National Recruitment Guidelines for Emergency Recruitment

Country Offices should have an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) in place which describes how CARE will respond to different types of emergencies or disasters that may occur. To implement these emergency response plans, mobilization of human resources are an important and key requirement. In order to be better prepared, we suggest that each CO review this guidance and put together a Human Resources plan that works for your context and within your legal framework. This guidance is focused on having specific recruitment procedures in place. This guidance is broken out as follows:

1. Preparing for an Emergency

2. What to do once the emergency has been declared

3. Separating from CARE

1. Preparing for an Emergency

In preparation for an emergency, the CO should have both human resource related processes and forms (Annex A) in place for a quick response. The following processes and forms are required to be done by Country Offices in advance in order to be adequately prepared for an emergency and should be included in your CO EPP minimum preparedness actions. These processes and forms should be reviewed and updated every 6 months.

Please refer to the Emergency Toolkit often as it contains good humanitarian program and program support information including examples of forms and templates – it can be found at:
https://www.careemergencytoolkit.org/programme-support/21-human-resources/

Staff assessment

The CO should have already conducted a capacity assessment of their own staff and have both delegated Emergency Response roles as well as identified their staff capacity gaps as part of their EPP process (refer to capacity assessment form Annex 5 from EPP guidelines). If not, one should be conducted, gaps identified and staff identified who could transition to the emergency program if needed. If there are strong staff who don't have the exact skill set needed, consider appropriate training for them in advance. This may include training them on humanitarian and sphere standards and humanitarian principles. Capacity plans should be developed and capacity building actions should be included in the CO EPP minimum preparedness actions.

Job Descriptions (JDs)/Terms of References("ToRs")

Based on the capacity assessment and the response plans from the CO EPP, positions that will be needed during an emergency response should be identified and generic JDs or ToRs should be drafted in advance. One can use the online Emergency Tool Kit mentioned above to access generic TORs which you can contextualize for your response. If you use a grading scheme for positions, ensure to grade these emergency TORs.

Database of former staff

Keep a database of former staff who worked successfully in previous emergencies. Make the time to keep this updated so you know who to reach out to when needed.

Workforce planning

Identify which roles can be hired locally and those that will need international assistance and plan accordingly. Remember that both program and program support need to be scaled up at the same time – one of CARE's key lessons learned is that when program support is overlooked, programs are not successful. National surge capacity is defined as local staff who are hired directly by the country office for a specific period of time related to the emergency (less than 6 months). Please see Annex B for an overview of international staff deployments.

Salaries, benefits and salary approval process

Ensure a salary scale is available with a fair range. It is important to remember that during an emergency, there is high demand for experienced emergency staff which can inflate salary demands. Determine in advance the salary approval process outlining who can approve exceptions.

Review and identify benefits that may need to be changed for national staff during an emergency, this may include additional paid time off, changed working hours or incentive pay for hard to fill positions or locations. (May also need to plan for conducting a salary and benefits survey to adjust the salary scale in order to stay competitive during an emergency- especially one that may last for more than 6 months).

Interview questions and related tests

Draft and develop relevant interview questions and related tests for the JDs/ToRs in order to have this material ready when needed. Ensure to build in competency-based questions that focus on teamwork, diversity and stress management. For all phases of recruiting and contracting in emergencies, keep diversity in mind as you would for development recruitment.

Job advertisements

Review appropriate sites for posting openings. If the site has a fee, consider paying that in advance or signing up in advance on the respective site. Ensure that your job advertisements address any local labor law concerns.

Headhunting

During emergencies, HR networks are often formed both formally and informally. It is good to discuss with the network about poaching and reference checks so that there is a standard to follow. Often during emergencies, the NGOs in the HR forums agree to not headhunt or recruit from other NGOs just to avoid the problems associated with staff jumping from NGO to NGO for better pay. So be sure to avoid "unethical recruitment" practices that do irreversible harm to local and national NGOs by poaching their staff – particularly with regards to references and notice periods. Please make note of this and join any relevant HR networks to ensure what to do in an emergency.

Coordination

Ensure you are participating in any NGO related HR forum, skype group etc. and are on the relevant HR email lists as this becomes important during an emergency especially in terms of conducting benefit surveys, reference checks, etc.

Contracting

Work within local labor laws and with your legal team to determine how best to hire employees (short-term employees, volunteers, temporary worker). These may be different from your current ways of contracting.

HR Policies

Develop the following policies and guidelines for emergencies (not an all-inclusive list):

- Local and international R&R – It's important to understand the importance that staff working in an emergency are in need of mandated time off outside of the country or area of work (generally it is advised every 8 -12 weeks depending on the intensity of the work and operating context);
- Per diem - ensure the per diem is sufficient to cover a variety of meal options to account for a diversity of staff diets and laundry costs if the guest house does not have laundry facilities;
- Housing policies - Some national staff may need to be relocated to a different city than their home of record during the emergency so ensure you develop benefits and any relevant policies needed;
- CO visitors guide - include a map of the area and CO, accommodations and food information, banks, doctors, shops (including places for women to obtain feminine products), electric plugs, etc.;
- Visa guidelines - Understand the visa process and what documents are needed based on different nationalities in advance in order to properly advise visitors and international deployed staff.
- Consider any and all other policies that will be needed for an emergency particularly those that relate to your context.

Establish systems to ensure CARE staff Safety, Security and Welfare

Although all humanitarian workers are exposed to risks to their physical and psychological safety, emergencies pose a particular hazard because of the difficult operating environments, the urgency of response and long hours in the field, and exposure to dead bodies and/or engagement with survivors of natural disasters and armed conflict. Key questions to consider for the staff safety, security and welfare:

- ✓ Are CARE staff adequately trained in emergency safety and security protocols?
- ✓ Is there a comprehensive stress management plan in place?
- ✓ Have staff been briefed on the possible psychosocial consequences of an emergency assignment and have they assessed their self-care strategies?
- ✓ Do senior managers and team leaders have people-management skills appropriate to emergencies?
- ✓ How will all staff responding to the emergency be assured access to individual or group consultations to review and assess their experience?
- ✓ Have additional staff welfare resources been identified and are there ways to rapidly access these resources if needed?

Define clear Roles and Responsibilities

- *HR Responsibility* - Human Resources, in consultation with senior management, is generally responsible for coordinating recruitment activities. For international staff, this will be done in coordination with the Regional Management Unit, CARE US and CEG surge capacity focal points. At the onset of the emergency, consider deploying at least one CO HQ HR staff to the field location as soon as possible, or requesting a deployment of an emergency HR Manager if there will be large-scale recruitment. A dedicated HR staff member for the response is critical.
- *Head of Country Office Response* - Based on an assessment of staffing needs and the capacity of the country office to respond to a specific crisis, the CO should have a pre-determined senior program person who is responsible for authorizing and approving all emergency staffing recruitment and procedures.
- *Hiring Managers* - Responsible for ensuring the JDs/TORs are complete and appropriately reflect the requirements. Also ensure that the emergency requisition form is completed, and available budget confirmed.
- *Administration* - Ensure you have a dedicated staff member in administration who can assist with visas, hotel accommodation, airport pick up, purchasing IT hardware, office space, guest houses, etc.

Note: failure to plan staff recruitment for upcoming projects does not constitute an emergency.
Note: In emergencies, speed is a key factor of success. To achieve this, it can be necessary to decentralize recruitment and allow sub-offices to hire directly. This has to be done with clear guidelines sent to all sub-offices as quickly as possible. A ceiling grade, above which only HR at head office is allowed to interview and hire, may have to be set. A memo describing the guidelines for decentralized recruitment needs to be endorsed by the Country Director (or delegate) and sent out immediately.

2. What to do once the emergency has been declared

Recruitment

The HR Manager will advertise the national positions to the local networks.

a) Positions that are externally advertised can either have a closing date of 5 days[1] from posting or may not specify a closing date where curricula vitae (CVs) will be received and reviewed until a suitable candidate is selected.

b) Positions should be advertised even if there is not yet confirmed budgets in order to get a pool of potential candidates for when funding is approved for the relevant position;

c) Positions can also be filled from former CARE staff or from your database of candidates who have previously applied and/or interviewed for a prior position or from the CVs being received from other job recruitments, but you may need to have a pre-approved guideline for this (please see other exceptions below).

d) Ask your lead member for HR support! While you are finding additional HR expertise in-country, your lead member office may be able to assist with posting advertisements, drafting job descriptions, making short lists and interview guides

e) Ensure that there are a sufficient number of female candidates that have been short listed and selected for interviews.

Other Exceptions

In some instances, it may be in the organization's interest to identify and select candidates for higher-level or time-sensitive positions without going through the formal recruitment process noted above. This must be in considered in line with local labor laws. In this instance:

1. The respective Hiring Manager will prepare a memo providing the rationale and justification for the recruitment exception and, identify a potential candidate. The memo must outline the candidate's qualifications and why the candidate meets the requirements and attach the CV of the candidate.
2. The CD, Assistant CD/Program or Program Support and HR Manager, will discuss the proposed recruitment and, if in agreement, will interview and approve the selection of the candidate. The report is prepared within 1 working days of the interview and is signed by all panel members and approved by the CD.
3. Once the candidate is approved, the HR department will confirm the candidate's job history and obtain satisfactory references from the candidates' referees before making a job offer. All reference checks should be conducted in the same manner as they are for regular recruitments. If accepted, an Employment Contract is prepared. If the candidate does not accept the position, then subsequent qualified candidates, if available, will be contacted or a formal recruitment will be initiated.

[1] The number of days posted should be based on the operating context but at least a minimum of 2 days is required.

Selection and Contract Offers

- Due to the urgency of an emergency response program, and given that suitable candidates hold minimum qualifications, **the time of availability will be a key selection criterion;**
- Have interviews in person, by skype, or by zoom and ensure that there is at least one female on the interview panel. Do NOT overlook PSEA and child protection measures; ensure your processes meet minimum standards.
- A conditional offer can be made to a prospective candidate pending receipt of satisfactory references, credential and education supporting documentation, etc.
- A verbal reference is acceptable (that is, face-to-face, or over the telephone). Notes from the reference obtained and details of the referee should be documented and included in the hiring documents in the personnel file including —who gave the reference, when, and the contact details.
- HR should check any other requirements such as education credentials or certifications.
- Provide feedback to all candidates who were interviewed, this can be done verbally or in writing. Make sure the successful candidate has accepted before declining any other suitable candidates.

References

PSEA reference questions should be included (examples include: Do you have any concerns regarding this individual's ability to maintain a safe and harassment-free workplace? To the best of your knowledge, has this individual ever been found by a current or previous employer to have violated an organizational policy? If so, which one?)

Do not rely only on reference or employment letters and do not accept references of colleagues and friends. References should be from a former or current direct supervisor as well as someone from HR. Understand your context to know how to best solicit references to ensure we are hiring the best candidate and one that meets our PSEA commitments.

Lastly, if you do want to reach out to a peer agency about a candidate, be sure to tell the candidate that you will be doing so.

Hiring

Contracting: HR should issue a short–term contract such as a Temporary worker/volunteer contract or fixed-term contracts, depending on the duration of the response and on confirmed funding and local labor laws. Special attention should be taken during recruitment to avoid raising false hopes of long-term employment for employees hired for an emergency response program, which is generally shorter in duration.

a) If the staff is new to CARE, you may want to give a three-month contract to start and then extend based on their performance.
b) **Ensure a probation period is included in the contract.** It is recommended at a minimum to have a one-month probationary period for any contracts lasting three months. Ensure all hiring managers understand their role during this probationary period and that they should inform HR early of any issues or concerns that might lead to separation and/or their plans to extend the staff member.
c) Ensure details of new staff and employment contracts are provided to finance and payroll
d) Ensure the appropriate type of contract is issued that will enable the termination of the contract if needed

Orientation: Despite the urgency, ensure that all staff, including ex-CARE staff, get some orientation (preferably 2 – 3 days before being deployed to the field) from HR and others regarding the emergency response.
Ensure that the orientation includes at a minimum:

- CARE’s values, structures and systems
- CARE’s program and emergency response
- Code of conduct, gender and diversity, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Safety and security briefing
- Orientation to the staff member’s role and job requirements
- Relevant Administration and procurement policies and forms
- Provide links to other essential documents for staff to read when they have time.

3. Separating from CARE

Emergency response staff Performance Management

When a staff member is released from the response assignment, his/her supervisor will complete a performance assessment. The relevant line manager will ensure that the above formalities have been completed before the employee is released from the response assignment. The completed performance form for a staff member should be attached with the HR copy of release letter and added to the employee file.

Annex A: List of Suggested Forms & Policies

- TOR/JD
- Recruitment Requisition form
- RED form (Record of emergency data)
- Recruitment checklist
- Interview framework template
- Reference form
- R&R or per diem guidelines
- Performance appraisal
- Salary approval process for emergencies

Annex B: International Surge Response

Surge response in an emergency is dependent on three key components as indicated below:

1. The Rapid Response Team (RRT)

- Members of the RRT are full time CARE staff who are *hired specifically to deploy to emergencies*.
- They were hired specifically as they have significant experience in humanitarian response and the team comprises a variety of roles from Team Leader to technical sector expertise including gender and M&E as well as program support expertise such as logistics and human resources A range of expertise is covered by the team with a strong focus on core sectors as well as coordination and other cross-cutting specialties like gender, logistics etc.
- RRT deployments are contracted directly between the CO and CARE Canada the lead member who manages the RRT. Agreements on RRT deployments are confirmed through an exchange of standard deployment letters

2. Other CARE staff

- CARE members are increasingly hiring staff who are expected to deploy to emergencies a few times each year – this is typically reflected in job descriptions at levels of 20-40% (allowing improved resource planning against deployment needs AND promoting sustainability of the post via cost recovery)
- Even those who do not specifically have deployment in their job description have been deployed when the need is great and their CARE manager can release them
- These CARE staff are contracted directly between the CO and the CARE member using the standard exchange format letter or through a secondment/TDY with cross billings for costs

3. CARE's Roster for Emergency Deployments (CI-RED)

- The CARE Emergencies Group (CEG) manages a database to track humanitarian experts who have been *pre-approved to deploy* to CARE emergency responses upon request. These people may be current staff, former staff or external freelance consultants.
- Recruitment is supported by CEG and humanitarian job profile leaders to help COs identify the most suitable candidate in a timely manner

External experts must be contracted by either the lead member or the country office. If none of the above yields a suitable candidate, then we reach out through individuals' personal and professional networks; or we post an urgent advertisement and fast-track the recruitment process.

**As a rule we seek cost recovery for deployments, and programs should budget for rates of about USD 475 per day plus travel, accommodation and in-country operational costs.*