experts for deployments.
- **Impact potential**: Learning generated about CEA coordination and localisation, and the creation of a community of practice among these actors to promote learning, could contribute to improved CEA in responses across the system. As an innovation, this solution appears to be at an ideation and development stage, and not yet ready for implementation or diffusion.

Project 4: RedR UK UK

- **Problem**: RedR UK recognised that local actors who are the first to respond in a disaster often lack capacity and are underutilised in responses; international agencies still fail to consider existing capacities (so local actors struggle to have a voice in humanitarian coordination mechanisms); and in disasters there is a rush to respond so few resources are available for training and capacity development when they may be needed most.
- **Solution**: RedR UK aimed to address this problem with a pilot project to establish a team of regional responders -- a Rapid Onset Localization Team (ROLT) – able to deliver selected training modules for local actors. The concept is to provide 'just-in-time support and bite-sized tailored training' to local actors during emergencies to improve their response capacity and facilitate dialogue with the humanitarian system, thereby strengthening their voice and localisation efforts.
- **Activities**: RedR UK reports recruiting trainers; developing engagement processes for the ROLT; developing onboarding modules for the ROLT; developing initial training modules - focused on:
  - Disasters and Localisation – including disaster risk management and principles of localisation
  - The Humanitarian Environment – including humanitarian principles and needs assessments
  - Accountability – including accountability to affected populations and protection principles
  - Resource Mobilisation – including human resources and project cycle management
  - Staying Effective – including risk management and personal security
- **Achievements**: RedR UK expects to identify, onboard, and prepare five experienced responders and trainers from the Asia Pacific region to engage with relevant processes in place; develop draft engagement processes for the ROLT, including processes, procedures, recruitment guidelines, safety and security policies and SOPs for ROLT activation; and make available five short, contextualized training modules. It also expects to establish a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning (MERL) system and complete Proof-of-Concept steps including definition, development, design, execution, and initial evaluation Proof of Concept Report and related MERL System.
- **Learning**: RedR UK understands the ROLT depends on partnerships and collaboration. ROLT activation requires a network of partners and collaborators in country, and developing open-

source material and recruiting a regional team of responders is more effective in collaboration with others and in collaboration with the local organisations and responders that will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

- **Response utility**: RedR UK expects the ROLT to be established and the mechanism ready for activation in a disaster response, where it is expected to benefit local organisations and responders who will receive just-in-time support from it when activated. It will be a central pillar of RedR UK's strategy.
- **Impact potential**: The ROLT service, once developed and implemented, could be diffused more broadly in other contexts. RedR UK's MERL activities will support this process with learning and guiding future progress, although questions remain about how to measure its impact. As an innovation, this solution appears to be at an ideation and development stage, but not yet implemented or ready for diffusion —although these are planned and likely to go ahead.

Project 5: Field Ready

- **Problem**: Field Ready recognised the humanitarian sector relies on importing supplies in disaster responses and more broadly lacks engineers with manufacturing knowhow. While Field Ready has developed processes for manufacturing in disaster zones over the past eight years, it has not been able to prepare and share these in a format that can be used by other actors, including local and national actors. This is considered an important missed opportunity.
- **Solution**: Field Ready aimed to address this problem by developing and publishing its procedures and tools for the local production of appropriate quality aid supplies, based on its years of innovation and learning in this area of emerging interest. It would consolidate, codify publish and share its way of working with the sector, in the format of a 'mobile enabled website', to bring new expertise into the sector, contribute to new ways of working, and enable manufacturing of local items.
- **Activities**: Field Ready reports reviewing its tools, guidance and methodologies; working to consolidate, codify, present and publish them; and engaging a software developer to turn these into digital products.
- **Achievements**: Field Ready expects to deliver a mobile-enabled website that makes available its practical tools for manufacturing in emergencies. These include a Goods Received Note, Know-Where Template, and a Manufacturer Checklist Design, and a related training package.
- **Learning**: Field Ready observes that the Get Ready Fund and its formal reporting requirements, in addition to the funding allocation, helped to provide the organisation with the necessary focus and obligation to deliver this important project amid other competing demands on its limited capacity.
- **Response utility**: Field Ready expects the mobile-enabled website to be available to all humanitarian actors, and has received expressions of interest from larger humanitarian actors and innovation actors.
- **Impact potential**: The mobile-enabled website should allow for diffusion of Field Ready's methods for local manufacturing. As an innovation, this solution appears to be at development stage which may allow for implementation and diffusion next.

Conclusions

The Get Ready Fund provided micro-funding to six established H2H members across four thematic areas, offering unusually valuable funding to develop their services. The projects each proposed innovative technical solutions to identified problems, and all were being implemented and could be expected to deliver intended results. An emerging lesson across several projects was the critical importance of partnerships with in-country humanitarian actors, which were needed to establish

hosting arrangements and stakeholder collaborations, to tailor services to requirements, or to mobilise national and local technical capacities.

At the response level, the projects each intended to make products and services available to specific humanitarian response actors. All the projects will publish 'open source' outputs, but utilisation will depend on these services being accessible in the right place, at the right time, and in the right way. At the system level, all the projects identified problems or gaps in humanitarian action, and most were in the process of designing and developing expert solutions. Most may now be ready for implementation and applied testing, but some of these innovative services seemed more sustainable than others – especially when clearly integrated into organisational strategies.

In practice, the H2H Fund provided micro-funding to several established global service providers, the grantees conceived and developed expert solutions as intended, and most of them will be ready for implementation and testing in future humanitarian responses. The potential for these services to contribute to systemic changes through diffusion and scaling will depend on their sustainability, which is not guaranteed.