Welcome to:
Addressing retention issues & increasing employee engagement for programme managers
This training is sponsored by the: Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project Horn of Africa Consortia:

*a collaborative effort of the inter agency working group on emergency capacity.*

The session was prepared by People In Aid.
Aims of this training

• Enhance participant knowledge and understanding regarding staff turnover and retention issues.
• Equip participants with strategies, tools and techniques for enhancing retention / addressing staff turnover.
• Ultimately to improve your staff / team engagement.
Overview
1. Introduction
2. Understanding retention
3. Addressing retention
4. Mitigating retention
Turnover and Retention Research

2006 – ECB research into employee perspectives and the paper produced during ECB Phase One entitled “Understanding and addressing staff turnover in the humanitarian sector” (HPN Network Paper Number 55).

2009 – ECB assessment of how Horn of Africa consortia agencies are presently handling retention and staff engagement issues
Understanding Retention

Why is retention an issue and whose problem is it?

What are the causes of poor retention in your organisation?
Understanding retention

Turnover

Voluntary

Dysfunctional

Avoidable turnover

Unavoidable Turnover

Involuntary

Functional
Note on involuntary turnover

1. Involuntary turnover is caused by organisations: programmes ending, lack of funding, poor management, restructures and lack of alignment between emergency and development agendas.

2. People not intended to leave may leave anyway – unsure about their future or the negative experience of colleagues.

3. Organisations can control the impact of these factors and need to mitigate the consequences of staff turnover on the organisation.
What are the consequences of staff turnover?
Whose responsibility is it to address retention?

Voluntary, dysfunctional and avoidable turnover is a management issue!
Push factors, pull factors & retention strategies

**Environmental factors**
Health and social environment – security conditions and other local stress factors

**Programme factors**
Project-based funding and job insecurity, pressure on overheads and under-investment in training

**Organisational factors**
Deliberate policies of the agency, values and management of staff, poor support, inadequate terms and conditions of service

**Good HR practices**
Adequate terms and conditions of service, policies ensuring appropriate selection, management and development of staff

**Personal factors**
Workload, career concerns, burnout, disillusionment, desire to start a family

**External factors**
Better professional opportunities elsewhere in terms of salary, benefits or promotion

**Meaningful work**
Fit between individual and organisational values, motivational work and leadership

**Pull factors**

**Push factors**

**HR practices**

**Job satisfaction**
2006 Why do people stay and perform?

- **Presence of:**
  - Good team / colleagues (32%)
  - Challenge / variety (24%)
  - Learning / innovative culture (23%)

- **Absence of:**
  - Excessive workload (36%)
  - Excessive impact on personal / social life (29%)
  - Bureaucracy / poor systems (25%)
2006 Why do our staff leave?

1. Better pay / terms and conditions elsewhere (50%)
2. Poor leadership / values / culture (40%)
3. Lack of career opportunity and growth (38%)
4. Burnout, disillusionment and frustration (29%)
## Retention scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Potential push factors</th>
<th>Potential pull factors</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Poor retention across the whole region | • Remuneration Packages  
• Profile / Image  
• Restructuring / new strategy | Other organisations offering senior positions, better salaries, or terms and conditions. |
| Poor retention in country programme | • Line management  
• Poor programme design or funding  
• Development v emergency agenda |                                                                                       |
| Poor retention in one field location | • Line management  
• Living conditions  
• Poor programme design or funding  
• Security |                                                                                       |
| Poor retention in one team or position | • Line management  
• Workload  
• Wrong job description and competencies |                                                                                       |
Retention Findings

1. Organisations are not in control of the underlying causes behind mobility of staff in the sector.

2. Line managers have little control over many push factors such as environment, short term contracts (Staff often leave in the 3rd quarter of programme cycle), family pressures and poor alignment between development and emergency agendas.

3. Even if funding continues there are other barriers to retention – ethnicity, not speaking the local language, remoteness.

4. However, other push factors such as management style, staff engagement, job satisfaction and terms and conditions can be influenced.
Retention Findings

1. Overall Pull factors are dominant in decision-making in East Africa
2. Individual’s personal and professional expectations are met by their employees.
3. Staff still leave their organisations and move to new positions.
4. Retention is a factor of individual self-interest.
5. Any values-driven organisation is a potential vehicle for achieving an individual’s goals.
Exercise

• What can you do as a manager to mitigate push factors in your team / programme?
• Brainstorm ideas in pairs for 3 minutes
• Feedback to the group ideas
Addressing Retention

How can you ensure your retention rate improves?

Have you helped implement initiatives that have intended to improve retention?
Retention Findings

Introduce / improve career paths and professional development (49%)

1. Organisations’ investment in their staff and improvement in human resources is contributing to a pool of talent which benefits all organisations.

2. Talent development, competitive recruitment and the alignment of personal and organisation agendas are necessary to engage staff.

3. Utilise the psychological contract to better understand expectations and improve engagement.
1. Good HR practices are the foundation for improved retention and engagement
2. Flexible approaches such as improved salary or terms and conditions work well in the short term
3. Implementing the People In Aid Code
4. Employee engagement surveys, and follow up
Retention Findings
Better leadership (14%)

1. Good management practices
   I. Managers behaviour is a significant catalyst for turnover especially amongst international staff but their behaviour is not always intentional.
   II. Self development is important - use formal and informal feedback methods to know what your impact is
   III. Use formal management approaches in a consistent way
   IV. Use informal management approaches in a transparent way
## Retention scenarios Part II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Who is responsible</th>
<th>Potential push factors</th>
<th>Potential pull factors</th>
<th>Action Check list - consider each of the following options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Poor retention across the whole region | HQ                 | • Remuneration Packages  
• Profile / Image  
• Restructuring / new strategy                                                           | Other organisations offering senior position, better salaries, or terms and conditions. | Strategy and Structure – focus, priorities, and overall set up |
| Poor retention in country programme    | Regional or HQ office | • Line management  
• Poor programme design or funding  
• Development v emergency agenda                                                            |                                                                                         | Operations – security, living conditions, systems, operating procedures |
| Poor retention in one field location   | Country office or HQ | • Line management  
• Living conditions  
• Poor programme design or funding  
• Security                                                                              |                                                                                         | Programmes – type, design, funding |
| Poor retention in one team or position | Country office management and HR | • Line management  
• Workload  
• Wrong job description and competencies                                                  |                                                                                         | People – salary, terms and conditions, talent development, work load |
|                                        |                    |                                                                                         |                                                                                         | Management – style, behaviour, performance               |
|                                        |                    |                                                                                         |                                                                                         | Leadership – team work, ‘esprit de corps’, communication, culture |
Exercise

• What can you do as a manager to improve your impact on staff motivation and engagement?
• Brainstorm ideas in pairs for 3 minutes
• Feedback to the group ideas
Managing the consequences

How can you ensure poor retention doesn’t damage your programmes?

What steps have you taken to mitigate the impact of poor retention?
Retention Findings

1. Using ICT to best effect, e.g. the office in a box
2. Rapid inductions especially advice on how to navigate their way in the organisation
3. Learning and development on the job
4. Succession and continuity planning based on strategic foresight anticipating future deployment and programme needs
5. Mechanisms for preserving institutional memory
Exercise

- As a manager how can you improve your working relationship with HR and ensure HR and Retention best practice is put in place?
- Brainstorm ideas in pairs for 3 minutes
- Feedback to the group ideas
## Top Ten Tips

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Know your organisation’s retention issues</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Agree retention indicators and targets</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Prioritise retention as a management responsibility</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mitigate push factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitigate pull factors</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Improve engagement through conversation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Encourage personal development</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Plan for the end at the beginning</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Ensure a fast response</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Ensure systems are transparent and practices consistent.</td>
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