

Preparing for Emergencies by strengthening Organisational Procedures, Learning and Exchange (PEOPLE) Project – final evaluation

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SUMMARY

The PEOPLE project engaged ten partners over two years, with the aim of strengthening capacity to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. The most notable results seen through this project are the improvements in volunteer management practice, which in turn contribute to partners' emergency response capacity.

Volunteers have long been part of the work of Caritas, engaged in different activities. PEOPLE introduced concepts around the potential of volunteers and good practice in how to manage them; supporting partners to develop policies, procedures, and other tools to support better management, and then, crucially, to test this through the recruitment and training of office and community-level volunteers. The impact has been visible, positively affecting the work of almost all target Caritas partners.

Volunteer management was not necessarily a priority for partners at the beginning, but through the project, this has been discovered as a relevant topic. For some partners the presence of trained community volunteers is already bearing fruit, with faster access to on-the-ground information, and local capacity to mobilise the community to take action following a disaster. The office-based volunteers are bolstering partners' human resources, again with visible results. It is widely believed, with good reason, that the presence of the community volunteers will lead to faster responses following disasters. The extent to which they also affect the quality and effectiveness of response will be tested in time.

Progress has also been seen in developing or refining Emergency Preparedness Plans, setting up complaint-handling mechanisms, and developing organisational policies, which will all contribute to stronger organisations that are more able to prepare for and respond to emergencies. There are already examples of these being applied with positive results. For most partners this is work in progress.

PEOPLE's approach to capacity strengthening is based on CAFOD's tried and tested model, tweaked based on learning from previous projects. Importantly, PEOPLE used a variety of approaches which complemented and built on each other. These approaches combined exposing partners to new knowledge (via trainer of trainers and webinars), with 'seeing in practice' (via the peer-exchange visits), supported by having resources available as needed (including grants, accompaniment throughout by one of CAFOD's Humanitarian Capacity Strengthening Officers (HCSO), and access to example materials such as policies and guidelines). New capacity strengthening approaches (including the use of webinars, more formal mentoring, and an on-line community of practice) were also trialled, generating useful learning and adding to the suite of approaches that can be used by CAFOD and partners.

Peer-exchange visits were seen as having the most impact. Important to this was the fact that they followed the TOT workshops, and so allowed theory to be seen and explored in practice. The support provided by the HCSOs was critical for a range of reasons (including supporting partners to push forward with project activities) and responded to the needs and priorities of partners. Webinars, a new approach, allowed learning from the office and, where connection allowed, were seen as time-effective, providing short sharp knowledge inputs and exchange. At the same time, the Capacity Strengthening grants allowed partners the space and flexibility to cover costs for rolling out learning and taking forward other priority activities. These approaches all contributed to the progress seen in partners.

The inclusion of the Caritas Africa Regional office alongside country-level National and Diocese offices in the same project has potential to strengthen the Caritas Family, with benefits reaching beyond the project. In some countries the process by which the National Office engaged all Diocese offices in policy development, has strengthened the links between them. The simulation exercises involving National and Diocese partners together highlighted to staff the importance of, and current gaps in, coordination and communication which may motivate further change. It is the evaluator's opinion that this mix of partners is an exciting feature of this project, opening up the possibility of wider system change in addition to individual partner change.

Much was achieved in a short time-frame. Capacity strengthening takes time. Trust needs to be built between the HCSO and key partner staff as a starting point, and partner staff need to come together to identify their own strengths and gaps, developing a plan based on their priorities. This is the backbone on which capacity strengthening

activities can build, and only once this has been developed can partners start to take steps to addressing gaps. This is a lot to fit into a two-year time scale.

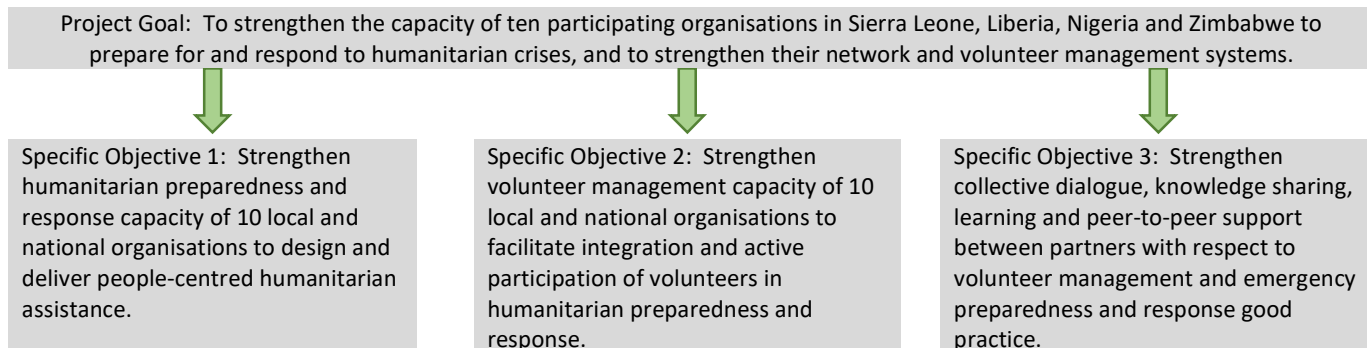
There are examples of how the PEOPLE project has brought about attitude changes at senior management level, increased knowledge among staff, developed policies, and introduced new practice that has been adopted by partners. However, many of these changes are still new and therefore fragile. Further work is needed by partners to build on the progress made and cement changes for them to be sustainable. The tangible results seen to date are motivating for partner staff involved and could encourage further action beyond the project. The links built between Caritas partners between countries provides a wider network that those involved can draw on for support, and may also contribute towards further changes.

Revisiting partners 18 months after the end of PEOPLE would help:

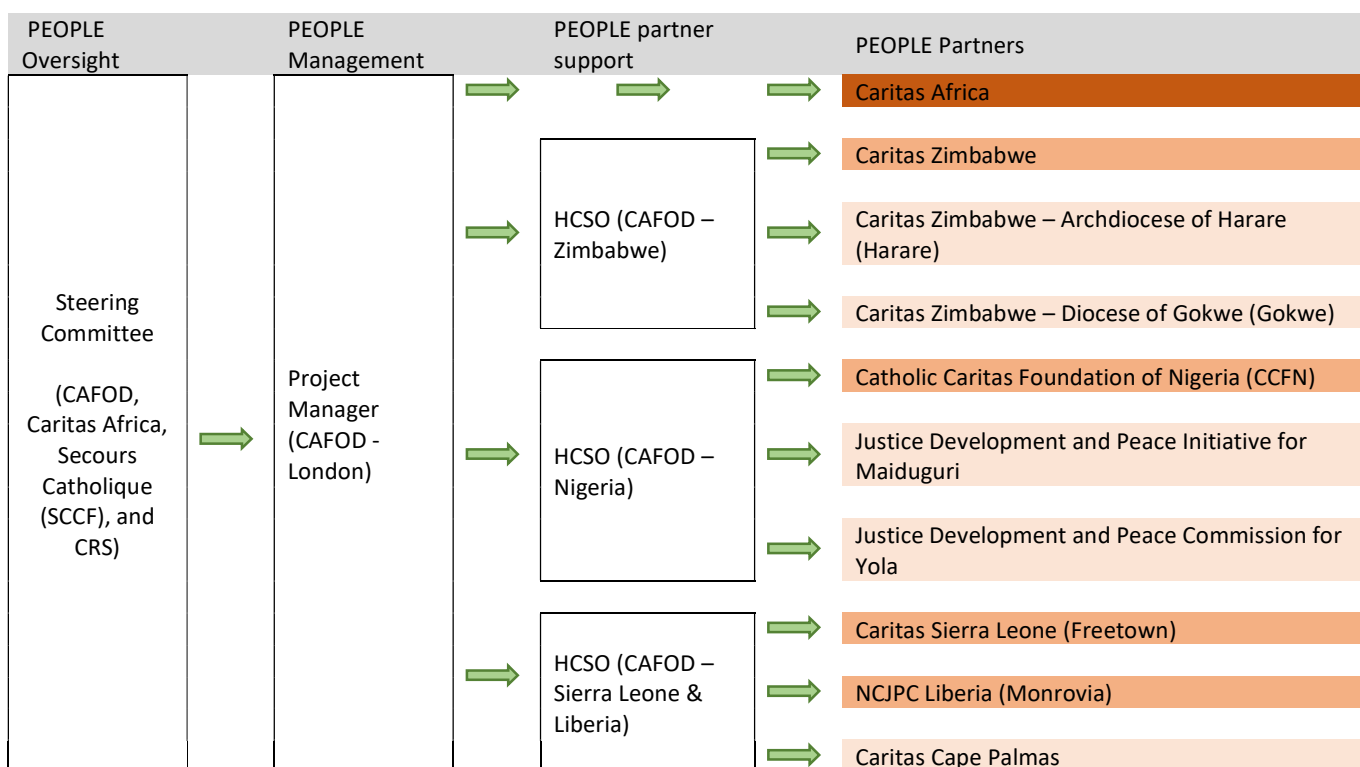
- To understand changes and successes seen from rolling out policies.
- To see if further progress has been made to cement new practice.
- To explore if the changes seen during the later parts of the PEOPLE project have been sustained.
- To review how these changes have made a difference to the quality and effectiveness of partner response work (assuming partners have responded to emergencies).

INTRODUCTION

Scope and aims of the PEOPLE Project: Over two years (from April 2018 to March 2020) the PEOPLE (Preparing for Emergencies by strengthening Organisational Procedures, Learning and Exchange) Project has brought together ten partners from across Caritas in Africa to strengthen their capacities to respond to emergencies. The total budget for the project was Euro 795,228 funded by the European Union Aid Volunteers (EUAV) and € 135,732 by CAFOD and SCCF. The diagram below summarises PEOPLE’s goal and three objectives:



Organisations involved: The PEOPLE project was designed to be jointly implemented by 3 organizations: CAFOD, Secours Catholique and Caritas Africa, with additional technical support from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance. The ten target partners included Caritas Africa (the Regional office) and a combination of National and Diocesan Caritas offices. The diagram below summarises the partners involved:



Project approach: The PEOPLE project built on the experiences from CAFOD’s Humanitarian Capacity Development (HCD) program, which previously supported local organizations in eight countries, including Zimbabwe, Myanmar, DRC and Kenya. In essence, PEOPLE supported partners through a Capacity Self-Assessment process, which resulted in a Capacity Strengthening Plan. Partners identified a Focal Point to lead on project activities, and capacity strengthening support was then provided in a variety of forms.

For the PEOPLE project the Capacity Self-Assessment Tool was based on indicators drawn from the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CIMS) and linked to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and EUAV requirements. It had 33 capacity indicators across 12 domains: Vision and Strategy; Management and Governance; Preparedness; Assessment and Design; MEAL; Coordination and Collaboration; Communications and Advocacy; Fundraising; Human Resources; Finance; Security; and Logistics.

Capacity strengthening support was provided through numerous approaches: accompaniment from in-country Humanitarian Capacity Strengthening Officers (HCSOs), Training of Trainer (TOT) workshops, webinars, partner grants, peer exchange visits, formal mentoring initiative, an on-line Community of Practice (COP), and simulations. The timeline below summarises broadly when these different approaches took place during the project.



PEOPLE focused on capacity strengthening of the staff and organisation as a whole (regardless of which project they worked on). Staff from across the organisation were involved in identifying gaps and developing the CS plan, and so had an opportunity to define their priorities. It was recognised that funding for projects with a focus primarily on strengthening organisations is rare. More commonly, externally-funded capacity strengthening activities are linked to specific projects, with a focus on ensuring good project delivery in both the focus of support (e.g. report writing) and who is targeted (e.g. staff implementing the project only).

Compared to CAFOD’s previous HCD work, PEOPLE had a number of distinct features. Webinars and international peer-exchange visits were added to the suite of capacity strengthening approaches used. “This time the project has gone further by helping us see what is happening outside of the country” – Director. The focus on volunteer management was seen as moving capacity strengthening beyond the office out to the field. “HCD focused on Caritas staff and organisational systems without going beyond to field volunteers who are far afield. PEOPLE enabled us to go beyond the office” – Focal point; “PEOPLE was getting us into the communities” – Focal point. Plus, the links made between partners involved in the same project allowed partners to learn more about the other partners involved. “HCD remained with the local partners but PEOPLE involved other Caritas from across Africa”.

METHOD

The PEOPLE evaluation took place between January and March 2020 and was led by an external consultant based in the UK. It sought to respond to three evaluation questions:¹

1. To what extent did the PEOPLE Project meet its objectives?
2. How effective and efficient were the different PEOPLE HCS approaches in supporting partners' capacity strengthening in emergency response and volunteer management?
3. How effective and efficient were the project management processes, and what lessons can be learnt for similar joint Caritas projects in future?

Three main sources of data informed the evaluation findings:

| 1. Existing documents and data generated throughout PEOPLE | 2. Data collected in February 2020 by the evaluator | 3. Data collected in February/March 2020 by others involved in the project |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly narrative and financial reports from partners. • Participant trackers. • Existing reports: Mid-term Review; consultant reports on mentoring and volunteer management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted via Skype: with 26 (10 women) staff from across all 10 partners, CAFOD and consultants involved. KIIs with partners targeted Coordinators/ Directors and Focal Points. (See Annex 2 for the menu of questions and Annex 4 for the list of people interviewed) • Staff survey, targeting partner staff not consulted through the KIIs: 21 respondents (6 from women). (See Annex 3.1 for survey tool) • Volunteer Survey, targeting partner volunteers with access to a computer: 11 respondents (5 from women). These were primarily office-based volunteers. (See Annex 3.2 for survey tool) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-and re-assessment data from partners • Evaluation discussion questions for those involved in the re-assessment (See Annex 3.3 for questions) • Reviews of: Peer-exchange visits. |

Through the KIIs and surveys, the evaluator asked staff and volunteers to identify the biggest change they had seen since the start of PEOPLE and which capacity strengthening approaches had the most impact (with additional probing and follow-on questions). The responses to these questions formed the structure for grouping the findings presented here, and for weaving in information from other sources. The draft findings and recommendations were presented to partners in the final workshop (March 2020), for validation and elaboration.

It is important to note this evaluation did not set out to evaluate individual partners' progress but instead sought to look collectively, across all, at progress made and the changes seen. Many factors feed into organisational change (internal and other external support). Partners may have support from multiple sources, as well as their own internal drive. Therefore the emphasis in this evaluation has been on understanding whether PEOPLE made a contribution to partner capacities, rather than attributing all changes directly to PEOPLE project.

Limitations to note

- 'Contact' time with partners was short with a maximum of 2-3 hours spent talking to 1-3 staff per partner via Skype, often with connection issues. This has limited the extent to which certain issues could be explored in depth, but despite this some clear themes emerged.

¹ See Annex 1 for the evaluation Terms of Reference

- There were limited opportunities to verify and triangulate reported changes, in particular to explore the quality of step-down activities (plus strengths and gaps) from the perspective of field staff, community volunteers, and end beneficiaries. Where possible some changes were triangulated through discussions with one other partner staff member, the CAFOD HCSO, or responses to the staff and volunteer surveys.
- It is common for respondents to want to report positive changes for projects they have been involved in, risking positive reporting bias of results. Similarly, it is important to recognise bias towards reporting more 'visible' changes, for example, citing new policies and documents rather than subtle organisational cultural shift.
- The time for change to have occurred is short (see findings section for more on this), and the evaluation took place soon after many activities had happened. Therefore, partners had not necessarily had the time to finish rolling out developed policies or see changes from step-down trainings that had just happened. In addition, not all partners have responded to an emergency since the start of PEOPLE activities - the real test of if and how changes had resulted in stronger capacity to respond to emergencies. As such, in some instances the impact of activities conducted under PEOPLE on their emergency response work was assumed rather than observed.

Disclaimer: the evaluation took place in parallel to the project checking and reviewing final output data (on participant data and partner-led activities). The latest available data (up to February 2020) was analysed and is included in this report. There may be a few small discrepancies with final figures reported in other documents that draw from the final output trackers. This should not affect the main messages and findings in this report.

FINDINGS: WHAT RESULTS AND CHANGES HAVE BEEN SEEN TO DATE?

Evaluation question: To what extent did the PEOPLE Project meet its objectives?

In reviewing the findings, it is important to note that the timeframe for the project was relatively short. As such, there is a need to be realistic about the level of change that can be seen in this timeframe, as well as reflect on what this means for sustainability of the project. Two years is short for the types of changes aimed at by this project, especially taking account of the structure of Caritas. For example, co-development of policies at national level while involving the Diocese offices takes time. Moving from changes in individual capacity to organisational ones also takes time.

Although being planned for two years, the time available for partners to work on their capacity strengthening was less than this. The revision of the Capacity Assessment framework after the initial Inception workshop with all partners, and time taken to sign grant agreements with some partners, were the main source of delays and lost momentum built during the inception workshop. Many activities at partner level have been conducted recently, in the last 6 months of the project.

Based on discussions with partners, the most significant or ‘biggest changes’ seen fall into six broad categories (each of which is explored in more detail below):

1. Volunteers and volunteer management
2. Being prepared for effective emergency response
3. Strengthening linkages between parts of the Caritas network
4. Reflective practice
5. Personal Growth and trainings for staff
6. Development of organisational policies to guide work

1. Volunteers and Volunteer management

The findings below link to: Specific Objective 2 – The project aims to strengthen volunteer management capacity of 10 local and national organisations to facilitate integration and active participation of volunteers in humanitarian preparedness and response.

- **Nine out of the ten partners identified at least one aspect of volunteer management that had changed for their organisation and this was seen as one of the most significant changes arising from the PEOPLE project.** The focus on Volunteer Management was seen as relevant, playing into the strength of the Caritas Network, and expanding the capacity of offices. It helped partners think through some of the challenges linked to labour laws that had previously been barriers to engaging volunteers. Plus, crucially, partners were able to apply the learning and test newly developed procedures and policies in practice, through recruiting and training volunteers within the timeframe of the project.
- **Through the support provided by PEOPLE, partners now have increased knowledge and awareness of the role volunteers can play** (including at the time of an emergency), and how to manage them in a professional way. All five of the Diocese partners targeted through the project have done step-down training for staff on volunteer management, and as such partners reported that volunteers were now being treated better than before due to greater awareness among staff.

For example, over the past 5 years JDPC Maiduguri has worked with hundreds of volunteers, but since the PEOPLE project they have changed how volunteers are managed. Volunteers are now trained on volunteer management, PSEA and sexual harassment, and also given ID cards and T-shirts. As a result, staff observed that

volunteers have more confidence and are more integrated into the organisation with a stronger sense of belonging.

JDPC Yola observed that the better attitude towards volunteer response workers as a result of PEOPLE has resulted in higher performance. The better coordination between management and volunteers, with information being shared, is seen as a dramatic change for the organisation.

Partners in Liberia were surprised that once trained, people were willing to volunteer, something they previously thought was not possible. They were also surprised that volunteers could be skilled within fields of expertise, rather than only unskilled persons.

- **Nine partners have strengthened how they manage volunteers through developing or adopting a Volunteer Management Policy, standardising the practice of volunteer recruitment and training, and clarifying expectations and responsibilities on both sides. Of these five have been approved.** While it was common to engage volunteers in the past during emergencies, partners lacked guidance as to how volunteers should be engaged.

For example, following the introduction of good practice in Volunteer Management, Caritas Sierra Leone observed a change in willingness and efforts to making sure volunteers are well managed through setting up systems, developing a policy, and getting them to sign the code of conduct.

Caritas Gokwe established a volunteer database including contact details and qualifications/skills. They were able to use the database to contact volunteers based in an area affected by floods at end of 2019 in order to gather data from the ground. Partners have commonly also set up WhatsApp groups to facilitate rapid information sharing between community volunteers and Caritas. For Caritas Gokwe and CCFN, the PEOPLE Focal Point has also been tasked with being responsible for volunteer management for the organisation.

Through the survey, volunteers highlighted positive changes linked to: the process by which they were recruited and managed; the level of collaboration between staff and volunteers; and the benefits of volunteering in terms of their opportunity to learn and be exposed to new experiences.² The new practice of including volunteers as part of the work plan was highlighted as a positive change by volunteers of one partner.

- **All five of the Diocese-level partners trained and formalised the relationship with community-based volunteers during PEOPLE. This will enable Caritas offices to gather information rapidly on the situation from community level, and has also empowered volunteers to take the lead on resource mobilisation and local-level response.**

Examples of the knock-on benefits seen by two partners as a result of having trained community volunteers in place. Following the training given to volunteers by Caritas Gokwe, staff saw a shift in understanding among volunteers on their role following a disaster. Before there was a perception that they needed Caritas or others for support, but now volunteers have the capacity to mobilise resources for their community. This was seen at the time of Cyclone Idai when volunteers were able to mobilise their communities to donate food, clothing, kitchen utensils and other resources for people affected by the cyclone. Previously Caritas Gokwe worked with volunteers who were elected within the church structures, meaning they often changed during re-election times or before then. In comparison, now the 44 trained volunteers are community members and so are more likely to remain as an asset to the organisation.

Caritas Gokwe also saw a change in their ability to access information. Previously staff would have needed to travel to communities to collect basic information, but now WhatsApp is used with volunteers to get an almost instant response. This was tested in response to floods at the end of 2019, when the volunteer system was used to gather information remotely on the level of damage. The preliminary data from volunteers also meant staff

² Although it is worth noting that of the 11 volunteers respondents, only three had been with their organisations for more than one year and so in a position to compare the present with before the PEOPLE project activities.

had an idea of what to expect when they visited affected areas for the detailed assessment, so could be more prepared. *“It is a blessing to now have specific people to consult in order to get information from point A to point B – before we had challenges knowing who to consult” - Focal Point* This expanded network had a positive knock-on effect for the organisation. Caritas Gokwe became the main source of information from the affected area, and as a result the District Development Coordinators now recognises the capacity of Caritas Gokwe to gather information fast through this network of volunteers.

Similarly, Caritas Harare felt their response to Cyclone Idai was stronger, as they knew how to work with the volunteers involved in house building in a more professional way. At present, Caritas Harare are using their network of volunteers to gather updates on the drought situation at community level via WhatsApp.

Other partners have yet to test their trained community volunteers, but were confident this will make a difference to how they respond. For example, previously during an emergency Caritas Cape Palmas and Caritas Sierra Leone would recruit volunteers on the spot, but now they have “people on stand-by with the appropriate skills and understanding of their roles that can be called on when there is an emergency”. This has the potential for faster response following a disaster, both because volunteers are able to take immediate action and because the Caritas office does not need to spend time trying to identify and mobilise volunteers in the early stages of a response. *“When there is an emergency our response normally starts from the office, rather than from the community. Now with the PEOPLE project we are trying to recruit volunteers in communities, so that when a disaster strikes these volunteers will spring up. They have already received training and so will be able to mobilise the community to provide assistance to victims.” Focal Point*

It is important to note that while the presence of trained community-level volunteers was seen as an asset by partners, improving their ability to respond more rapidly to emergencies, it was not possible as part of this evaluation to verify volunteer skills acquired through the training, nor draw conclusions on how this might affect the quality and effectiveness of response. For example, if volunteers are involved in needs assessments, to what extent are they looking to understand needs from the perspective of different groups within the community (men vs women, younger vs older people, abled vs less abled, more vulnerable etc)? This could be evaluated through reviewing an emergency response that had taken place since the volunteers had been recruited; reviewing needs assessment information collected by volunteers; or and/via direct conversations with community-level volunteers.

- **Seven partners had recruited office volunteers for the first time, bolstering their human resource capacity.** For example, the Sierra Leone National Office has four staff members and currently two volunteers (assigned to programmes and finance), although these have only been in place since January 2020 it was too soon to report on the benefits of this. Caritas Gokwe has recruited two volunteers (both students from local universities) to support their understaffed accounts department and other paperwork. CCFN had started to receive requests from other teams for volunteers following the recruitment of their first volunteer. Of the 11 volunteers who responded to the survey, eight report their role included some form of Finance, Filing and Admin or Report writing. This suggests that office volunteers are for the large part supporting partners with their core functions.

As an example of how this extra capacity has led to visible results for partners, the office volunteers within Caritas Harare helped gain funds from WFP through support with the proposal development. *“In the past we used to think as there were only 3 staff in the office we couldn’t respond, so we would fold our hands. Now we know we can respond with the volunteers.” Focal Point*

What might affect the sustainability of progress and changes seen in volunteer management?

- **How will the pool of community-level volunteers be maintained?** A common challenge for pools of ‘stand-by’ volunteers is how to maintain their skills, interest, and connection to the organisations, plus ensure the pool is added to when volunteers leave their community. While trained volunteers may be engaged through other Caritas projects, overall partners did not have plans for how these relationships could be maintained between emergencies. This was not necessarily recognised as an issue by all, but learning from other organisations with a

strong volunteer focus suggests this is likely to be a challenge. [“If there is no project in their area they will just be sitting and waiting” – Focal Point.](#)

- **To what extent will partners be able to apply good practice in volunteer management during a rapid scale-up of activities? Which parts of volunteer management are non-negotiable even in an emergency response?** In a medium- to large-scale emergency response more volunteers are likely to be needed, in particular in certain affected communities. To date, scale-up following new volunteer management approaches has yet to be tested by partners.
- **Will partners be able to cover travel costs (or a small stipend) for office volunteers after PEOPLE?** To date the office volunteers have been paid a stipend to cover travel costs of coming to the office, covered by the PEOPLE capacity strengthening grant. Different partners have different plans for how this might continue after PEOPLE, but most raised that it was unlikely (and unreasonable) to expect office volunteers to continue for long if they were personally incurring travel costs.

For example, Caritas Sierra Leone and NCJPC Liberia hope to explore other non-monetary motivational ways to keep volunteers coming, such as ensuring volunteers feel they are still learning by involving them in new activities. Caritas Harare and NCJPC Liberia hope to use overhead costs from future donor budgets to cover volunteer stipends (if these are approved by the donor). In addition, NCJPC Liberia and CCFN are looking to use or generate more unrestricted funds through a Lenten collection which could be used to cover volunteer costs. [“For us the stipend ended in December \[2019\] but having volunteers is part of our practice, so we are looking for funds beyond PEOPLE. Volunteerism is not going to stop – it is something that is here to stay.” - Focal Point](#)

- **What level of turnover will partners face for their office volunteers? To what extent will partners be able to re-recruit and train office volunteers (something that takes time) beyond PEOPLE?** At least two partners reported their office volunteers were young, for example those working for NCJPC Liberia are students from the University. Students and younger volunteers tend to be more mobile and are not necessarily a stable resource.

2. Being prepared for effective emergency response

The findings below link to: Specific Objective 1 – The project aims to strengthen humanitarian preparedness and response capacity of 10 local and national organisations to design and deliver people-centred humanitarian assistance.

Overwhelmingly the improvements in volunteer management (discussed above) were identified as a key change that had strengthened partners’ ability to respond in emergencies. In addition, partners highlighted a couple of other areas that had also contributed to this improvement, as discussed below.

- **Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPPs) were developed by eight partners, with six partners undertaking step-down trainings within the last 8 months involving a wider pool of staff.** The Sierra Leone and Liberia National office involved all Dioceses in-country in the development of their EPP, with each Diocese developing their own EPPs for the first time to feed into the national level one. Others who already had an EPP, such as Caritas Harare, reviewed their existing one as part of PEOPLE.

Has this affected practice? Training on EPPs occurred relatively recently, for NCJPC Liberia Diocese training was in July 2019, for Caritas Sierra Leone June 2019, for JDPC Maiduguri only two months ago (December 2019). As commented by one Focal Point [“We now have the knowledge about this but to put into practice what we learnt is difficult, and there wasn’t enough time in this project.”](#) At the time of the evaluation no partner had tested

their EPPs³, but the simulations planned for March 2020 at the end of PEOPLE were seen as an opportunity for testing and then revising as needed.

It was reported in the final workshop, that following the simulation that tested the EPP and other response readiness, Caritas Sierra Leone had decided to establish a National Emergency Response Teams (ERT), in order to have nominated representatives from the each of the dioceses and have clear roles for when an emergency hits.

Do they have the potential to effect practice? While the EPPs clarified roles and expectations during an emergency response, as well as brought together details of other key actors, the ability to mobilise resources (in advance of an emergency) was seen as a major challenge to the EPPs being used in practice. Resource mobilisation for partners is also a major challenge to being able to respond to emergencies (and apply learnings) and to being able to take the lead alongside other actors.

- **Eight out of the ten partners reported taking action following the CHS and Complaints Handling TOT held in May 2019. This includes seven partners who conducted step-down trainings on CHS for staff and volunteers, and others who developed (or refined an existing) complaint handling mechanism.**

Complaints Handling is one of the commitments that partners have embraced. NCJPC Liberia developed a Complaints Handling Mechanism for the first time with the input of the Diocese. This has been approved by the Conference of Bishops and so has the active backing by leaders. CCFN hired a new Programme Accountability Manager in August 2019 to manage their Complaints Handling. As part of this they have set up an email address, telephone line, and have complaints boxes in some project sites. A number of humanitarian projects have complaints focal points and hold Focus Group Discussions as a means to hear community feedback. For both these national offices the process of rolling out to their Diocese is still underway.

Example of changes in activities made following received complaints. JDPC Yola previously received complaints via their desk officer. Under the PEOPLE project they undertook an assessment in IDP camp to identify preferred channels, and as a result set up a phone line and complaints boxes in the camp. Positively this has already resulted in a lot of feedback, allowing them to adjust their work. These adjustments included those linked to host community and IDP relationships, and barriers affecting female participation in savings groups.

Partners in Zimbabwe had already developed Complaints Handling Mechanisms and policies under CAFOD's HCD project, which Caritas Harare was able to use during their Cyclone Idai shelter response, successfully receiving complaints that required a review of their beneficiary selection. Interestingly, despite the previous work through the PEOPLE project, Caritas Zimbabwe identified areas where their existing policy needed refining (which they plan to do with Diocese offices). This highlights the importance of testing, using, and refining policies once developed.

It has not been possible during the evaluation to understand the results (expected or seen) from the CHS step-down training. In particular, how the increased awareness on the CHS is being translated into practice. This includes: to what extent are staff clear on how the CHS can be applied? How are the different CHS commitments being integrated into ways of working? What on-going support and monitoring is needed to look at the application of the commitments?

What might affect the sustainability of progress and changes seen in emergency preparedness?

- **For many, work in this area is still in progress.** Initial steps have been taken, but further action is needed to see these developed further. This raises the question of how partners can push forward the processes and activities started under PEOPLE, for example to put a useful EPP in place and have a functioning complaints handling mechanism.

³ Caritas Freetown (a Diocese under Caritas Sierra Leone) response to flooding after their EPP was developed but was not clear if and how this impacted on the speed or effectiveness of the response.

- **What action is needed to support the application of greater CHS awareness?** While partners reported increased awareness on the CHS, and due to interest there was a focus on complaints handling, there seemed to be less focus on what is needed to support the application of other aspects of the CHS beyond the step-down training for staff.
- **How can barriers in partners' ability to use their EPPs be overcome?** A number of partners mentioned lack of resources as a barrier to being able to use their EPPs, in particular funds that would allow rapid action following a disaster in line with their EPP.

3. Strengthening linkages between the Caritas Network

The findings below link to: Specific Objective 3 – The project aims to strengthen collective dialogue, knowledge sharing, learning and peer-to-peer support between partners on volunteer management and emergency preparedness and response good practice.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

- Many partners reported **the PEOPLE project had brought about exchange between partners based in different countries, and as such they felt more connected to the wider Caritas network.** The Trainer of Trainers (ToT), webinars, exchange visits, formal mentoring relationships, and Community of Practice all provided opportunities for sharing between partners (more on each in the next section). However, this change was predominantly linked to the recent Peer-Exchange visits, which seem to have cemented connections made through the face-to-face Trainer of Trainer workshops. Encouragingly, there are many examples of on-going contact between visitors following the visits (via WhatsApp groups and individual connections), which suggests these connections are currently active. *“We are friends now so our contact will continue, and we will share ideas. We are all part of the catholic church, so we have that connection” - Focal Point*
- **Although Caritas Africa was part of the project and helped realise some of the TOTs, partners at country level were less clear about their role in implementing the project.** Based on the evidence gathered it is not clear if and how links have been strengthened between Caritas Africa and National offices during the PEOPLE project.⁴

NATIONAL LINKS

- **There are many ‘in theory’ benefits of involving both National and Diocese partners together as part of the PEOPLE project. These include:**
 - Strengthening the system, allowing policies and procedures to be developed from the centre. Once there is clear thinking and a strong National office it is easier for the Diocese offices to follow.
 - Providing an opportunity for the national office to pilot approaches with involved Diocese offices before rolling them out to others, as well as an opportunity for the National office to learn from the Diocese offices.
 - Building a shared and common understanding among National and Diocese staff on topics of Capacity Strengthening, as well as an understanding of the role each part of the system plays and where some of the gaps/challenges might be.
 - Bringing about better collaboration and coordination through working together to develop policies, and other co-design opportunities.
- **The extent to which these benefits were realised in each country depended on the role the National Office was able to play.** In countries where the national office worked with the Diocese to roll out PEOPLE learning

⁴ During the KIIs partner staff were asked about the role of the partners on the Steering Committee, including Caritas Africa, rather than explicitly about changes in the linkages between Caritas Africa as the regional office and National Caritas's.

some of these benefits were reported; in other countries where this did not happen partners were not convinced there were actual benefits from having different parts of the system as part of the project.

Generally, approaches that saw the National office engaging with Diocese offices included:

- Bringing together and training representatives from each of the Diocese offices. For example, the Zimbabwe National office rolled out CI Management Toolkit training to a focal point with a manager from all eight Diocese offices. The Sierra Leone National office and NCJPC Liberia involved representatives from each of their four Dioceses as part of the EPP training.
- Printing materials for distribution to all offices. For example, the CI Management Toolkit was commonly mentioned. In Sierra Leone the vision and mission of Caritas was also printed for all Diocese offices.
- Co-design of policies. For example, Sierra Leone National office drafted the Volunteer Management policy, shared this for review, and then brought together Diocese representatives (directors and board members) to discuss it in Freetown. The Liberia National office involved Diocese partners in the development of their Volunteer Management policy by asking them specific questions to feed into the policy. This was then approved by the bishops. The development of the Complaints Handling Mechanism was done through bringing together staff from each Diocese to build an understanding of the CHS and develop the mechanism.

In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the approaches taken by the National Office with Dioceses in the co-design of policies and the development of their EPP is reported to have strengthened the working relationships. [“There is now a desire for the Diocese and national office to operate as a team. For example, we have set up a WhatsApp group specifically for emergency response.”](#)

The National Office in Nigeria and Zimbabwe felt PEOPLE had improved their coordination skills for working with Dioceses as a result of training on the CI Management toolkit, and in Zimbabwe through the hands-on support from the HCSO as part of the Cyclone and Drought responses. These changes were not necessarily verified by the participating Diocese offices, in part for Zimbabwe because the National office had faced challenges with making as much progress as planned against their Capacity Strengthening plan and so had been less visible when it came to PEOPLE related activities.

It is worth noting that countries with a smaller number of Dioceses (Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Liberia) were more easily able to involve all Dioceses in roll-out activities; in comparison, Nigeria, which has a much larger number of Dioceses and so targeted only five out of 56 offices. It may be that the model and level of support for bringing about change in larger countries needs to be adapted to reflect the greater number of Diocese offices. For example, taking account of the number of Focal Points included in the project, the grant level, and the value of including Provincial Offices (present in Nigeria due to its size) to support with cascading down change, if and how Diocese to Diocese peer support could be encouraged further.

- **Did the project approach encourage transparency between the offices?** National Office’s Capacity Strengthening Plans were not always shared with Diocese offices, for example staff from the Diocese level who were involved in the re-assessment process in Sierra Leone had not seen the national-level plan. In another country it was also commented by a Diocese Focal Point that they were unclear how the National office had used the capacity strengthening grant. This was addressed in Nigeria during the capacity re-assessment process at the end of PEOPLE, with partner presentations to each other on their initial capacity strengthening plan, re-assessed scores, and progress made over the last 2 years.

What might affect the sustainability of links made between different parts of the Caritas Network?

- **Between countries: What is needed to cultivate and maintain the linkages further and to strengthen relationships of staff in different countries to prevent them from petering out?** As with any ‘long-distance’ relationship there is a risk that this may diminish over time unless there is some level of investment by involved

parties.

- **Within countries: Can National Offices continue with co-design collaborative approach to national-level processes?** To some extent this depends on whether National partners are able to find alternative resources for bringing Dioceses together or imaginative approaches for engaging Dioceses virtually.

4. Reflective practice

- **Four partners identified the self-assessment process by which staff reviewed their own capacity and identified gaps as one of the biggest most significant change.** This enabled them to review organisational systems needed to respond to emergencies, and develop their own capacity strengthening plan.

For example, although CCFN scored themselves highly across most indicators in the capacity assessment framework, the process was important for bringing about a shift in thinking. The following was captured in discussions with CCFN during the Mid-Term Review:

“What was done differently?” PEOPLE enabled us to look at the CIMS assessment as an organisation. Each time previous organisational assessments were done only a few people had a chance to look at the scores. With PEOPLE we were able to take ownership of our own capacity strengthening. We collectively looked at what our strengths and gaps are as an organisation.

Why is this change important? Creating a culture of openness is essential for capacity strengthening. There was a problem of perception by CCFN – the organisational culture of excellence had no room for failures. PEOPLE was not seen as an opportunity at first. The internal culture is gradually changing. The manner of reception is fairer now.... and we understand the need to improve. This time last year that was not the case. The PEOPLE project has helped to create this change.

What did PEOPLE do to contribute to this change? Repeatedly ask CCFN to share their CIMS assessment, and also facilitated meetings with different CCFN units to review assessments and develop a plan”

The significance of organisations coming together to review practice, and the shift in mindset associated with this, was highlighted by a Focal Point who had experienced CAFOD’s HCD project: *“The self-assessment wasn’t easy as when donors visit there is a tendency to defend more than identify gaps. However, through the HCD we discovered that the self-assessment was for our own benefit, so realised we had to re-assess to identify more gaps.”*; *“Initially when we started with HCD we didn’t know how looking at these things would be beneficial. Later on we realised the importance of this, after seeing the results and benefits.”*

What might affect the sustainability of progress and changes seen in reflective practice?

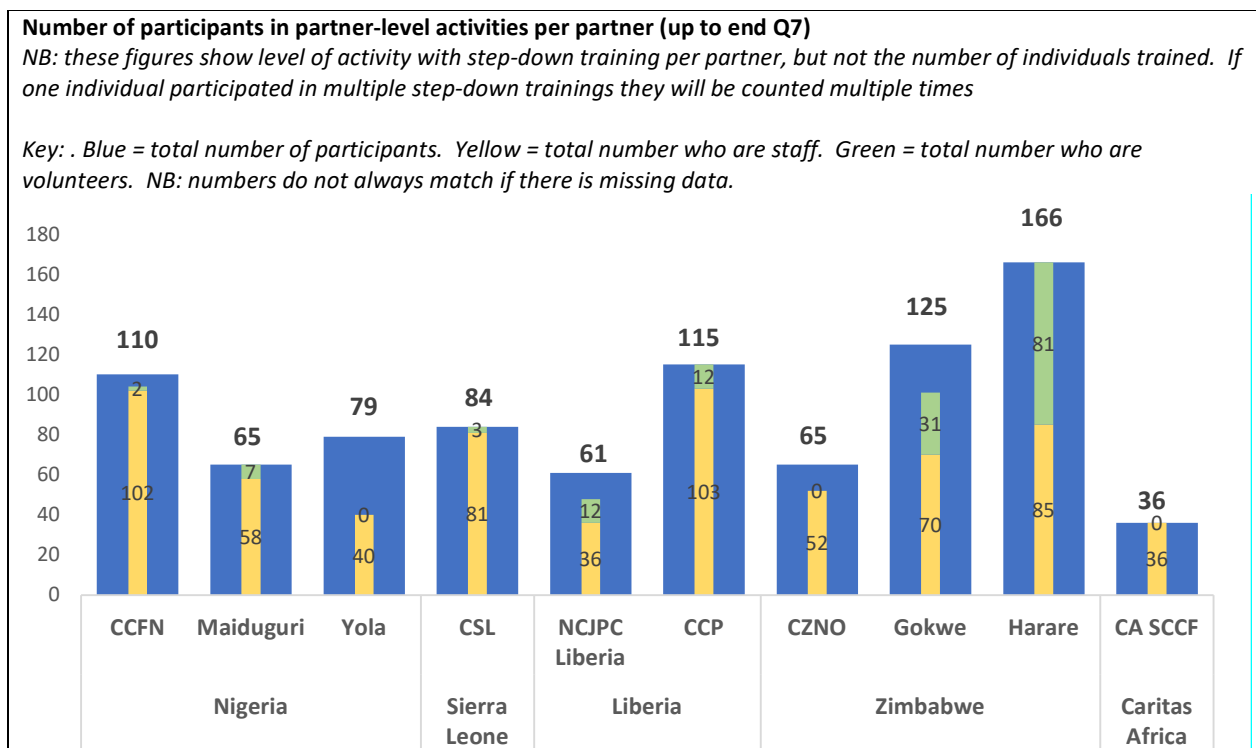
- **The results from the organisational self-assessment (and associated Capacity Strengthening plan) will remain, even if this is not updated regularly.**
- **To what extent will partners continue a regular process of reflecting on practice? Will this be looking at the organisation as a whole, or reflecting on specific projects or implementation of specific policies?** While the PEOPLE project self-assessment and re-assessment process introduced good practice, this was initiated by the project and facilitated by the HCSOs. The evaluator is not aware of other actions taken during the project to encourage self-reflection. Given this, a culture of self-reflection may not have been institutionalised as yet as part of the project.

5. Personal growth and trainings

- Four partners identified personal growth and the increased level of training for staff as one of the biggest changes. This included personal growth in the Focal Points, who had worked with PEOPLE most intensively, and

increased trainings as a result of the step-down trainings delivered for staff.

- **Data from activities at partner-level (predominantly led by the Focal Points or a HCSO) confirm a high level of ‘participant numbers’ across partners (see graph below).** In total 940 participants (of which 35% were women) were part of the capacity self-assessments, trainings, and/or meetings supported by the PEOPLE project. It is important to note that individuals who participated in more than one training would be double counted in these numbers, but these figures given an indication of activities conducted with staff and volunteers at partner level).



- **The focus of these trainings included those focused on by PEOPLE (CHS, CI Management Toolkit, EPP, Volunteer Management), as well as topics selected by partners based on their individual needs.** For example, CCFN conducted trainings for staff on Safety & Security, First Aid, and Gender & Security, Mobile Data Collection, HR processes, Project Management for volunteers and refreshers on Finance management. Caritas Sierra Leone brought staff together for an Advocacy Strategy Development workshop, and JDPC Yola worked with staff to develop a new five-year Strategic Plan. JDPC Maiduguri revitalized their board of trustees (who had not been meeting regularly) by holding a meeting to sensitize them on the key actions of the organization.
- For target partners, given the focus of the trainings, this improved staff knowledge should have positive knock-on effects for the organisations’ capacity to respond to emergencies, but as noted by partners **there has not been the opportunity or time to test this new knowledge and whether this has led to greater capacity.** It is hoped the simulations at the end of PEOPLE will be one opportunity for this.
- **To what extent have these trainings reached other Dioceses (beyond those directly targeted by PEOPLE)?** The ToTs and Webinars run by the project reached all 10 target partners, plus people from ‘northern’ Caritas partners, rather than from other Dioceses within target countries. This feels like a missed opportunity to use the live webinars to engage staff from other Dioceses as well.
- **Similarly, the level of step-down trainings by the four participating National offices to Diocese offices on different topics was relatively low within the timeframe of PEOPLE. As such, this has limited the engagement and reach to Diocese offices not targeted directly by the project.** For example,

| Step-down training or activities on: | ... potentially reaching other Diocese offices has been done by ⁵ |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Volunteer Management | 1 National offices |
| CHS and Complaints Handling | 4 National office |
| EPP | 2 National offices |
| CI Management Toolkit | 2 National offices |
| Other trainings | 2 National offices |

For step-down training to be beneficial there needs to be agreement (and support) on how staff once trained will apply this within their local office. For example, in Sierra Leone the EPP step-down was reportedly beneficial for disaster prone Dioceses such as Caritas Makeni and Caritas Freetown. However, “it was clearly seen from the capacity re-assessment process in Sierra Leone that there was a gap in information sharing by staff members who had been sent as representatives for the different trainings but who never passed on knowledge or information acquired. In fact, for some of participants in the re-assessment workshop it was their first time to hear about the PEOPLE project.”⁶ It was suggested by partners that each Diocese office should have a Focal Point to attend trainings and then lead the roll out in their own offices, supported by their directors to avoid learning remaining with a few.

During the evaluation, it was not always clear if National level partners had the same horizons for where they wanted to influence change. For example, in the context of improving Volunteer Management, during discussions held as part of the evaluation some National offices only considered how they were using volunteers within their own office rather than also how they had or might support all Diocese offices to strengthen the management of community and office volunteers. This raises the questions: did national offices have the same expectations on stepping-down learning to all Diocese offices and supporting them to implement stronger practice? What support was given to a National office, in particular the Focal Point, on how to support a Diocese with organisational development?

What might affect the sustainability of progress and changes seen in trainings for staff?

- **If staff (and volunteers) are not able to use and apply the knowledge and skills acquired through trainings there is a risk this will be diluted over time.** In addition, turnover of staff, especially in emergencies with the use of short-term contracts, means there will be a **need for continuous training to maintain capacity.**
- The TOT model adopted by PEOPLE means trainers with the skills to deliver more trainings will remain with the partners. However, the capacity strengthening grants given to partners were key for covering costs associated with stepping down of trainings. The extent to which the level of trainings continues (including that needed in the roll out of policies), will depend on whether partners can find funds needed for convening staff gatherings.

6. Development of organisational policies to guide work

- **Through the PEOPLE Project partners looked to develop a significant number of policies, and to provide clarification on their approach to a topic and a document that would guide practice going forward.** The impetus for developing and updating policies varied. Some partners felt it allowed them to meet the expectations of external partners better; for others, discussions with staff on topics such as volunteer management had motivated staff to identify aspects of policies that needed updating in order to reflect the

⁵ Data based on CAFOD’s activity tracker (up to Q7). The number of Diocese offices participating in step-down trainings or activities was not monitored, but participant numbers give an indication on how likely this was.

⁶ Content from the HCSO’s report on the final self-assessment process (March 2020) – edited slightly to reduce length.

change they wanted to see. The table below summarises the policies revised and newly developed under PEOPLE.

Summary of policies revised or newly developed under PEOPLE project, and where known the status of each

| ZIMBABWE | NIGERIA | LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Caritas Zimbabwe <u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management Policy - to be discussed with dioceses | <p>CCF Nigeria <u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management Policy - awaiting board approval • Complaints Handling Policy – approved • Emergency Preparedness Plan | <p>NCJPC Liberia <u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management Policy – approved • Complaints Handling Policy – approved • Emergency Preparedness Plan – working to finalise • Safeguarding policy - draft |
| <p>Caritas Gokwe <u>Updated/reviewed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT Policy • HR Policy • Procurements Policy <p><u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer management policy – approved • Emergency Preparedness Plan - approved • Communication policy - draft • Whistleblowing Policy - approved • Safeguarding Policy - approved | <p>JDPC Maiduguri <u>Developed New:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management policy – approved • Emergency Preparedness Plan – being finalised • Human Resources - approved • Safeguarding and Protection - approved • Finance - approved • Volunteer Management - approved • Procurement – approved • Travel - approved | <p>Caritas Cape Palmas <u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management Policy - Adopted national-level policy. • Emergency Preparedness Plan – working to finalise • Code of conduct - draft |
| <p>Caritas Harare <u>Updated/reviewed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of conduct • HR policy • Fundraising • Staff Capacity Development Policy • Emergency Preparedness Plan <p><u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer management policy – approved • Complaints handling policy – approved • Safeguarding policy – draft • Humanitarian Policy – in development | <p>JDPC Yola <u>Updated/reviewed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR manual • Review of Organizational Policies <p><u>Developed New</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management policy • Complaints Handling Policy – ongoing • Emergency Preparedness Plan - completed • Code of Conduct • HR Manual • Safeguarding Policy • 5 Year Strategic Plan Development | <p>Caritas Sierra Leone <u>Developed new</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management Policy (Approved March 2020) • Emergency Preparedness Plan – working to finalise • Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement - draft (Approved March 2020) • Advocacy strategy - 2nd draft • Safeguarding Policy -1st draft <p><u>Planned</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding - Security - Gifts and gratuity |

- **It is a testament to the efforts of Focal Points, and the support of the HCSOs, that some partners were able to realise a significant level of policy generation.** Especially given the time needed to review content (including for National Offices the backwards and forwards exchange with Diocese offices over the content), and the challenge of building wider staff involvement in policy development in addition to their day-to-day tasks. One partner addressed this by giving each staff member the responsibility to review the policy they were most interested in. Positive changes in scores from donor compliance reviews following the development of policies, helped staff recognise the importance of developing polices and acted as a motivator.
- **Final approval of policies rests at the Conference of Bishops level, which for most partners (even where there was active Bishop buy-in) delayed the process of finalisation.** While partners reported that policies could be used before final approval, it is understood that this is likely to affect the extent to which a policy can be actively promoted and used.

- **While National level policy development has the potential to bring about changes across all Dioceses offices, in some cases the speed of development was slower than the individual Diocese partners involved in PEOPLE want.** At the Diocese-level, partners reported feeling ‘held-back’ by the slow progress at National level. In other countries, Diocese partners moved forward with policy development even without progress from National level. For example, in Zimbabwe Caritas Gokwe and Caritas Harare both developed and approved a Volunteer management policy, while the National level one was still under development.
- **The summary of policies developed shows seven partners also worked on their approaches to safeguarding, developing policies on safeguarding, whistleblowing, and Code of Conducts for staff and volunteers.**

What might affect the sustainability of progress and changes seen in policy development?

- **For many partners these policies have been developed towards the end of PEOPLE, and there are questions around how they will be rolled out after PEOPLE without the Capacity Strengthening grant.** As one Focal Point reflected: “We developed policies during the life of PEOPLE but going forward we now need to roll them out. Not sure how we are going to do this after PEOPLE as [we] need resources for on-going training of staff and for new staff.” In terms of raising staff awareness once approved, Caritas Gokwe plans to ask existing staff to read and sign each policy and integrate them into the inductions for new staff. Caritas Harare plans to use staff meetings to discuss a policy at each meeting.

However, rolling out of policies often requires more than just building staff awareness around the content, and the experience of using policies may identify aspects that need refinement. It is not clear if partners have plans for operationalising policies beyond raising awareness of their content with staff.

In addition, a lack of on-going monitoring of changes achieved to date (be this by partner management or CAFOD’s HCSO) was seen as a potential risk to sustainability of these changes, suggesting that these changes have not yet had time to become the accepted ways of working but need active follow-up to be embedded.

- In addition, time will tell **if partners who are part way through the policy development process will be able to push these to completion and approval without the support of resources linked to the PEOPLE project** (in particular the grants and active motivation from the HCSOs). This will require the Coordinators/Directors to push for their completion.

Results from the self-assessment process

- **The results from the self-assessment process (done at the beginning and again at the end of PEOPLE) show positive changes in self-assessed scores, which confirms that a wider group of partners staff feel their capacity in certain areas has improved.** Of the 33 indicators, 1 or more partners scored more highly at the end of PEOPLE for 28 of them.

It is worth noting that at the beginning of PEOPLE partners scored themselves against all 33 indicators, whereas at the end most partners only scored themselves against the areas they had worked on directly. If partners had re-assessed against all they may have identified additional areas of indirect change.

As summarised by the table below, a look across the 12 competency domains in the Humanitarian Capacity Assessment Framework shows most partners (seven) saw positive changes in Vision and Strategy and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, followed closely by Preparedness and Human Resources. See Annex 5 for graphs of the changes against each competency domain for each partner.

Number of partners with positive (and negative) change in scores against each of the twelve competencies domains in the Humanitarian Capacity Assessment Framework.

| Competency Domains | Number of partners with positive change in this area |
|--------------------|--|
|--------------------|--|

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Leadership | Vision and Strategy | 7 |
| | Management & Governance | 0 |
| Preparedness & Response | Preparedness | 6 |
| | Assessment & Design | 2 |
| | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning | 7 |
| External Engagement | Coordination & Collaboration | 3 |
| | Advocacy & Communications | 2 |
| | Fundraising | 5 |
| Management of Resources | Human Resources | 6 |
| | Finance | 0 |
| | Security | 3 |
| | Logistics | 5 |

- **How does this tally with the changes identified directly by the evaluation?** Preparedness & Response saw the highest number of partners scoring positive changes against two of its Competency Domains: Preparedness and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. A look at the specific indicators for these areas (see table below) shows this is largely explained by increased orientation for staff on the CI Emergency Guidelines, and putting in place formal complaint-handling procedures for staff as well as beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Fewer partners scored higher in the area of having assessed disaster risk and developing preparedness plans and emergency response strategy/plans. This tallies with the findings identified directly by the evaluation.

The Humanitarian Capacity Assessment Framework is not explicit on volunteer management, which has the potential to fall under a number of the Competency Domains. A separate mapping of partner volunteer management practices/ policies was done at the start and end of the project, which was not available at the time of the evaluation but is included in the final report to EUAV.

While the Human Resources domain was scored positively by 6 partners, looking at the specific indicators shows there is no particular indicator that has fed into this. Similarly, the links built between the wider Caritas Network would not have been picked up by this framework.

Four partners' scores show progress in terms of their "organisations ensuring protection of staff, volunteers, people it works with and other stakeholders against abuse, harassment, exploitation and violence" which tallies with work done on safeguarding.

Interestingly, under other competencies domains and not picked up by the data collected through the evaluation, four partners scored more highly at the end of PEOPLE in Logistics, specifically having and applying a procurement policy, and five scored more highly in Fundraising, specifically having a fundraising strategy/plan.

A look at the specific indicators for the four Competency Domains where the highest number of partners had a positive change in scores – what exactly changed?

| Competency Domains | | Indicator | Number of partners with positive change in this indicator |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--|---|
| Leadership | Vision and Strategy | The Organisation's strategic plan reflects its humanitarian mission, is developed in a participatory way and is owned and used for operational planning and decision making | 4 |
| | | Staff, volunteers and interns know the vision and mandate of the Organisation and adhere to policies and regulations. | 3 |
| | | International Humanitarian standards and principles are known and applied appropriately | 6 |
| Preparedness & Response | Preparedness | Program staff responsible for emergency response are oriented on the CI Emergency Guidelines in their induction and ongoing development, and understand how they function | 6 |
| | | Disaster risk is assessed, preparedness plans and where relevant an emergency response strategy/plan is developed | 3 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|----------|
| | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning | The Organisation ensures the protection of staff, volunteers, people it works with and other stakeholders (especially children and vulnerable adults) against abuse, harassment, exploitation and violence. It does so through consistently applied policies and procedures, risk assessments and governance mechanisms | 4 |
| | | The Organisation ensures, through communication using effective channels and language, with specific attention for women and girls, that affected people and communities know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and are participating in every stage of the project cycle | 3 |
| | | Formal and appropriate complaints handling procedures for staff as well as beneficiaries and other stakeholders are in place and applied | 5 |
| | | Projects are implemented with the active involvement of the communities served, using sound planning, monitoring of the results and accountability to stakeholders | 1 |
| | | Analysis of evaluations, audits, reviews, feedback and complaints is undertaken for learning purposes and shared with relevant stakeholders | 2 |
| Management of Resources | Human Resources | Staff policies and procedures respect the dignity of staff, promote equity, and are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant with the local labour law | 3 |
| | | The Organisation ensures to recruit and endeavours to retain qualified staff to deliver its work | 3 |
| | | Job descriptions and clearly defined reporting levels are in place for all staff, including executive management | 1 |
| | | Staff work according to clear performance objectives, have regular appraisal meetings and are provided with the appropriate support and development to fulfil their role | 2 |

- **Looking at the level of change per partner shows all partners scored more highly at the end of PEOPLE against 3 or more indicators, with an average of seven.** There is wide variation between partners in the number of indicators with positive scores – Caritas Harare had positive changes in 17, Caritas Gokwe 15, JDPC Maiduguri 10 and NCJPC Liberia 8. All others saw positive changes in 3-5 indicators.

Five partners have had at least 1 negative change, with the Zimbabwe National Office scoring lower against 15 indicators and Caritas Africa against six. There are differing explanations for this. Commonly across a number of partners, the staff who participated in the end line re-assessment were different to those that took part in the baseline, and so there were slightly different perspectives on their organisation's systems and procedures.

Caritas Zimbabwe had initially scored themselves considering the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) policies. During the reassessment, they scored themselves based on Caritas Zimbabwe specific policies only, hence lowering scores in places. In addition, by the re-assessment stage partners were more familiar with the Peer Review format used in Zimbabwe, and so Diocese partners questioned Caritas Zimbabwe processes and procedures more, resulting in lower scores. For Caritas Africa the person facilitating the endline re-assessment process had a deeper understanding of the organisation and was able to weave some of the challenges into the simulation scenarios used before the re-assessment process. The simulation enabled staff to reflect on their organisation's capacity in more detail compared to the baseline process, and thus they scored themselves lower.

The self-assessment process, and scoring against indicators, is not an exact science. The reduction in scores, indicates that at the end of the project partner staff had a deeper understanding of the gaps and issues their organisation faces, and were also open to recognising these. The use of simulations and peer review as part of the process provides an opportunity for greater reflection based on practical examples and external perspectives.

What factors contributed to the level of progress and change seen?

- **PEOPLE engaged a variety of partner organisations from across the Caritas system. The level of progress made and changes seen across the 10 partners by the end of PEOPLE varies considerably, some of which can be explained by the variations between partners.** The partners involved included 5 Diocese partners who directly implement projects; 4 national partners responsible for coordination at country-level; and 1 regional partner responsible for coordination across the Caritas Africa region.

At country level, the number of Dioceses supported by each national partner also varies, from Liberia with only 3 Dioceses to Nigeria with 56 (Sierra Leone has 4 and Zimbabwe 8). The number of staff within each partner also varied: national partners tended to have fewer compared to Diocese partners (reflecting their role as coordinators rather than implementers). At Diocese level staff numbers ranged from 10 to 37.

Finally, at least five of the involved partners had experienced specific capacity strengthening projects in the past, supported either by CAFOD or CRS. Prior exposure to this type of project creates an awareness of the potential benefits and value of reflecting on gaps and being open to change.

- **In addition, the following factors were identified as influencing the level of change seen. It is important to note that generally it was not one factor but a combination of factors that affected levels of progress.**
 - Wider organisational change negatively affected partner progress. This included internal restructuring as well as Focal Point and/or Coordinator turnover. Six out of the ten experienced a change in Focal Point, Coordinator, or both during the PEOPLE project.
 - New emergencies provide an opportunity for learning by doing, and allow new capacities to be tested, but they also detract time from implementing the capacity strengthening plan. Not all partners experienced emergencies during PEOPLE. For example, Sierra Leone and Liberia experienced only small-scale localised emergencies (flooding and fire). JDPC Yola and JDPC Maiduguri continued to support people displaced by insecurities, although the situation remained broadly the same throughout PEOPLE. Zimbabwe partners were the only ones who faced new and more extensive emergencies, with Cyclone Idai in March 2019, and more recently the drought. Emergencies as reported in KIIs are summarised below.

| <i>Nigeria</i> | <i>Zimbabwe</i> | <i>Sierra Leone</i> | <i>Liberia</i> |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going displacement in the north linked to Boko Haram in areas where JDPC Yola and JDPC Maiduguri work. • Flooding in Kogi state. • Disease outbreaks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riots in Harare (January 2019) • Cyclone Idai affecting 3 Diocese (March 2019) • Flooding in Gokwe (end of 2019). • Drought response (current – the appeal was launched January 2020) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding in Freetown + Bo (August 2019) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire disaster (Monrovia) |

- Level of senior leadership buy-in to the project. The PEOPLE project engaged Coordinators from the outset as part of the Inception workshop. The level of engagement and active backing from the Conference of Bishops was identified as positively affecting the speed of progress.
- Attitude and skills of leaders (in terms of being open and willing to learn through the process) and confidence and ability of the Focal Points to drive change forward. Being able to ask for support was also linked to level of progress made.
- The presence and proximity to the HCSO was a factor, for example the lack of HCSO for Caritas Africa and the challenge of travel to Cape Palmas limited the number of HCSO visits.

Concluding comments: To what extent did the PEOPLE Project meet its objectives?

There is evidence that as a result of the PEOPLE project nine partners have strengthened their volunteer management capacity, with the 10th partner still taking steps (*Specific Objective 2*). PEOPLE supported partners to learn about the potential of volunteers and good practice in how to manage them, and to develop policies, procedures and other tools to support better management, and then, crucially, to test this through the recruitment and training of office and community-level volunteers.

For some partners the presence of trained community volunteers is already bearing fruit, with faster access to on-the-ground information, and local capacity to mobilise the community to take action following a disaster. It is widely believed, with good reason, that the presence of these volunteers will lead to faster responses following disasters. The extent to which they also affect the quality and effectiveness of response has yet to be tested.

There is also evidence that all partners made some level of progress as a result of PEOPLE (recognising that the level of progress made is very variable). Progress in volunteer management, thinking about and developing Emergency Preparedness Plans, setting up complaint-handling mechanisms, and developing organisational policies will all contribute in some way to stronger organisations which are more able to prepare for and respond to emergencies (*Specific Objective 1*). There are a few examples of this being applied with positive results, but for most partners this is work in progress and as yet untested.

Positively, during the final workshop the Zimbabwe National Office reflected that the two Diocese partners involved in PEOPLE were more proactive in emergency responses compared to other Diocese offices which had not been involved. This was explained by their increased capacity gained through the project (and previous CAFOD CS projects), although it was not possible to verify this through the evaluation.

A number of the Capacity Strengthening approaches used by PEOPLE allowed for collective dialogue, knowledge sharing, learning and peer-to-peer support between partners based in different countries (*Specific Objective 2*). The international peer exchanges in particular seem to have cemented connections.

At country level, there are many 'in theory' benefits of involving both National and Diocese partners together as part of the PEOPLE project, including strengthening the links between these offices. The extent to which these benefits were realised depended on the role the National Office was able to play in rolling out changes and stepping-down trainings.

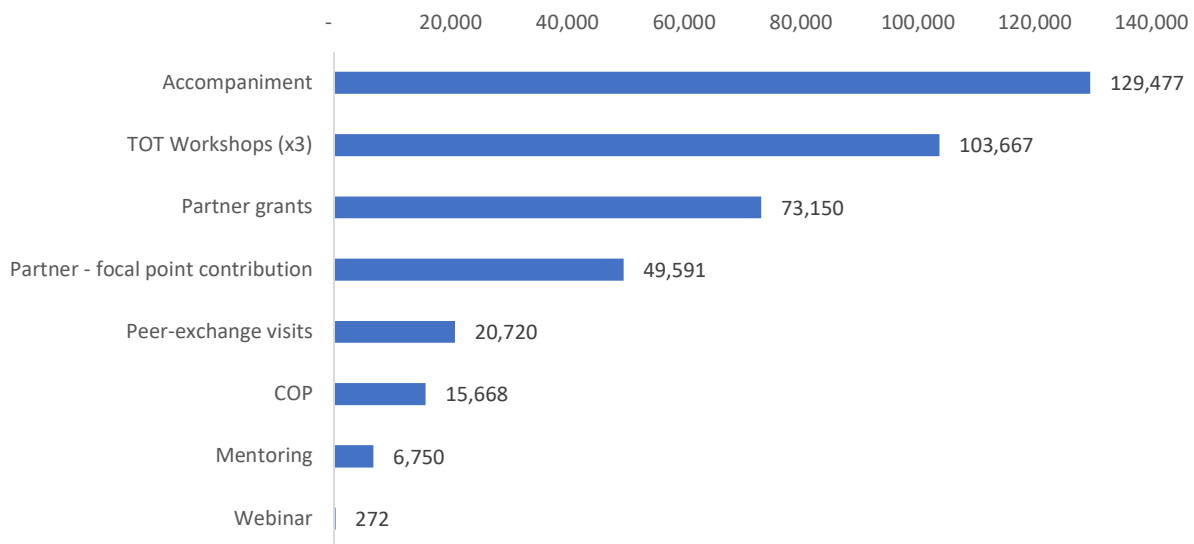
FINDINGS: WHICH CAPACITY STRENGTHENING APPROACHES HAD THE MOST IMPACT?

Evaluation question: How effective and efficient were the different PEOPLE HCS approaches in supporting partners' capacity strengthening in emergency response and volunteer management?

- **Of all the approaches, the peer-exchange visits were most commonly cited as one of the “most impactful”.** In comparison the **Community of Practice (COP)** and the **formal mentoring relationships were not referred to by partners as contributing to changes seen.** The following approaches, each explored in more details below, were also commonly cited as supporting change:
 - Trainer of Trainers (ToTs),
 - Accompaniment support provided by the HCSO,
 - Webinars
 - Self-assessment process
 - Grants
- **74% of spend (to end Q7) was on the capacity strengthening approaches used with partners.** Of this, the majority was spent on accompaniment and ToT workshops (see graph below). Overall, the majority of activity spend was on CS approaches' that partners identified as supporting change. Those approaches identified by partners as less effective (COP and mentoring) cost only a tiny fraction of the spend.

Summary of spend in Euros (to end of Q7) against the different capacity strengthening approaches

To note: While the below shows direct spend linked to different approaches, it does not accurately factor in the time costs. For example, for the webinars the time needed for coordinating presenters and reviewing materials; for the Peer-exchange visits to staff time for the visitors and hosts.



Peer exchange visits

- **Nine partners sent staff (predominantly their Focal Point for PEOPLE) on one of five international peer exchange visits, and eight partners were involved in hosting a visit.** The visits were organised based on the learning priorities of each organisation, allowing each partner to visit another who had experience and strengths in their area of interest.
- **Overall there was very positive feedback from the country peer-exchange visits from across partners.** These were felt to be a powerful experience. **Key to this was the fact the peer exchange visits followed the TOT workshops (and most of the webinars),** so allowed the theoretical knowledge gained through these to be

understood in context. Of the staff who went on exchange visits seven out of the nine had attended at least one ToT and all had participated in webinars (on average 6 each).

- **Partners reported numerous benefits of the peer-exchange visits, linked both to the process and immediate outcomes they gained from the experience of the visits. At process level these benefits included:**
 - Meeting different stakeholders at different levels including beneficiaries, volunteers and staff. Being able to ask questions directly to ‘the person on the ground’, and people who would not normally participate in webinars or international workshops, enabled visitors to hear different perspectives and made the learning more believable. “[Through the peer-to-peer visit I] was able to get to the foot soldier level rather than just reading, so I could really see activities and really get information [about them].” - Focal point; “I spoke to a volunteer working in a refugee camp to hear about challenges faced – learning from this [on the issues with soap distribution] was really important.” Focal point; “[The visit] was soooo so interesting. It gave us an avenue to interact with other persons working at Diocese level, and I could observe practice that can be picked and implemented here..... I must say it was an eye opener.” Focal Point; “Hearing the different points of view between the different intervenors was very interesting and leads to the necessity of putting [oneself] into one another shoes to better understand how to proceed”⁷
 - The exchange visits provided practical insights into how trainings could be applied, and an opportunity to learn from others who had more experience on a topic. In particular, seeing things first-hand, including additional aspects that cannot be written down or conveyed during a training, was seen as valuable. This allowed visitors to think through details they had not considered before and gave more time to reflect on and discuss issues with others. “Through seeing the practical aspect linked to the training we gained confidence that the theory can be applied with community volunteers” - Focal point; “The peer exchange was the most impactful as this was practical and the webinars were theoretic. During the peer exchange I saw on the ground what I had learnt on the webinars – I talked with volunteers and I saw.” - Focal Point; “The practical demonstrations by the community volunteers and Caritas Staff, made it easier to understand the concept of Volunteer Management under the PEOPLE project”⁸
 - Actively reflecting on what could be applied to their own organisation, through the facilitated debriefing sessions at the end of each trip and writing of the peer exchange visit reports.

At immediate-outcome level benefits included:

- Gaining new ideas, knowledge, learning from each other’s experience, and exposure to different types and scales of emergencies. This learning included shifts in perceptions of what is possible, plus seeing how other partners had implemented the PEOPLE project. For example, visitors from Caritas Gokwe and Harare commented on the value of being exposed to larger-scale emergencies during visits to Nigeria and Sierra Leone, which put their emergencies into perspective. For example, visitors to Zimbabwe took away the idea of supporting volunteers after the emergency through livelihood support, and also learnt that local community members irrespective of their religion are willing to contribute to Lenten collections for a humanitarian response. Those to Nigeria took away the idea that motivating volunteers could go beyond the volunteers themselves but also take into consideration the families from where they come, plus how CCFN Nigeria and JDPC Yola had implemented PEOPLE and the impact it has had on the organization as well as staff and volunteers.
- **There are a number of value-added benefits to the international nature of the peer-exchange visits that partners felt would not be seen from exchange visits within countries. Even given the extra cost (both in time**

⁷ Peer exchange report.

⁸ Peer exchange report

and money), all partners felt the international element added greatly to the value of the exchanges.

Specifically the international aspect:

- Allowed exposure to different contexts and potential to import best practice and new ideas from different places. The combination of visiting other partners that were members of the Caritas Family (and so face similar issues such as level of resourcing) and visiting partners who do not face the same constraints as those within the same country was seen to be valuable. For example, seeing how other national offices function and work with Dioceses.
- Gave confidence that the theory is possible and also allowed the of use practical examples from the visit to convince others within their organisation and as part of the step-down training.
- Was motivating for both visitors and hosts. The post-visit reports are full of ideas and actions visitors hope to take forward following the visit. For the hosts it was useful to hear feedback about things they had not previously recognised as a strength. Identifying where other partners faced similar challenges, and where their own organisation was doing well compared to others was seen as motivating. *“Before we didn’t even know what they were doing and if we were doing the right things. Getting to learn from them and improve our systems was a big thing. I felt inspired when I could relate our own challenges to their challenges” - Focal point*
- Provided an opportunity to strengthen connections built during PEOPLE beyond their own national office and built greater awareness of the wider Caritas Network in Africa. *“Now know people in Nigeria and Togo – I feel quite networked” - Focal Point*
- Going to different countries seems to have allowed people to be more open to absorbing and reflecting on practice and seems to have enhanced the normal benefits of peer exchange because of international element.
- **There were benefits for both the visitors and hosts of a visit.**
- **There are examples of people taking immediate action following the visits, but generally application of learning was seen by partners as linked to rolling out of activities in their capacity strengthening plan. As such the experience is feeding into the existing organisational change process rather than resulting in standalone actions.** For example, the Caritas Gokwe focal point was able to lead on a meeting concerned with re-looking at the structure of the commissions in Zimbabwe, based on learning on how commissions are structured in other countries gained from the exchange visit. The NCJPC Focal Point has already discussed with the bishops how learning on local-level resource mobilisation could be applied in the Liberian context. The Harare Focal point found it easier after the visit to start the volunteer management training and registration of volunteers, based on the learning acquired.
- **The cost of the international peer-exchanges is low relative to the overall project budget.** Given the energy these have generated and role they seem to have played in cementing learning and connections, these seem worth the cost.

Trainer of Trainers (TOTs) and Webinars

- **Formal trainings were delivered through three Trainer of Trainers (ToTs) (that brought staff together in Nairobi, Abuja and Lomé) and a series of 14 webinars.**⁹ In addition to bringing in external resources to support volunteer management and CHS, CAFOD was also able to capitalise on internal in-house capacity, for example by bringing in their Security Adviser to run a webinar on Security Management.

⁹ Originally PEOPLE planned for ten webinars, but as these were appreciated by partners following the MTR, more were planned covered additional topics.

- On average 26 participants attended each ToT, including an average of 16 from 10 PEOPLE partner organisations. Live webinar attendance was lower, with an average of 15 participants per webinar, including an average of 9 staff or volunteers from six PEOPLE partner organisations (it is not known how many people access the webinar recordings).

Participant levels (see table below) over the course of the project show that interest in the webinars persisted until the end of the project. Sessions on CHS, volunteer management and safeguarding appear more popular, compared to those on localisation, emergency simulations and mentoring skills and tools, which appear to be less popular topics.

Trainer of Trainer (TOT) Workshop and Webinar topics with participants numbers

| | Total no. of participants | No. of participants from PEOPLE partner organisations | No. of PEOPLE partner organisations represented |
|--|---------------------------|---|---|
| Trainer of trainers | | | |
| 1. An introduction to Humanitarian Capacity Strengthening and Volunteer Management | 32 | 20 | 9 |
| 2. Emergency Preparedness and Volunteer Management | 17 | 12 | 10 |
| 3. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and Complaints Handling | 30 | 17 | 10 |
| Webinars | | | |
| 1. Introduction to Volunteer Management | 14 | 9 | 6 |
| 2. Humanitarian Capacity Strengthening Planning and Methods | 15 | 7 | 5 |
| 3. Training and Facilitation Skills | 13 | 6 | 6 |
| 4. Localisation of humanitarian response | 17 | 5 | 5 |
| 5. Introduction to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) | 15 | 8 | 7 |
| 6. Training on the CHS | 10 | 7 | 6 |
| 7. Emergency Simulations | 11 | 4 | 4 |
| 8. Mentoring skills and tools | 12 | 7 | 3 |
| 9. Security Management | 16 | 10 | 6 |
| 10. Volunteer Management in Practice | 20 | 13 | 10 |
| 11. Safeguarding | 21 | 14 | 6 |
| 12. Complaints Handling | 12 | 9 | 6 |
| 13. Volunteer Management in emergencies | 14 | 9 | 7 |
| 14. EUAV certification for hosting organisations | 21 | 12 | 7 |

- In total, 51 different individuals (staff or volunteers) from PEOPLE partners participated in the ToTs and Webinars. Of these 25 were 'single attenders' who attended one ToT or Webinar, and 12 were 'higher attenders' participating in 6 or more. Unsurprisingly, the 'higher attenders' tend to be the Focal Points. For eight of the partners the Coordinator or Director participated in at least one ToT or webinar (generally the initial Inception workshop in Nairobi). Of these, five participated more than once, showing a level of on-going engagement in the project.
- For almost all partners (nine) staff members beyond the Focal Point and Coordinator/Director participated in at least one of the live webinars or ToTs, however the numbers of other staff participating are relatively low. In addition, with the exception of KMSS in Myanmar¹⁰ participants beyond the ten targeted partners came from 'northern' Caritas partners¹¹, rather than from other Dioceses within target countries. This feels like a missed opportunity to use the live webinars to engage staff from other Dioceses.

¹⁰ Where a similar capacity strengthening project is being implemented.

¹¹ Including staff from implementing partners (CAFOD, SCCF CRS, CHS,) as well as other European Caritas (Caritas Austria, Caritas Belgium, Caritas Europa, Caritas Czech Republic, and Trocaire).

Number of staff / volunteers from each PEOPLE partner participating in the TOTs/webinars, and number of TOTs webinar staff members attended.

Key: Pink = number includes Coordinator / Director Green = number includes Focal Point

| | Number of staff / volunteers directly involved | Number of TOTs and/or Webinars attended by individual staff/volunteers | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
| Caritas Africa | 11 | 6 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | | | |
| NCJPC Liberia | 3 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| Caritas Cape Palmas | 4 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Caritas Sierra Leone | 6 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Caritas Zimbabwe | 6 | 4 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Caritas Gokwe | 4 | 3 | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Caritas Harare | 2 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| CCF Nigeria | 4 | 2 | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | |
| JDPC Yola | 5 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | |
| JDPC Maiduguri | 5 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| TOTAL | 51 | 25 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |

- **These trainings also equipped the focal points to be able to train other staff and lead the process of change in their organisations. The people trained via ToTs at both National and Diocese levels are now a resource that can be used by Caritas across the country,** so even after the end of the project there is capacity to replicate training with other staff. For countries such as Sierra Leone, however, where only the national office participated, less of an on-going resource has been built compared to countries such as Zimbabwe and Nigeria where three offices participated.
- **Webinars were very commonly referred to as a good approach potentially with high impact, although with some limitations.** Specifically, people found these to be: An effective training medium, providing an opportunity to learn content within a short period of time. Time effective allowing participants to engage with other people and learn about a topic from their own desk. Accessible via recordings if connection or travel meant it was not possible to participate live. Records also allow people to re-visit topics as needed and used in future application as part of roll-out.
- **Challenges with internet connections (and the cost of data for downloading recordings) affect partners differently. For a small number of partners webinars did not work.** Generally, these are more of a barrier for Diocese offices, and for staff who spend the majority of their time further out in the field.

Role of the HCSO in accompanying partners

“‘Accompaniment’ means working alongside partners throughout – including the hard times and the good times”
HCSO

- **The HCSO accompanied partners throughout the project, providing a range of support that pushed forward project delivery and provided technical input to activities.** Partners identified a number of key roles played by the HCSO throughout the project:
 - Project management: Providing guidance on what needs to be delivered as part of the project, following up on timelines for delivering activities and reporting, reviewing budgets and monitoring progress. For some partners this included helping with continuity on the project during times of HR turnover and change.
 - Guiding each partner through the self-assessment process, and development of their own capacity strengthening plan.

- Support with step-down trainings either as co- or lead facilitator, helping to contextualise and review the training content.
 - Facilitating access to materials and resources from other partners, CAFOD, beyond. This includes example policy documents and experts who can support on an issue.
 - Advising on how to make change happen, for example how to engage parish priests and leadership. The HCSOs were described as mentors, who were easily accessible due to their physical proximity to partners. [“The mentoring from the HCSO was one of the most effective ways of capacity strengthening – this includes having the space to practice.” Focal Point](#)
 - Reviewing and improving quality of reports, training content, drafted policies. HCSOs were seen as bringing in experience and knowledge on topics covered by PEOPLE.
 - Providing encouragement to the Focal Points.
 - Coordinating with other international partners in country.
- **The exact nature of ‘accompaniment’ varied by partner – for some, HCSOs were required to ‘do’ more rather than accompany**, for example through leading on step-down training rather than co-facilitating with the Focal Point.
 - **HCSOs played a key role in supporting partners to realise their capacity strengthening plans and bringing about change. While progress may still be made without a HCSO, partners recognised that this would be at a much slower pace.** As an example, the absence of a HCSO for Caritas Africa is seen as one of the reasons that less progress has been made against their plan.

The distance of some partners from the capital (and base of the HCSOs) prohibited regular visiting. For example, travel by road to Caritas Cape Palmas takes a day, with flights heavily booked well in advance. Similarly, travel to JDPC Yola and JDPC Maiduguri takes a day, so a three-day support visit from the HCSO involves two days on the road with only one in the office with partner staff. Recognising the value of face-to-face HCSO support in situ, these partners recommended more resources be allocated in the future to allow for longer and more frequent HCSO visits.

- **The extent to which HCSOs were able to support partners with ‘learning by doing’ varied between countries.** The multiple humanitarian crises in Zimbabwe in recent years provided an opportunity for ‘live’ support from the HCSO to the National office (as well as Caritas Harare and Gokwe). This included two joint monitoring to project areas with the Focal Point from the National Office, support on coordinating activities, and reviewing the previous Cyclone appeal proposal and expected milestones. In addition, the HCSO and CAFOD’s Finance Officer supported the national office to develop the new Drought (launched January 2020). [“Because of their assistance we are developing appeals in different ways” Focal Point](#)

In Nigeria, the HCSO supported JDPC Maiduguri in developing two proposals for external donors, and although these were unsuccessful, knowledge on how to write a proposal was increased.

The only examples of an HCSO visiting activities on the ground (outside of the peer-exchange visits) were from Zimbabwe. **‘Donor lines’ were seen as barriers to accompanying Focal Points to review practical application of learning down to the field in projects not funded by CAFOD**, as one HCSO said: [“Where CAFOD is not funding a project there is minimal HCSOs can do - the partners have the standards so they can go through these themselves to make sure other projects are in-line with these.”](#)

- **HCSOs face a tension between facilitating and accompanying only vs driving forward the project in line with agreed deliverables and budgets.** [“We want ownership to be with the partner so can’t push them too fast” If \[the project\] had full control it could achieve more, but we are moving at the pace of the partner as we want sustainability beyond \[the project\]” - HCSO](#) As one HCSO commented, if there are delays in partner progress this may reflect badly on the HCSO. In most countries partners felt that despite this tension the decision making for the project remained with the partner. In a couple of instances partners felt decisions on the use of their

capacity strengthening grant and associated activities remained more with CAFOD rather than with the partner.

Grants and salary support for partner staff

- **Grants, including stipends for up to three volunteers, were given to all partners.** Diocese partners were allocated a grant of £12,200, National and Regional Partners at grant of £18,600. In addition to the grants, PEOPLE covered 30% of the Focal Point's salary for up to 18 months. *"The capacity strengthening grant is a major feature of this project, and just for our utilisation"* - Focal Point
- **Grants facilitated partners' ability to lead activities and bring in skills as needed,** and also to undertake capacity strengthening activities to address gaps specific to them. The grants were used by all partners to step-down trainings to staff and volunteers. This included allowing National Offices to roll out some trainings to Diocese offices beyond those directly targeted by PEOPLE, and National offices to bring representatives from all Diocese together to develop policies. Some partners also used the grant to hire consultants to draft certain policies; print materials, such as the vision and mission for all offices; pay stipends for office volunteers; and in one case purchase equipment for electronic data collection.

Example of how the grant supported Caritas Gokwe to develop a Whistleblowing policy - The impetus to strengthen Whistleblowing came from another donor funded project, but at the time the organisation lacked the resources to make this happen. The PEOPLE project grant allowed Caritas Gokwe to 'create space' in normal work, bringing staff together in an external venue to brainstorm the content for the policy. The grant also enabled the management board to be engaged in the process (ensuring their buy-in) and covered the costs of an external person to draft the policy document. The Whistleblowing Policy was approved towards the end of 2019.

- **Broadly, and given the experience of implementing the project, partners found the grant to be sufficient for implementing activities needed, such as rolling out trainings.** Spend against budget up to the end of quarter seven (December 2019), shows on average partners have spent just under half (48%) of their grants, also confirming that these grants were sufficient given the planned activities.

"A first when we saw the grant amount we thought: what is this really going to address? But we have actually done so much without really using the grant up" - Focal Point; *"Yes [the grant was sufficient]– very surprised to see that it was even difficult to absorb the money!"* – Focal Point

- **One challenge raised by a few partners was that Focal Points spent more than 30% of their time on the project, and with their normal tasks this added to the stress and hecticness of their roles.** To overcome this, some recommended in future more partner staff should be engaged to spread the load, others that the project should hire a dedicated Focal Point within each partner. There are potential risks for achieving progress and sustaining change with both of these recommendations. The seniority of the Focal Point in almost all partners coupled with a good understanding of their organisations (including leadership structures) have been important for realising progress. However, this challenge is likely to be raised in future projects and so worth discussing from the outset.

In addition, a couple of partners recommended that the project should contribute something (even if small) towards their finance staff who prepared the PEOPLE financial reports for CAFOD. This was seen as important for positively motivating these staff, by knowing the project was contributing something towards their salaries.

Self-assessment process

- The Capacity Self-Assessment Tool was adapted under the PEOPLE project to include relevant indicators from the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CIMS), as well as those linked to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and EUAV requirements. It has 33 capacity indicators across 12 domains: Vision and Strategy; Management and Governance; Preparedness; Assessment and Design; MEAL; Coordination and Collaboration;

Communications and Advocacy; Fundraising; Human Resources; Finance; Security; and Logistics. All 10 partners completed their Capacity Self-Assessments between August 2018 and January 2019.

- **There was flexibility in how the self-assessment was done based on what partners had done before.** The standard approach used by most partners involved a 2-3 day workshop involving a cross section of staff that included a review of existing policies, procedures and practices. Variations on this approach were taken by CCFN, who had recently done a CIMS assessment and so focused on reviewing and updating relevant parts of this assessment. Partners in Zimbabwe had also previously done a self-assessment under CAFOD's HCD project, and so a peer review process was used that brought together partners to review each other.
- **Partners recognised the value in assessing their own capacity, with the support of an external facilitator or peer who could challenge them on assigned scores, explain the specific indicators and ask probing questions.** The self-assessment process built ownership of the findings, and was seen in contrast to donor audits they had experienced that focused on compliance to assess eligibility for funding. "Looking at gaps and developing own plans gave us ownership of our own organisational development a drive to make sure things are in place." - Focal Point. It involved staff from across the organisation, for example JDPC_Maiduguri's self-assessment involved 15-20 staff (including the coordinator, PM, and heads of different units such as finance, logistics, field teams). On average 13 staff participated in each capacity self-assessment process.¹² The tool itself pushed thinking and understanding. "It created an opportunity to sit down and assess ourselves against the criteria. The questions linked to each criteria helped us to check our actual score." - Focal Point. The External facilitation and people to play 'critical friend' as part of the self-assessment (whether from the HCSO or peers as in Zimbabwe) added value, and prevented the process becoming a tick-box exercise. "Through the self-assessment and the peer review process there were other people looking at our organisation and helping us reflect on the processes and procedures we had in place. Having peers assist us look in depth and see our gaps helped us reflect on the organisation as a whole" - Focal Point. Finally, an unexpected outcome from the project seen in Zimbabwe was that team building was fostered during the policy review process.
- **Have partners shared or used capacity strengthening plans beyond PEOPLE?** The evaluation identified two nice examples of this happening. First, through the self-assessment process JDPC Yola identified the need for a strategic plan and were able to successfully approach CRS with their capacity strengthening for support with this. Secondly, CCFN wanted to shift from paper-based data collection to electronic data collection. They approached CRS with their capacity strengthening plan, and CRS was able to support with training while the PEOPLE project grant allowed them to buy phones for data collection.

Formal mentoring

- The PEOPLE project looked to pilot formal mentoring with the aim to establish and coordinate a network of mentoring relationships between the 10 partner Caritas organisations involved in the PEOPLE project. A key feature of this formal mentoring was that it involved matches between mentors and mentees based in different countries. The intention was that this initiative would continue after the end of the PEOPLE project managed by CAFOD or Caritas Africa. An external consultant was brought in to set up the mentoring relationship and provide support to mentors and mentees in the form of written guidelines, two webinars, and on-going support, and Q&As.
- **The level of uptake and mentoring relationships established was low, given the number of partners involved in the project and resources (and effort) put into setting up the pilot.** There were 22 applications for either mentor or mentee received from all but one partner office, including from 5 Directors. This resulted in six mentoring matches, including one peer mentoring match. The level of participation for the two webinars on

¹² Source: PEOPLE Partner activity lists. 13 is the average per self-assessment, which includes separate workshops for CCFN, JDPC Maiduguri, JDPC Yola, NCJPC Liberia, Caritas Cape Palmas, and Caritas Sierra Leone, plus one joint peer self-assessment review for partners from Zimbabwe.

mentoring was relatively low and the uptake for the ‘support surgeries’ and one-to-one support was limited.¹³

Those matched faced challenges with speaking, both finding the time around busy schedules and network challenges especially when in the field. A couple of staff mentioned that they had reached out to their mentor but not had a response. Of the six matches made between July and October 2019, only four were still active by December 2019, with two relationships ceasing before they had started due to communication issues.¹⁴

- **Reports from the mentor-mentees who did successfully meet highlighted positive benefits**, particularly around support with the application of learning and a boost in confidence. *“Mentoring has helped me feel more confident about managing an organisation that is growing rapidly, and understand some of the areas that need tackling that I didn’t fully feel confident with before” - Mentee¹⁵*
- **Partners attributed the low uptake for the mentoring scheme to a number of factors, in particular that the project had already opened other avenues for support.** The PEOPLE project had already expanded the number of people Focal Points could turn to, from the HCSOs, to Focal Points in other partners, to the volunteer based in Caritas Africa. As such, for them, there was less need for an international mentor. The HCSOs provided on-going mentoring and also had the added benefit of understanding the local and organisational context, being based close by, and being generally available to them (rather than needing to timetable a meeting far in advance). A number of partners stressed the importance of close proximity in mentoring relationships, to allow for physical meetings and a more personal relationship to develop.

Time constraints were also seen as a reason for low uptake. Finally, the practice of formal mentoring and coaching is not common in the workplace in partner countries. For example, in Zimbabwe this type of relationship would be found but only between a student and assigned supervisor.

- **However, the pilot did produce some useful learning and recommendations that could be factored into future models** (also the well-received written guidelines could be used in future mentoring initiatives). In terms of managing the process the pilot has highlighted a need to:¹⁶
 - Understand the roles and hierarchy within each organisation in order to match mentors and mentees.
 - Review the level of skills and experience of the mentors to ensure the quality of information imparted to mentees. Self-declared areas of mentoring expertise / proficiency could be potentially overestimated by mentors.
 - Find mentors with local and institutional fundraising experience (a popular topic for support), and mentors who speak French (or the language of target mentees).
 - Identify who can oversee the process internally, including managing the mentoring registers and provide on-going support to the mentors, to provide a chance to check in with someone, express concerns, find solutions and be reassured as the process continues.

Community of Practice (COP)

- A Community of Practice (COP) hosted on the A2P DIRO website¹⁷ and supported by Secours Catholique Caritas France (SCCF) was established with the “aim of helping members gather and share documentation on the topics concerning their own organisation in order to understand better the mechanisms that are at the core of humanitarian emergencies preparedness and response”. Specific themes selected for the COP were: Emergency Preparedness and Response, Complaints handling mechanisms, and Local resource mobilization. A COP charter (outlining the principles and ground rules for the COP) was developed in May 2019, and the COP was launched

¹³ Source: December 2019: “PEOPLE Project Mentoring Consultancy – Final Report of Consultancy”, Tess Williams

¹⁴ Source: December 2019: “PEOPLE Project Mentoring Consultancy – Final Report of Consultancy”, Tess Williams

¹⁵ Source: December 2019: “PEOPLE Project Mentoring Consultancy – Final Report of Consultancy”, Tess Williams

¹⁶ Source: December 2019: “PEOPLE Project Mentoring Consultancy – Final Report of Consultancy”, Tess Williams

¹⁷ A2P DIRO is the name of a programme run by SCCF. The site was originally in French and translated into English as part of PEOPLE (the English link broken at time of evaluation).

during a webinar in August 2019. Members of the community included PEOPLE partners as well as Caritas in Myanmar, allowing for further exchange beyond PEOPLE.

- **While the potential value of an on-line COP is recognised** (as mentioned by one Focal Point “[The whole world gets opened to you from your small office to what others are doing. It’s a screen that allows you to see where you are and allows you to increase your knowledge base](#)”), **it is broadly acknowledged that the COP has not worked**. As found in the MTR, the configuration of the site and its translation have caused some technical problems¹⁸, and partners confirmed that access issues, connection challenges, and the need to log-on to an external site were barriers to use. The COP was not seen as a priority for staff with busy schedules and limited time in the office. In addition, media such as WhatsApp allow for instant exchange between partners which, although may not allow for the same level of exchange as envisaged via the COP, do allow for exchange ‘on the go’.

The COP was considered as part of a similar project that started after PEOPLE to be implemented in Francophone countries in Africa and was rejected as an idea by partners. This highlights the importance of reviewing with participating partners which capacity strengthening approaches should be used as part of a project.

Simulations

- Multi-day simulations were held at the end of PEOPLE just before the re-assessment process with partners. The sequencing of simulations before the re-assessment was beneficial. It provided useful practical examples for staff to reflect on when discussing scores against the indicators in the assessment framework. Those involved in facilitating the simulations sessions (predominantly the HCSOs) highlighted the following benefits:
 - Simulations provided an opportunity to test knowledge, skills, and capacities, including those developed during PEOPLE. It provided a means to test out an emergency scenario in a controlled environment. The use of real-life scenarios added to the learning. They also provided an opportunity to test out newly developed policies and reflect on the practicalities of realising these.

“For some partners, it was their first experience of a simulation. It provided partners the opportunity to test out their EPPs and helped individuals to recognise the critical role they need to play in emergency situations. It also highlighted the need for clear procedures for Emergency Response, for example if the Bishop/director is unavailable what decisions can be taken and by whom?”

Through the simulation there was a realisation that policies may exist, but staff need to be familiar with them in advance of an emergency, as during there might be limited time to search through policies. It also showed the need for simplified ready to use documents such as volunteer agreements, having a volunteer database for quick access to volunteers, the need for training/supervision of volunteers no matter the emergency and clearly defined communication procedures between National and diocesan Caritas.” - HCSO

- Simulations provided an opportunity to raise awareness around the importance of key issues (e.g. safeguarding) and unpick challenges. The practical nature of the simulation helped staff more fully understand some of the challenges, for example around coordination and communication. It was useful for staff to identify themselves gaps between theory and practice that could then be fed into the re-assessment process. The nature of the simulation also helped staff identify practical solutions that could be used to address gaps.

¹⁸ Mid-term report and action plan Community of Practice PEOPLE Project.

- Through involving National and Diocese partners together in the same simulation, staff could explore how the different members of the Caritas Family might work together and see the benefits of coordination. In some cases, it was the first time all partners had participated together in a simulation.
- Simulations are time consuming to organise and can be daunting to run for staff who have never participated in one. There is a need to build HCSO and partner skills in how to organise simulations. There is need to promote simulations as a process such that people/organisations believe in them and are willing to engage in a way that sees the maximum benefit. It can also be a challenge for partner staff to commit the time needed to participate in a simulation, although experience has shown off-site venues can help, and that after the simulation staff themselves recognise the value of dedicating time to this.

How did the project ensure management buy-in?

- **Coordinators and directors were engaged from the beginning of PEOPLE** through the inception workshop. They were part of organisational self-assessment along with other staff, and invited to (and some participated in) on-going trainings and webinars. This was seen as key by themselves, and by other staff as important for building their understanding and buy-in. *“What was the catalysts for change? The PEOPLE project and the fact it was able to get the highest leadership involved. By ensuring the CEO was carried along (and explained the benefits and challenges) this really brought about the change.” - Focal Point*
- **Regular country-level steering committee meetings were envisaged but did not happen.** These were planned to be quarterly meetings involving the partner Coordinator/director, HCSO and CAFOD Country Representative to review progress at partner-level, and as a mechanism to feed into London-level project decision making.

At the beginning of the project there was no strong desire for these committees from partners, finding time was a key challenge to making these happen, and there was no clear need for these as a mechanism to feed into overarching project decision making. During PEOPLE, as a result of feedback collected during the Mid-Term Review, the MTR workshop included a specific session with the senior leadership participants about organisational change and emphasising their role. However, in at least 3 countries it was felt that having periodic country steering committee meetings would have been beneficial for ensuring on-going active engagement from top management.¹⁹

- **The Bishops’ buy-in is key for institutionalising and rolling out changes at National and Diocese level**, and the Conference of Bishops in each country needs to approve all new policies. For example, the progress made by NCJPC Liberia, including the finalisation and approval of a new Complaints Handling Policy, was linked to the buy-in of the Bishops (who actively asked for updates). *“The bishop has been very essential in his involvement – if the programme passes through the bishop it gets more attention and motivates people to take part in training.”* As commented by a Focal Point from a different country: *“In some projects, if you cannot get the bishops of the Diocese to commit then nothing happens”*.

The lack of involvement of other church arms (such as JPC and Education) was also seen by Liberian partners as a risk to sustaining changes achieved under PEOPLE. Caritas Gokwe had meetings with key church stakeholders after the Inception workshop. The evaluator was not able to explore this issue in depth, but it is noted here for future consideration.

- The importance of engaging the Bishops was recognised from the beginning of PEOPLE, with the inception workshop emphasising the importance of involving Bishops. However, **engagement of the bishops was left to the partner Coordinators, rather than having specific activities that engaged bishops**. It was recognised that it would have been beneficial to have an activity with the Bishops to bring them onboard with the project, plus to

¹⁹ In addition, the recommendation to have annual meetings with leaders was voted as the second most important in the final workshop (see recommendations) suggesting in hindsight this would have been beneficial.

support them to understand better their role in emergency preparedness and response, and also their role linked to the policies that are being developed. For example, through a greater understanding of what effective Emergency Preparedness and Response looks like in practice, it was felt the bishops would be more inclined to allocate resources needed for this, as well as understand the decisions they need to make to achieve this. Linked to complaints handling was a question as to whether the bishops understand their role in complaints handling (for example if there are complaints raised about a member of their clergy).

Where there was a pre-existing relationship/closeness between CAFOD and the Bishops, or where the Bishops were already engaged in the Caritas, it was easier to engage them. However, it was noted that building relationships is more challenging where the Bishops' role is more distanced from Caritas.

Concluding comments: How effective and efficient were the different PEOPLE approaches?

PEOPLE used a variety of approaches which complemented each other. These approaches combined exposing partners to new knowledge (via trainer of trainers and webinars), with 'seeing in practice' (via the peer-exchange visits), supported by having resources available as needed (including grants, 'mentoring' by the HCSO, and example materials such as policies and guidelines). Certain approaches targeted the organisation as a whole (e.g. the self-assessment process), whereas others targeted individuals who could then step-down to others (e.g. TOTs and webinars). It is important to stress that the results seen through this project cannot be linked to any one approach but to the combination, which built on each other.

As would be expected, different people preferred different approaches, and the variety of approaches allowed for different learning styles. For example, trainings provided more structured learning environments preferred by some, whereas the peer exchange visits allowed for 'informal' learning preferred by others.

Peer-exchange visits were most commonly cited as having the most impact, but this was partly because these followed the TOT workshops and so allowed theory to be seen and explored in practice. The support provided by the HCSOs was critical for a range of reasons (including supporting partners to push forward with project activities) and responded to the needs and priorities of partners. Webinars allowed learning from the office, and, where connection allowed, were seen as time effective providing short sharp knowledge inputs and exchange. At the same time, the Capacity Strengthening grants allowed partners the space and flexibility to cover costs for rolling out learning and taking forward other priority activities. These approaches all contributed to the progress seen. In comparison, the Community of Practice (COP) and the formal mentoring relationships were not effective capacity strengthening approaches as used in PEOPLE, in part because the project offered alternative approaches that met partners' needs.

FINDINGS: MANAGEMENT

Evaluation question: How effective and efficient were the project management processes, and what lessons can be learnt for similar joint Caritas projects in future?

PEOPLE as a joint Caritas project

PEOPLE brought together four different Caritas agencies to collectively manage and realise the project: CAFOD, Caritas Africa, and SCCF, with technical support from CRS. Representatives from these organisations formed the PEOPLE Steering Committee, which met roughly every quarter to look at progress and budget issues.

Beyond participating in this Steering Committee, the contribution of each agency to the project was mixed.

- CAFOD was the main presence in realising the project, led by a project manager based in London and with the support of three CAFOD HCSOs based at country-level. They managed project activities, provided support to partners, and sourced additional expertise as needed.
- SCCF were originally leading on knowledge management and identified a volunteer to lead on the Community of Practice (COP) work based within Caritas Africa's Lomé office. While the COP as an approach was not successful, the volunteer also supported during the peer-exchange visits (although it was not possible to evaluate the added value of having an external person participate in each visit). The Volunteer also supported Caritas Africa with their organisational capacity strengthening in the absence of a HCSO.
- Caritas Africa, the regional Caritas office, was part of the project both as a target partner and to co-manage specific activities of PEOPLE's implementation. Caritas Africa supported the project start-up and capacity self-assessment in Liberia prior to the appointment of the Sierra Leone and Liberia HCSO. Caritas Africa hosted the ToT in Lome and supported the organisation of the Kenya workshops. The project budget included an additional Capacity Strengthening position based in Caritas Africa, to fulfil both these aspects. This was filled short-term though a staff member who had already been seconded to Caritas Africa from CRS. This affected both the progress made against their capacity strengthening plan and the role they were able to play in project management.

Caritas Africa as a huge remit given a limited number of staff. As a regional-level partner it has quite different CS support needs, and priorities, compared to country-level partners. Given C Africa's role as a coordinating office and scope or role, CS needs to be carefully focused on what PEOPLE could feasibly support C Africa with give available resources, both to see results and also to look at how C Africa could reinforce the progress made with partners under the PEOPLE project. Questions for reflection in determining direction of support include: What role might Caritas Africa play in following up after PEOPLE? How might Caritas Africa support other Caritas offices in Africa on topics covered by PEOPLE? How could certain topics (e.g. CHS) be integrated into work that is done with other offices?

- CRS provided Monitoring and Evaluation technical support. This included training on MEAL in the inception workshop, developing the MEAL plan, leading the Mid-Term Review process and final monitoring. All of which was seen as beneficial and built on their expertise.

None of the nine other target partners knew about the role of SCCF or Caritas Africa in realising PEOPLE, at country level CAFOD was the main organisation responsible for implementing PEOPLE (with regular contact with both the HCSOs and the Project Manager in London). The relationship and support received from CAFOD throughout was seen very positively by partners.

While PEOPLE was a joint Caritas project on paper, the level of contribution by the other partners was minimal. CAFOD played the lead role in realising the project, and their approach was well received by partners.

Management

In-country HCSOs reported directly to the PEOPLE Programme Manager based in London, with a dotted line to a manager in-country. It was recognised that there were pros and cons to this matrix management set-up, but given PEOPLE was a multi-partner, multi-country programme this was seen as the right set-up.

The central management allowed the project to be kept on track, and for support and exchange between the HCSOs. For countries with a heavy work load it also lightened the pressure for country representatives.

There is a risk with central management that it takes away from country-level ownership, making it less likely for synergies with other projects to be identified and for the Country Representative to follow-up with partner coordinators as needed. The reporting to London also risks that the project is not on the radars of other staff in country. While these risks were reported to varying degrees by the CAFOD Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Sierra Leone/Liberia offices, the involvement of the country representatives in designing the project meant they had a good understanding and interest which served to mitigate against the risks. For the smaller offices (Nigeria and Sierra Leone/Liberia) these risks were less of an issue, as the smaller teams meant easier sharing between team members. For Zimbabwe, which is both a larger office and has faced successive emergencies these risks were more pronounced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

| THEME | Recommendation |
|---|--|
| <p>Moving from policy to practice and testing skills.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In future projects, developing a menu of activities could help partners with the implementation of new and existing policies. Depending on partner interest and support needs this could include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. HCSOs to accompany partners down to field level to review how existing policies are implemented in practice (using CAFOD or other donor funded projects as test cases). b. Partners to document and share how policies have been applied with CAFOD for advice. c. Use other projects to test policies, followed by reflection sessions to look at the extent to which certain policies have been applied. d. Funding to test in practice and then reflect. e. Annual reflection events to reflect on how organisational policies have been applied and revisions needed. f. Capacity strengthening for partners on how application of policies can be monitored, changes in decision-making needed to implement. g. Plan for more time and step-down trainings from the National Office to Dioceses Offices in order to roll out policies developed during the project. h. Using more simulation during the project. 2. In future projects, <u>identify opportunities for HCSOs to accompany Focal Points in reviewing the practical application of learning</u> from policy to community level, which may include visits to projects not funded by CAFOD. 3. Plan for <u>more simulations during the project to test out new organisational capacities</u> so these can be adjusted before there is a disaster.²⁰ This would include testing the application of new policies, staff skills from trainings, newly developed EPPs, and more. During the final workshop it was recommended that there should be at least 2 before the end of the project. 4. In future projects, <u>design carry-on support from the outset so the timeframe for realising changes is longer but with intensive support for the first two years</u> (in this case), followed by a lighter level of support beyond this. <i>As commented by partners in Zimbabwe “It is a process not an event”. (NB this recommendation is adapted from partners’ feedback that given the changes hoped for the project should be longer than 2 years. It looks to recognise that external donor funding is normally fixed term).</i> |
| <p>Ensuring on-going leadership buy-in to push forward changes and keeping project momentum.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. In future projects, <u>conduct annual partner review meetings with partner leadership to review partner-level progress to date.</u>²¹ Consider involving all country-level partners together in the annual review meetings plus involve the Conference of Bishops to gain greater buy-in. These meetings will build understanding around the changes each partner is working towards and to encourage transparency and accountability. It is recommended that these are face-to-face meetings. 6. In future projects, continue with partners to <u>identify the most appropriate means for engaging the bishops for buy-in and to support roll-out of changes.</u>²² Engagement should be proportional – recognising competing priorities for time. <p>During the final workshop it was suggested that:</p> |

²⁰ During the final workshop this recommendation was voted as the joint second most important by partners (receiving votes from 3 out of the 10 partners). This was seen as important by partners in coordinating roles.

²¹ During the final workshop this recommendation was voted as the joint second most important by partners (receiving votes from 3 out of the 10 partners). It was seen as important by National Office partners.

²² During the final workshop this recommendation was voted as the most important by partners (receiving votes from 7 out of the 10 partners)

| THEME | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishops should be engaged in their respective locations, in particular the Bishop President (who is the head of Caritas), to present the project and focus of work so that when the Bishops convene they have a level of understanding to allow for discussion and points to be agreed on. In addition, prior reading (project summaries and policies) should be shared in advance of the Bishops meeting as a Conference. Given the competing priorities of Bishops, approaches should be explored to gain their attention and make organisation strengthening a priority. • <i>Who should do this?</i> This depends on the dynamics in country, and strength of relationships between the Bishops, coordinators/directors and CAFOD. Some partners feel CAFOD would be well placed to push on behalf of the National Office, others that the Directors/coordinators have the primary role for engaging with the Bishops. However, engaging the Bishops requires a solid understanding about what the project seeks to achieve, and the potential longer-term impact. CAFOD and future projects could play a role in supporting with materials and pre-briefings to help others engage as appropriate. • Other parts of the Catholic Church (JPC, Education, Health) should also be engaged in the project as these departments also face emergencies in some way and deal with volunteers, communities and vulnerable groups (especially children). As an example, linked to the PEOPLE project they should be part of step-down trainings on the CI Emergency Guidelines, the development of the EPP, part of work taking forward stronger Volunteer Management (including signing of the Code of Conduct), and have awareness of Complaints Handling mechanisms. They could either be part of existing trainings or have sessions tailored to them. Policies developed could be developed for all parts of the Catholic church, rather than only tailored to Caritas, so they have broader applicability. <p>7. In future projects, look to <u>minimise the time between the Inception workshop and first activities.</u> Financial Capacity Assessment and collection of Bank details should be done as soon as partners have been selected for the project. Money distribution can follow in good time, and where this is not possible allow for <i>partners to pre-finance activities where they are able to do so. (Partner recommendation)</i></p> |
| <p>Reaching other Diocese with project opportunities, benefits and changes.</p> | <p>8. In future projects, <u>embrace other Dioceses within target countries in the project.</u>²³ This could be through inviting them to participate in trainings and workshops organized, and identifying a Focal Point in each of the other Diocese offices who can participate in Capacity Strengthening activities and then lead on taking forward activities and learnings within their organisation. During the workshop, feedback indicated that in some countries the National Office can face difficulties getting Diocese offices to participate in activities. The role of CAFOD in supporting this could be explored. <i>(Partner recommendation)</i></p> <p>9. In future projects, <u>engage other Dioceses in the webinars,</u> to allow benefits to go beyond target partners. Review if and how the webinars can be used to engage more staff within target partners.</p> |
| <p>Encourage transparency of plans and progress (including spend against budget)</p> | <p>10. In future projects, the <u>National Office to share their Capacity Strengthening Plan and budget</u> with Diocesan Offices, and vice versa.</p> <p>Consider as well how there can be more transparency on progress made and spend of CS grants between participating country partners. For example, through a country-level</p> |

²³ During the final workshop this recommendation was voted as the joint second most important by partners (receiving votes from 3 out of the 10 partners). It was seen as important by partners from Zimbabwe.

| THEME | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| between target NOs and DOs partners in country | annual review process with Coordinators and Focal Points share plans and progress against these (including budget vs spend). |
| Measuring change | <p>11. <u>Decide with HCSOs and participating partners how examples of changes can be captured throughout the project, including subtle shifts in attitude and understanding among key partner staff that can have a huge influence on practice, and broader organisational cultural shifts.</u> The Records of Changes (RoC) documented by partners as part of their quarterly reports is one valuable tool. There could also be merit in HCSOs documenting their observations and capturing changes they perceive in their work with partners.</p> <p>12. <u>Follow-up with partners 18 months after the end of PEOPLE to understand changes and successes seen from rolling out policies; to see if further progress has been made to cement new practice; to explore if the changes seen during the later parts of the PEOPLE project have been sustained; plus to review how these changes have made a difference to the quality and effectiveness of partner response work (assuming partners have responded to emergencies).</u> Evaluations, reflections or reviews of recent emergency response work could also be used to build in reflection on the extent to which progress made as part of PEOPLE has been built on and sustained.</p> |
| <p>Specific capacity strengthening approaches</p> <p><i>(NB: Other recommendations linked to specific approaches are also included under the above themes)</i></p> | <p>13. <u>Review with participating partners which capacity strengthening approaches are most appropriate to use as part of a project.</u> This will allow approaches to be adapted based on contextual factors and constraints, as well as preferred styles of learning.</p> <p><u>TOTS (building a pool of trainers / local resources, and step-down of training)</u></p> <p>14. In future projects, where there is only 1 focal point per country, consider including additional staff from Diocese-level to build a larger pool of trainers.</p> <p>15. In future projects, work with partners to consider how a pool of trainers (e.g. staff trained during ToTs) might function for Caritas at country-level.</p> <p><u>Peer exchange visits</u></p> <p>16. Peer Exchange visits add an opportunity to cement learning from training workshops and webinars and see examples for how this can be applied. These should be incorporated into future projects where possible, in particular following after more theory-based learning to bring this to life.</p> <p><u>Webinars</u></p> <p>17. In future projects, review internet connectivity solutions with each partner. As needed consider supporting better internet connection (including buying bundles/data) through the project. If all target partners have potential challenges with connection, review if webinars are a workable medium or not.</p> <p>18. In future projects, open up the invitation for the live webinars to more staff from target partners and other Dioceses in country.</p> <p>19. In future projects, partners (especially National and Regional offices) to consider how webinar recordings could be used as part of roll-out with other Dioceses (and countries). For example, webinar ‘book groups’ or in follow-up to step-down trainings.</p> <p><u>Accompaniment by HCSOs</u></p> <p>20. In future projects, allocate funds and time to allow HCSOs to spend more time with partners based outside the capital (visiting their offices), factoring in travel time. This is both to support roll out of activities and accompaniment support, and also to allow for recommendation #2.</p> |

| THEME | Recommendation |
|-------|--|
| | <p><u>Grants and support for partner focal points</u> 21. In future projects, consider contributing a small percentage towards finance staff salary so they are more involved in the project. <i>(Partner recommendation)</i></p> <p><u>Capacity self-assessment and plan</u> 22. In future projects, partners to look for opportunities to use their Capacity Strengthening Plans beyond the project.</p> <p>23. In future projects, volunteers should be involved in the capacity self-assessment reviews alongside staff. In addition, consider the merits of all parts of Caritas (including church structures) being involved in the capacity self-assessment. This will present a holistic picture of the capacity of entire church and its organizations</p> <p><u>Simulations</u> 24. In future projects, build both the HCSO and Focal points skills in conducting simulations, so that the focal points may continue to run simulations after the end of the project. Continue to look at how the simulations can feed into further reflective practice, including the self-assessment processes.</p> |

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2 – Evaluation and Learning Review Matrix (with questions)

Annex 3.1 - Staff survey: What changes have you seen?

Annex 3.2 – Volunteer survey: What changes have you seen?

Annex 3.3 - Discussion questions for partner reassessment process

Annex 4 – List of stakeholders consulted

Annex 5 – Re-assessment results by partner (comparing baseline with end-line)

Annex 6 - What factors enhance or undermine each approach? Final Workshop discussion notes