

INNOVATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN HUMANITARIAN TRAINING

SUMMARY OF PROJECT FINDINGS

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Introduction

In May 2017, RedR UK and the University of Sussex were awarded an early stage innovation grant from the Humanitarian Innovation Fund to test the recommendations identified in our earlier collaboration, the results of which are available [here](#).

The overall aim of the project was to improve the impact of RedR's capacity building services, by:

- Increasing the likelihood of learning, behaviour change and results amongst learners by identifying and making more use of methodologies which promote these changes, and;
- Making the measurement of these changes more feasible and more cost effective by incorporating evaluation at Kirkpatrick levels 2 (learning) and 3 (behaviour change) into capacity building interventions.

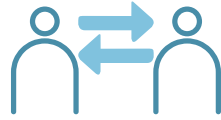
To do so, and based on our earlier collaboration, three areas were considered in this project:

1. **Ongoing engagement**
2. **Reflective practices**
3. **Role play/simulations with video capture.**

This paper provides an overview of our findings in each area.



Ongoing engagement



Recommendation from previous work:

'In order to extend the learning journey and prolong contact between the training provider and the learner, a recommendation emerges to maintain regular contact with learners in the period following the main capacity building intervention.'

To address this recommendation, a series of six scenarios and discussion questions were developed for two established RedR courses. In each instance, the scenarios were closely linked to themes from the course competencies and built on content considered within the face to face training event. The methodology was piloted with one instance of each course during the project period. Participants received a group email every two weeks for a period of 12 weeks and were asked to consider the questions and reply to discuss.

In practice, none of the participants responded to the group emails during the pilot phase. A review of the methodology compared the rate and content of responses to a standard three-month follow-up survey which is sent to all RedR course participants. On the two pilot courses, 25% and 30% of participants responded to the follow up survey, compared to an overall response rate of 44% during the full period of the HIF project. The percentages of participants who claimed to have continued reading and self-learning was similar on these courses to the average across all RedR courses surveyed (57% vs 54%). Interestingly, 29% of participants on the courses with the ongoing engagement methodology reported

further contact with trainers/mentors from the course, compared to overall average of 7% across all courses.

To understand more about the ongoing engagement methodology, user feedback was collected through interviews with participants on the pilot courses. All those interviewed stated that they had read the emails but did not respond due to other priorities. While they felt the content was valuable and relevant, they were not motivated to engage directly, with some stating that this was because it was not a requirement to obtain the course certificate. A number of participants suggested that 'more easily consumed' exercises like videos would have increased their engagement.



Reflective practices

Recommendation from previous work:

'Encourage personal reflection (in diaries for example) about changes in individual professional practice and their relation to the course'

To address this recommendation, tools were adapted or developed to seek examples and case studies of learning, behaviour change, and results amongst learners on existing programmes. These included coaching and mentoring schemes, the reflective journaling component of credit-rated programmes, and the learning essay component of a longer term blended training programme.

Monitoring and evaluation tools for both learners and trainers were revised to include questions better designed to capture information on higher level

evaluation of learning, but particularly of behaviour change and results. Guidance was developed for trainers on credit-rated courses, who mark participants' reflective journals, describing the background to the project, outlining criteria for case studies, and requesting that as part of the marking process the marker identifies examples of behaviour change or results and present this as a short case study.

To assess the findings of this reflective practice methodology, data from learner and trainer evaluation tools and case study examples across all the reflective practices were reviewed. This provided clear evidence of learning taking place as a result of reflective practices in all of the approaches. Examples can be grouped to include the learning of new techniques and tools, gains in confidence, and consolidation of learning through reflection. In addition, the methodologies were found to promote behaviour change at individual and organisational levels. For example, through the creation of professional development plans, updating of policies, or improvement of procedures.

Again, user feedback was collected through interviews with individuals in each of the roles: coach, coachee, mentor, mentee, journal/essay writer, marker. When asked about impact of these approaches respondents highlighted several advantages, namely:

- **It is flexible, tailored and specific to the individual**
'An advantage is the flexibility of the programme, the mode and timing of meetings suits participants.'
'My mentor was able to fine-tune the programme to my specific needs...I am going to work in Sierra Leone...'

'I could go at my own pace and raise things specifically of concern and interest to me. It wouldn't be so tailored to the individual in a training course.'

- **The timeframe for interaction is longer, which allows more time for reflection, and to achieve and observe change and impact**
'Coaching provides a much longer timeframe for interaction with the coachee(s) and gives the opportunity to see progress over time which is connected with their weekly/monthly work for their organisation.'
'The mentee explored and followed up leads, suggestions and advice and persisted with activities towards releasing their goals.'
- **It is empowering**
'For me, this programme helps to build that sense of community we need to have in the sector...making this an ongoing relationship.'
'I think the programme is also helpful for the mentor in terms of reflecting, thinking back on my experiences and thinking about how I could have done them differently.'

In addition, participants in these programmes tended to be self-selecting, either into a mentoring or coaching scheme having identified a specific learning requirement, or into an optional component of a programme, such as the reflective journals on credit-rated courses. This was not reflected upon by the learners but it likely to have resulted in higher than average motivation for learning and behaviour change.

Simulation and video capture



Recommendation from previous work:

‘Recording participants’ performance in practical exercises and providing this for them to watch back could be used as a means to support them to identify their own learning, and areas for continued improvement.’

To address this recommendation, a human-centred design approach was used, loosely based on IDEO.org’s toolkit. The different stages of research entailed in-situ research at RedR’s headquarters with managers, trainers and M&E staff, which was used, together with findings from the literature, to develop an initial concept. Three pilots followed, each taking place during a different training course. Between each pilot interviews were conducted with the trainers, training manager and participants, with learning incorporated into changes ahead of the subsequent pilot.

▪ First pilot

In the first pilot, a Training of Trainers course, video capture took place as a before and after exercise. On the first day of training, participants delivered a 10-minute training on a topic of their choice. This was captured on video and participants then viewed the footage individually on a laptop and filled out a reflection sheet. User feedback was gathered initially through observing reactions to the view back, and from the reflection sheets. Participants said that they were generally not aware of camera, and watching themselves made them realize certain mannerisms, movements and accents, which they singled out for improvement. One participant in

particular was more positive, writing that ‘I think it is reassuring to know I do not appear so nervous. Means I can go into future training sessions feeling more relaxed which allows me to elaborate and say everything I had planned to say.’

On the fourth day, after a number of training sessions on various aspects of training design and delivery, participants worked in groups of three to deliver a 30-minute training activity on a humanitarian topic of their choice. This was captured and edited and then the groups watched their footage, discussing it and again filling out a reflection sheet. Observations during the view-back of the group activity highlighted peer support, for example one participant saying ‘I look less competent because I move around so much’ and another responding ‘no, that’s not true’. This reflection remained at a superficial level. Once again, the main focus of the discussion was on physical behaviour. This was reinforced by feedback collected in a subsequent interview with the lead trainer, who stated that:

‘most people identified that they want to work on physical things like their body language (shifting from foot to foot, using their hands a lot, fidgeting, etc.) when in reality these things are normal and don’t detract from a session. They failed to pick up on what we would cite as more important aspects of facilitation...I do wonder if this is because they could see themselves on the tape and so they focused only on the physical aspects of their session.’

Review of reflection sheets after the second video and view back session show the emergence of more awareness of pedagogical aspects, for example: ‘I have to make sure I link the different parts of my presentation (work on transitions),’ ‘I need to keep an instruction simple and say it

once and don't repeat it in a different way, it leads to confusion' and 'my question asking style, try to be less firm when stating something, ask clarifying questions to avoid making participants feel uncomfortable.' Such learning can be supported and reinforced through more tailored questions on the reflection sheet, which was redesigned following the pilot.

Simultaneously, the opportunity was taken to test a number of different technologies (mobile phones of various qualities, a DSRL camera and a low-cost digital video recorder). Because of the low-light and acoustic conditions in the training room, we also tested using a microphone for sound enhancement. This experiment identified the Samsung 7 as the best option of those tested, as shown in the summary table below:

Device	Price	Ranking of camera performance under poor light conditions (5 highest)	Ranking of sound performance under poor acoustics conditions (all were boosted with external mic)
Low-cost generic smart phone Android	£64	2	1.5
Midrange-cost Android	£130	2.5	1.5
Apple OS 4S	£220	3	2.5
Samsung 4S	£164	3	3
Samsung 7	£288	4	3.5 (up to 4.5 with mic)
Low-cost digital video recorder(Vivitar)	£35	1.5	1.5

- **Second pilot**

In the second pilot, a Security Management course, filming took place on the fourth day of training, during a crisis management simulation exercise. The participants were placed in three rooms simulating different offices (international HQ, national office and field office), which resulted in a highly dynamic filming environment, compounded by the general high-pressure environment of the simulation needed. The filming was focused on injects, when actors unexpectedly burst into the rooms pretending to be journalists, board members, local government representatives, etc. and intended to capture participant responses to these high-pressure moments.

Following the first prototype, where there was concern about too much technology in the class room due to the number of technologies being tested, the second pilot employed 'frugal technology,' meaning a static phone and computer taking wide-angle shots without any light or sound enhancement. Because of the small size of the rooms we had to film from behind the participants, and especially the sound quality was not good enough for participants to clearly hear themselves during view-back.

View-back of unedited footage, took place at the end of the simulation while groups prepared their evaluations. This view-back was observed by the researchers and found to serve as conversation starters about how participants reacted, allowing them to explain why they did what they did and also observing and commenting on how others around them had reacted. Again, much of the focus was on physical reactions, including body language and physical movement and well as appropriate tone of voice. In further conversations, participants said that they could see the value in video capture and view-back but suggested a longer timeframe in which to do the view-back, for example, days or weeks after the learning event. Participants also suggested integrating trainer comments into the video clips to highlight learning points participants could continue to consider after the course. This would necessitate extra time and resources for proper editing and trainer voice over.

Based on the learnings from these two prototypes, and especially challenges around footage editing and transfer, we decided to use participants' own mobile phones for our final prototype.

▪ **Third pilot**

In the third pilot, a Managing People course, the video capture focused on a 10-15 minute mock negotiation session that participants conducted in pairs at the end of their second day of training. This was selected as it was preceded by a lesson on negotiating strategies that highlighted the importance of body language and non-verbal communication, which had emerged as areas of participant focus during view-back in the previous pilots. During the session, one participant assumed the role of office manager who was talking to a member of staff who had not followed the latest security protocol.

Participants were asked to use their own phones, which ranged from low to high price Androids and Apple phones. Anticipated concerns from participants around personal phone use, quality and storage did not materialise.

During view-back participants discussed how they came across in the negotiation and how their intentions were showing or not: 'I look really guilty here,' 'I have my hand on my heart to show that I mean it'. Once again, the focus on body language was appropriate for this exercise, and participants also became more aware of the importance of physical surroundings, for example the size of the table between them or how they were sitting vis-a-vis each other. 80% of participants rated the use of the video capture and view back as very useful. In addition, some suggested that the video itself could provide a useful tool for follow up, particularly if integrated with trainer feedback and/or coaching.

In reviewing the three video capture pilots, the third is considered the

most successful, due to the selection of an exercise in which physical and therefore visual elements were particularly tied to the learning outcomes, combined with the use of participants' own devices, which enabled immediate view back and removed any need to edit or transfer footage. Furthermore, in this instance, the view back emerged as both a conversation starter, and as a reflective practice, drawing together learning about the methodology from all three pilots.

Summary of findings and next steps

There are promising possibilities in combining the three methodologies tested during this project. For example, making video footage of activities or scenarios available to participants after a training has ended could act as a means of continued engagement with the course content. By adding in tools or support, through which participants can review their performance and gain feedback and recommendations for continued learning, reflective practices could support participants' ongoing learning and behaviour change.

To successfully integrate the methodologies, a suitable multi-media platform would need to be identified, developed and maintained. This platform would enable participants to easily view-back video footage and provide their reflective comments not just via email or written text, but also through voice or video clips. Such a platform could also provide a means to build communities of alumni who could engage in continuing learning together, using the scenarios or questions that were tested during this grant if presented in a more engaging format. In addition, to make the best use of these methodologies, sufficient time and resources need to be allocated both during programmes and in preparation and follow-up. The learning from this project raises questions for RedR to consider in the design of learning programmes which further promote reflective practices yet remain accessible to humanitarian practitioners who are often time-poor.