



TRANSFORMING SURGE CAPACITY



PROJECT OVERVIEW



Through the Transforming Surge Capacity project, 11 humanitarian agencies and two technical partners have come together to better understand how the sector can deliver more effective surge capacity to respond to an increasing humanitarian need.

The project's baseline report highlighted that organisations active in surge and their donors have to ensure that sufficient resources and systems are in place to respond to a rising demand for surge responses. Evidence has also shown that while international surge continues to play a role in emergency response, organisations must focus further on building capacity amongst national staff and local actors - recognising the vital role they play in surge response.

The Transforming Surge Capacity project is piloting and building evidence on new approaches to surge that are more localised, collaborative and better engaged with key stakeholders such as partner organisations, the private sector and UN agencies. Learning gathered through the project will enable agencies to make more informed decisions in the future.

THE PROJECT SEEKS THREE CHANGES:

- ▶ To increase capacity of skilled personnel, and strengthen systems for surge capacity at national and regional levels, to better complement international surge
- ▶ To strengthen surge policies and practices of the project's consortium as a result of evidence gathered through the project
- ▶ Better integration and strengthened collaboration across civil society organisations and other key stakeholders on the delivery of surge capacity, including sharing of good practice, learning and resources with other key stakeholders

THE PROJECT'S ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR INCLUDE:

- ▶ Formation of collaborative and localised surge rosters with **600+ members** in the Philippines, in Pakistan and in the Asia Region to ensure surge resources are directly available to the frontline
- ▶ **87%** of the project's evaluation respondents consider Transforming Surge Capacity to have increased the speed or potential speed of surge responses through project activities
- ▶ Collaboration with **13 INGOs**, **6 NNGOs** and **5 CSO networks** representing over **1,800 organisations** to gather a body of evidence on how surge can be delivered more collaboratively, locally & effectively
- ▶ Development, piloting and roll-out of **9 surge behaviours training modules**
- ▶ Completion of **7 pilot projects** on collaborative engagement with the private sector and government agencies
- ▶ Over **30 learning products** on surge practices shared internally & at **24 external stakeholder events**



PROJECT DEFINITION OF SURGE

Surge capacity is the ability of organisations, communities and individuals in crisis to rapidly and effectively respond to the needs of affected populations through improved local preparedness, collaborative effort and the scaling up and down of responses

RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTING SURGE STAFF



Surge Training:

A training mapping piece was conducted to look at existing training and needs for surge personnel. The findings revealed that although significant technical training available, there is little to prepare individuals for the challenges of working under high pressures, in diverse teams, and to manage behaviours. In response, a 5 day training was created focusing on 8 key areas;

- ▶ **Humanitarian sector**
- ▶ **Culture and diversity**
- ▶ **Accountability and participation**
- ▶ **Working with others**
- ▶ **What to expect on deployment**
- ▶ **Women's rights in emergencies**
- ▶ **People management**
- ▶ **Stress & wellbeing** (inc. an introduction to mindfulness based stress reduction).

The training was developed collaboratively by agencies and is being delivered by all the platforms to their roster members. The resources are available for any agency to use for free, providing a unique set of training materials for the surge sector and beyond. A leaflet of the training can be accessed [here](#).

Exploring Good Practice for Wellbeing:

The mental health of workers, affected by stress, anxiety and trauma in the humanitarian sector is at chronic levels. In a [survey](#) conducted by the project across Start Network members on wellbeing of surge staff, 48% of staff have experienced a distressing/highly challenging environment or threat to their life, and 42% of staff felt organisational support after the incident was 'bare minimum'. In response ACF has collated a wellbeing resource pack '[Exploring Good Practice for Wellbeing](#)' to share a range of general, as well as sector specific, wellbeing resource, tools, and services which could be used across the sector to provide better wellbeing support to surge staff.

Guidelines for the Role of HR in Supporting Staff Care:

Staff working in surge responses are known to face high workload, environmental, cultural, physical and psychological pressures. Many organisations have developed good staff welfare and wellbeing policies and practices. This guideline uses the 'Essentials of Staff Care' principles, and focuses specifically on the role of HR in staff care, with input from a wide range of HR professionals in many organisations.

Monitoring and Measuring the Impact of HR Support in Surge Responses:

HR teams play a critical role during any surge response. This guideline provides information and suggestions on developing key performance indicators so that HR teams can monitor their impact on programme delivery.

Safer Recruitment Guidelines:

During a rapid humanitarian surge response, there is often significant pressure to recruit staff as quickly as possible. Yet, the need to fill posts urgently should not compromise the requirement to ensure that only people with the right competencies, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are recruited. This guideline outlines the key steps and issues to consider in recruitment in order to safeguard organisations and individuals.

Development of HR Capacity in Partner/National Organisations

This paper puts forward some suggestions on how organisations who have established HR functions and resources, can support the building of HR capacity in either smaller, national or partner organisations.

Guidelines for Establishing a HR Co-ordination Network during Surge Responses:

The current humanitarian cluster system, led by OCHA, to improve co-ordination during a response does not include a HR cluster. HR co-ordination can be invaluable during a response to provide support and learning between international and national agencies as well as provide benchmarks that allows employment terms, conditions and practices to be realistic to the specific situation.

Surge Capacity - online Human Resources Portal:

An online interactive HR portal, which is intended to help HR and other humanitarian staff to access and share good practices and resources, learn and talk online to each other when undertaking surge responses. The portal has 203 members, based in 38 countries from 63 organisations.



The State of Surge Capacity in the Humanitarian Sector:

Published by the CHS Alliance in 2015 this report features recent developments and lessons learned across the sector on surge response. Data was gathered from over 50 representatives of humanitarian agencies as well as the private and public sector, and provides the largest snapshot of surge in over a decade.

Surge Baseline Report:

This report provides a more detailed overview of the surge practices of the consortium members of the Transforming Surge Capacity Project.

TRACKING REPORTS: Since the launch of the Start of Surge Report, the project has created a series of tracking reports on how agencies have responded to recent emergencies, this has included:

- ▶ **2015 Nepal Earthquake Tracking report:** The report highlights the critical role of national and regional staff, an analysis of collaboration for surge, as well as some of the challenges, best practice, innovations and lessons from the surge response.
- ▶ **2016 Bangladesh floods:** The report focused on the locally led emergency response where responding agencies reported a 100% Bangladeshi led response with no agencies reporting surging in staff from outside of the country.
- ▶ **2016 Hurricane Matthew Report:** The report highlights the challenges of responding to the hurricane when the country was still highly vulnerable from cyclones, droughts, and the devastating earthquake of 2010.
- ▶ **2017 Nock Ten Response:** The response to the cyclone illustrated the role of collaboration and localisation as described in this report where the joint On Call roster deployed responders for the first time.
- ▶ **Slow Onset Research Piece:** The report highlights the challenges of deploying surge staff to slow onset crises when the majority of surge tools and mechanisms in the sector are mainly set up to respond to sudden-onset crises, and provides examples of how agencies are overcoming these challenges.

The Future of Humanitarian Surge Learning Report:

Providing an overview of the learning from the three year Transforming Surge Capacity project, this report sets out learning and recommendations to strengthen the localised and collaborative nature of surge.

Women in Surge Paper:

A paper co-written by Care and ActionAid which highlights the significant need for a gender balance in surge practice and much stronger support to the critical role that women play in a humanitarian response. The report highlights some of the barriers and challenges women who are surged internationally face - ranging from personal safety and security, to childcare, personal hygiene and self-confidence; and offers some recommendations on how these can be addressed by the sector

UN & INGO Collaboration Paper:

Recognising the critical role the UN plays within humanitarian response, this research pilot aims to explore INGOs' engagement with UN agencies and systems on surge. The project plans to use this research piece to better understand how agencies can strengthen and build on the collaborations with the UN to support the scaling up of responses.

Cost Effectiveness/Financial Sustainability of Surge:

This research was commissioned to identify more financial sustainable models for surge capacity. The report has drawn out some key quantitative findings to compare the cost of surge at global, regional and national levels. It highlights that localised deployments have both speed and costs benefits, and the potential benefit of collaboration in offering more cost-effective surge.

Value for Money Research:

A global piece of research led by Save the Children to look at whether or not collaboration between UK NGOs during the surge phase of a rapid onset emergency will give better VFM than NGOs working separately. The research included the involvement of a selection of agencies with significant global surge models.



Identifying best practice and alternative approaches in INGO to national NGO Collaborations:

This study documents and analyses national NGO experiences of recruitment for surge by international NGOs and identifies good practices, documents impact, and develops recommendations for taking the findings forward across the humanitarian sector. The report specifically focused on the experiences of NGOs in the Philippines.

Corporate and community engagement learnings:

This research explores collaboration between civil society, private sector and communities in disaster-prone areas, focussing on those bordering the Bay of Bengal which includes areas in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar

COLLABORATIVE ROSTERS



The development and piloting of multi-agency surge rosters, has enabled humanitarian agencies to draw on a pool of some 600 surge staff from different international non-government organisations (INGOs), partner organisations, national NGOs and other stakeholders, ready to deploy in response to emergencies across the Asia region and beyond. The rosters have been a critical initiative in bringing together two of the project's central focus areas of localisation and collaboration.

REGIONAL ROSTER

Go Team Asia, is an innovative shared roster which provides surge capacity to seven humanitarian INGOs for disaster responses in ten countries in Asia (deployments to/from other countries are subject to discussion between the hosting and the deploying organisations). The roster members are skilled and experienced staff at mid- or senior-level currently working for any of the seven participating organisations, and have received an innovative surge training prior to deployment. Deployment support from this roster is available within 72 hours for 4-12-week deployments. Deployments are primarily expected for L2 level disasters, however support can also be provided for backfilling and needs assessments in slow onset emergencies.

SECTORS:

- Logistics & Supply Chain
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Food Security & Livelihoods
- Inclusion & Gender
- Cash Programming & Protection
- Accountability & Learning
- Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

Current no. of organisations using the roster

7

Current no. of members

50

PAKISTAN ROSTER

The Pakistan Surge Emergency Response Team, (SERT) roster is a collaborative roster set-up spanning several skills sets and calibrated into different tiers based on levels of experience. Members include agency staff members and external stakeholders. The National Humanitarian Network in Pakistan has recently agreed to take over leadership of the roster once the project ends.

SECTORS:

- Shelter
- Health
- Nutrition
- WASH
- Protections & Logistics

Current no. of organisations using the roster

48

Current no. of members

117



PHILIPPINES ROSTER

The Philippine roster, On Call, is composed of NGOs, private firms, and volunteer and professional organisations. These organisations invite former/current staff/members to join the roster that aims to provide human resource by matching skills sets of individuals to the surge needs of humanitarian agencies.

SECTORS:

- Food security & Livelihoods
- Health
- Shelter & settlements
- Gender & Protection
- Logistics
- Finance & Human Resources
- WASH
- Nutrition
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Education in emergencies
- Community Mobilisers

Current no. of organisations using the roster

36

Current no. of members

450

PILOTS



A number of smaller pilot project were conducted by the project's platforms to look at how surge could be delivered in more effective ways.

◆ PAKISTAN RESCUE 1122 PILOT:

This pilot is aimed to enhance the surge capacity of communities through the establishment of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) in vulnerable villages and union councils in Punjab in collaboration with local civil society organizations and the provincial government. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority has selected the district as a model to be replicated in other districts, and has committed to conducting further training on disaster preparedness with the teams.

◆ PAKISTAN MULTI SECTORAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING (CTP):

A project on Multi Sectoral Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) is being implemented with the purpose of developing and delivering context-specific trainings in three provinces: Punjab, Baluchistan and Sindh, and at federal level in Islamabad equipping at least 90 surge professionals from 12 CSOs, INGOs and Provincial and District Disaster Management Authorities with the competencies necessary to design, deliver and monitor multi-sectoral CTP effectively in humanitarian preparedness and response.

◆ PAKISTAN ACADEMIC PILOT:

A project on collaboration with academia on disaster preparedness with a focus on surge is being implemented. Training orientation sessions have been conducted where 117 students have been trained in Peshawar University while 111 students in Sindh University have completed a short course on Surge and disaster preparedness.

◆ PHILIPPINES LOCAL HUMANITARIAN FUND:

A pilot to explore the setting up of a local, in-country humanitarian fund. This is in response to expressed capacity gap of local CSOs to be able to mount a surge response.

◆ THE SHADO PILOT PROJECT:

CARE and Plan International initiated a pilot to strengthen and build gender surge capacity within the Asia region by recruiting, selecting, training and deploying gender in emergency (GIE) advisors from the Asia region to undertake "shadow" deployments with GIE experts.

CASE STUDIES

- **Case study on collaboration in the Asia regional platform:** This case study traces the collaboration of 7 INGOs in Asia as part of the Transforming Surge Capacity project. It identifies the enabling factors that have allowed the involved organizations to collaborate and produce an innovative inter-agency roster for Asia. It also captures what partners have learned from collaborating at a regional level.
- **Case study on Islamic Relief's journey to regionalization:** This case study highlights how Islamic Relief, one of the platform partners is moving towards more regionalized surge systems, has been able to support inter-agency collaboration in the project, and how it used learnings and outputs of the project to improve its own surge mechanisms.
- **Walking into the Whirlwind: The Case for Collaboration in Disaster Management:** This case study presents the case for collaboration in disaster management within the Philippines context and examines factors which promote or hinder collaboration.
- **DEPP Footprint in the Philippines:** This document examines the progress of the DEPP projects in the Philippines and the lessons learnt during implementation.
- **The Nuts and Bolts of Collaboration within the DEPP Transforming Surge Capacity Project:** This case study analyses the challenges and lessons learnt from collaboration on this project and what key enabling factors drove it towards an effective collaborative set up.
- **Transforming Surge Capacity through training:** This case study sheds light on the rationale behind developing a Surge training curriculum, the development process and key lessons from the initial pilots of the training material.
- **Case study on first deployment from Go Team Asia:** For the first deployment from the Regional Roster, Madan, Logistics and Supply Chain Specialist for Save the Children in Nepal was deployed to Christian Aid's response to cyclone Vardah and this case study shares insights from his deployment.
- **Pushing back the tide: A human resource innovation primes Philippines for dealing with disasters:** This case study examines the On Call Surge Philippines which is an innovative project (roster) that uses technology, through its web-based platform, to quickly respond to the affected communities during humanitarian action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CLICK THE LINKS BELOW

Transforming Surge Capacity - Final Project Evaluation



This report presents the findings and recommendations from the final evaluation of the TSC project conducted during the period of November 2017 - February 2018. The evaluation reviews progress and evaluates the extent to which the project was successful in achieving its goals. It highlights some of the project's key achievements and puts forward a number of recommendations for the future.

Transforming Surge Capacity Project Video



Transforming Surge Capacity Website

