
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUMANITARIAN LEARNERS AND LOCALISED CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

FRANZISKA BASSE, ELLIE CHESHIRE, JP FISHER, JESS LYGA,
IREM SIMSEK

13052, 23713, 20776, 17780, 17953

WORD COUNT: 9,313 (EXTENTION REQUESTED BY CLIENT AND
GRANTED BY ACADEMIC MENTOR)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the functioning and programming of the humanitarian sector. Despite challenges, the pandemic may present opportunities to fast track a shift towards a locally-led response by reinforcing the commitment of aid organisations to implementing responses “as local as possible and as international as necessary” (IASC 2016: 3). This report explores if and how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted access to and use of learning opportunities for those engaged in the humanitarian sector in the framework of localisation and related capacity strengthening initiatives.

This is considered by examining user engagement with the Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP), an initiative of the Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA), before and after the onset of the pandemic. HOP is a tiered humanitarian programme (including HOP Fundamentals, HOP Core and HOP Response) that combines both online and face-to-face learning elements intended to cover the essentials of humanitarian action (SCUK 2019). The training programme is targeted at those wishing to enter a career in the humanitarian sector and those seeking a refresher of fundamental principles.

The methodology for this research study included a desk-based literature review to provide the overall current context and debates on and around both localisation and capacity strengthening in the humanitarian sector. This was followed by a data analyses on learners who are registered, have accessed and utilised HOP Fundamentals, an online learning programme, before and after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to the methodology, a survey and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted amongst learners from across the HOP portfolio to offer additional insights to the questions posed in this research study.

This report takes a mixed-methodology approach utilising both qualitative and quantitative data provided by HLA and is grounded in a comprehensive literature review to inform analysis. As part of the qualitative analysis, ten HOP users responded to requests for interviews and 35 users took part in an online survey that was advertised with support of HLA from February to March 2021. HOP users self-selected to be a part of the qualitative research and were users from all three HOP tiers. The results of the qualitative component were complemented by a quantitative analysis of user data from HOP Fundamentals, the online learning programme available on the Academy’s e-learning platform Kaya. Data was collected from 2016 until the end of 2020 to best examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on user engagement with the online learning tool.

Analysis was guided by and structured around four primary research questions:

1. How has learning from HOP been used to improve local capacity under COVID-19 and what difference has it made on individuals and organisations?
2. What are the regional differences in terms of impact of COVID-19 on access and usage of learning for HOP learners and graduates?
3. How has the use of HOP online learning materials changed after the onset of COVID-19?
4. What other online professional development tools have HOP learners and graduates accessed and used to improve their capacity to respond under the pandemic and how effective was it?

As such, the primary findings of this report are as follows:

- Humanitarian professionals have accessed HOP to improve their capacity after the onset of COVID-19. Users indicated that the programme was overall beneficial to both their organisational and individual capacities during the pandemic.
- While there was a significant increase in the number of users across all seven SCUK operating regions, the growth was more dramatic in regions linguistically correspondent to the available languages on the platform: English and French.

The steep growth of first-time users in French-speaking regions is correspondent with the roll-out of the Francophone platform in July 2020.

- Both new usership and the completion of modules significantly increased across all HOP users, including local staff, after the onset of COVID-19. There was an increase in usership across all age groups, indicated professions and gender, the extent of which being roughly consistent with usership trends noted before the pandemic. Quantitative analysis of HOP's Anglophone platform reveals a steep growth in online access to HOP Fundamentals after the onset of the pandemic, with 81% (2,862) of all users that had completed at least one module doing so during the first year of COVID-19.
- A majority of surveyed HOP users indicated to have used additional online professional development tools to strengthen their capacity before and during the pandemic. Critically, respondents pointed to internet connectivity challenges and lack of access to devices as barriers to accessing online training tools. A conclusion can also be drawn from the quantitative analysis that a lack of access to training opportunities in users' indicated working languages may also represent a barrier.

The report concludes that there has been increased demand for access to and use of HOP among platform users since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that demand and access was significantly impacted by the roll-out of the Francophone version of the platform. Based on the findings from this research, this report extrapolates that access to learning opportunities worldwide, particularly through online platforms, likely increased as a result of the pandemic.

Based on the results of the research, the report therefore includes recommendations regarding how training programmes, and HOP in particular, can better serve their user base and increase user engagement against the backdrop of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In general, this report recommends the following for learning opportunities in the context of localisation and COVID-19:

- Training should be implemented as a complementary component of a comprehensive capacity strengthening programming for maximum impact.
- The terminology related to localisation should be continuously interrogated, particularly as it pertains to considerations of 'local' and perceptions of 'capacity'.

- Training should be adapted to account for contextual variations as much as possible, including regional differences and the unique challenges presented by COVID-19-related restrictions.

In particular, this report recommends the following as it relates to HLA's HOP:

- The access and reach of HOP should be increased and sustained including outreach to local organisations and inclusion of more languages. HLA could also more heavily advertise HOP Fundamentals' offline component for users with connectivity challenges.
- HLA could benefit from increased focus on bi-directional learning and mutual capacity strengthening by facilitating networking opportunities between and among users across all of HOP's three tiers.
- Long-term support for and development of the training programme and integrating linkages with other capacity strengthening elements such as those outlined in the Grand Bargain could increase programme effectiveness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team would like to extend their gratitude to Kara Blackmore (LSE), Dr. Stuart Gordon (LSE), Pawel Mania (SCUK and HLA) and Olivia Scaramuzza (SCUK and HLA) and with special thanks to Seema Patel (SCUK and HLA) for the continuous guidance, support, and collaboration throughout this project. We would also like to thank all the interviewees and survey respondents who shared their time, insights and experiences with us.

The Humanitarian Leadership Academy is part of the Save The Children Fund – a charity registered in England and Wales (213890) and Scotland (SC039570) and a registered company limited by guarantee (178159). Registered office 1 St John's Lane, London, EC1M 4AR

DISCLAIMER

The authors of this report and its supporting documents are MSc students from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Any findings, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this report are solely those of the authors. They do not reflect the views of the Save the Children UK and Humanitarian Leadership Academy (SCUK and HLA), or the London School of Economics and Political Science. All rights for reproduction, publication, storage in physical or electronic databases, and distribution via electronic or physical means rest with the Save the Children UK, subject to full attribution to the individual authors. The information provided by interviewees and survey respondents is used under their full consent. All images used in this report have been duly credited and cited.

All images are courtesy of the HLA media centre. All the rights of the pictures are reserved to HLA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	List of Figures
02	List of Abbreviations
03	Introduction
05	Methodology
08	Literature Review
14	Findings
14	Research Question 1: How has learning from HOP been used to improve local capacity under COVID-19 and what difference has it made on individuals and organisations?
20	Research Question 2: What are the regional differences in terms of impact of COVID-19 on access and usage of learning for HOP learners and graduates?
25	Research Question 3: How has the use of HOP online learning materials changed after the onset of COVID-19?
29	Research Question 4: What other online professional development tools have HOP learners and graduates accessed and used to improve their capacity to respond under the pandemic and how effective was it?
32	Recommendations and Conclusion
37	Annex
38	Annex I: Revised Version of the Terms of Reference (ToR)
43	Annex II: Original Terms of Reference (ToR) and Justification of Changes
45	Annex III: Endnotes
48	Annex IV: Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP)
49	Annex V: Bibliography
54	Annex VI: Additional Data and Graphs
60	Annex VII: Survey Questionnaire
63	Annex VIII: Background Information on Survey Outputs
64	Annex IX: Key Informant Interview Questionnaire
66	Annex X: Information Sheet and Consent Form
69	Annex XI: Ethics Summary

LIST OF FIGURES

04	Figure 1: An Overview of HLA's Humanitarian Operations Programme
14	Figure 2: Gaps Caused by COVID-19 as Identified by Survey Respondents
16	Figure 3: Reasons for Choosing to Participate in HOP Fundamentals According to Survey Respondents
17	Figure 4: Percentage of Survey Respondents Indicating That HOP Fundamentals has Been Beneficial to Address Capacity Challenges During COVID-19
20	Figure 5: First Completion of a HOP Fundamentals Module on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms by Region
22	Figure 6: First Completion of a HOP Fundamentals Module on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms in 2020: Top Five Countries per Region with the Largest Percentage Increase in Usage
23	Figure 7: Total Number of Modules Completed in HOP Fundamentals on both Anglophone and Francophone Platforms
25	Figure 8: First Access to HOP Fundamentals on Kaya Platform on Both Anglophone and Francophone Platforms: Disaggregation by Self-Identification of Involvement With Organisation
26	Figure 9: All HOP Fundamentals Users on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms Who Have Completed at Least One Module: Disaggregated by Age
27	Figure 10: All HOP Fundamentals Users on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms Who Have Completed at Least One Module: Disaggregated by Gender Before and After COVID-19 Onset
28	Figure 11: Language Preferences Indicated by HOP Fundamentals Users Before and After COVID-19 Onset
29	Figure 12: Survey Responses Indicating Initial Engagement With HOP Fundamentals
29	Figure 13: Survey Responses Indicating Initial Engagement With Other Online Professional Development Tools
30	Figure 14: Limitations to Accessing HOP as Indicated by Survey Respondents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
FIELD	Field Manager in Emergencies Learning and Development
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
HLA	Humanitarian Leadership Academy
HOP	Humanitarian Operations Programme
IASC	Interagency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LNGO	Local Non-governmental Organisation
MEE	Middle East and Eastern Europe
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NNGO	National Non-governmental Organisation
SARS-CoV-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus Type 2
SCUK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SHIP	Save the Children Humanitarian Intermediate Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCA	Western and Central Africa
WHO	World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

The SARS-CoV-2 virus (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus Type 2), resulting in COVID-19, continues to have an unprecedented impact on the functioning and programming of the humanitarian sector. For organisations dedicated to enhancing the capacities of local actors, this has presented both opportunities and challenges. In order to best interrogate if and how the context surrounding the pandemic has shaped capacity strengthening for local organisations after the onset of COVID-19, this research will examine key components of capacity strengthening prior to the pandemic and interrogate the subsequent impact of COVID-19.

For the world's most vulnerable, the crisis threatens to derail progress towards addressing some of the world's most urgent matters as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (Sumner et al. 2020). In addition to health consequences, the secondary effects of the pandemic on the humanitarian system are extensive. The impact of COVID-19 threatens to wipe out about a decade of progress in poverty reduction with estimates in some regions predicting poverty will return to levels similar to thirty years ago (ibid.).

As the world copes with the fallout from COVID-19, local organisations have been at the frontline of the humanitarian response (Barbelet et al. 2020). While there was significant reliance on local responders pre-pandemic (Bolletino, Bruderlein 2008), this dependence has increased during the pandemic as international ability to directly reinforce local capacity through supplies and personnel was curtailed due to movement restrictions, border closures and lockdowns (Konyndyk et al. 2020; HAG et al. 2020). The pandemic has further highlighted that local organisations are often better placed and more effective in an outbreak response that is rooted in trust as community ties allow for better navigation of local context (Konyndyk et al. 2020; Featherstone, Bogati 2016).

In this respect, many in the humanitarian sector regard the pandemic as an opportunity to fast track a normative shift towards a locally-led response (Barbelet et al. 2020). Others argue that the crisis is instead driving a regression towards traditional, top-down funding dynamics (Konyndyk et al. 2020).

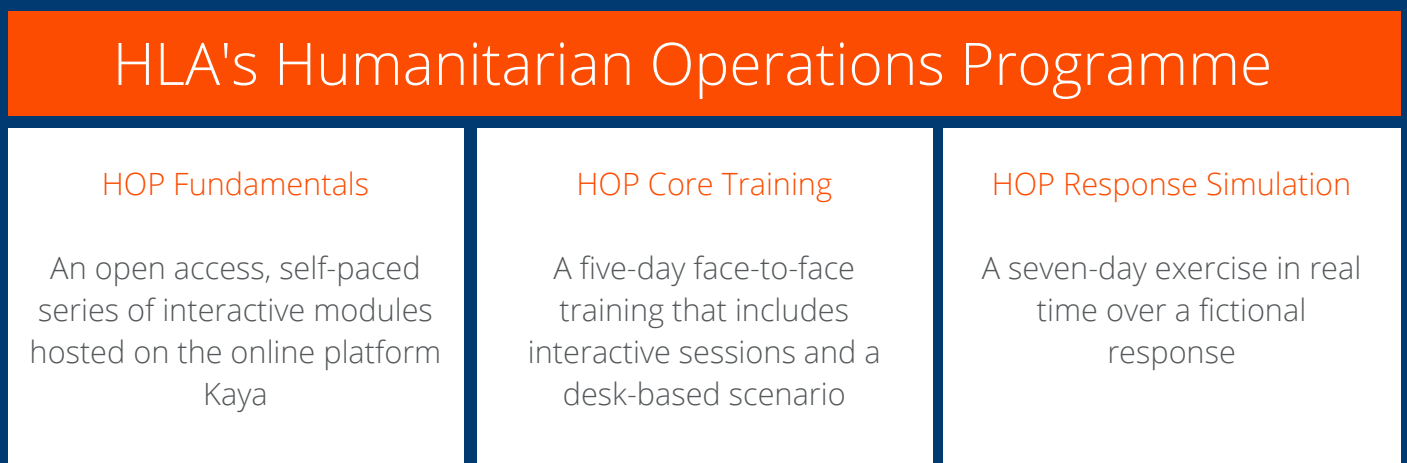
In any case, the humanitarian sector still faces significant challenges in accelerating the localisation agenda and since the outbreak of the pandemic, there has been only incremental progress (Barbelet et al. 2020) stemming from established trends widely acknowledged in pre-pandemic academic literature examining pitfalls of localisation progress.

The possibility that COVID-19 becomes an opportunity to shift towards a more local response continues to develop as the pandemic enters its second year. For instance, at the global policy level there is increased rhetoric about the localisation agenda to which some have attributed a changing attitude among donors to pass on financial flexibility to local organisations (ibid.). Some organisations are also seizing the momentum presented by the pandemic to restructure programme operations to have more of an emphasis on localisation (ibid.).

Therefore, an examination of opportunities and barriers brought on by the pandemic is critical to the consideration of training programmes by the HLA that are tailored to strengthen the capacity of local responders. This research specifically examines HLA’s Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP; see Figure 1) with the aim to understand the impact of COVID-19 on access to and use of learning as a form of capacity strengthening of HOP learners and graduates. To analyse this, a literature review will provide background information on key concepts and definitions. The research questions will then be addressed by Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), a survey and a data analysis.

Lastly, this report aims to provide recommendations for HLA’s specific training programme in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. A graphic of HLA’s Humanitarian Operations Programme is included below (SCUK 2019) (for more information see Annex IV).

Figure 1: An Overview of HLA’s Humanitarian Operations Programme



METHODOLOGY

This report is based on various data collection methods: desk-based research, data analysis, a survey and interviews. This chapter explains the choice of the data collection methods, analysis and intrinsic limitations.

Literature Review

Initially, an extensive literature review was conducted on the subjects of localisation, capacity strengthening and training and their linkages to the COVID-19 pandemic. This provided an important basis for the research, while also highlighting relevant key debates to HLA's training programme. Access to data and literature related to the COVID-19 pandemic was limited as the situation was still developing at the time of this report. All in all, the research draws on a wide variety of sources such as academic journals, books, grey literature, publications from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), Save the Children United Kingdom (SCUK) and additional websites.

Data Analysis

HLA provided demographic and activity data for HOP Fundamentals hosted on the Kaya platform (HLA 2020). HOP Fundamentals is divided into two versions hosted for different participants according to language capabilities:

Anglophone and Francophone, which will be treated separately throughout the analysis. Many participants, most notably in the Anglophone data, had accessed HOP but had not engaged with the content or had merely begun one module without completing it. Following the exclusion of these participants, the data analysis consisted of a total of 4,432 participants (3,538 Anglophone and 894 Francophone). The participants accessing the Anglophone platform had completed at least one module out of 22 total modules and the Francophone participants had completed at least one out of 15, as there were only 15 modules available on the Francophone version of HOP.

Survey

A survey was completed amongst 35 HOP learners and graduates from various locations between 11 February and 22 March 2021 (for more information on participants see Annex VIII). The consultants coordinated with HLA to facilitate access to potential survey respondents. HLA identified HOP Fundamentals' graduates that 'opted in' to be contacted for further research for the consultants to survey.

An online survey, using Qualtrics, was rolled-out over a five-week period to HOP Fundamentals participants (see Annex VII for survey questionnaire). Through the survey, the consultants aimed to gather insights about organisational capacity challenges related to COVID-19, limitations to access to HOP Fundamentals, utilisation of HOP Fundamentals and other learning materials to which HOP learners have access.

Key Informant Interviews

Between 18 February and 19 March 2021, ten HOP learners and graduates working in the humanitarian sector self-selected to participate in the KIIs, representing four countries - Nigeria, South Sudan, Kenya and Zambia. They were interviewed via phone or video-chat, with most interviews lasting between 15 to 25 minutes. The consultants coordinated with HLA to facilitate access to potential interview respondents. The research team used interview notes to undertake thematic analysis to examine the qualitative data obtained. To maintain participants' anonymity in this report, some identifying details have been changed, combinations of identifying details were minimised and 'they' is used as a singular pronoun for all people quoted.

These semi-structured interviews (see Annex IX for the interview questionnaire) focused on challenges related to COVID-19 on capacity strengthening, access to HOP Fundamentals and other online training materials and utilisation of HOP training.

Scope and Limitations

While the research methodology allows the research questions to be answered, some limitations remain intrinsic to the process, such as the small response rate to the survey which limited the statistical significance of the results; a lack of representation of local actors due to a bias of survey respondents towards large organisations and due to the fact that most interviewees worked with Save the Children; geographical limitations among interviewees to a small number of countries; and most participants in the interviews not having participated in HOP Fundamentals and therefore limiting specific findings for online training tools. Additionally, all interviewees had completed elements of HOP in 2019, before the onset of the pandemic. This may result in the overstatement or understatement of some of the conclusions drawn.

The Francophone version of HOP was rolled out after the onset of the pandemic in July 2020. This factor contributed to the uptake of HOP in French speaking regions and therefore the increase in HOP usage in those regions cannot be attributed entirely to factors related to COVID-19. Additionally, HOP users are classified by country and region based on their country of residence at the time of completing HOP Fundamentals, which limits the degree of data accuracy for examining trends surrounding localisation.

Due to data discrepancies in the analysis, 47 participants from the Anglophone data had missing demographic information, resulting in slightly varied results. Finally, the data utilised has been collected up until 31 December 2020. Following consultation with HLA, the COVID-19 onset date was determined to be 23 March 2020, or the start of the UK's first national lockdown, as HLA is based in London. Despite the onset date being based off the UK's COVID-19 timeline, it is acknowledged that the impact of the pandemic varied across different countries and regions.

The multi-methodological approach specifically aims at mitigating and counterbalancing these challenges. Taking these limitations into account, this research nevertheless sheds light on HOP in the context of COVID-19 and can possibly hint at generalisable trends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recognition of the importance of a professionalised humanitarian system that can prepare and respond to the growing number of humanitarian crises, many organisations have long-standing commitments to implement localisation as part of their response. SCUK as a signatory of the Grand Bargain has repeatedly emphasised its vision of a locally and nationally led humanitarian response, backed by global resources when necessary. This has never been as relevant as today in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the shift towards localisation to tackle challenges for accountability, coordination and quality of humanitarian assistance (Macrae 1998; Moshtari, Goncalves 2011).

Over the years, debates around the role of local actors in responding to crises and the need to strengthen local capacities have increasingly shaped research in the humanitarian sphere. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated debates and critiques of the humanitarian system such as inefficiencies, overcentralisation, power imbalances between actors and unsustainability (Lister 2000; Hillhorst 2002) [1]. Against this backdrop, localisation has often been seen as an important

measure to address these critiques of the humanitarian system and to improve the overall response.

As such, localisation has repeatedly been described as a ‘paradigm shift’ for the humanitarian system and implementation on the ground (Elkahlout, Elgibali 2020). However, the exact meaning of the term is rarely made clear. Over the years, precise terminology has been widely discussed and a vast body of literature examines the variety of approaches and definitions that fall under the concept of localisation (ibid.). The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) defines localisation as

[t]he process through which a diverse range of humanitarian actors are attempting, each in their own way, to ensure local and national actors are better engaged in the planning, delivery and accountability of humanitarian action, while still ensuring humanitarian needs can be met swiftly, effectively and in a principled manner (ICVA n.d.).

In accordance with this definition, HLA reiterates the “critical importance of national and local action in humanitarian contexts” to realise locally led action (HLA 2020: 1).

Van Brabant and Patel (2017) distinguish between two forms of localisation: (1) localisation as a transformative process for the political economy of humanitarianism and (2) localisation as a decentralising, technical change to improve on-the-ground response and resource access. Barbelet (2018), as well as Wall and Hedlund (2016) emphasise that depending on the focus on different actors and their field of work, the terminology might shift from 'localisation' to 'local' or 'locally-led humanitarian action' [2].

Even though the essential role of local and national NGOs (LNGOs/NNGOs) in increasing efficiency and ownership of a humanitarian intervention are well established themes in the literature, a clear definition of 'local actor' is difficult to identify (Campbell, Knox-Clarke 2016) [3]. Debates around more critical engagement with conceptualising local and international actors as binary opposites additionally complicate rigorously identifying local actors (Roepstorff 2020). Local actors are a fluid, highly contextual and diverse concept, which hinders an unambiguous analysis and cooperation across stakeholders (Wall, Hedlund 2016). This also calls into question the Interagency Standing Committee's (IASC) definition of 'local' as framed by the Grand Bargain:

"Organizations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are not affiliated to an international NGO [non-governmental organisation]" (IASC 2017: 1). Specifically, in the context of closed borders and evacuated international staff, the exclusivity of 'local' is challenged by some in its omission of local staff affiliated to international organisations who are nonetheless working in their country of origin (Barbelet et al. 2020). The pandemic has highlighted the need for a wide pool of skilled, local humanitarian responders to enable surge capacity regardless of affiliation with either local or international organisations (HAG et al. 2020).

While many authors and practitioners still grapple with the definition of 'localisation', it has been a long-established term in the humanitarian sphere, which has been manifested in various humanitarian standards and declarations over the years. This re-emphasises the difficulty of academic and practical debates around the issue, making localisation not only a technical, but also a highly contentious issue (Van Brabant, Patel 2017). Nevertheless, key humanitarian frameworks, such as the Paris Declaration (2005), the Humanitarian Accountability Report (2015), the Charter for Change

(2016) have reaffirmed the principle of localising humanitarian action and increasing local ownership of responses (CHS Alliance 2015; Sphere Project 2018; ICVA 2018). The following World Humanitarian Summit with its announcement of the Grand Bargain reform agenda (2016) has only placed localisation more firmly in the centre of debates around change in the humanitarian system, by committing governmental and aid organisations to implementing responses “as local as possible and as international as necessary” (IASC 2016: 3; Metcalfe-Hough et al. 2019).

However, research suggests that a divide between rhetoric and practice persists, as these “commitments rarely translate into effective relationships on the ground” (Wall, Hedlund 2016: 3) [4]. Smillie (2001) emphasises the difficulty in successfully implementing these commitments by pointing to the relationship between INGOs and NNGOs continuously being shaped by patronage instead of partnership. Nevertheless, recent literature underlines the possibility of partnerships in localisation mitigating a top-down, resource-dependent approach to the implementation, while ensuring sufficient support from INGOs for local actors (Eade 2007; Elkahlout, Elgibali 2020; IFRC 2018).

In this context, reviewing partnership agreements and strengthening capacities of local actors will have to be key steps towards implementing localisation commitments as a paradigm shift (Nightingale 2012; Gingerich, Cohen 2015).

In recognition of the importance of capacity strengthening, international organisations have committed to providing initiatives for local actors as part of the localisation workstream of the Grand Bargain. According to the IASC Guidance Note on Capacity Strengthening, support should aim to enhance the ability of local actors to adequately “prepare for, anticipate and deliver timely and cost-effective humanitarian services of appropriate quality, and to strengthen the resilience of affected population and transparent and accountable management of resources” (IASC 2020a: 2).

While the central role of local actors in the humanitarian system has widely been acknowledged, debates around implementation and concepts remain – especially against the backdrop of capacity strengthening. Over the years, research has documented the terminological developments and broad range of different interpretations of capacity [5].

SCUK refers to capacities in line with its Grand Bargain commitment to include preparedness, coordination, response and planning (IASC 2016). When examining capacity strengthening approaches, it is vital to acknowledge the relevance of terminology because differences between building or strengthening capacities have emerged over time (Barbelet 2018; Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream 2020). This definitory ambiguity is exacerbated by different targets, purposes and a lacking agreement among stakeholders (Smillie 2001; Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream 2020).

Even though both terms, capacity building and capacity strengthening, are often used interchangeably, capacity building tends to assume a deficit among local actors that will be addressed externally (Barbelet 2018). Over time, in research and practice, the term 'capacity strengthening' has been established to emphasise the already existing skills of actors and organisations that are being reinforced by interventions – thus being highly contextual (Eade 1997; Kaplan 2000; Audet 2011). SCUK (2016: 2) defines capacity strengthening as “[t]he process through which organizations, people and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time”.

Most commonly, this is being implemented via training and knowledge sharing between organisations (Potter, Brough 2004; Audet 2011). Paul (1995) distinguishes between four categories of capacity building: Human and Institutional; Planning and Implementation; Micro and Macro Level; Cognitive and Practice [6].

Many authors analyse the challenges and opportunities that are intrinsic to the implementation of capacity strengthening in the humanitarian space (see e.g. Obrecht 2014). Literature repeatedly emphasises the importance of capacity strengthening programmes that are co-developed and oriented towards long-term, contextualised, sufficiently funded partnerships between L/NGOs and INGOs (Christoplos 2004; Smillie 2001) [7]. Studies aimed at evaluating the implementation also described the difficulty in precisely determining the impact of capacity strengthening on the capacity of local actors (see e.g. Sobek, Agius 2007; Sobek 2008).

The current set-up of the humanitarian system has often been criticised for undermining, instead of strengthening local capacities (Smillie 2001). Nevertheless, a vast body of literature on capacity strengthening underlines the importance of the

issues for ensuring localisation of response, increasing accountability, local ownership, cost-effectiveness and strengthening resilience (ibid.; Sobeck, Agius 2007) [8].

This dichotomy in academic debates has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, when most expatriate experts and international employees left the response teams, mainly leaving local staff to manage and implement responses - making capacity strengthening initiatives critical for implementation (Paul 1995; Bryant 2020) [9].

Organisations that would generally bolster local responses with surge capacity from non-host countries increasingly relied on in-country staff and remote support mechanisms to coordinate activities (IASC 2020b). This demographic shift in in-country responders following the exit of large numbers of expatriate staff has led to a shift in roles for actors at all levels, creating new space for local leadership (HAG et al. 2020).

Over the years, training as one particular instrument of professional capacity strengthening has shifted into focus of research and practice (Russ 2012; Eade 1997). For HLA, “learning provides an important key to localisation” and capacity strengthening, as evidenced by the roll-out of training programmes, such as HOP (2020: 1).

Training as human resource development can refer to “planned and systematic activities designed to promote the acquisition of knowledge [...], skills [...], and attitudes” (Salas et al. 2012: 77). To attain these objectives, training programs can vary in regard to their objectives, target audiences, costs, organisational set-up and certification (Jacquet et al. 2014). Additionally, accessibility of training due to available languages is an important factor (Russ 2012; Bustamante et al. 2020).

Training has shifted into an important approach to capacity strengthening of organisations. Against the backdrop of an increasing number of disasters and more personnel available overall, which often also comes from a variety of different backgrounds, training can be a key mechanism to guarantee adaptable, sustainable and efficient responses (Hailey, James 2002; Walker et al. 2010) [10]. This is closely linked to a shift towards professionalisation and accountability in the humanitarian sector (Bolletino, Bruderlein 2008; Bustamante et al. 2020; Russ 2012).

And while these developments have increased the demand for training overall, providing more training opportunities in lieu of complementary support mechanisms such as funding may not be sufficient.

Thus, Bolletino and Bruderlein (2008) highlight the importance of strategically increasing the uptake among local actors to ensure a shift in cooperation and power methods [11].

Training can be conducted in person via e.g. experiential training and simulations (Eade 1997) or online, which has become increasingly important during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility of face-to-face teaching (Tint et al. 2015; Bolletino, Bruderlein 2008). Against this backdrop, intersectoral partnerships have been found to promote knowledge dissemination and improve the overall response to the health crisis (Aluisio et al. 2020). Remote relationships are acknowledged to have increased as a result of the pandemic and it was found that remote support was most helpful when combined with technical advice, coaching and mentoring from a distance that complemented local cultural and political expertise (HAG et al. 2020). While designed and rolled-out before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, HLA's HOP open access platform and blended learning approach enables users to access content remotely and easily tailor the content to their needs. Online training tools are often used to reach additional participants and it is therefore a tool to enhance and not replace in-person, traditional

forms of training (Pollard, Willison 2005). Consequently, these tools provide a basis for humanitarian organisations to disseminate humanitarian and organisational principles and to ensure accountability and standardisation among personnel and cooperation partners (Bolletino, Bruderlein 2008).

However, many authors also criticise current forms of training as only being an input-focused, symbolic exercise in the capacity strengthening framework (Christoplos 2004; Smillie 2001). Implementing training tools is further impeded by short-term funding cycles for programmes, lacking access to technology (such as internet and devices) among participants and "pressure to show low rates of administrative overheads" (Russ 2012: 47; Wall, Hedlund 2016; Hailey, James 2002). Nonetheless, research also suggests that training and especially online training, can be a tool to close the gap between local, national and international staff, while also mitigating the effects of quick staff turnover in the humanitarian system (Bolletino, Bruderlein 2008). To ensure program effectiveness, evaluating overall outcomes as a factor for change and how humanitarian staff implement learning into their work will have to be further analysed (ibid.; Russ 2012; Christoplos 2004).

FINDINGS

During COVID-19, all humanitarian actors have experienced major changes to their work and training. In this context, the aim of this report is to understand if and how the pandemic has impacted access to and use of training for

humanitarians and any subsequent effect on strengthening local capacity. The following chapters critically examine this topic through data analysis, interviews and a survey among HOP learners and graduates.

Research Question 1: How has learning from HOP been used to improve local capacity under COVID-19 and what difference has it made on individuals and organisations?

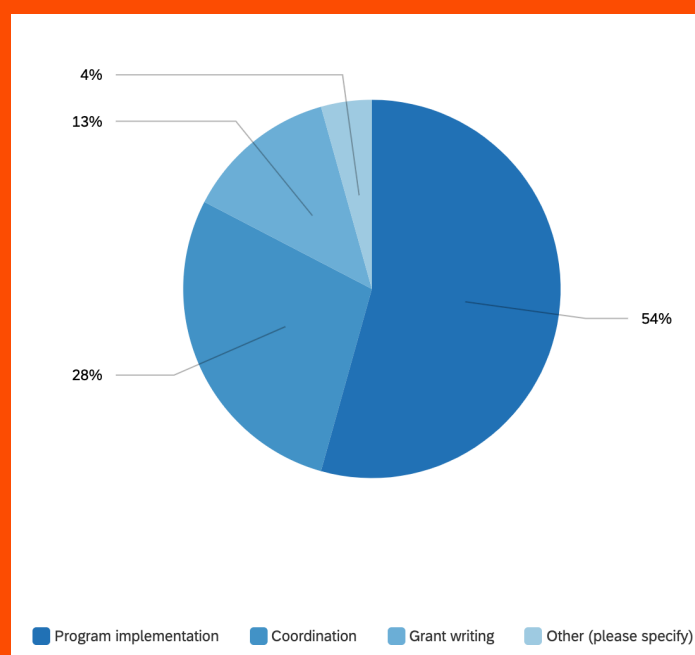
The interviews and surveys with HOP learners and graduates working in the humanitarian sector identified key aspects of HOP's impact:

- main organisational capacity challenges related to COVID-19;
- the ways in which HOP was accessed;
- how knowledge gained has been utilised by learners and graduates;
- and whether it has improved local capacity under COVID-19.

To mitigate gaps exacerbated by the pandemic, many local actors working in humanitarian sector indicated accessing HOP to improve their capacities. Particularly in the areas of adaptability, conducting needs assessment and community engagement, HOP has been found to benefit participants and strengthen their capacities.

Since the onset of the pandemic, local actors faced a variety of capacity challenges, often closely linked to the pandemic. In the survey, 83% (29) of respondents stated that limitations caused by COVID-19 have created capacity gaps, especially in the programme implementation and coordination (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Gaps Caused by COVID-19 as Identified by Survey Respondents [12]



The interviews also highlighted these aspects and pointed to additional challenges relating to the management of field operations, monitoring operations and coordination consistent with the survey results. Firstly, due to movement restrictions and health and safety concerns, project implementation in the field has been strongly affected. This situation was exemplified in the interviews as:

“As a food security and livelihood coordinator, I’m having so many difficulties in reaching out to our beneficiaries. I have 400 households to attend in four days. After the pandemic started, especially around June-July last year, it took almost 20 days to attend to these beneficiaries, can you imagine the implications of this for those people?” (Interview 1, 2021, Nigeria: Has completed HOP Core and Response).

In addition to hardships involved in reaching out to beneficiaries, lockdowns and other restrictions can create additional challenges for programme delivery.

“Our ability to deliver the programmes is affected. For example, we were supplying food for one child (who is in school) for a month in one household. When lockdown happens, families come to get the food, but since all family members are in the house due to lockdown, they all eat the food we supplied for the child and it is all gone in five days, because they are all hungry, but we had limited food. Nobody could see this, we were unprepared” (Interview 4, 2021, Nigeria: Has completed HOP Fundamentals (3-7 modules) and Core).

Secondly, due to low levels of funding, interviewees from some organisations do not have permanent offices in remote areas. With the addition of travel restrictions due to the pandemic, providing services for beneficiaries in remote areas and monitoring ongoing programme activities has become more challenging than ever. Many participants stated that, especially in remote areas, tradition, culture and religion have a great impact on people’s lives. In these contexts, taking time for sensitisation and awareness is critical when implementing projects, particularly in the context of the pandemic. Considering the impact of COVID-19, every practitioner interviewed emphasised the increased importance of understanding such needs of everyday life and taking time to address these issues to ensure that people comply with the rules of social distancing, wearing masks and other precautionary measures, in contexts where close monitoring has become nearly impossible.

Thirdly, coordination has become a major issue also due to the lack of internet access and reliable power supply. All practitioners stated that this prevented them from keeping in touch with other co-implementing partners, especially in remote locations where reliable power supply is also a major problem.

Many actors also highlighted that in the office, internet connectivity and accessibility was much easier compared to at home. Therefore, working from home due to lockdown measures further exacerbated these challenges. These issues were often accompanied by frustration and demotivation among staff. One interviewee highlighted this situation by stating:

“I have to attend at least four meetings in a day. Think about the burnouts from online meetings and now try to think you have connection problems in every one of them several times in the context where you have to do everything online, but can't do it properly” (Interview 7, 2021, South Sudan: Has completed HOP Core).

Against the backdrop of capacity gaps, often exacerbated by the pandemic, humanitarian staff have turned to capacity strengthening tools, such as HOP. In regard to respondents' motivations to participate in HOP Fundamentals, the reason that was most indicated by respondents 23% (27) was to have a better understanding of the knowledge and experience needed to build a career in the humanitarian sector. This was followed by the aim to have a better understanding of humanitarian work as indicated by 21% (24) of participants. Amongst respondents who completed their modules after the onset of the pandemic, 56% (9) stated that they participated in HOP Fundamentals for capacity strengthening in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Reasons for Choosing to Participate in HOP Fundamentals According to Survey Respondents

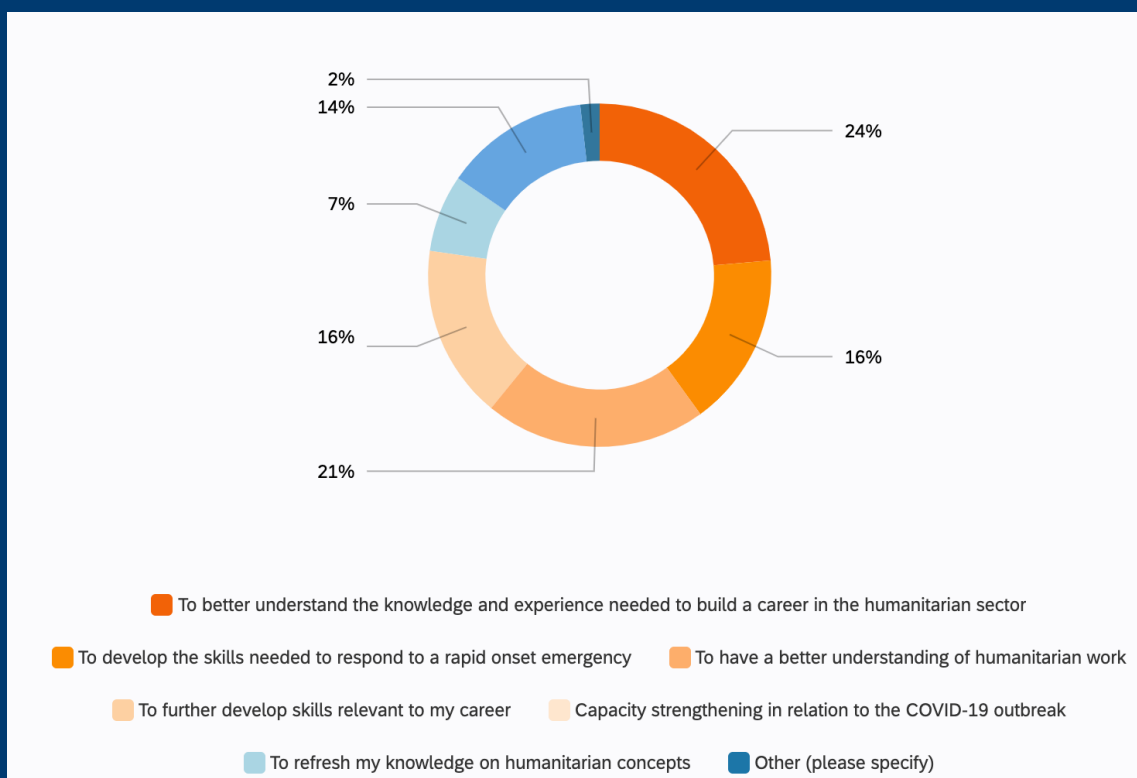
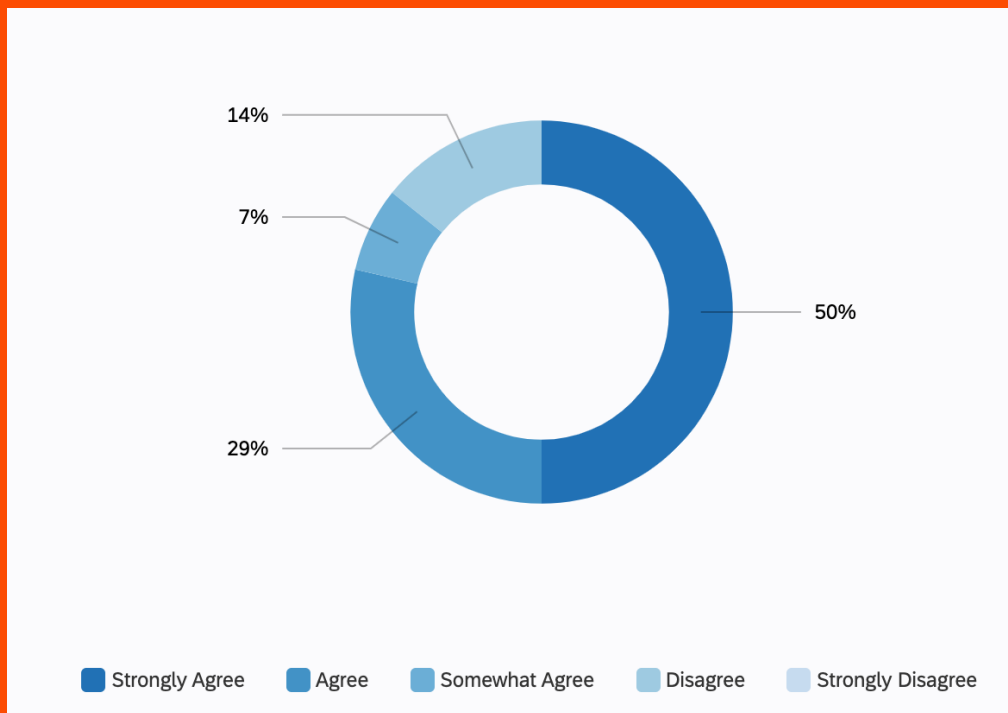


Figure 4: Percentage of Survey Respondents Indicating That HOP Fundamentals has Been Beneficial to Address Capacity Challenges During COVID-19



As part of the survey and the interviews, participants were asked to identify the modules that were most beneficial during the pandemic. For HOP Fundamentals in particular, a majority of the survey respondents 86% (30) thought that it had been beneficial to varying degrees during COVID-19 and 68% (24) said that they had utilised the knowledge gained from HOP Fundamentals (as illustrated in Figure 4).

Although there was some variation in responses in reference to the topics that were identified as the most relevant in response to the challenges of COVID-19, the module 'Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning in Emergency' was emphasised frequently by the respondents.

Many practitioners stated that HOP training increased their individual capacity through improving their knowledge about humanitarian operations. This impacted the individuals', but also their organisations' capacities. Common themes identified related to the utilisation of knowledge gained from HOP training included **adaptability, conducting needs assessments and community engagement.**

When it came to humanitarian intervention, the ability to adapt to changing contexts was critical, as stated in nearly all interviews. Since delivery and implementation of the programmes needed to be changed due to COVID-19, interviewees emphasised the fact that the knowledge they gained from the training was extremely useful.

“HOP Fundamentals provided me [with the] foundation to have a wider and richer perspective and basic [skills] to search and look for more information according to rapidly changing needs” (Survey respondent, 2021, Ecuador).

Learners and graduates of HOP equally highlighted the importance of the information on how to operate in difficult terrains and how to rapidly adapt lessons learnt to new situations as key aspects:

“During the training, we are taught how to operate in difficult circumstances and especially lessons about how to avoid crowds in outlets during distribution is something I’ve utilised from training” (Interview 5, 2021, Kenya: Has completed HOP Core and Response).

During the pandemic, this knowledge has crystallised as an important area to close capacity gaps and strengthen local stakeholders’ capacity to increase flexibility and adaptability of action.

The ability to make adequate assessments of situations was regarded as a critical capability for successfully addressing various challenges. Interviewees emphasised that poor assessment of the context is a major issue that is encountered frequently.

Specifically, timely information about what is needed and how to handle issues is also important for budget management in the face of decreasing funding (Interview 9, 2021), which was also echoed among survey responses.

“I have utilised the skills I acquired from HOP through planning, proper implementation of COVID-19 responses and adjusting the already set budgets to the response of the pandemic” (Survey Respondent, 2021, Zambia).

Therefore, proper analysis of the gaps has become more critical for local actors during COVID-19. Practitioners stated in the interviews that the ability to conduct a successful assessment of the situation is among the key topics they gained from HOP. A programme manager exemplified this by saying:

“In Nigeria, I managed to assess the situation successfully by identifying how many people need hand sanitizers and face masks. But also, you need to think about which type of face masks you need to supply, if it is a remote area, you can’t supply disposable masks every time, it should be washable ones so on... All these, I gained from HOP training” (Interview 3, 2021, Nigeria: Has completed HOP Core).

Another common theme raised in the interviews is that HOP increased awareness of community engagement and understanding and implementing minimum requirements and standards in humanitarian responses. Topics related to gender, inequalities and minorities have repeatedly been highlighted in the interviews, as the training programme provided new perspectives about how to approach the situation and created awareness on aspects that were neglected beforehand:

“It doesn’t matter how many years you spend working in this sector. Training always adds value to your work because it challenges your established thoughts and convictions. For example, I realised the importance of community feedback, how to listen to them and learn, most importantly, take everyone into account” (Interview 6, 2021, Kenya: Has completed HOP Fundamentals (more than 3 modules), Core and Response).

Participants repeatedly indicated capacity challenges that were exacerbated due to the pandemic. However, to mitigate this, many local actors accessed HOP to improve their capacity, which the majority of learners and graduates indicated has been beneficial in their organisational and individual experiences with the pandemic.

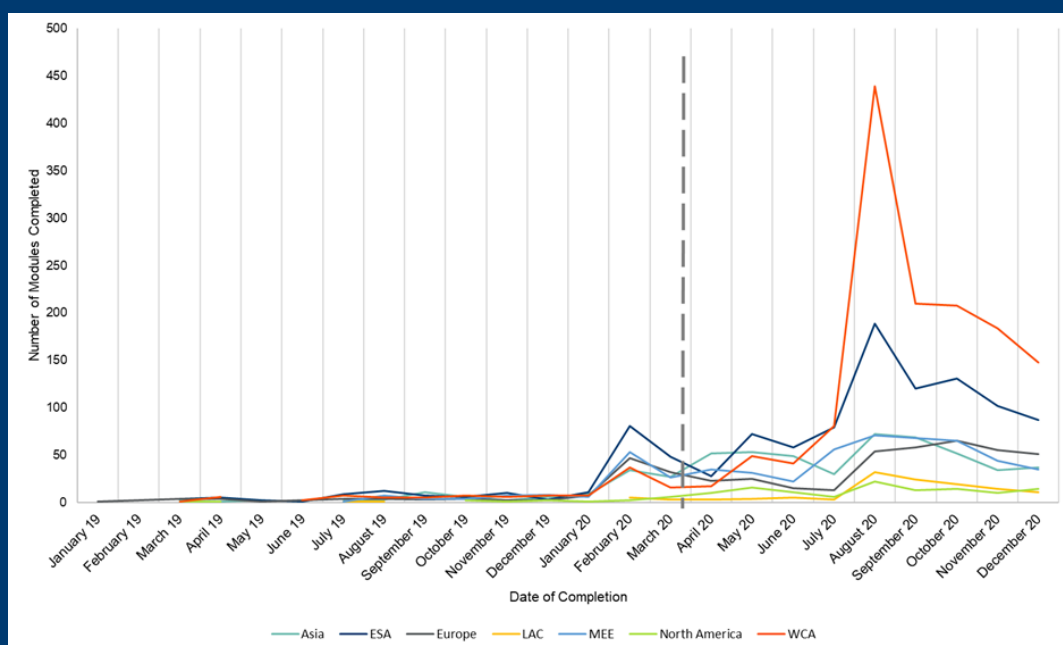
Common themes such as adaptability, conducting needs assessments and community engagement were identified as areas in which HOP strengthened local capacities, particularly in the context of COVID-19.

Research Question 2: What are the regional differences in terms of impact of COVID-19 on access and usage of learning for HOP learners and graduates?

An examination of the regional differences and the impact of COVID-19 on access and usage of learning indicates a consistent increase in overall usage across each HLA designated region (as seen in Figure 5). Variation across regions is most likely strongly influenced by HOP's availability in English and the roll-out of a French version in July 2021. Subsequently, Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and Western and Central Africa (WCA) regions had the most HOP Fundamentals participants overall with 30% (2,840) and 20% (1,483) of participants respectively, while Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) only had 3% (201) of participants. Asia had 16% (1,332) of all participants, MEE had 15% (1,315), Europe had 13% (447) and North America had 4% (301) of all participants.

The largest percentage increase in usage was the LAC region, where 12% (9) of participants completed their first HOP module before the pandemic, whereas 88% (116) completed it after its onset. However, LAC still had far fewer participants than other regions so it cannot be considered the most significant change. The region with the slightest change was Europe, where 25% (105) participants completed their first module before COVID-19 and 75% (371) completed it after the onset of the pandemic. This could suggest that COVID-19 related restrictions, provided some participants with more incentives to start an online education course, such as HOP Fundamentals. It should be noted that all Anglophone HOP modules were available before the onset of the pandemic, and therefore no new modules influenced HOP uptake.

Figure 5: First Completion of a HOP Fundamentals Module on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms by Region



The most significant increase in users occurred in the WCA region, with the number of users skyrocketing among French language speakers across the region and particularly in Burkina Faso. This increase in users corresponds to the roll-out of the Francophone language version of HOP Fundamentals platform in July 2020.

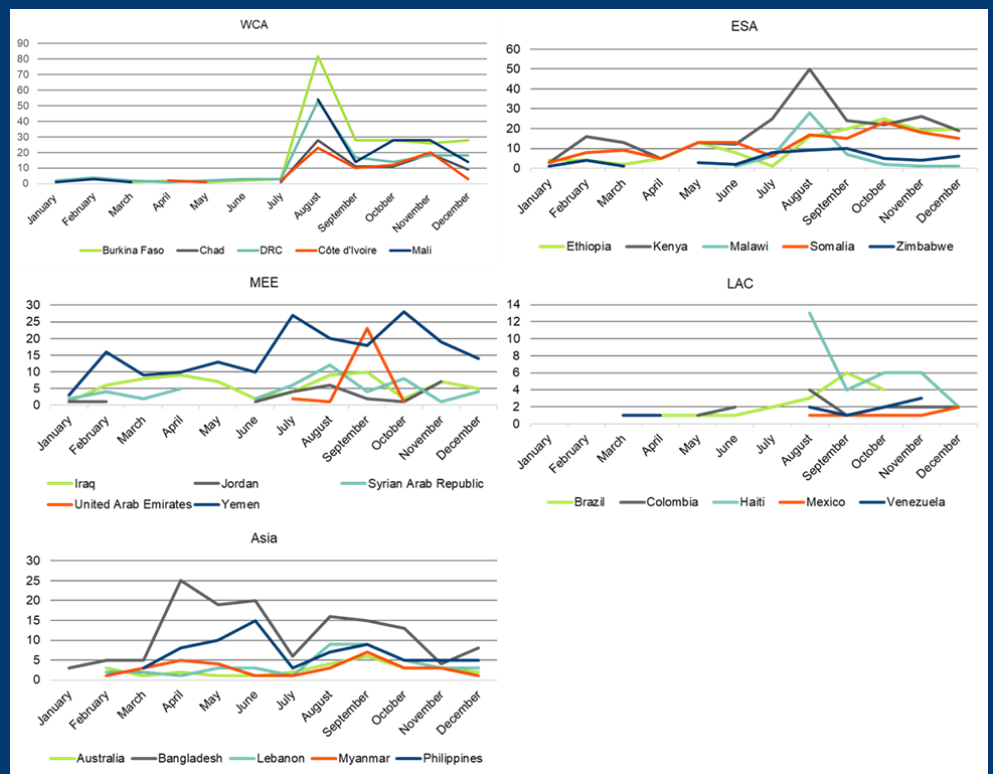
The participants represented in the Francophone data differed more greatly between regions than the Anglophone. 88% (2,737) of all participants were from WCA, while the next highest was Europe and LAC with 4% (102) and 4% (91) of participants respectively. Only 0.22% (2) of all participants were from Asia. The focus of participants in WCA highlights the importance of having a Francophone version of the programme for French speaking users wishing to engage in online humanitarian training.

Similar trends appeared when analysing specific country data. Overall, 4% (147) of all Anglophone users were from Bangladesh, 87% (128) of whom started the programme after the onset of COVID-19. The vast majority of participants indicated to be accessing the platform from Nigeria began after the onset of COVID-19, only 15% (58) began prior. Other countries such as the United Arab Emirates saw 100% (28) of their participants starting

HOP Fundamentals after the onset of the crisis. Furthermore, only nine countries had more than 50% of their completions before COVID-19. Of these nine countries, Serbia had the highest number of users, however it still only counted 0.08% (3) of all participants. These trends cannot be examined in regard to the Francophone data since the platform was introduced in French after the beginning of the pandemic.

Looking at the specific module completion data (detailed in Figure 6), while the ESA region accounted for the most Anglophone HOP Fundamentals participants (1,065), those who completed the entire programme, 41% (16 of 39) listed Europe as their region of residence. The Middle East and Eastern Europe (MEE), ESA, Asia and WCA regions all accounted for 13% (5) respectively. 3% (1) of participants came from North America and 5% (2) of participants from LAC. More notably, all 39 participants completed HOP after late March 2020, indicating an increased level of engagement with the training programme after the onset of the pandemic. In total, 85% of all modules undertaken were completed after 23 March 2020. An example of note includes the LAC region, where approximately 89% (179) of all modules were completed after the pandemic onset.

Figure 6: First Completion of a HOP Fundamentals Module on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms in 2020: Top Five Countries per Region with the Largest Percentage Increase in Usage



North America had the highest percentages of modules completed before the pandemic, still only 18% (55). All 100% of Francophone version modules were completed after the onset of COVID-19.

When considering the popularity of different modules in the Anglophone data, the 'Introduction to the History of Humanitarianism' was the most popular module, it accounted for 25% (1,795) of all modules completed. Other popular modules included 'Introduction to the Core Humanitarian Standard' which had 15% (1,094) of all completions and 'Safeguarding Essentials' which had 9% (663). The least popular module was 'Environment in Humanitarian Action,' which only accounted for 1% (74) of all completions. HOP Fundamentals is a self-paced course and participants have the flexibility to pick and choose between different modules.

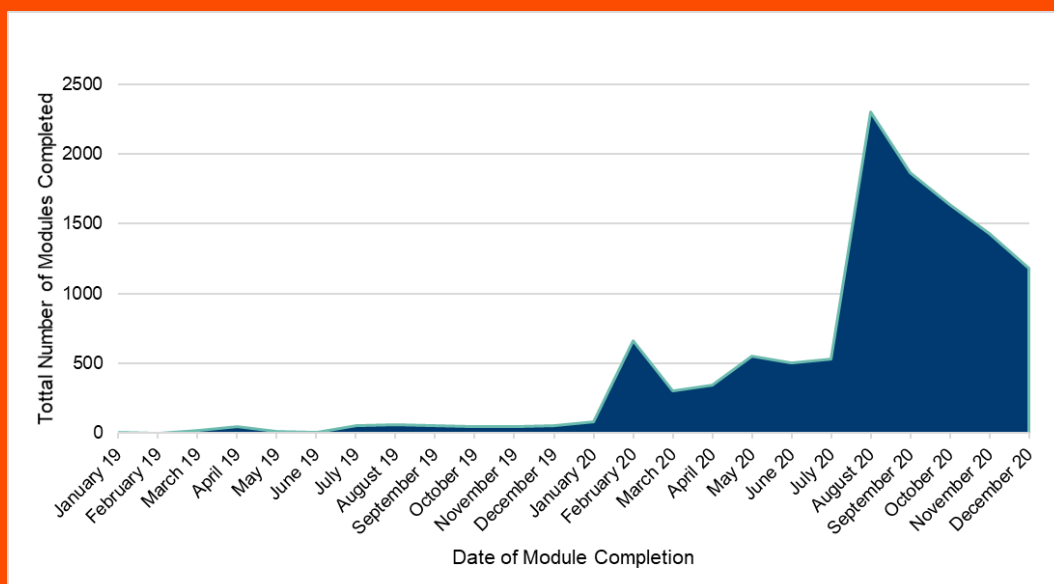
Therefore, the type of modules selected by users is indicative of user preference. Every one of the 22 modules had a higher completion rate after the onset of the pandemic, although some modules appear to have been more popular than others. Of particular note is 'Introduction to Humanitarian Law,' 100% (860) of its completions happened after the onset of COVID-19. In comparison, 'Responsible Data Management in Emergencies' had one of the lowest increases in participants post-pandemic, as 76% (226) of all completions have happened after the onset of COVID-19. While this continues to cement the narrative that HOP was accessed by more people after the onset of COVID-19, it also is illustrative of which modules were most accessed during the first year of the pandemic.

The survey data illustrated a similar narrative, with 69% (24) of the survey respondents completing one to three modules from HOP Fundamentals, 25% (9) of them completing four to seven modules and only 8% (2) of the respondents stated that they completed eight or more modules. Out of the 35 survey respondents, 38% (13) participated in HOP Core and/or Response. However, 70% (25) of the survey respondents who completed four or more modules stated that they completed their modules after the onset of the COVID-19 (March 2020). Whereas respondents who completed their last module before the pandemic commonly completed one to three modules. Findings from the data analysis are consistent with survey results as about 90% (3,951) of users completed between one and five modules, but less than 4% (312) completed more than 10 (see Figure 7; the detailed analysis included in Annex VI).

Much like the Anglophone version, the first unit in the Francophone

version, 'Introduction à l'histoire de l'humanitarisme,' was the most popular, it accounted for 19% of all completions (576). 'CHS La Norme humanitaire fondamentale' was the second most popular unit, which was responsible for 11% (352) of modules. The least popular unit was 'Environnement dans l'Action Humanitaire' which accounted for 2% (53) of all completions. Overall, the Anglophone data illustrates that more modules were completed after the onset of the post-pandemic, indicating an increased usage in the programme. The Francophone version was not rolled out until after the onset of the pandemic, so assumptions cannot be made about increased usage following the onset of COVID-19. As illustrated by the Anglophone data the popularity of specific modules has evolved. Nonetheless, the programme became more popular with participants in every age group, region and among both men and women, which indicates that it has been accessible during the pandemic.

Figure 7: Total Number of Modules Completed in HOP Fundamentals on both Anglophone and Francophone Platforms



This data analysis indicates one principal trend: the use of HOP Fundamentals has significantly increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, 81% (2,862) of all participants started the Anglophone programme of HOP after 23 March 2020 and all 39 who completed the entire programme (22 modules) did so during the first year of the pandemic. Moreover, this trend is generally consistent across different regions and demographics. For example, even in regions with less HOP participants, there was still an increase in access

with roughly 80% of each region's participants starting HOP Fundamentals after the onset of the pandemic. The data establishes that HOP has seen a significant growth in the number of users accessing the online platform, partially because travel restrictions and lockdowns have stymied the international community's ability to directly reinforce local efforts through surge capacity, thus placing more pressure on local NGOs (Konyndyk et al. 2020; Humanitarian Advisory Group 2020).



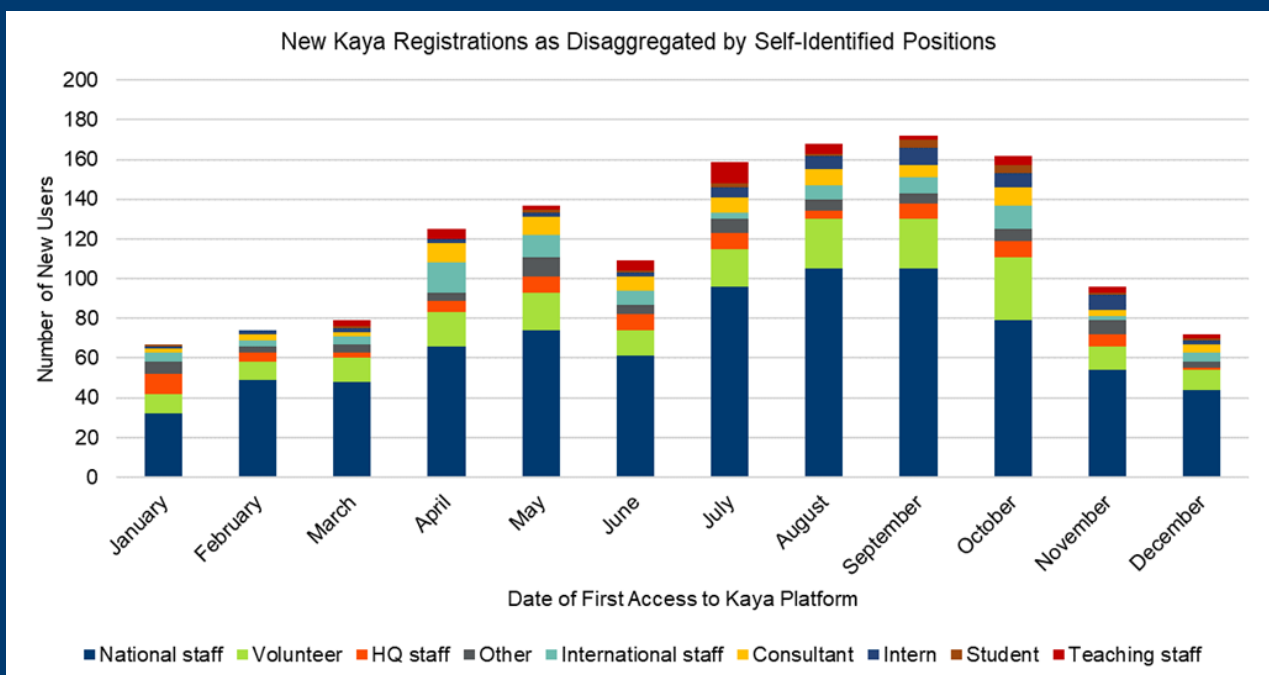
Credit to HLA

Research Question 3: How has the use of HOP online learning materials changed after the onset of COVID-19?

Both new usership and the completion of modules significantly increased among HOP users after the onset of COVID-19. In French speaking regions, this increase was accelerated by the roll-out of the Francophone version of HOP Fundamentals in July 2020; 100% of the 894 Francophone version participants began their first module post-pandemic. For the 3,538 participants who completed at least one module in the Anglophone version of HOP, 39 participants completed the entirety of the programme, which all occurred after the onset of COVID-19.

Since the roll-out of the Anglophone HOP Fundamentals in May 2019, an average of 81% of Anglophone users from all geographical regions, including Asia, ESA, WCA, LAC, MEE and North America, began their first module after the onset of COVID-19. As seen in Figure 8 when self-identifying type of role within their organisation, users are predominantly members of national staff, compared to other positions, such as volunteer and international staff.

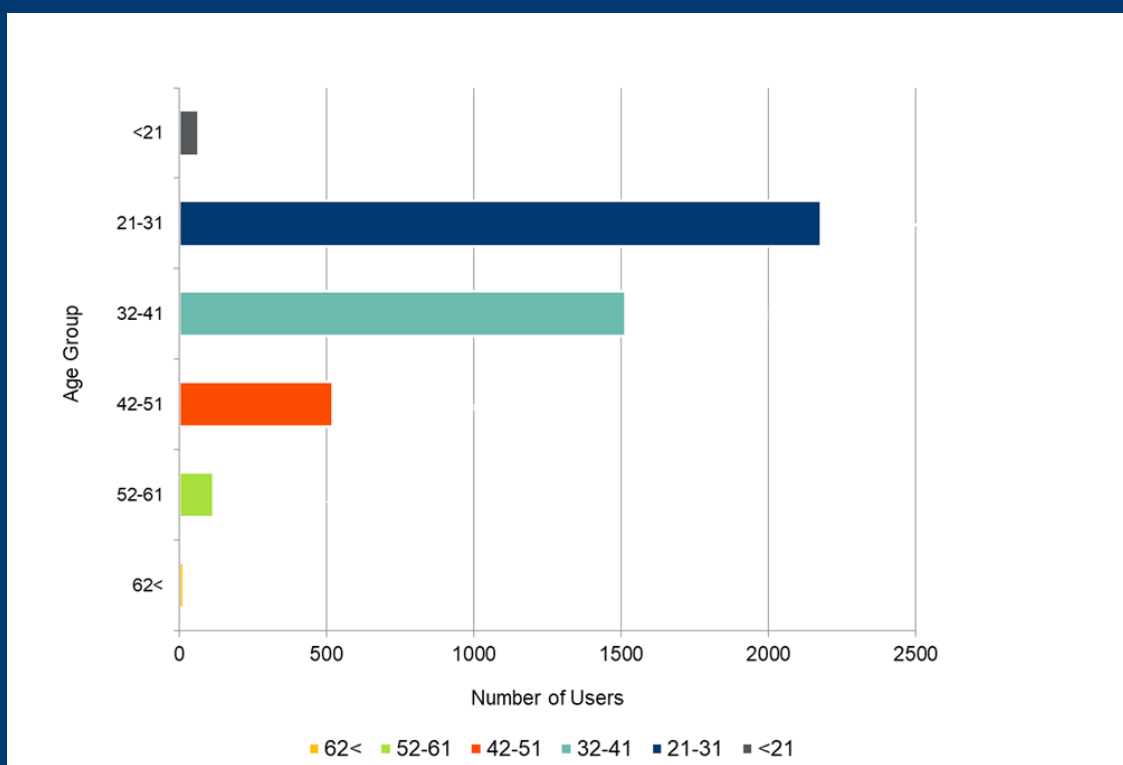
Figure 8: First Access to HOP Fundamentals on Kaya Platform on Both Anglophone and Francophone Platforms: Disaggregation by Self-Identification of Involvement With Organisation



The age breakdown in usage pre- and post-pandemic in the Anglophone data shows similar trends, based on the age brackets HLA established on the Kaya platform (as seen in Figure 9). The most significant increase in usage of HOP was among the 62+ age bracket, where 89% (32) of all modules completed happened after the onset of COVID-19. However, all age brackets saw an increase in usage, most notably among young adults. 82% (1,460) of persons between the ages of 21 and 31 years old, the most populous age bracket, started HOP after the onset of COVID-19. This illustrates a four-fold increase in HOP participants between 21 and 31, with only 16%

(291) beginning prior to the onset of COVID-19. In a similar fashion to the Anglophone version of HOP, the most popular age group accessing the Francophone version of HOP was the 21-31 year old bracket. A comparison of Anglophone module completion rates after the onset of the pandemic align with aforementioned trends. Specifically, 85% of all modules completed by those in the 21-31 bracket and 89% of modules completed by those aged 62 and over were completed after the onset of the pandemic. Those in the 52-61 age bracket completed the highest percentage of modules before COVID-19, however that was only 22% (59) modules out of a total of 275.

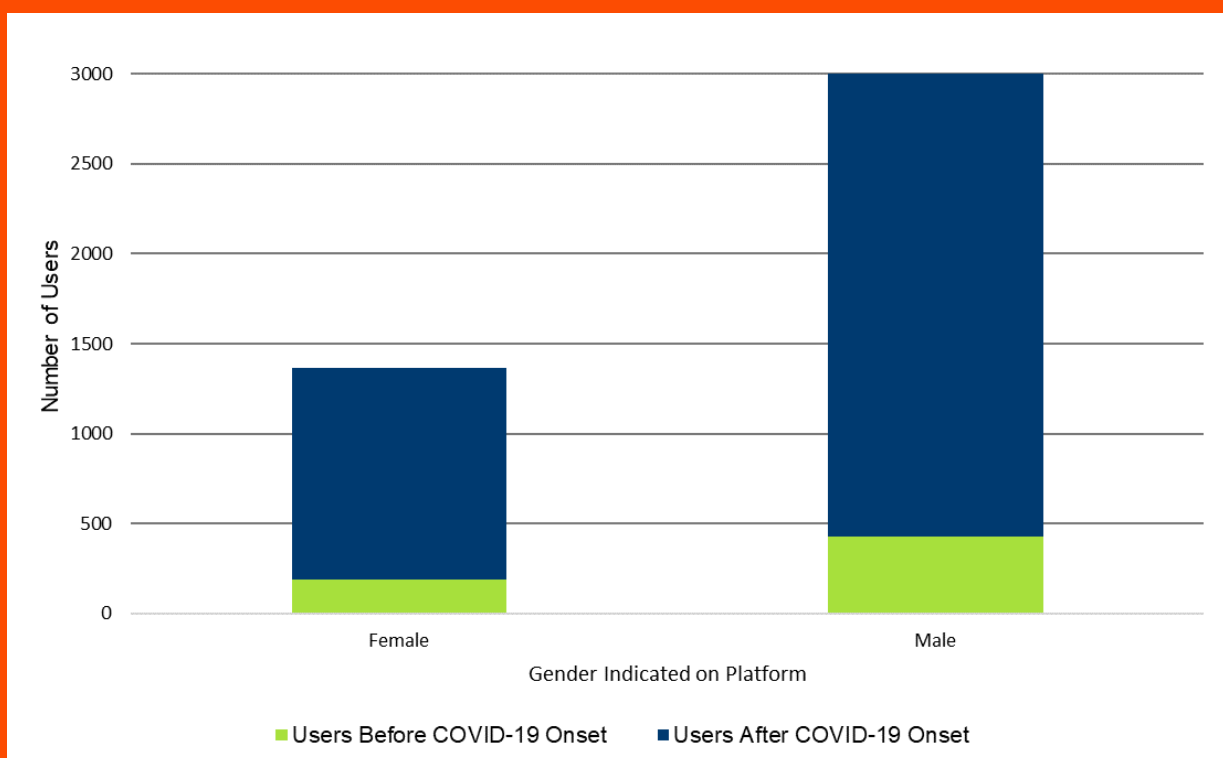
Figure 9: All HOP Fundamentals Users on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms Who Have Completed at Least One Module: Disaggregated by Age



From a gendered perspective, significantly more men have started HOP Fundamentals than women, with the Anglophone data showing that 65% (2,295) of all participants were male and only 35% (1,226) female. Of these totals, more female participants have accessed HOP after the onset of COVID-19 in comparison to their male counterparts. In total, 83% (1,018) of female participants started HOP following the pandemic, compared to 80% (1,835) of men. Among the 39 people who completed all HOP Fundamentals units, 69% (27) were men and 31% (12) were women, indicating that men are still the predominant gender accessing the programme.

The Francophone gender data supports this claim, with a total of 83% (736) male participants and 17% (156) female participants having completed at least the first module after the onset of the pandemic. Examining module completion data, 84% (5,104) of the modules completed by men took place after the onset of COVID-19. For women, the percentage was slightly higher, 86% (2,281) of modules have been completed after 23 March 2020 (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: All HOP Fundamentals Users on Anglophone and Francophone Platforms Who Have Completed at Least One Module: Disaggregated by Gender Before and After COVID-19 Onset



Participants were asked about their preferred language before starting HOP Fundamentals, which provides insight into the linguistic demographics of the user base (see Figure 11). For the Anglophone version of HOP out of 3,538 participants:

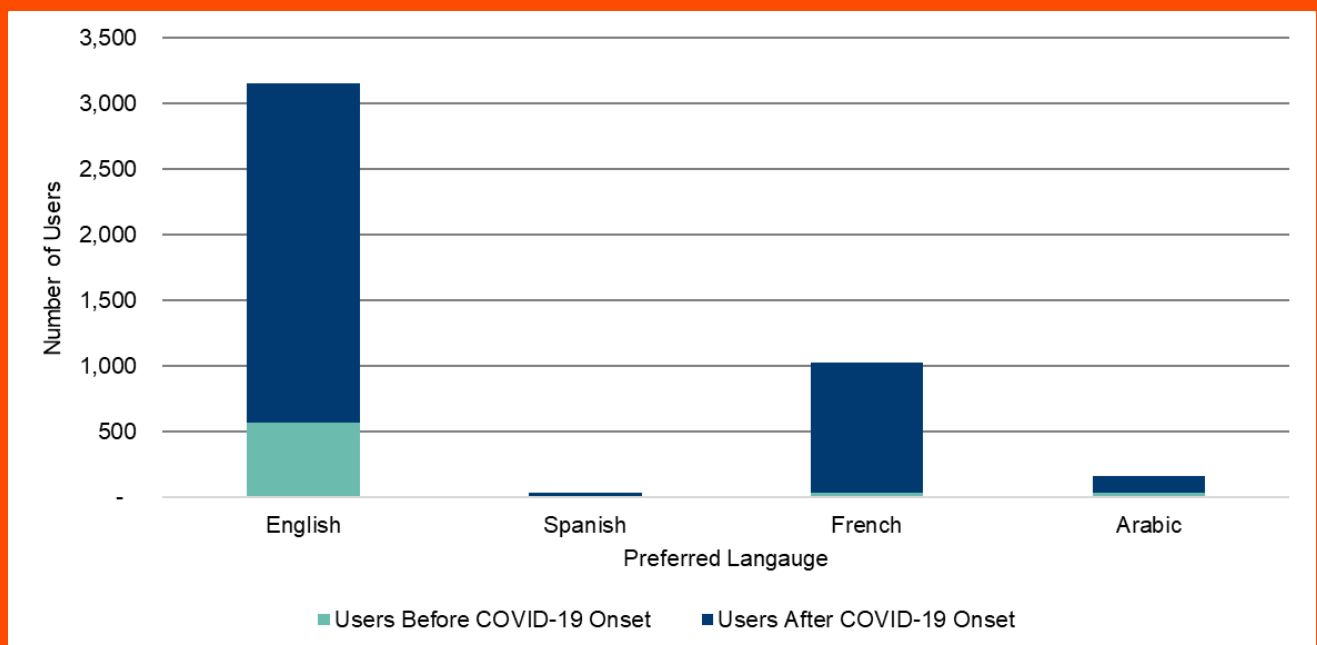
- 88% (3,120) preferred English;
- 6% (220) preferred French;
- 5% (163) preferred Arabic;
- 1% (35) preferred Spanish.

As expected, the 894 participants accessing the Francophone version of the programme were weighted towards French speakers with:

- 91% (813) preferred French;
- 8% (74) preferred English;
- <1% (4) preferred Arabic;
- <1% (3) preferred Spanish.

The encouraging uptake of the French version of the programme indicates that language still represents a significant restriction in the number of people who are able to access HOP Fundamentals. This is important during COVID-19 when the reduction of international support has left local NGOs with more responsibility and less international resources accessible to them (Chadwick, Smith 2020). As the data illustrates, the completion of online learning modules significantly increased among HOP users after the onset of the pandemic, however, the survey and data analysis suggest that users only completed one to three modules in total.

Figure 11: Language Preferences Indicated by HOP Fundamentals Users Before and After COVID-19 Onset



Research Question 4: What other online professional development tools have HOP learners and graduates accessed and used to improve their capacity to respond under the pandemic and how effective was it?

Generally, some learners and graduates of HOP also indicated to have used additional online professional development tools to strengthen their capacity. In total, 69% of the survey respondents state that they accessed other forms of online training for humanitarian response. These include: Trainings on the platform Agora (United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF); Child Protection: Children’s Rights in Theory and Practice (online course from Harvard University); Online trainings through Relief Web and Samaritan’s Purse; Emergency Medical Teams Training (World Health Organisation, WHO). Additional online training programmes were also highlighted during the interviews, such as courses on the platform

DisasterReady; Parenting without violence (Save the Children); Save the Children Humanitarian Intermediate Programme (SHIP; Save the Children); and Food Security (International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC).

Interestingly, participants accessed both HOP Fundamentals and other humanitarian learning opportunities after receiving newsletters or seeing an online advertisement (see Figure 12 and 13). Additionally, recommendations by colleagues or as part of an external coordination meeting were identified as important reasons for accessing online training programmes. This could indicate the importance of double-tiered communication with participants via direct and indirect channels.

Figure 12: Survey Responses Indicating Initial Engagement with HOP Fundamentals

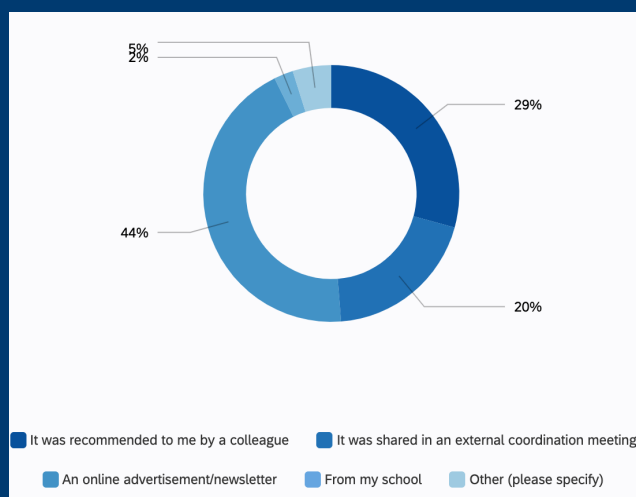
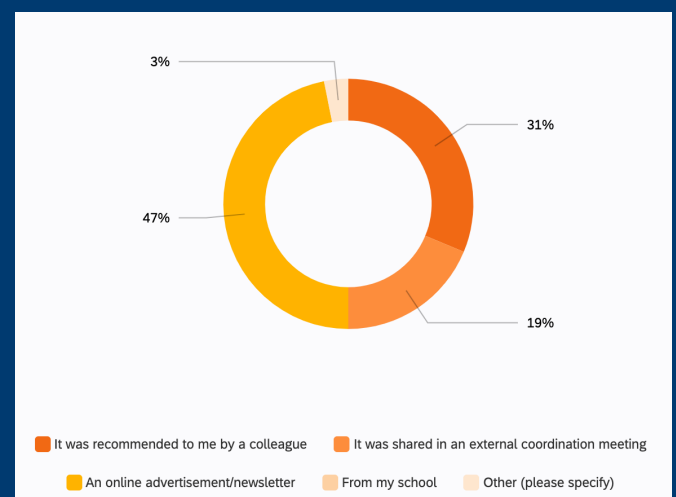


Figure 13: Survey Responses Indicating Initial Engagement with Other Online Professional Development Tools



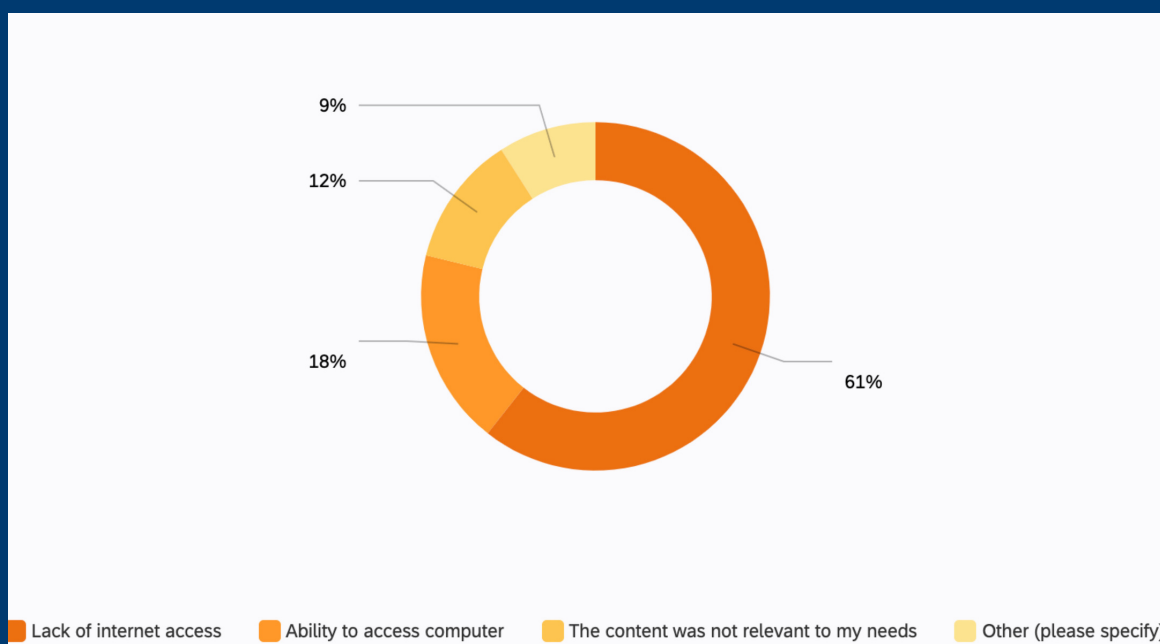
The main limitations identified by every practitioner interviewed in accessing HOP Fundamentals or any other online platform were the weak power supply, lack of access to computers and the internet (as seen in Figure 14). For example, three interviewees from South Sudan explained how they are discouraged to even start any kind of online training due to connection problems. One of the interviewees explained this by saying:

“Every time I start to take an online course, my internet keeps disconnecting every 10 minutes. Sometimes I lose my progress in the training due to sudden logout. If not, I get distracted and unable to focus anymore. So, I give up trying.” (Interview 2, 2021, South Sudan: Has completed HOP Core, accessed HOP Fundamentals and did not complete any of the modules).

As expressed previously, connectivity problems exacerbated due to working from home, which is less reliable than in an organisational office, discouraged them from accessing online training tools, which stated in one of the interviews as:

“In Zambia, even before the pandemic we were in the middle of an electricity crisis. But access to constant power and connection was way easier when we are in the office, as compared to home. After the lockdown started, we couldn’t go to the office for more stable power and connection, and the situation in houses worsened when the electricity crisis intensified with the pandemic. It was really hard to work, let alone do the online training.” (Interview 10, 2021, Zambia: Has completed HOP Core).

Figure 14: Limitations to Accessing HOP as Indicated by Survey Respondents



In the presence of constant connection problems, one option participants mentioned is using hotspots from their mobile phones which is regarded as being safer than Wi-Fi. However, using data from mobile phones is not a better option for doing online training, due to cost and high data usage when online tools include videos. One interviewee explained this problem by saying:

"I use my mobile phone when I need a constant connection, and it works better than other options. But it is not the best choice for doing one-hour long training especially with videos etc. If I do that, my data will finish so quickly, and it is really expensive." (Interview 8, 2021, Kenya: Has completed HOP Core and Response).

Moreover, technological complexity of some online training platforms came as another demotivating factor, especially for people who lack familiarity with these platforms.

In conclusion, a majority of users indicated to have accessed other online professional tools in addition to HOP Fundamentals with most accessing the opportunities after seeing online advertisements or receiving a recommendation from a colleague. Significantly, the largest barrier to accessing online professional development tools was related to access to technology and connectivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the functioning and programming of the humanitarian sector, but may present opportunities to fast track a shift towards a locally-led response (IASC 2016: 3). In this context, this research examined if and how COVID-19 impacted access and use of learning for humanitarians, strengthening their capacity as a result. This report aimed to address this by conducting desk-based research, interviews and a survey among learners and graduates of HOP. The findings show that during the

pandemic, there has been an increased demand for access to and use of training among humanitarian staff. The access to and use of HOP was also significantly impacted by the roll-out of the Francophone platform in July 2020. Based on the report findings, the following section provides recommendations covering both online learning platforms as part of the humanitarian localisation agenda in the context of COVID-19 in general, as well as actions related to HOP specifically.

Learning platforms and the localisation agenda in the context of COVID-19

Implement training as a complementary component of comprehensive capacity strengthening programming

Collaborative knowledge sharing and training collaboration continue to be vital aspects to move towards a paradigm shift towards more localised action. In the context of the pandemic, seizing the moment to implement capacity strengthening as an aspect of localisation should go beyond training (see i.a. Bolletino, Bruderlein 2008).

For instance, the efficacy of training opportunities is linked to sustainable access to resources and financing opportunities for local organisations (Metcalf-Hough et al. 2020). Additionally, online training programmes could take steps towards strengthening the capacity of local actors to navigate international programmatic frameworks and thus reduce coordination challenges.

Ensure continued evaluation of terminology related to localisation

It is important to continuously challenge concepts at the heart of training programmes in cooperation with local organisations. Such discourses facilitate locally driven, sustainable and knowledge-based responses, while also defining and evaluating indicators or benchmarks related to the impact of capacity strengthening measures (see i.a. Sobeck, Agius 2007). A more nuanced definition of 'local' could help facilitate outreach to a greater diversity of groups and actors

involved in a humanitarian response (Barbelet et al. 2020)

Adapt educational platforms

From the restrictions on movement in-country to the limitations to international surge support, COVID-19 has presented unique operational and logistics challenges to humanitarian actors. Subsequently, online learning opportunities will benefit by adapting content to contextual variations resulting from COVID-19 or regional variations in areas with a high and/or growing number of users.



Credit to HLA

Specific Recommendations for HOP

Increase and sustain access and reach of HOP

Sustaining, while also strategically increasing access to all three HOP training units by local actors will be key to achieve the programme's goals as set out by HLA.

- Enhancing outreach to local organisations for all levels of HOP will be important to increase the global reach of HLA's training programme, as HOP users heard of the training opportunity via multiple mediums.
- The introduction of the Francophone version of HOP led to a highly significant increase among French language users during the third quarter of 2020, particularly in WCA. This points towards the importance of language in platform usage. Countries such as Yemen, Iraq and Syria did not have as high of an increase in platform usage despite having an initially higher number of users. In the future, HLA could integrate additional language versions to ensure accessibility for all. Currently, HLA is planning to translate the first module into Arabic, which has a strong user base. This represents a significant step towards increasing accessibility.
- Given the growing importance of online training tools, particularly among local actors, access might be impeded by unstable internet connections or lack of suitable devices. To increase access to capacity strengthening opportunities through HOP Fundamentals, HOP's currently available offline option may need to be better advertised to accommodate users that may be hesitant about starting online courses due to connectivity barriers. To accommodate poor internet connections and limited mobile device accessibility, offering a non-video-based version could additionally extend HOP's reach.
- Based on the findings in this report, some participants of HOP emphasise having benefited from the programme over multiple years. For HOP Fundamentals, the findings indicate that a wide variety of people access it from various stages in their humanitarian career. While HOP Fundamentals successfully addresses the basic elements of the sector, continuously expanding, improving and adapting the programme by adding learning material could enable the platform to reach more participants and keep graduates continuously engaged with the programme.

Moreover, this could encourage higher completion levels. To this end, the HLA's Field Manager in Emergencies Learning and Development (FIELD) programme could be more strongly promoted among HOP participants, as it includes more advanced modules to be engaged throughout their career.

- An additional approach could be to include online versions of HOP Core and HOP Response, as these programmes are much more advanced. All interviewees who had participated in HOP Core and Response noted their interest in an option that would allow them to access related training material online.

Facilitate bi-directional learning and mutual capacity strengthening

To continuously improve HOP, it will be important for HLA to build from the knowledge and experiences of users through bi-directional learning. Mutual capacity strengthening between and among users on the platform may increase knowledge exchange, encourage linkages between the diverse users and take steps towards challenging power imbalances in the humanitarian sector.

- A network between and among the HOP participants could work towards mutual capacity strengthening and cooperation between staff and organisations on all levels. Therefore, to expand networking opportunities,

adding a chat function between users on Kaya and forming an online group for all HOP participants could be valuable for both the participants and HLA. During COVID-19 and beyond, online networking and communication possibilities could bring different stakeholders together to share experiences and knowledge.

- Additionally, HLA should continuously ensure that voices of local actors are part of the programme design, project activities and programme evaluation. This includes maintaining awareness of HLA/SCUK's own powerful role in the humanitarian system and actively considering and addressing challenges related to capacity building and localisation.

Ensure funding

Long-term funding support for HOP should be maintained to address the current and subsequent effects of the pandemic. Additionally, linking training and capacity building programming with other targets of the Grand Bargain will enable local actors to effectively scale up in response to a crisis (Metcalf-Hough et al. 2020).

To conclude, the need for adequate, context-specific and accessible training to strengthen local capacities has risen in importance and urgency during the pandemic. Learners and graduates of HLA's HOP identified the programme as being an aspect to strengthening capacities of local actors. Since short- and long-term consequences of COVID-19 remain unclear, continuously educating staff will prove to be a vital mechanism towards addressing the impact of the pandemic in the future.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I	REVISED VERSION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)
ANNEX II	ORIGINAL TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) AND JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES
ANNEX III	ENDNOTES
ANNEX IV	HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS PROGRAMME (HOP)
ANNEX V	BIBLIOGRAPHY
ANNEX VI	ADDITIONAL DATA AND GRAPHS
ANNEX VII	SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
ANNEX VIII	BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SURVEY OUTPUTS
ANNEX IX	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
ANNEX X	INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM
ANNEX XI	ETHICS



ANNEX I: REVISED VERSION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)



Dated November 2020

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Impact of Covid-19 on humanitarian learners
and localised capacity strengthening

Authors: Franziska Basse, Ellie Chesshire, JP Fisher, Jess Lyga, Irem Simsek
Candidate Numbers: 13052, 23713, 20776, 17780, 17953

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: The impact of Covid-19 on humanitarian learners and localised capacity strengthening

Duration of contract: This contract is to last a duration of 5 months (November – end March 2021)

Location: n/a

1. Background and Context

Over 10 years ago, we set out a vision to work towards a more professionalised, global humanitarian system that will enable countries to prepare for, and adequately respond to, the growing number of humanitarian crises. Over the last five years through the financial support of the IKEA Foundation, we have built solid foundations that have focused our efforts on the design, development and delivery of interventions that develop skilled, trained local experts who can prepare for and respond to, humanitarian disasters in the best way possible – acting quickly and effectively together to minimise suffering and save lives.

Experience gained and lessons learnt from years of designing, developing and delivering capacity strengthening in regions has demonstrated the importance of having the right expertise on the ground. Strong contextual understanding is vital, as are local language skills, with the ability to act quickly and provide optimal support. We have been striving for a model that is “as local as possible and as global as necessary” in line with our localisation commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. The value of strong local and national humanitarian response – backed by global resources where they are needed – has never been more evident than it is today.

The nature of the pandemic means that the traditional surge model of INGOs sending global / regional expertise to crises in the short to medium term will not be possible, resulting in local civil society organisations including Save the Children national and field offices being required to lead responses. Supporting this shift will enable local teams to identify their own needs, find solutions to enhance the overall capacity of front-line humanitarian staff and bolster leadership capabilities. There are a diverse range of actors including humanitarian organisations, local communities and non-traditional responders playing a critical role and support is needed to strengthen their capacity to handle crises of this magnitude.

In the face of adversity comes opportunity, and our response to COVID-19 has been an opportunity to decisively shift the humanitarian landscape and for local actors to claim the new space afforded them. With the right learning and

resources in place, COVID-19 has been an opportunity for the international community to empower local communities, offer a more carbon friendly, at-a-distance support that facilitates the responses that are driven locally.

Our programmes have been built to support localisation of capacity strengthening. Focusing on the learners and graduates from the Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP) we want to understand if we have delivered on this commitment and if so, to what extent under the global pandemic.

The HOP helps strengthen the capacity of staff working in emergency response at national and regional level. Designed for those wishing to understand fully the fundamental principles of humanitarian action, it covers essential elements in setting up and running a humanitarian response. We use the Core Humanitarian Standards and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) as a foundation. The HOP is driven by the need to be relevant to the context in which participants work. We blend face-to-face learning with distance and simulation learning to maximise impact. Participants learn theoretical knowledge and practice new skills so they are confident for future emergencies and can share their skills with others. Passing on learning helps multiply the humanitarian impact, supporting those affected by disaster. The HOP is also a platform for a successful career in humanitarian work, enabling participants to work across the sector in the future.

It was anticipated that online learning would be key to reaching our target audience at scale, this model was tested under Covid.

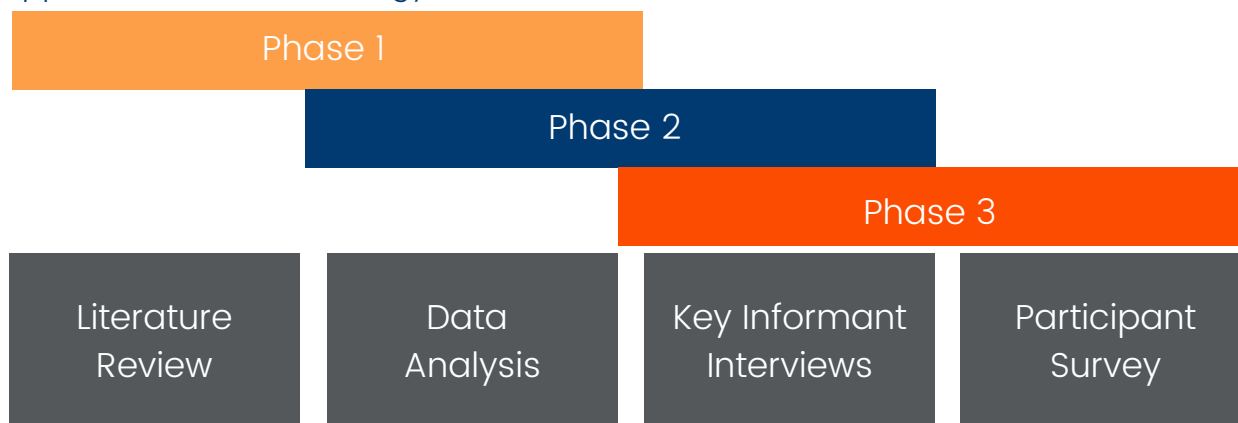
2. Objective of the contract

Looking at HOP learners and graduates, we want to understand if and how COVID-19 impacted access and use of learning for humanitarians based in the global regions, strengthening their capacity as a result.

Key questions for consideration, but not exclusive, include:

- Has COVID-19 increased and enabled access to learning resources for humanitarians based in the regions and if yes then to what extent?
- How has learning from HOP programme been used to improve local capacity under COVID-19 and what positive difference has it made on individuals and organisations?
- What other learning HOP learners and graduates have accessed and used to improve their capacity to respond under the pandemic and how effective was it?
- What are the regional differences in terms of impact of COVID-19 on access and usage of learning for HOP learners and graduates?

3. Approach and methodology



1. The Literature Review will serve to contextualize the analysis of the HOP against the backdrop of COVID-19 and review existing literature related to capacity building for local initiatives, particularly as it pertains to the pandemic response. The literature review will also feed into analyses for the above mentioned research questions if/when particular regions have been identified for further analysis as informed by the data analysis as discussed below.

2. The Data Analysis will be conducted primarily in response to above Research Question 1: How has the use of HOP online learning materials changed in the target region(s) after the onset of COVID-19?, and will also inform Question 4 in terms of analysing regional differences. The consultants aim to conduct a quantitative analysis based on trends of 'HOP Fundamentals' before and after the onset of COVID-19 utilizing Save the Children UK's HOP global data as available. To facilitate analysis, the consultants propose disaggregation of data by (i) geographic region, (ii) whether the respondent is either international or local staff, (ii) the indicated job category, (iii) the organizational classification (NGO, INGO, government agency, etc.) (iv) years of experience, and (v) gender, etc., as relevant. The consultants will coordinate possible and advised disaggregation of data with Save the Children UK focal points according to available information. Based on the data analysis, the consultants can coordinate with Save the Children UK to determine if narrowing the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Participant surveys to a particular region or regions is useful during further analysis.

3. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be conducted with graduates of the HOP to respond to Questions 2, 3 and 4. The consultants will coordinate with Save the Children UK during the selection of KIs to identify potential national-staff interviewees who have completed varying levels of the HOP training programme (estimated two to three persons from each level). The interview will be semi-structured according to pre-established questions that can be shared with Save the Children UK in advance for review and input as necessary. Through the KIIs, the consultants aim to gain a deeper understanding of how the HOP was used during the COVID-19 response and the impact it had on supporting local action.

4. A Survey will be conducted amongst HOP learners to offer additional insight to Question 2 among a wider participant base than can be reached through KIIs. The consultants will coordinate with Save the Children UK to facilitate access to potential survey respondents. Potential respondents to the survey can be narrowed through regional focus or focus on national/field-level staff. Through the survey, the consultants aim to gather additional insight about other learning materials HOP learned have access, the organization that provided the training, their rating of the effectiveness of the training as related to COVID-19 response, etc. The specific questions will be shared with Save the Children UK for review and approval as needed.

All research will be conducted according to Save the Children UK and London School of Economics research ethics; an ethics analysis is conducted as part of all LSE consultancies to control for any potential ethical concerns. The consultants will ensure clear and open communication channels with Save the Children UK during the above-mentioned data collection, interviews and analysis.

4. Resources and engagement from the Academy

A designated project coordinator (Research & Evidence Advisor) will act as the key point of contact at Save The Children UK for the consultant throughout the duration of this work. The Research & Evidence Advisor will be responsible for ensuring proper coordination with the HOP's Global Manager.

The Academy's Research & Evidence team will be available to provide specialist input working together with the HOP's Global Manager , to provide relevant background materials to HOP , and will provide feedback as appropriate according to review milestones.

The Academy's Research & Evidence lead will act as sponsor for this work and will provide feedback as appropriate according to review milestones.

5. Proposed schedule and deliverables

What	When
ToR Submitted to LSE	09 Nov
Proposal (Inception Report) submitted to HLA	11 Nov
Proposal agreed by HLA & LSE	TBD
Draft Report Submitted	TBD
Final Report Submitted	26 Mar
Presentation delivered	29 Mar - 02 Apr

ANNEX II: ORIGINAL TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) AND JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

LSE/ID Project Proposal Template	
Organisation and Department	Save the Children UK, Humanitarian Department
Project Working Title	The impact of COVID-19 on capacity strengthening and localisation.
<p>Background: Two short paragraphs. In the first, please provide a brief description of your organisation and its objectives. In the second, please provide a brief introduction to the topic to be addressed by the project. Why is the organisation interested? Why is the subject itself interesting?</p>	<p>Save the Children is driven by our belief in the rights of children and their potential to change the world. We fight for children every single day. Everything we do is focusing on ensuring more children survive, more children have the chance to learn and more children are protected when they're in danger.</p> <p>Save the Children is committed to localisation of humanitarian response, because we believe more localised responses can ultimately do better to fulfil the rights of children affected by crisis. As a capacity strengthening unit within Save the Children, we partner with local responders in countries affected by disaster or conflict to share learning. The ambition we have been striving for that is a model that is "as local as possible and as global as necessary" is even more critical than ever before.</p> <p>The humanitarian sector as a whole will have huge learning from COVID-19. Our focus is whether COVID-19 has accelerated the shift towards greater localisation and the role of capacity strengthening as part of this shift.</p> <p>The findings from this project will not only evaluate what has worked and why but will also provide recommendations on how to improve our own capacity as an organisation(s) that is able to complement and support rather than replace local actors in humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery.</p>
<p>Question: (One or two sentences. What is the motivating question? What is it, specifically, that your organisation would like to know?)</p>	<p>There are two drivers for this work:</p> <p>1) Seeking validation that COVID-19 has resulted in a shift towards more attempts to harness a localisation approach due to barriers within INGOs; Is it really a game changer that we anticipate it to be in terms of building even greater local and national capability, through increased reach and scale?</p> <p>2) In light of the shift, what has changed and needs to further change/be scaled to ensure that we maximise this new dynamic from a capacity strengthening perspective i.e. what works, what needs to be done differently; what's missing?</p>
<p>Objective: (Short paragraph)</p>	If our assumptions are correct and indeed COVID-19 has

<p>that explains what you hope to get out of the answer and how you may use the students' work to advance organisational objectives.)</p>	<p>accelerated thinking on the localisation of INGO work, then this would direct our thinking on how we make those changes sustainable and how we ensure we maintain the pace even after(?) the pandemic. The findings may not only reshape some of the narrative around the impact of COVID-19, but also the way the organisation defines capacity strengthening. Furthermore, we believe that there will be a lot of demand from across the sector for this learning and we aim to disseminate the learning across the sector as we see it as the foundation of the further work in that space.</p>
<p>Methodology: How the students are expected to answer the question. E.g. desk research, interviews, survey, review of internal documents, etc. If you wish the students to define the methodology, please say so.</p>	<p>We would expect the consultants to start with some desk research on localisation and capacity strengthening as well as analyse and interpret data we have on reach, completion, and our humanitarian digital audience. Finally, we want to provide access to participants and graduates from our flagship Humanitarian Operations Programme so consultants can work out best approach: survey/interviews, mapping out what has been achieved to-date.</p>
<p>Contact: (The name and contact information of the person within your organisation who will be responsible for liaising with the students.</p>	<p>Pawel Mania, Senior MEAL Manager, P.Mania@savethechildren.org.uk Seema Patel, MEAL Officer se.patel@savethechildren.org.uk</p>

Justification of Changes

The TORs for this research underwent a drastic change from those first presented to the group at the outset of the project. Following an initial meeting with the Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA) it was determined that the work should focus specifically on the Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP) run by HLA.

The original ToRs broadly focused on the impact of COVID-19 on localisation and capacity strengthening. The revised ToRs are substantially different to those first presented, which were much more general and did not focus specifically on HOP.

These changes were led by HLA not the research group at LSE and were

communicated to the group at the first meeting. After submitting the initial ToRs to LSE, HLA thought more specifically about the results desired and these conversations led to the updated ToRs. To guarantee feasibility of the research in the given time frame, the group worked together with the client to identify specific research questions.

The final four questions that HLA all centred around HOP and the impacts that the pandemic has had on both access and the nature of the programme. The research team was also tasked with determining how HOP had been used to improve local capacity during COVID-19 and what other online professional development tools participants have accessed during the pandemic.

ANNEX III: ENDNOTES

[1] For further discussions and contributions on this see i.e. *Shifting the Power* (2017); Ramalingam et al. (2013); Gingerich and Cohen (2015); or Stephenson Jr. (2017).

[2] As such, it can take various forms, from remote management to increased funding or capacity strengthening (Elkahlout, Elgibali 2020). Many of these measures require conscious decisions to transfer authority and power (*Shifting the Power* 2017). Therefore, many authors highlight this deliberate shift of power to local actors as a key aspect of localisation processes (Olliff 2018; Elkahlout, Elgibali 2020; Sundberg 2019). For further discussions among organizations in the humanitarian sphere, see: i.a. Van Brabant, Patel 2017; Barbelet 2018.

[3] Among others, Gingerich and Cohen (2015) and Wall and Hedlund (2016) comment further on the definition of local actors and their role in humanitarian interventions. The IASC (2018) distinguishes between local, national and international actors, while recognising that these are in themselves diverse groups. Local and national actors are categorised into two subgroups:

- Local and national non-state actors: “Organizations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are not affiliated to an international NGO” (ibid.: 1).
- National and sub-national state actors: “State authorities of the affected aid recipient country engaged in relief, whether at local or national level” (ibid.: 1).

While acknowledging these definitory difficulties, HLA (2020) highlights the critical importance of these actors in humanitarian contexts. For the purposes of this analysis, the report will refer to all local and national actors as ‘local’.

[4] Potter and Brough (2004) emphasise that capacity strengthening intrinsically lies at the very heart of development and thus is a vital component of international humanitarian work. Reflective of the debates around localisation, capacity strengthening can be perceived as a mere “buzzword” of the humanitarian sector or as a “synonym for institutional and organisational development” (Eade 2007: 631).

[5] Capacity will be understood as “the contribution of an actor or an organisation to alleviating the suffering of affected populations” (Barbelet 2018: 14). Capacities can thus refer to organisational or operational elements (Barbelet 2018) and can be strengthened in regards to various aspects such as material, technical, financial or intellectual (Eade 2007).

[6] According to Paul (1995), capacity building activities can take a variety of different forms and can be classified into four different categories:

- Human and Institutional: Especially against the backdrop of the fast-paced staff turnover in the humanitarian system, capacity strengthening on both levels is key to ensure complementarity of human and institutional capacities (Christoplos 2004; Richardson 2006; Sobek, Agius 2007).
- Planning and Implementation: While planning and implementation require different capabilities, a balance between the two must be emphasised in capacity strengthening interventions (Paul 1995).
- Micro and Macro Level: On the micro level, capacity requirements might involve management and implementation - contrary to the macro level, where policy evaluation might have a greater impact (ibid.).

- Cognitive and Practice: Capacity strengthening can be more on the practical or cognitive level, the latter making training an important but not exclusive part of the process (Kaplan 2000). Fast and Bennett (2020) underline that contextual and technical knowledge should ideally go hand in hand to ensure a capacity exchange on a level playing field between all actors involved.

[7] For further discussions among organizations in the humanitarian sphere, see: i.a. Fast and Bennett 2020; Petruney et al. 2014.

[8] For further discussions among organizations in the humanitarian sphere, see: i.a. Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream 2020; Barbelet 2018; Audet 2011.

[9] This can be exemplified e.g. along the 2020 Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) Briefing Note, which detailed that some INGO and UN country offices experienced a 50 to 75 percent reduction in international staff (Barbelet et al. 2020).

[10] Training is closely interlinked with debates on delivering qualitative humanitarian assistance and implementing humanitarian principles. For contributions on these issues see i.a. O'Dempsey 2009; Johnson et al. 2013; Hilhorst 2002. HLA establishes “relevant, scalable and sustainable” training as a key mechanism for capacity strengthening of individuals and organisations (HLA 2020).

[11] To examine responses from practitioners in the field see the survey by the network ‘Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance’ (ELRHA) which suggests that training remains fragmented and uneven across actors without minimum standards (Russ 2012).

[12] Participants identified a variety of gaps, exacerbated by the pandemic. In addition to programme implementation and coordination challenges, other gaps are identified, such as field visits, learning from one another, fellowship and networking.

ANNEX IV: HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS PROGRAMME (HOP)

As a signatory of the Grand Bargain, Save the Children has committed to strengthening the capacity of local actors. As part of this commitment, Save the Children's Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA) has designed multiple context-driven training and learning programmes dedicated to increasing the capacity of humanitarian actors with the Core Humanitarian Standards and Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) as a foundation. Among these mechanisms, HOP aims to strengthen the capacity

of staff working in emergency response at national and regional levels. The training programme addresses essential elements in setting up and running a humanitarian response through a blended approach that utilises distance and face-to-face learning. The theoretical knowledge covered in the training aims to enhance the ability of participants to practice new skills and share those skills with others (SCUK HCB 2019). The training programme is broken down into three units as detailed below:

HOP Fundamentals (Level 1):

HOP Fundamentals is an online, open-access catalogue of interactive learning modules that provide a basic framework for those beginning their journey in the humanitarian sector or who would like a refresher on core humanitarian principles. The modules are broken into six topics: (1) Technical Skills, (2) Response Support Skills, (3) Response Setup and Management, (4) Operations Management, (5) Principles and Approaches, and (6) Law (SCUK HOP 2020).

HOP Core (Level 2):

The week-long, in-person training includes context-driven interactive sessions and a desk-based scenario. The training aims to enhance and operationalise participant knowledge of cross-cutting themes ranging from introductory principles of Humanitarian Action to proposal writing (SCUK HOP 2020).

HOP Response (Level 3):

The intensive, in-person exercise is available upon completing the HOP Fundamentals and Core training and is designed to test the good practice of participants to enhance an understanding of political and cultural contexts, information analysis, and leadership skills (SCUK HOP 2020).

ANNEX V: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aluisio, Adam R. et al. (2020): Academic-humanitarian partnerships: leveraging strengths to combat COVID-19. *Global Health Action* 13(1). pp. 1-4.

Audet, Francois (2011): What future role for local organizations? A reflection on the need for humanitarian capacity-building. *International Review of the Red Cross* 93(884). pp. 1151-1164.

Barbelet, Veronique (2018): As local as possible, as international as necessary. Understanding capacity and complementarity in humanitarian action. HPG Working Paper. Humanitarian Policy Group Overseas Development Institute: London. pp. 1-27.

Barbelet, Veronique et al. (2020): 'All Eyes Are on Local Actors': Covid-19 and Local Humanitarian Action. HPG Humanitarian Policy Group Overseas Development Institute. Briefing Note. pp. 1-12.

Bolletino, Vincenzo and Bruderlein, Claude (2008): Training humanitarian professionals at a distance: testing the feasibility of distance learning with humanitarian professionals. *Distance Education* 29(3). pp. 269-287.

Bryant, John (2020): Mapping local capacities and support for more effective humanitarian responses. Overseas Development Institute. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/publications/16505-mapping-local-capacities-and-support-more-effective-humanitarian-responses> [last accessed: 15/02/2021].

Bustamante, Nirma D. et al. (2020): The Haiti Humanitarian Response Course: A Novel Approach to Local Responder Training in International Humanitarian Response. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 35(2). pp. 220-224.

Campbell, Leah and Knox-Clarke, Paul (2016). How can we better involve national actors in humanitarian coordination? (Coordination Workshop Briefing Paper). ALNAP/ ODI: London.

Chadwick, Vince and Smith, Emma (2020): Local Professionals step in to fill delivery gap amid questions over resources. Available at: <https://www.devex.com/news/local-professionals-step-in-to-fill-delivery-gap-amid-questions-over-resources-97363> [last accessed: 07/04/2021].

Christoplos, Ian (2004): Institutional capacity building amid humanitarian action. *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004*. pp. 29-72.

CHS Alliance (2015): Humanitarian Accountability Report. On the road to Istanbul: How can the World Humanitarian Summit make humanitarian response more effective?. Available at: <https://dlh79zlgfht2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2019/07/CHS-Alliance-HAR-2015.pdf> [last accessed: 21/02/2021].

Eade, Deborah (1997): *Capacity-Building. An Approach to People-Centred Development*. Oxfam: Oxford.

Eade, Deborah (2007): Capacity building: who builds whose capacity?. *Development in Practice* 17(4). pp. 630-639.

Elkahlout, Ghassan and Elgibali, Kareem (2020): From Theory to Practice: A Study of Remotely Managed Localised Humanitarian Action in Syria. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 15(2). pp. 235-249.

Fast, Larissa and Bennett, Christina (2020): From the ground up. It's about time for local humanitarian action. HPG Report. Humanitarian Policy Group Overseas Development Institute: London. pp. 1-29.

Featherstone, Andy and Bogati, Subindra (2016): Opportunity Knocks: Realising the potential of partnerships in the Nepal earthquake response. ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund. pp. 1-30.

Gingerich, Tara R. and Cohen, Marc J. (2015): Turning the Humanitarian System on its Head. Saving lives and livelihoods by strengthening local capacity and shifting leadership to local actors. Oxfam Research Reports. Oxfam International: Oxford. pp. 1-55.

Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream (2020): Guidance note on capacity strengthening for localisation. Available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17264/pdf/guidance_note_on_capacity_strengthening_max_2020.pdf [last accessed: 15/02/2021].

Hailey, John and James, Rick (2002): Learning leaders: The key to learning organisations. *Development in Practice* 12(3). pp. 398-408.

Hilhorst, Dorothea (2002): Being good at doing good? Quality and accountability of humanitarian NGOs. *Disasters*, 26(3). pp. 193-212.

HLA (Humanitarian Leadership Academy) (2020): The Humanitarian Leadership Academy and Localisation.

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) et al. (2020): A Window of Opportunity: Learning from COVID-19 to Progress Locally Led Response and Development. pp. 1-16.

IASC (Interagency Standing Committee) (2016): The Grand Bargain - A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need. Istanbul. pp. 1-16.

IASC (Interagency Standing Committee) (2017): Categories for tracking funding flows. pp. 1 Available at: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/categories_for_tracking_direct_as_possible_funding_to_local_and_national_actors_003.pdf [last accessed: 19/04/2021].

IASC (Interagency Standing Committee) (2018): Definitions Paper IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, Localisation Marker Working Group. Available at: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/hfft_localisation_marker_definitions_paper_24_january_2018.pdf [last accessed: 19/04/2021].

IASC (Interagency Standing Committee) (2020a): Guidance note on capacity strengthening for localisation. pp. 1-3. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-05/Guidance%20note%20on%20capacity%20strengthening%20May%202020.pdf> [last accessed: 19/04/2021].

IASC (Interagency Standing Committee) (2020b): Interim Guidance Localisation and the COVID-19 Response. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain> [last accessed: 16/02/2021].

ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) (2018): Localization Examined: An ICVA Briefing Paper. pp. 1-18.

ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) (n.d.): Localisation. Available at: <https://www.icvanetwork.org/localization#:~:text=Localization%20is%20the%20process%20through,be%20met%20swiftly%2C%20effectively%20and> [last accessed: 21/02/2021].

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) (2018): IFRC Policy Brief. Localization - what it means and how to achieve it. pp. 1-6.

- Jacquet, Gabrielle A. et al. (2014): Availability and Diversity of Training Programs for Responders to International Disasters and Complex Humanitarian Emergencies. *Plos Currents* 23(6). Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4073805/> [last accessed: 15/02/2021].
- Johnson, Kirsten et al. (2013): Competency-Based Standardized Training for Humanitarian Providers: Making Humanitarian Assistance a Professional Discipline. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*. pp. 1-4.
- Kaplan, Allan (2000): Capacity building: Shifting the paradigms of practice. *Development in Practice* 10(3). pp. 517-526.
- Konyndyk, Jeremy et al. (2020): Humanitarian Financing Is Failing the COVID-19 Frontlines. Center For Global Development. Available at: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/humanitarian-financing-failing-covid-19-frontlines>. [last accessed: 03/04/2021].
- Lister, Sarah (2000): Power in Partnership? An Analysis of an NGO's Relationships with its Partners. *Journal of International Development* 12. pp. 227-239.
- Macrae, Joanna (1998): The death of humanitarianism?: An anatomy of the attack. *Disasters* 22(4), pp. 309-317.
- Metcalfe-Hough, Victoria et al. (2019): Grand Bargain annual independent report 2019. Executive summary. HPG Commissioned Report. Humanitarian Policy Group Overseas Development Institute: London. pp. 1-9.
- Moshtari, Mohammad and Goncalves, Paulo (2011): Understanding the Drivers and Barriers of Coordination Among Humanitarian Organizations. POMS 23rd Annual Conference. pp. 1-38.
- Nightingale, Katherine (2012): Building the Future of Humanitarian Aid: Local Capacity and Partnerships in Emergency Assistance. Christian Aid. pp. 1-40.
- Obrecht, Alice (2014): 'De-Internationalising' Humanitarian Action: Rethinking the 'Global-Local' Relationship. IRIS Humanitarian Affairs Think Tank. pp. 1-12.
- Olliff, Louise (2018): From Resettled Refugees to Humanitarian Actors: Refugee Diaspora Organizations and Everyday Humanitarianism. *New Political Science* 40(4). pp. 658-674.
- O'Dempsey, Tim (2009): Fair training: a new direction in humanitarian assistance. *Progress in Development Studies* 9(1). pp. 81-86.
- Paul, Samuel (1995): Capacity building for Health Sector Reform. Discussion Paper No. 5. World Health Organization: Geneva. pp. 1-19.
- Petroney, Tricia et al. (2014): Informing the future of capacity building: lessons from an NGO partnership. *Development in Practice* 24(3). pp. 435-441.
- Pollard, Emma and Willison, Rebecca (2005): Institute for Employment Studies. Beyond the Screen: Supporting E-learning. Report. Institute for Employment Studies IES: Brighton. Report 425.
- Potter, Christopher and Brough, Richard (2004): Systemic capacity building: a hierarchy of needs. *Health Policy and Planning* 19(5). pp. 336-345.
- Ramalingam, Ben et al. (2013): Missed opportunities: the case for strengthening national and local partnership-based humanitarian responses. ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB and Tearfund. pp. 1-27.

Richardson, Frances (2006): Meeting the Demand for Skilled and Experienced Humanitarian Workers. *Development in Practice* 16(3-4). pp. 334-341.

Roepstorff, Kristina (2020): A call for critical reflection on the localisation agenda in humanitarian action. *Third World Quarterly* 41(2). pp. 284-301.

Russ, Catherine (2012): Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalisation. Enhancing learning & research for humanitarian assistance (ELRHA). pp.1-69.

Salas, Eduardo et al. (2012): The Science of Training and Development in Organizations: What Matters in Practice. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 13(2). pp. 74-101.

SCUK (Save the Children UK) (2016): Remote Capacity Strengthening in Syria for Better Child Protection (RISE). Available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/16983/pdf/rise_project_brochure_2016.pdf [last accessed: 03/04/2021].

SCUK (Save the Children UK) (2019): Humanitarian Operations Programme Save the Children UK. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-practice/humanitarian-capacity-building/humanitarian-operations-programme> [last accessed: 03/04/2021].

SCUK (Save the Children UK) (2019): What is the Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP)? Essential Foundations for the Humanitarian Sector. pp. 1 - 2. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/hop-hcb-programme-descriptor.pdf> [last accessed: 12/04/2021].

SCUK (Save the Children UK) (2020): Accelerating Localised Response to COVID-19: Practical Pathways. pp. 1-10.

Shifting the Power (2017): Localisation of Aid: Are INGOs walking the talk?. pp. 1-16.

Smillie, Ian (2001): Capacity Building and the Humanitarian Enterprise. In: Smillie, Ian (Ed. for the Humanitarianism and War Project) (2001): Patronage or Partnership. Local Capacity Building in Humanitarian Crises. Kumarian Press: Bloomfield. pp. 7-23.

Sobeck, Joanne (2008): How Cost-Effective is Capacity Building in Grassroots Organizations? *Administration in Social Work* 32(2). pp. 49-68.

Sobeck, Joanne and Agius, Elizabeth (2007): Organizational capacity building: Addressing a research and practice gap. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 30. pp. 237-246.

Sphere Project (2018): The Sphere Handbook. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. Available at: <https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/#ch001> [last accessed: 15/02/2021].

Stephenson Jr., Max O. (2017): The Theory and Practice of International Humanitarian Coordination. *Palgrave Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations in World Politics*. pp. 485-502.

Sumner, Andy et al. (2020): Estimates of the Impact of COVID-19 on Global Poverty. Vol. 2020. WIDER Working Paper. UNU-WIDER.

Sundberg, Molly (2019): National Staff in Public Foreign Aid: Aid Localization in Practice. *Human Organization* 78(3). pp. 253-263.

Tint, Barbara S. et al. (2015): Games for Learning and Dialogue on Humanitarian Logistics. Applied improvisation training for disaster readiness and response. Preparing humanitarian workers and communities for the unexpected. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management* 5(1). pp. 73-94.

Van Brabant, Koenraad and Patel, Smruti (2017): Understanding the Localisation Debate. *Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI)*. pp. 1-19.

Walker, Peter et al. (2010): A Blueprint for Professionalizing Humanitarian Assistance. *Health Affairs* 29(12): pp. 2223-2230.

Wall, Imogen and Hedlund, Kerren (2016): Localisation and Locally-led Crisis Response: A Literature Review. *Local to Global Protection (L2GP)*. pp. 1-46.

ANNEX VI: ADDITIONAL DATA AND GRAPHS

Annex VI Table 1: All Registered HOP Users by Age Group Disaggregated by Gender

Annex Table VI Table 1. All Registered HOP Users by Age Group Disaggregated by Gender								
Row Labels	Female	% Female	% Female of Total	Male	% Male	% Male of Total	Grand Total	% of Grand Total
<21	40	63%	1%	24	38%	1%	64	1%
21-31	794	37%	18%	1,381	63%	31%	2,175	49%
32-41	387	26%	9%	1,122	74%	26%	1,509	34%
42-51	118	23%	3%	403	77%	9%	521	12%
52-61	31	27%	1%	84	73%	2%	115	3%
62<	5	36%	0%	9	64%	0%	14	0%
Grand Total	1,375	31%	31%	3,023	69%	69%	4,398	100%

**Data includes all HOP users who created accounts on the Kaya platform until 31 December 2020 including both users from the Francophone and Anglophone platform. Users that did not or did not choose to specify an age and/or gender are not represented in this table as they represent a statistically insignificant proportion of respondents for data analysis purposes ($n < 1\%$). Therefore the number of participants listed in the Grand Total does not equal the total number of participants listed in the report (4,432).

Annex VI Table 2: HOP Users Completing First HOP Module Pre and Post COVID-19 Onset

Annex VI Table 2. HOP Users Completing First HOP Module Pre and Post COVID-19 Onset						
Region	Female			Male		
	Pre COVID-19 Onset	Post COVID-19 Onset	% Growth	Pre COVID-19 Onset	Post COVID-19 Onset	% Growth
Asia	28	181	546%	67	273	307%
ESA	37	224	505%	150	654	336%
Europe	61	239	292%	39	128	228%
LAC	5	57	1040%	4	59	1375%
MEE	34	159	368%	75	277	269%
North America	10	60	500%	8	54	575%
WCA	15	254	1593%	88	1126	1180%
Grand Total	190	1174		431	2571	

**Data includes HOP users of the Francophone and Anglophone platform who completed his/her first HOP module before and after COVID-19 onset. For data analysis purposes the date of onset was established with SCUK to be 23 March 2020. As the HOP Francophone platform was rolled out in July 2020 this is part of the explanation behind the large increase in WCA. Note that users that did not or did not choose to specify gender are not accounted for in this table as they represent a statistically insignificant proportion of respondents for data analysis purposes ($n < 1\%$). Furthermore, a very small number ($n < 1\%$) of the module completion dates were uploaded to the platform as an error and are thus not reflected here.

Annex VI Table 3.1 and 3.2: Categorisation of Language Preference: HOP Users Completing First HOP Module Pre and Post COVID-19 Onset

Annex VI Table 3.1. Categorization of Language Preference: HOP Users Completing First HOP Module Pre and Post COVID-19 Onset

English Language Preference					French Language Preference				
Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Preference Group	% Growth Pre/Post C.O.	Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Preference Group	% Growth Pre/Post C.O.
Nigeria	58	318	12%	448%	Burkina Faso	1	193	19%	19200%
Kenya	36	203	8%	464%	Mali	2	127	13%	6250%
Bangladesh	19	128	5%	574%	Cameroon	6	113	12%	1783%
Ethiopia	17	128	5%	653%	Congo, The Dem	5	111	11%	2120%
Somalia	28	127	5%	354%	Niger	5	71	7%	1320%
United Kingdom	60	114	6%	90%	Chad	0	63	6%	n/a
Yemen	23	83	3%	261%	Côte d'Ivoire	0	57	6%	n/a
South Sudan	25	68	3%	172%	France	1	43	4%	4200%
Uganda	16	67	3%	319%	CAR	1	33	3%	3200%
United States	15	65	3%	333%	Haiti	1	30	3%	2900%
Other	269	1290	49%	380%	Other	10	154	16%	1440%
Total	566	2591	100%	358%	Total	32	995	100%	3009%

Annex VI Table 3.2. Categorization of Language Preference: HOP Users Completing First HOP Module Pre and Post COVID-19 Onset (Cont'd)

Arabic Language Preference					Spanish Language Preference				
Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Preference Group	% Growth Pre/Post C.O.	Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Preference Group	% Growth Pre/Post C.O.
Yemen	21	60	49%	186%	Colombia	0	7	19%	n/a
Syrian Arab	4	28	20%	600%	Spain	0	5	14%	n/a
Iraq	2	16	11%	700%	Venezuela, Bolivari	0	4	11%	n/a
United Arab	0	11	7%	n/a	Argentina	0	4	11%	n/a
Turkey	2	7	5%	250%	Peru	0	3	8%	n/a
Egypt	0	3	2%	n/a	Ecuador	0	2	5%	n/a
Jordan	0	3	2%	n/a	Panama	0	1	3%	n/a
Belgium	0	1	1%	n/a	Trinidad And Tobago	0	1	3%	n/a
Sudan	0	1	1%	n/a	Dominican Republic	0	1	3%	n/a
Tunisia	0	1	1%	n/a	Germany	0	1	3%	n/a
Other	2	2	2%	0%	Other	0	8	22%	n/a
Total	31	133	100%	329%	Total	0	37	100%	n/a

**Data includes HOP users of the Francophone and Anglophone platform who completed his/her first HOP module before and after COVID-19 onset disaggregated by language preference indicated on the platform. For data analysis purposes the date of COVID-19 onset was established with SCUUK to be 23 March 2020. Furthermore, a very small number ($n < 1\%$) of the module completion dates were uploaded to the platform as an error and are thus not reflected here.

Annex VI Table 4: First Modules Completed Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset Disaggregated by Region

Annex VI Table 4. First Modules Completed Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset Disaggregated by Region														
WCA					E SA					Asia				
Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset	Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset	Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset
1 Nigeria	58	318	25%	448%	Kenya	36	203	22%	464%	Bangladesh	19	128	27%	574%
2 Burkina Faso	2	199	14%	9850%	Ethiopia	17	128	14%	653%	Philippines	6	67	13%	1017%
3 Cameroon	17	163	12%	859%	Somalia	28	127	15%	354%	India	12	54	12%	350%
4 Mali	4	142	10%	3450%	Uganda	16	68	8%	325%	Lebanon	4	38	8%	850%
5 DRC	4	122	8%	2950%	South Suda	25	68	9%	172%	Myanmar	3	29	6%	867%
6 Niger	5	82	6%	1540%	Zimbabwe	7	48	5%	586%	Australia	4	25	5%	525%
7 Chad	2	78	5%	3800%	Malawi	1	46	4%	4500%	Afghanistan	14	24	7%	71%
8 Côte d'Ivoire	1	72	5%	7100%	Sudan	14	40	5%	186%	Pakistan	4	19	4%	375%
9 CAR	2	41	3%	1950%	Zambia	17	27	4%	59%	Nepal	6	18	4%	200%
10 Senegal	2	34	2%	1600%	Tanzania	8	27	3%	238%	Sri Lanka	4	8	2%	100%
Other	6	129	9%	2050%	Other	18	97	11%	439%	Other	21	47	12%	124%
Total	103	1380	100%	1240%	Total	187	879	100%	370%	Total	97	457	100%	371%

MEE					Europe					Latin America				
Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset	Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset	Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset
1 Yemen	44	143	34%	225%	UK	60	115	37%	92%	Haiti	1	32	26%	3100%
2 Iraq	12	57	13%	375%	France	3	54	12%	1700%	Brazil	2	19	17%	850%
3 Syria	7	41	9%	486%	Italy	7	35	9%	400%	Colombia	2	14	13%	600%
4 Turkey	16	40	10%	150%	Germany	3	25	6%	733%	Venezuela	1	11	10%	1000%
5 UAE		28	5%	n/a	Spain	1	16	4%	1500%	Mexico		6	5%	n/a
6 Jordan	2	25	5%	1150%	Switzerland	1	16	4%	1500%	Peru	1	5	5%	400%
7 Indonesia	10	20	6%	100%	Belgium	1	14	3%	1300%	Ecuador	1	5	5%	400%
8 Egypt	6	13	3%	117%	Netherlands	3	14	4%	367%	Argentina	1	5	5%	400%
9 Libya	2	11	2%	450%	Greece	3	12	3%	300%	Trinidad And Tobago		3	2%	n/a
10 Tunisia		10	2%	n/a	Portugal	2	11	3%	450%	Costa Rica		2	2%	n/a
Other	10	48	11%	380%	Other	21	59	17%	181%	Other	0	14	11%	n/a
Total	109	436	100%	300%	Total	105	371	100%	253%	Total	9	116	100%	1189%

North America				
Country Indicated	1st Module Completed Pre-COVID-19 Onset	1st Module Completed Post COVID-19 Onset	% of Total Users in Country (Pre+Post COVID-19)	% Growth Pre/Post COVID-19 Onset
1 United States	15	66	60%	340%
2 Canada	4	51	40%	1175%
Total	19	117	100%	516%

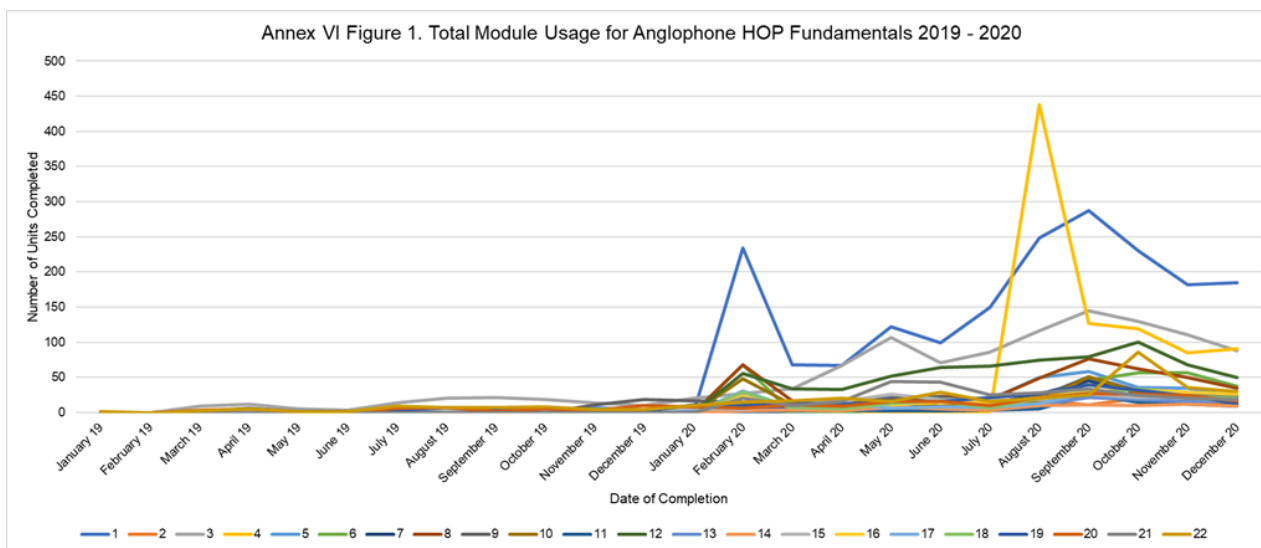
**Data includes HOP users of the Francophone and Anglophone platform who completed his/her first HOP module before and after COVID-19 onset disaggregated by region and country. For data analysis purposes the date of COVID-19 onset was established with SCUUK to be 23 March 2020. Colour saturation indicates a higher number relative to other numbers in the same column. Furthermore, a very small number (n<1%) of the module completion dates were uploaded to the platform as an error and are thus not reflected here.

Annex VI Table 5: Total Module Usage for English HOP Fundamentals

Annex VI Table 5. Total Module Usage for English HOP Fundamentals																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	T total
January 19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
February 19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
March 19	0	2	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	20
April 19	0	2	12	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	6	5	0	5	44
May 19	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	11
June 19	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	7
July 19	0	2	14	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	7	0	0	0	3	6	0	9	53
August 19	0	3	20	0	3	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	7	7	0	7	57
September 19	0	0	21	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	6	0	0	0	3	1	0	7	50
October 19	0	1	19	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	5	5	0	8	48
November 19	0	2	14	0	7	0	1	0	11	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	2	3	0	4	49
December 19	0	1	10	0	3	0	1	0	19	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	10	0	4	54
January 20	0	0	20	0	5	0	1	0	17	0	1	0	4	0	6	0	0	0	11	8	0	10	83
February 20	234	1	27	0	3	68	2	68	15	48	0	56	3	2	4	23	31	29	10	6	20	15	665
March 20	68	2	34	0	14	0	6	17	16	11	2	34	4	3	16	7	7	7	14	11	10	17	300
April 20	67	6	67	0	13	0	11	11	15	13	3	33	3	2	16	7	14	5	12	9	16	20	343
May 20	122	13	107	0	24	6	15	13	20	17	2	52	6	8	26	11	6	13	16	16	44	16	553
June 20	89	7	71	0	16	5	8	23	22	9	2	64	7	5	19	15	8	17	16	16	43	29	501
July 20	150	7	88	0	19	3	13	19	12	13	3	66	8	3	18	14	7	6	21	10	25	16	519
August 20	248	18	116	438	50	12	26	49	22	16	5	75	11	10	19	21	13	20	27	21	28	20	1285
September 20	287	11	145	127	58	46	45	76	51	51	25	79	21	11	26	30	28	28	39	27	34	25	1270
October 20	230	20	130	119	36	57	28	62	31	29	15	100	19	10	21	33	25	34	32	26	24	86	1167
November 20	182	13	111	85	35	57	21	60	25	20	12	68	16	12	21	29	21	23	23	24	20	36	904
December 20	185	15	88	91	23	38	13	35	23	16	9	50	17	9	15	26	15	20	14	17	19	30	788
Total	1872	126	1129	860	332	292	202	423	299	243	88	677	135	75	237	216	175	202	265	232	283	369	

**Data includes all module completion per month for the years of 2019 and 2020 for the Anglophone platform. Colour saturation indicates a higher number relative to other numbers in the same chart. Data errors for some of the dates compromised collation for some of modules, but the number of cell errors is not statistically significant (n<1%).

Annex VI Figure 1: Total Module Usage for Anglophone HOP Fundamentals 2019 – 2020



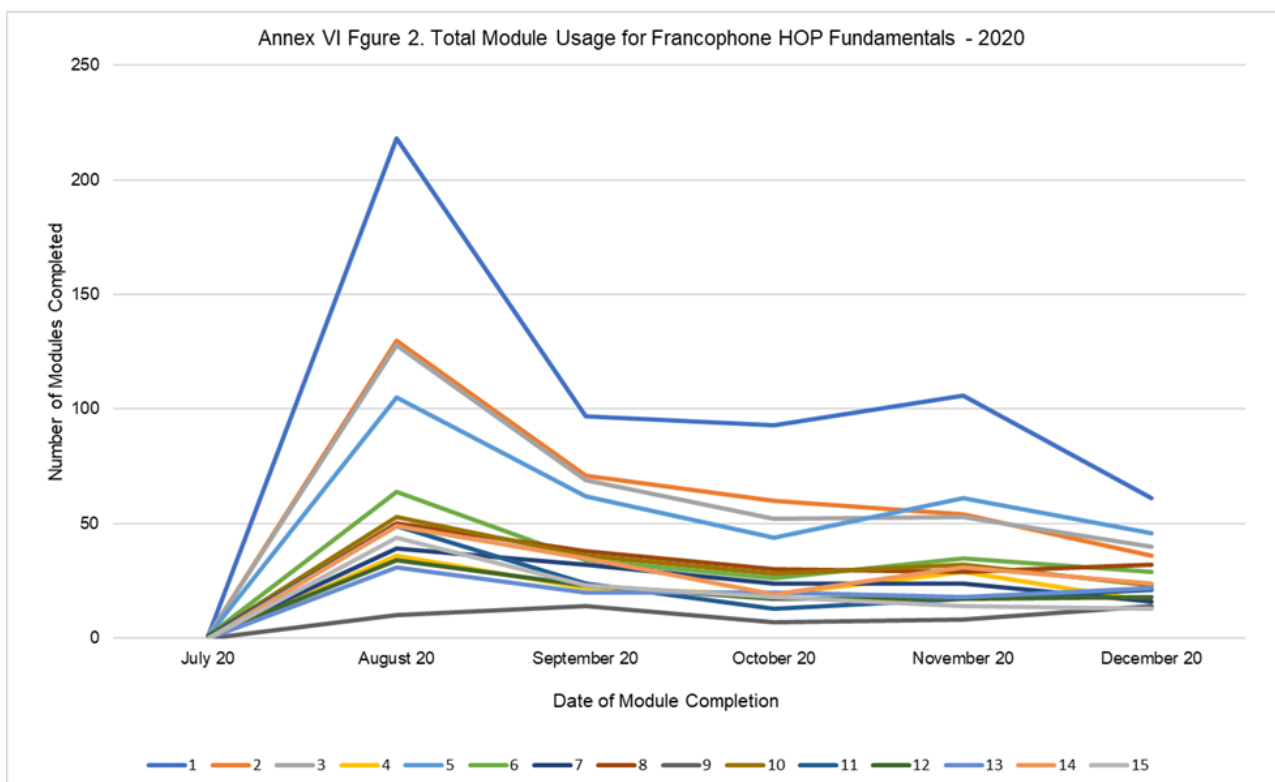
**Annex VI Figure 1 corresponds to Annex VI Table 5: Total Module Usage for Anglophone HOP Fundamentals.

Annex VI Table 6: Total Module Usage for Francophone HOP Fundamentals

Annex VI Table 6. Total Module Usage for Francophone HOP Fundamentals																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
July 20	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	9
August 20	218	130	128	36	105	64	39	50	10	53	49	34	31	49	44	1040
September 20	97	71	69	22	62	34	32	38	14	36	24	23	20	35	23	600
October 20	93	60	52	19	44	26	24	30	7	28	13	17	20	19	18	470
November 20	106	54	53	29	61	36	24	29	8	32	17	17	18	31	14	628
December 20	61	36	40	16	46	29	16	32	14	23	21	18	22	24	13	411
Total	576	352	343	122	319	189	136	179	53	173	125	110	111	158	112	3058

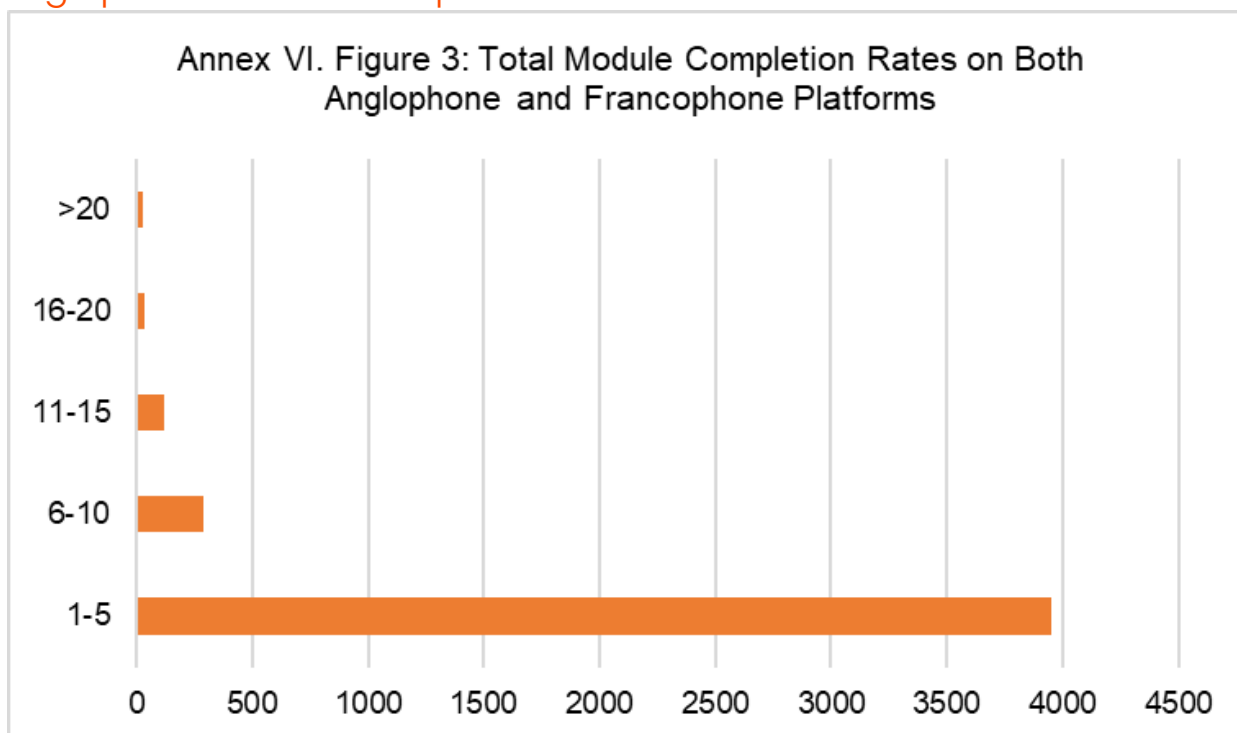
**Data includes all module completion per month since the Francophone version of the platform was rolled out in July 2020. Colour saturation indicates a higher number relative to other numbers in the same chart. Data errors for some of the dates compromised collation for some of modules, but the number of cells errors is not statistically significant ($n < 1\%$).

Annex VI Figure 2: Total Module Usage for Francophone HOP Fundamentals - 2020



**Annex VI Graph 2 corresponds to Annex VI Table 6: Total Module Usage for Francophone HOP Fundamentals.

Annex VI Figure 3: Total Module Completion Rates on Both Anglophone and Francophone Platforms



** Annex VI. Table 3 accounts for the module completion rates among all HOP users that had completed at least one module on both Anglophone and Francophone platforms. Within the users that completed one to five modules, 45% (2,204) completed only one module.

ANNEX VII: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Questions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name	The Impact of Covid-19 on Humanitarian Leaders and Localised Capacity Strengthening
Partner	Save the Children UK
Location	Global
Data Collection Period	TBD

BACKGROUND

Save the Children UK (SCUK) established teaching programmes “to work towards a more professionalised, global humanitarian system.” Over time but especially against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, introducing learning tools to strengthen local capacities has gained importance. The Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP) is a training programme which combines online and practical learning to build the next generation of humanitarian workers. HOP draws on expertise and experience of humanitarian practitioners to cover all the essential aspects of emergency response required for humanitarian personnel.

The training programme is divided into three levels:

1. **Fundamentals (online):** An introduction to the fundamentals of humanitarian action, for those starting their career in the sector or transitioning from the development sector.
2. **Core (in-person):** A 5-day training of blended learning with interactive face-to-face workshops, teaching sessions and a 3-day desk-based simulation in a fictional setting.
3. **Response (in-person):** A 7-day highly intensive residential training course which consolidates the technical and operational areas covered during the HOP Fundamentals online modules and on the HOP Core training

Project Objective: To analyse if and how the recent changes due to COVID-19 have impacted the access and use of SCUK’s HOP training.

Consultancy Research Questions:

1. How has the use of HOP online learning materials changed in the target region(s) after the onset of COVID-19?
2. How has learning from HOP been used to improve local capacity under COVID-19, and what difference has it made on individuals and organisations?
3. What other online professional development tools have HOP learners and graduates accessed and used to improve their capacity to respond under the pandemic and how effective was it?
4. What are the regional differences in terms of impact of COVID-19 on access and usage of learning for HOP learners and graduates?

Survey Objective: In order to gain insight into Research Question 2, the consultants will conduct a survey with past HOP Fundamentals training graduates from various locations and backgrounds.

The survey will cover four core topics:

1. General Information
2. COVID-19 Challenges on Localisation and Capacity Building
3. Access to HOP Fundamentals
4. Utilization of HOP Fundamentals

METHODOLOGY

SCUK will identify HOP Fundamental graduates that 'opted in' to be contacted for further research for the consultants to survey. An online survey, using Qualtrics, will be rolled-out over a two-week period to HOP Fundamentals participants in coordination with SCUK (estimated number of participants to be contacted at the time of this TOR submission is approximately 60). Survey participants will need to have completed at least one module in HOP Fundamentals.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Interviewees, self-identified via the Kaya Newsletter, will have completed at least one module of HOP Fundamentals
- Interviewees recall their experience with HOP Fundamentals
- A number of interviewees will have completed HOP Fundamentals before the pandemic and a number will have completed it after the COVID-19 onset
- Interviewees that completed HOP fundamentals before the COVID-19 onset are able to reflect on the relevance of HOP Fundamentals during the COVID-19 response and/or its subsequent institutional impact
- Any interviewee who has completed HOP Core and Response will be able to adequately distinguish between their experience completing HOP Fundamentals and the subsequent units.
- Interviewees will be able to understand and respond to questions posed in English.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION I: General Information	
Country of Job Posting	Drop Down Menu
Is this the country you are from?	Yes / No
Gender	Select one: Male / Female / Other / Do not wish to disclose
Organisation	Select one: Save the Children HQ; Save the Children Country Office; Save the Children Regional Office; Save the Children International; national non governmental organization; international non governmental organization; Government; Private Sector; Student; Other (open ended)
Job Category	Select one: Programme/Project Management; Administration/Finance; Communications/Advocacy; Donor Relations/Grant Management; Human Resources; Informational and Communications Technology; Information Management; Logistics; Procurement; Monitoring and Evaluation; Student; Private Sector; Other
HOP Fundamental Modules Completed	Select one: Less than 3 modules; Between 3 and 7 modules; More than 7 modules
When did you complete your latest module of HOP Fundamentals?	Month / Year (drop down)
Did you participate in HOP Core and/or Response in 2019?	Yes / No

SECTION II: COVID-19 Challenges on Localisation and Capacity Strengthening

Do you feel that limitations caused by COVID-19 have created capacity gaps?	Yes / No
If answered yes, please identify these gaps:	Program implementation; coordination; grant writing etc. other (please specify)

SECTION III: Access to HOP Fundamentals (Motivation and Barriers)

How did you first hear about HOP Fundamentals?	Select all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was recommended to me by a colleague • It was shared in an external coordination meeting • An online advertisement/newsletter • From my school • Other (please specify)
Why did you choose to participate in HOP Fundamentals?	Select all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To better understand the knowledge and experience needed to build a career in the humanitarian sector • To develop the skills needed to respond to a rapid onset emergency • To have a better understanding of humanitarian work • To further develop skills relevant to my career • Capacity strengthening in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak. • To refresh my knowledge on humanitarian concepts • Other (please specify)
Were you able to easily access information needed?	Yes / No
What limitations did you have to accessing HOP?	Select all that apply: Lack of internet access; Ability to access computer; Language Barriers; the content was not relevant to my needs; Other (open ended)
Did you access any other forms of online training for humanitarian response?	Yes / No
If yes, please specify	Open ended
How did you hear about the other online learning opportunities?	Select all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was recommended to me by a colleague • It was shared in an external coordination meeting • An online advertisement/newsletter • From my school; • Other (please specify)

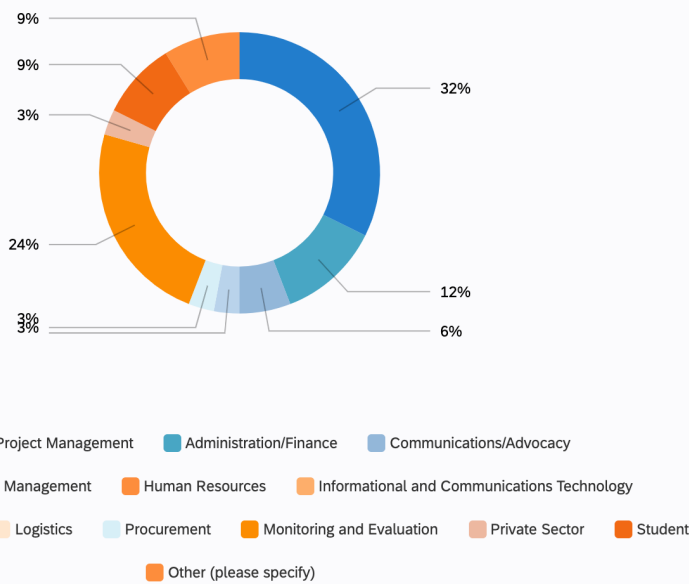
SECTION IV: Utilisation of HOP Fundamentals

Have you utilised the knowledge gained from HOP Fundamentals during COVID-19?	Yes / No
Has HOP Fundamentals been beneficial to you during COVID-19?	Select one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Identify the modules that have been the most relevant to responding to the challenges caused by COVID-19?	Select all that apply
How have you used the knowledge gained through HOP Fundamentals?	Open ended

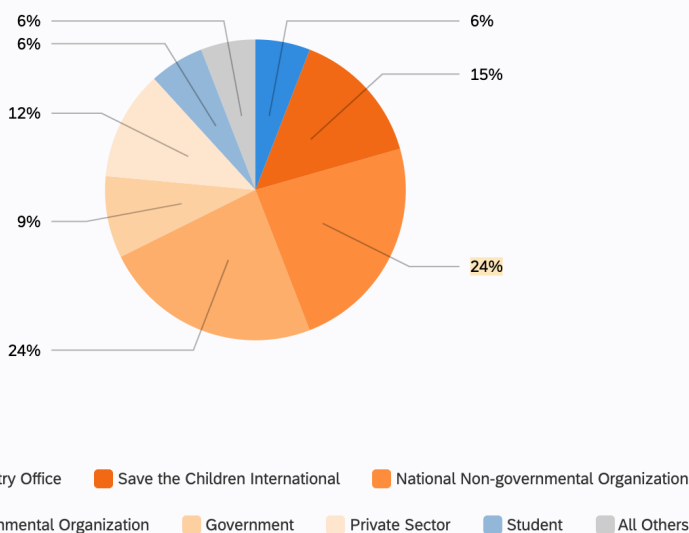
ANNEX VIII: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SURVEY OUTPUTS

A survey was conducted amongst 35 HOP learners from various locations between February 11th and March 22nd, 2021. The countries represented in the survey are Ecuador, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, Yemen, Zambia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, South Sudan, Angola, Venezuela, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Somalia, Lebanon and DRC. Approximately one-quarter of the respondents were in national NGOs and one-quarter of the respondents were

in INGOs (except SC International and SC Country Offices). Annex VIII Figure 1 provides an overview of the types of organisations that survey respondents work for. Among survey respondents, Programme/Project managers (32%; 11) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practitioners (24%; 8) constitute more than half of the respondents. Annex VIII Figure 2 provides an overview of the job categories of the respondents.



Annex VIII Figure 1: Survey Respondents by organisation type (N=35)



Annex VIII Figure 2: Job categories of the respondents

ANNEX IX: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Key Informant Interview Guide

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name	The Impact of Covid-19 on Humanitarian Leaders and Localised Capacity Strengthening
Partner	Save the Children UK
Location	Global
Data Collection Period	TBD

BACKGROUND

Save the Children UK (SCUK) established teaching programmes “to work towards a more professionalised, global humanitarian system.” Over time but especially against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, introducing learning tools to strengthen local capacities has gained importance. The Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP) is a training programme which combines online and practical learning to build the next generation of humanitarian workers. HOP draws on expertise and experience of humanitarian practitioners to cover all the essential aspects of emergency response required for humanitarian personnel.

The training programme is divided into three levels:

1. Fundamentals (online): An introduction to the fundamentals of humanitarian action, for those starting their career in the sector or transitioning from the development sector.
2. Core (in-person): A 5-day training of blended learning with interactive face-to-face workshops, teaching sessions and a 3-day desk-based simulation in a fictional setting.
3. Response (in-person): A 7-day highly intensive residential training course which consolidates the technical and operational areas covered during the HOP Fundamentals online modules and on the HOP Core training

Key Informant Interviews Objective: In order to gain insight on Research Questions 2, 3, and 4, the consultants will interview past HOP training graduates from various locations and backgrounds. The KIIs will cover four core topics:

1. General Information
2. Localisation and Capacity Building
3. Utilization of Knowledge Gained from HOP
4. Access of HOP Learning Resources
5. Other Online Learning Resources

ASSUMPTIONS

- The SCUK identified HOP graduates have completed HOP Fundamentals plus HOP Core and/or HOP Response
- Interviewees recall their experience with HOP and will be able to adequately distinguish between their experience completing HOP Fundamentals, Core, and/or Response.
- A number of interviewees will have completed HOP Fundamentals, Core, and/or Response before the pandemic and a number will have completed it after the COVID-19 onset
- Interviewees that completed HOP before the COVID-19 onset are able to reflect on the relevance of HOP during the COVID-19 response and/or its subsequent institutional impact
- Any interviewee will be able to understand and respond to questions posed in English.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION I: General Information	
Name	
Country of Job Posting	
Is this the country you are from?	
Organisation?	
Job Category?	
HOP Progress	Select all that apply: Fundamentals / Core / Response
HOP Fundamental Modules Completed	Select one: Less than 3 modules; Between 3 and 7 modules; More than 7 modules
When did you complete your latest module of HOP? Identify different modules and pathways.	

SECTION II: Localisation and Capacity Building	
Has COVID-19 exposed challenges in localisation and capacity strengthening according to your perspective of L/CS?	Have you experienced or observed any organizational capacity challenges related to COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic?
Has the HOP made localisation easier to implement during COVID-19?	What (if any) aspect of the HOP did you find useful in addressing these challenges?
During COVID-19, how has HOP increased your capacity individually or for your organisation?	Ask if they don't mention in previous answers

SECTION III: Utilisation of Knowledge Gained from HOP	
What knowledge from HOP did you gain and utilise during COVID-19? Can you identify differences in utilization before and after COVID-19?	Specific modules? Networking?
Which level was most beneficial to knowledge gained?	If they don't specify, ask about Fundamentals vs Core vs Response

SECTION IV: Access of HOP Learning Resources	
Do you feel a need to access HOP learning resources since COVID-19? Which modules?	
Would you recommend HOP Fundamentals to other staff to better respond to COVID-19?	Optional, skip if needed
Do you think HOP Core and Response should be available virtually? Would it be beneficial?	Optional, skip if needed
Were there limitations to access of HOP resources during COVID-19?	

SECTION V: Other Online Learning Resources	
What other online learning resources have you accessed during COVID-19 or for general capacity building? Any specific to your region? How did you hear about it?	
What did you like about other online learning materials; what didn't work for you?	

ANNEX X: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

The Impact of Covid-19 on Humanitarian Learners and Localised Capacity Strengthening.
Franzi Basse, Ellie Chesshire, JP Fisher, Jess Lyga and Irem Simek
Department of International Development, London School of Economics

Information for participants

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place from December 2020 to March 2021. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

1. What is the research about?

The aim of this project is to examine the of Covid-19 on humanitarian learners, particularly concerning Save the Children's Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP). LSE is carrying out this research on behalf of Save The Children UK. In particular, we will be examining if and how the recent changes, due to Covid-19, have impacted the access and use of learning. We also wish to ascertain how these changes have impacted HOP learners and graduates in relation to capacity strengthening in the regions of research.

2. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part we will ask you to sign a consent form which you can sign and return in advance of the interview.

3. What will my involvement be?

We will be asking people who have participated in HOP level one to complete a survey to ascertain their experience. We may be tweaking these survey as we progress through the project and therefore we may ask you answer some additional questions later down the line. Nonetheless, we are hoping not to make the survey too time consuming for participants. Moreover, we will be asking some people who have participated in HOP levels two and three to take part in interviews to grow through their experience in more detail. We would expect these interviews to last no longer than a couple of hours. Due to the current global restrictions this will all take place online.

4. How do I withdraw from the study?

You can withdraw from the study at any point without giving a reason. If any questions during the interview make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study we will not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for us to do so.

5. What will my information be used for?

We will use the collected information for our consultancy project that will be submitted as part of our masters degree at LSE. A copy of the project will also be given to Save the Children, the INGO we are doing the research for. Save The Children UK will use the research for organisational reporting that will disseminated internally and externally within the humanitarian sector.

6. Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?

The records from this study (all audio recordings and written transcripts) will be kept confidential and secure throughout the project period. Only the members of this group and our client lead at Save the Children will have access to the files and any audio tapes, unless in exceptional circumstances as referred to in point 7 below. Your data will be anonymised – your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the interview. All audio recordings, transcripts and summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Any hard copies of research information will be kept in locked files at all times. All data collected by LSE which is related to this research will be anonymised and handed over by 15th April 2021 to Save The Children UK to retain on a secure database for up to 5 years for future research and reporting purposes. LSE will delete and/or destroy all research-related data (audio recordings and interview transcripts) from their databases on 15th April 2021.

7. Limits to confidentiality: confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless you tell us something which implies that you or someone you mention might be in significant danger of harm and unable to act for themselves; in this case, we may have to inform the relevant agencies of this, but we would discuss this with you first.

8. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has undergone ethics review in accordance with the LSE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure and Save The Children UK's Research Evaluation and Ethical Policy.

9. Data Protection Privacy Notice

The Save The Children UK Privacy Statement can be found attached to this document

The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found at:

<https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.1.pdf>

The legal basis used to process special category personal data (e.g. data that reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation, genetic or biometric data) will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.

To request a copy of the data held about you please contact Seema Patel, Research evidence & MEAL Advisor: se.patel@savethechildren.org.uk

10. What if I have a question or complaint?

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the researcher, Ellie Chesshire, on e.b.cheshire@lse.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the LSE Research Governance Manager via research.ethics@lse.ac.uk or Seema Patel, Research evidence & MEAL Advisor: se.patel@savethechildren.org.uk

If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign the consent sheet attached.

**The Impact of Covid-19 on Humanitarian Learners and Localised Capacity Strengthening.
Franzi Basse, Ellie Chesshire, JP Fisher, Jess Lyga and Irem Simek**

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY

I have read and understood the study information dated 25/11/2020, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

YES / NO

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

YES / NO

I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

YES / NO

I understand that the information I provide will be used for a research project and that the information will be anonymised.

YES / NO

I agree that my (anonymised) information can be quoted in research outputs.

YES / NO

I understand that any personal information that can identify me – such as my name, address, will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone outside of the LSE consultancy group and Save The Children UK.

YES / NO

I give permission for the (anonymised) information I provide to be deposited in a data archive so that it may be used for future research by Save The Children UK

YES / NO

Please retain a copy of this consent form.

Participant name:

Signature: _____

Date _____

Interviewer name:

Signature: _____

Date _____

For information please contact: e.b.chesshire@lse.ac.uk (Ellie Chesshire)

ANNEX XI: ETHICS SUMMARY

This research has paid careful attention to ethical research practices. The research proposal has undergone two separate ethics approval procedures, at the London School of Economics (LSE) and at Save the Children UK (SCUK). The interviews and survey have been conducted only after the signing of a consent form, which provided participants with information on the purpose of the research, the researchers' positionality and their relationship to Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA) and SCUK, information on length and objective of the data collection and confidentiality. During the outreach, all participants were informed of these key issues. Participants were informed of the option to withdraw from interviews and the survey at any time without any consequences.

The survey was conducted amongst Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP) graduates and learners that 'opted in' for surveys on SCUK's learning platform and/or participants in the in-person training, utilising a secure online survey tool. Many respondents were also invited to participate through social media channels and newsletter advertisements through HLA.

Interview participants were selected in collaboration with HLA amongst graduates and learners from HOP Core and Response that 'opted in' to be contacted for questions. The interviews were not recorded, and the results were stored on a secure server to ensure confidentiality of participants.

The data analysis was conducted based on information provided by SCUK, largely regarding HOP Fundamentals. Based on this data, trends before and after the onset of COVID-19 were analysed. All data was anonymised and stored safely according to the groups data management policy in accordance with LSE standards.