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NGO Staff Well-being in the Darfur Region of Sudan & Eastern Chad

Assessment Report for InterAction

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Director of the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance - OFDA, Mr. Ky Luu, travelled to Darfur, Sudan in the spring of 2007. Prompted by concerns expressed to him during this visit, InterAction commissioned an assessment of the adequacy of policies and programs in place to support the well-being of humanitarian staff in the region.

In October and November 2007, the Headington Institute surveyed 80 humanitarian workers – 8 US-based headquarters management staff from 5 agencies, and 72 field staff based in Sudan and Chad representing 10 agencies. Seventy participants in the US, Sudan, and Chad also participated in follow-up interviews or focus groups. Surveys and interviews explored field staff’s current experiences of stress and well-being, policies and programs related to staff wellness, staff selection, preparation and orientation, and staff support during and after assignments.

The purpose of the assessment was to:

1. Review, and assesses the adequacy of policies and programs currently in place to support field staff and mitigate stress;
2. Provide recommendations to agencies for realistic adjustments in policies and programs that should reduce stress for field staff; and
3. Provide recommendations to InterAction regarding activities that would contribute to improved practice in the humanitarian community.

Findings related to the current coping and experiences of field staff in Sudan and Chad are outlined first. Against this backdrop, key survey and interview data, comments on the existence and adequacy of policies and programs currently in place, and agency recommendations are organized in chapters that explore the following topics:

1. Overall view of policy and procedures;
2. Staff selection;
3. Preparation and orientation;
4. Support during assignment;
5. Support after assignment;
6. Managing in crisis situations; and

7. Recommendations to InterAction regarding activities that would contribute to improved practice within the humanitarian community.

Several common themes were apparent in the findings related to these various topics, including:

1. Field staff in Sudan and Chad are under increased physical and emotional stress;
2. There is a growing awareness of the need for policies and programs to support humanitarian staff in high stress situations;
3. There is a wide variety of policies and programs apparent across organizations;
4. Some organizations are actively investing in strengthening their capacities, policies and programs related to staff care and staff well-being, and all organizations desire to continue to improve in these areas;
5. Relatively few agencies have clearly articulated a commitment to staff well-being in organizational handbooks and other policy documents, or outlined proactive plans for staff support;
6. Follow through and implementation of existing policy is often uneven;
7. Field staff are frequently not aware of specific policies and programs that *are* in place to support staff;
8. The following are seen by staff as key over-arching issues related to staff support policies and programs:
 - a. The critical role of skilled managers in effective staff support;
 - b. The equity of policies and programs as applied to national and international staff;
 - c. The availability of funding and other resources for staff support purposes; and
 - d. The complexity of the situations in Sudan and Chad, and the challenge this poses to designing and implementing relevant and appropriate policies and programs from headquarters.

A summary chart outlining the key findings and recommendations related to staff selection, preparation and orientation, and support during and after assignment can be found on page 63.

Recommendations to InterAction for activities that would contribute to improved policy and practice within the humanitarian community include:

- Within 6 months

- Support a series of interagency workshops on stress and trauma management and self-care to promote resilience and hardiness for staff based in Sudan and Chad.
- Support a series of interagency workshops focused on management skills for crises environments, communication skills and conflict management, signs of stress and trauma, and coping with the pressures of managing in high-stress environments.
- Within 12 months
 - Form a Minimum Standards for Staff Care (MSSC) Task Force to propose minimum standards for staff care for humanitarian workers.
 - Disseminate the MSSC to all InterAction Members and other humanitarian agencies.
 - Incorporate the MSSC into future USAID Requests for Proposals.
- Within 3 years
 - Encourage adoption of the MSSC among InterAction members.
 - Design and conduct a compliance audit of InterAction members regarding the MSSC.
 - Fund a longitudinal study to assess the effectiveness of staff-care programs that can lead to a revised set of data-based recommendations for future staff-care programs.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 History & Terms of Reference of the Assessment

The Director of the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance - OFDA, Mr. Ky Luu, travelled to Darfur, Sudan in the spring of 2007. During the trip he was approached by several non-government organization (NGO) field staff in the region who expressed a desire for better support and assistance in managing stress. Following the trip he approached InterAction and expressed concern about the issue of staff care and wellness in the region.

In response, InterAction, the largest alliance of US-based NGOs working in relief and development overseas, solicited bids for a consultancy to assess NGOs' staff well-being in Darfur, Sudan, and Eastern Chad.

The aim of this assessment report and recommendations is to provide information that will strengthen the ability of InterAction members to meet the psychosocial needs of national and international staff working in Sudan and Eastern Chad. Headington Institute consultants were contracted to report on:

- A review of policies, programs and/or other interventions currently in place to support staff and mitigate stress;
- An assessment of the adequacy of these policies, programs, and interventions in these complex and highly insecure environments;
- Recommendations for realistic adjustments in these policies, programs, and interventions that should result in a reduction of stress for field staff; and
- Recommendations to InterAction about activities and/or deliverables that would contribute to improved practice within the humanitarian community.

2.2 The Humanitarian Crisis

The humanitarian crisis originating in Darfur is currently the largest complex emergency in the world with perhaps the most challenging security and humanitarian access situation experienced in recent history.

2.2.1 Darfur Conflict Overview

Conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur is in its fourth year, despite a peace agreement between the Government of National Unity (GNU) and one faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) that was signed in 2006. Armed conflict among opposition group factions, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and militias, persisted throughout 2006 and 2007 and has so far displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians. This complex

emergency in Darfur affects approximately 4.2 million people. Table 1 highlights the impact of the conflict.

Table 1. Internally Displaced Persons & Refugee Population Numbers in Sudan.

	Numbers at a Glance	Source
Internally Displaced Persons in Sudan	From Southern Sudan: 2.7 million	UNHCR ⁽¹⁾ – November 2007
	In Darfur: 2.2 million	OCHA ⁽²⁾ – August 2007
	In Eastern Sudan: 70,000	U.N. – December 2006
Sudanese Refugees	From Darfur: 231,000	UNHCR ⁽²⁾ - July 2007
	From Non-Darfur Sudan: 272,000	UNHCR - August 2007
Refugees in Sudan	From Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, DRC, and others: 232,000	UNHCR – November 2007

⁽¹⁾ Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

⁽²⁾ U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

*Source: USAID: Sudan – Complex Emergency. Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. November 16, 2007.

2.2.2 Current Situation in Darfur

From mid-August to mid-September 2007, the humanitarian situation in Darfur deteriorated considerably and the Sudanese Government placed travel restrictions upon certain roads within West Darfur, restricting humanitarian access to conflict-affected populations. Due to increasingly volatile conditions in IDP camps, resulting from the presence of armed factions and tensions between pro- and anti-government groups, the U.N. advised the humanitarian community to reduce its presence in some IDP camps.

In September 2007, aerial bombardments, Arab militia attacks, and fighting involving armed opposition groups and government-aligned militias continued to displace civilians. In addition, aid workers faced a dangerous and highly insecure operating environment, which limited access to vulnerable populations. This security situation also hindered the transport of food aid, fuel, and other commodities. In October 2007, aid agencies were able to provide only minimal assistance to major IDP camps in North and South Darfur due to insecurity.

Overall 240,000 people have been newly displaced or re-displaced during 2007. In many IDP camps armed elements are present and violent incidents have recently increased. Following major attacks in North Darfur in late September and in South Darfur in early October the location of approximately 50,000 IDPs remains unclear (USAID, 2007).

2.2.3 Current Situation in Chad

Continued conflicts in Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR) are causing significant refugee inflows and instability in Chad. Furthermore, armed opposition groups, ethnic tension, and widespread banditry within Chad have displaced tens of thousands of Chadians.

Since April 2003, more than 275,000 Sudanese and Central African Republic refugees have fled to eastern and southern Chad, straining already scarce resources including water and grazing pasture for livestock, and impacting an estimated host community population of 700,000.

In Eastern Chad interethnic conflict, fighting between Government of Chad (GOC) forces and armed opposition groups, and cross-border raids from Sudanese militias based in neighboring Darfur, have intensified since the end of 2005. In 2006 and 2007, increased interethnic conflict within Chad led to the internal displacement of approximately 112,000 Chadians, resulting in increased need for water, sanitation, food, and health services. The heightened violence and insecurity has restricted access and led relief agencies to reduce staff, hindering their efforts to provide emergency relief assistance to conflict-affected populations

In addition to the IDP populations more than doubling since October 2006 the ongoing conflict between the government and rebel groups continues to directly impact communities that host IDPs and refugees, affecting agriculture, livestock raising, and other livelihood activities. During 2007 the security situation in the Northern and Eastern border regions of Chad has deteriorated significantly, and resulted in the government's declaration of a State of Emergency in October 2007.

Table 2. Internally Displaced Persons & Refugee Population Numbers in Chad.

	Numbers at a Glance	Source
IDPs in Chad	180,000	OCHA ⁽¹⁾ – August 2007
Affected Host Population	700,000	OCHA – September 2007
Sudanese Refugees	231,000	OCHA – July 2007
Central African Republic Refugees	44,000	OCHA – September 2007

⁽¹⁾U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

* Source: USAID: Chad – Complex Emergency. Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. Revised October 18, 2007

2.3 Overview of Humanitarian Engagement

Widespread international attention was not focused on Sudan until 2004, and this was brought about mainly due to the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan. In April 2004, 230 relief workers struggled to assist 350,000 people. Today, more than 12,000 relief workers aim to help more than 4 million people affected by the conflict (OCHA, 2007). The UN reports that there are close to 200 agencies currently engaged in the complex emergency in Darfur. These include almost 30 InterAction agencies.

2.3.1 Violence Against Staff in Sudan

According to UN-OCHA, attacks against aid workers increased by 150 percent between June 2006 and June 2007. Between January and October 2007, violence against aid workers in the Darfur region resulted in at least:

- 98 humanitarian vehicles being hijacked or attempted to be hijacked;
- 61 humanitarian convoys attacked, ambushed and/or looted;
- 15 humanitarian personnel injured;
- 50 humanitarian personnel arrested and/or detained;
- 118 humanitarian personnel kidnapped;
- 66 humanitarian personnel physically and/or sexually assaulted; and
- 12 humanitarian personnel killed.

During October 2007, in Darfur:

- 7 humanitarian workers were killed in Darfur, the highest monthly death toll for aid workers since the conflict began (OCHA);
- 10 humanitarian vehicles were carjacked; and
- 7 convoys were ambushed and looted

2.3.2 Violence Against Staff in Chad

There is little public information available regarding violence involving humanitarian staff working in Eastern Chad. In recent months however, at least one American aid worker has been kidnapped by the Movement for Democracy and Justice (MDJT) in the northern town of Tibesti, and the Tubu rebels have called for all foreign aid workers to stay away from the area controlled by the MDJT.

Some 3,000 European peacekeepers are due in the region in November. Their mission is to protect some 200,000 refugees who have fled across the border from the Sudanese region of Darfur.

3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

To assist in reviewing current staff support policies, practices, and other interventions for humanitarian workers in Sudan and Chad, the Headington Institute team developed two surveys to be completed prior to participating in individual interviews and focus groups. One survey was administered to field staff, the other to headquarters management personnel. Follow-up individual interviews and focus groups were then conducted with the participants in the USA, Sudan, and Chad. A commitment was made to protect the confidentiality of all participants and organizations. The approach and its rationale are described in more detail in the following sections.

3.1 Team

The project was conceptualized and realized collaboratively by a team of six experienced Headington Institute personnel. Clinical psychologists, Dr. James G. Guy, Jr. and Dr. Laurie Anne Pearlman, along with mental health professionals, Bree Hulme and Lisa McKay, collaborated in designing the approach, creating the surveys, and analyzing the data. These individuals have field experience in East Africa, extensive publications in the area of staff care and psychological trauma, humanitarian staff training experience, and qualitative and quantitative research experience.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted by two senior humanitarian professionals, Rick Augsburger and William Sage, each with over 20 years of experience both domestically and internationally in agency-based humanitarian work, leadership of emergency response and refugee assistance programs, and implementation of trauma response and staff care programs in natural and human-caused disasters.

All six individuals contributed to the data analysis and preparation of the report and recommendations.

3.2 Method

The assessment consisted of several coordinated elements:

- Structured surveys for headquarter managers and field staff, including a French-version for French speaking staff (see Appendices C & D). A total of 80 individuals completed surveys.
- Fifteen interviews (with one or two participants) and 7 focus groups (with three or more participants) with individuals who had completed the surveys prior to the interviews. Interviews and focus groups addressed perceived areas of relative strength and weakness in staff support policies, programs, and

procedures related to staff in Sudan and Chad. Interviewees were also asked what they would find most helpful in terms of staff wellness, individually and organizationally. A total of 70 individuals participated in the interview/focus group process.

- Consultations with field-based representatives from UN agencies and the Red Cross movement.

Administering surveys and following up with interviews and focus groups allowed for probing of survey responses in order to clarify, contextualize, and expand upon the survey responses. It also allowed participants to express their ideas and opinions about areas related to staff care and well-being and that may not have been specifically explored by the surveys.

3.3 Philosophy of Approach

This multimodal approach using surveys, individual interviews, and focus groups, was adopted for the following reasons:

- A multimodal approach can be expected to provide more robust data than a single-element approach. Information obtained using different assessment elements addresses target questions from different perspectives, and provides a stronger foundation for policy and program recommendations.
- Allowing participants to complete surveys via paper or online, in English or French, makes the process accessible to a broader range of individuals.
- Experiencing at least some reactions to stress, trauma, and vicarious trauma is an occupational hazard of working in complex emergency situations such as Chad or Sudan, rather than aberrance. Given this, it was apparent that a process focusing on clinical assessments of individuals' mental health status and/or current experiences of post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychopathologies would be an unnecessarily narrow approach, and potentially intimidating for participants. The information gathered during a clinical assessment process could also not be counted on to inform non-clinical interventions or programs related to staff wellness. In light of the environmental and organizational constraints that currently exist for agencies operating in Sudan and Chad, many key policies, procedures, and programs that will improve staff welfare will necessarily be organizational, administrative, and focused on issues which agencies, managers, and individual staff can address without clinical interventions. As such, it was decided that a non-clinical assessment that focused not only on staff's current experiences and perceptions of stress, but also more broadly on policies and programs in place to select, orient, support, and transition staff, would be the most informative and useful.

All recommendations in this report are made with the understanding that while agencies should make their best efforts to implement them to the extent reasonably possible, some adaptations may be necessary given internal and external constraints.

3.4 Data Collection Process

Interviews were conducted with both headquarters staff and field personnel immediately following the completion of the surveys. The Headington Institute consultants conducted telephone interviews with headquarters management staff, visited selected NGOs' headquarters in the USA, and conducted on-site interviews in country and field offices in Khartoum, El Geneina, N'Djemena and Abeche. All field staff were interviewed in-person.

3.5 Time Constraints and Sample Selection

Due to the 90 day timeline for this assessment and reporting, it was agreed in the terms of reference to focus the US- based survey and interviews on key human resource personnel, staff wellness personnel, and staff security personnel working for 5 InterAction agencies which had operational programs in Darfur and Chad. These agencies were identified in consultation with InterAction staff.

Field based surveys and interviews included as many participants from as many agencies as possible, 72 staff from 10 agencies.

Due to fiscal calendar constraints the assessment and report preparation were undertaken in a timeframe much shorter than originally proposed and desired by the Headington team and by InterAction. However, more surveys were administered and more interviews conducted than originally anticipated.

3.6 Participant Demographic Information

Every effort was made to obtain a sample of participants that represented as many perspectives as possible in the assessment. Eighty participants represented the following:

Table 3. Demographic Information for HQ Managers & Field Staff Who Participated in the Surveys.

	National Staff		Expatriates		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Headquarters Management	4	4	0	0	8
Field Staff	25	14	24	9	72
Total	29	18	24	9	80

3.6.1 HQ Management Staff Demographic Information

Eight staff members from 5 humanitarian organizations completed the headquarters survey. These staff members had worked in the humanitarian field between 3 and 29 years (with an average of 11.9 years). Seven of the eight participants were based in the USA. Participants worked in a variety of human resources, staff support, organizational development, and security roles.

3.6.2 Field Staff Demographic Information

Seventy-two field staff from 10 humanitarian organizations (8 InterAction member agencies and 2 non InterAction member agencies) completed the field staff survey. These staff had worked in the humanitarian field between 1 and 27 years (with an average of 8.3 years). Field staff were aged between 20 and 59 years.

Forty-five of the participants were based in Sudan and 27 in Chad. Geographic locations of the participants surveyed and interviewed included: Khartoum, El Geneina, Nyala and El Fasher in Sudan; and N’Djemena, Abeche, Bahai and Tibesti in Chad.

Participants worked in a variety of positions and departments including: country director, program management, security, human resources, finance, administration, logistics, drivers and transport, operations, communications, and sectoral specialists.

Thirty-five participants were classified as Expatriates (living and working in a country other than their home country) and 36 as Nationals (living and working in their country of origin). The nationalities of participants are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Country Considered Home by Field Staff.

Home Country	N	%
Canada	4	5.6%
Chad	12	16.7%
France	5	6.9%
Kenya	3	4.2%
Sudan	24	33.3%
UK	1	1.4%
USA	7	9.7%
Other*	13	18.1%
Total	69	95.8%

*Other includes: Australia (n= 1); Belgian (n = 1); Benin (n= 1); Burkino Faso (n = 1); Cote D' Ivoire (n = 1); DRC (n = 1); East Timor (n = 1); Ethiopia (n = 1); Ghana (n = 1); Niger (n = 1); Rwanda (n = 1); Zimbabwe (n = 1)

4. CURRENT COPING AND EXPERIENCES

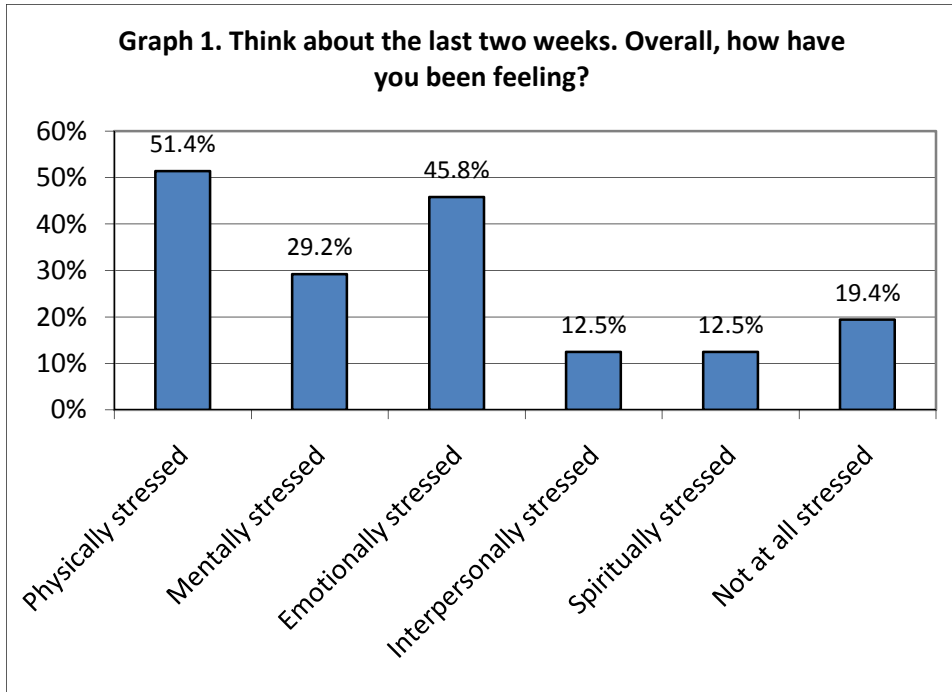
Field staff in Darfur and Chad were surveyed regarding their overall well-being, current stress levels, work-life balance, and sources of stress and satisfaction related to work. The following key results provide a snapshot of the experiences and reactions of the 72 field staff based in Darfur and Chad who completed the Field Staff survey.

4.1 Current Experience & Perceptions of Stress

The graph below displays field staff's experiences of stress during the previous two weeks. More than half reported being physically stressed, including having "headaches, sleep disturbances, stomach upsets and tight muscles." Just under half also reported being emotionally stressed which involved, "irritability, mood swings, feeling depressed, anxious or numb."

Approximately a third reported being mentally stressed, manifested by "difficulty concentrating and forgetfulness." Thirteen percent reported feeling interpersonally stressed and/or spiritually stressed. Interpersonal stress was defined as, "feeling withdrawn, overwhelmed by people, or lonely, and/or avoiding being with people." Spiritual stress was defined as, "feeling empty; feeling as if you have lost your sense of meaning, purpose, hope or connection; and questioning or doubting some of your core beliefs."

Twenty percent reported that they did not feel "all that stressed."

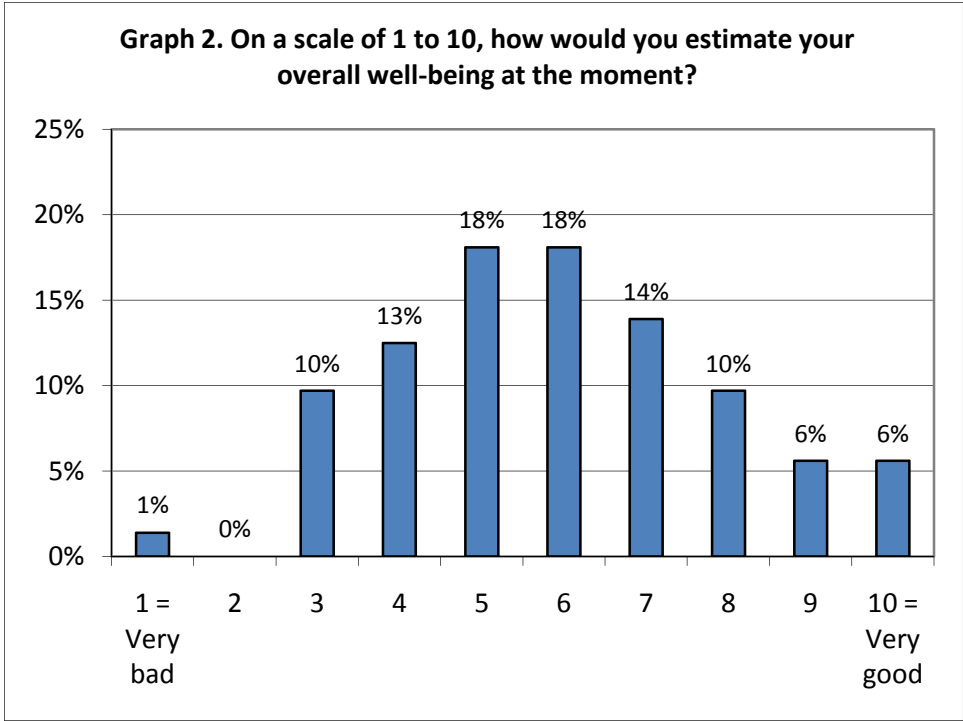


Field staff were also asked whether they felt they were currently under more stress than was normal for them. Fifty four percent of field workers surveyed answered “yes” to this question. Forty four percent answered “no”.

Given that less than 20% of field staff indicated that they “did not feel all that stressed,” it is likely that a significant proportion of those who indicated they were not currently feeling more stressed “than normal” simply consider high levels of physical and emotional stress (in particular) to be the norm for their current situations in Darfur and Chad.

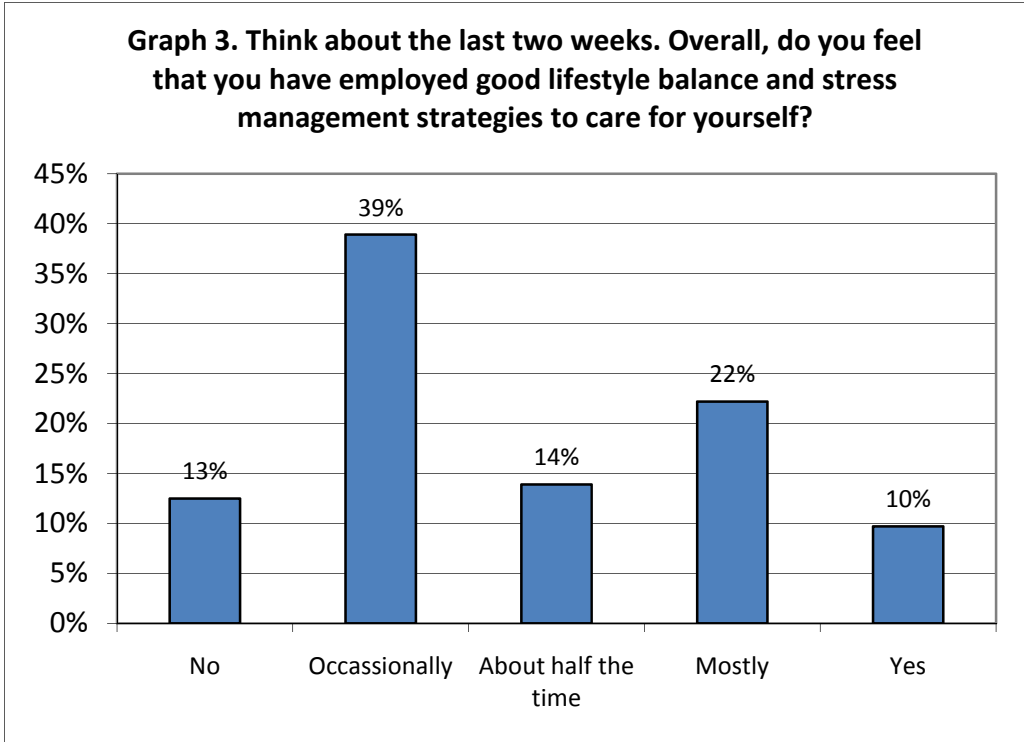
4.2 Current Experience & Perception of Well-being & Work-life Balance

Field staff were asked to estimate their overall well-being using a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = “very bad” and 10 = “very good”). Forty two percent of field staff ranked their well-being at 5 or below. Detailed responses to this question are displayed in the graph below.



Staff were also asked whether they felt they currently had good work/life balance. Almost two thirds of those who responded (65%) answered “no” in response to this question. Just under one third (32%) answered “yes”.

A follow up question explored whether field staff felt they had employed good lifestyle balance and stress management strategies to care for themselves during the last two weeks. More than 50% of field staff answered either “no” or “occasionally.” Responses to this question are presented in the graph below.



4.3 Significant Sources of Stress During Current Job

Staff were polled regarding the most significant sources of stress they had encountered in their current role in Sudan or Chad. In order to help provide some idea of the relative perceived significance of different types of stressors (rather than just whether or not staff had experienced any given stressor), staff were instructed to select “up to five” of the stressors listed or provide additional sources of significant stress under “Other”. Responses to this question are displayed in the table below in rank order of how frequently items were endorsed.

Table 5. Significant Sources of Job Stress for Field Staff.

<i>During the time you have been in your current job, what have been the most significant sources of stress for you? (Select up to five)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Witnessing or hearing stories of personal tragedy, suffering and devastation	41.7%
Being separated from family and friends	40.3%
Heavy workload	29.2%
The feeling that a highly traumatic event might happen to me	27.8%
Feeling overwhelmed, and like there are not enough resources available to combat the problems I see here	27.8%
Long working hours	26.4%
Struggling with moral dilemmas related to humanitarian work and wondering about issues related to whether “we are really doing any good here”	25.0%
Culture shock and communication difficulties that arise from working in a multicultural environment	25.0%
Feeling like there is not enough time or resources available to do my job properly	23.6%
Not being able to communicate with family and friends as much as I would like to	23.6%
Being separated from a familiar faith framework (e.g., a church or community group)	22.2%
Highly traumatic events that have happened to me (e.g., events such as shootings, kidnappings, and severe car accidents)	18.1%
Inadequate management or supervision	13.9%
Communication difficulties with colleagues and team members	13.9%
Not enough time off work	8.3%
Feeling like I don’t know what I’m supposed to be doing in my job	6.9%
Questioning my core beliefs about meaning and purpose	5.6%
Communication difficulties to and from headquarters	4.2%
Other	9.7%

Specific sources of significant stress listed under “Other” included:

- Specific stress related to management (e.g., “*Senior Management Team internal power struggles resulting in no team spirit*”; “*lack of confidence and transparency*”; and “*too many levels of work to deal with, too much micro-management*”);
- Lack of control over work (e.g., “*Feeling accountable for something you can’t really control as some decisions are made by others without any kind of consultation and communication*”);
- Feeling concerned about supervisees (e.g., “*I spent a majority of my time managing the team in West Darfur. While I was not personally involved in any*”);

security incident, it was my responsibility to manage the incidents once they occurred. I did not feel that my security was at risk but it is difficult when you are daily concerned about your teams operating in the field”);

- Government bureaucracy; and
- Personal health issues.

On witnessing suffering... *“You see the suffering of the people, recognize the demands which just seem to increase and you begin to wonder if you are making any progress.”* (Field staff)

“Sometimes, the international and local staff see so much misery out there with the beneficiaries they begin to wonder if they are making any difference. Staff here in Darfur often wonder if headquarters really understand the circumstances under which we work.” (Field staff)

On stress and families... *“Staff who are involved in work that deals with emergencies and crisis events are exposed to a lot of stress and they often then expose their family members to that stress.”* (Field staff)

“Communication is a problem. When the internet goes down, which happens frequently, staff cannot communicate with their families...this adds additional stress on the family and loved one working in Darfur.” (Field staff)

On the workload... *“Most stressors fall into two categories. The first category relates to security and particularly physical security. The second category is related to the workload especially when staff feel that days are not long enough to complete their work or when field staff think that there should be more staff available to handle the extensive workload. Too much work, too few staff, is all too commonly heard.”* (Field staff)

On security... *“Security concerns weigh heavily on the field staff. There has been a problem with banditry however, the violence and attacks against humanitarian aid workers have only increased. [Organization’s name] is fortunate that we have lost no staff.”* (Field staff)

“Security is a major concern. One wonders if at some point the fire fights will come over the wall into the compound.” (Field staff)

“An improvement in the overall security situation would be the most important element towards reducing stress...Separation from our families...is also the second biggest stressor.” (Field staff)

“Sometimes staff are stressed by the number of check points they must pass through when traveling by road to their field work or they worry about the possibility of unexploded ordinances along the road as they travel.” (Field staff)

On the impact of curfews and government bureaucracy... *“The evening/night curfew has also impacted field staff. This is tough because we cannot go any place after work. We can’t go meet friends for a cup of tea or socialize with other agency staff working in El Geneina. Not having an outlet for socialization after work is a major concern.”* (Field staff)

“Another very high stressor is the... requirements for so many permits: permits to leave the country; visa applications; travel permits; and work permits. Permits for so many things make us feel that we are in confinement.” (Field staff)

On inadequate leadership... *“Stress can be inadvertently caused when supervisors and managers do not have the appropriate leadership and management skills. Sometimes people skills are lacking and given the stress of the workload, and lack of people skills of managers, this adds to the level of stress.”* (Field staff)

“Some of the stress is caused by poor management and some managers are not qualified to be managers and managers subsequently cause stress for those they work with.” (Field staff)

On environmental constraints... *“Sometimes the electricity is cut off and this impedes work and work deadlines and this causes a lot of stress.”* (Field staff)

“Lack of exercise is a problem. The curfew creates limitations...Also the city electricity is unreliable so you cannot wake up early in the morning and read and meditate or reflect until there is sunlight...The conditions in the office are overcrowded...The same is true of the living conditions...There is no privacy.” (Field staff)

On gender issues... *“There is a lot of stress for women. Women have to be more particular about the way they dress for example. Female humanitarian aid workers always feel like they are being continuously judged and watched.”* (Field staff)

On communication issues... *“Language is a barrier too many times...Staff are left with the feeling that they wonder if they are getting the truth or the whole story. The translations don’t feel right.”* (Field staff)

On religion... *“There is no [familiar] faith community here... Devotions every morning helps but it is not the same as being a part of a [familiar faith] community.”* (Field staff)

On responsibility... *“This is my greatest fear, one day I may make a wrong decision which could affect the life and lives of the staff. And if I make a mistake and someone is harmed, I’m not sure what resources are available.”* (Field staff)

4.4 Significant Sources of Satisfaction During Current Job

Staff were also polled regarding the most significant sources of satisfaction they had encountered in their current role in Sudan or Chad. Staff were instructed to select “up to five” sources of satisfaction listed, or provide additional sources of satisfaction under “Other”. Responses to this question are displayed in the table below in rank order of how frequently items were endorsed.

“Organization’s name] is there to assist 560,000 beneficiaries, that is our mission and that is why we are here.” (Field staff)

Table 6. Significant Sources of Job Satisfaction for Field Staff.

<i>During the time you have been in your current job, what have been the most significant sources of satisfaction for you? (Select up to five)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
The feeling that I am helping others	80.6%
Opportunities to contribute to an issue of global importance	59.7%
Learning new skills that will serve me well in the future	56.9%
Working closely with a team of colleagues	41.7%
Opportunities to learning about a new culture	38.9%
The sense of meaning or purpose I find through this work	37.5%
The feeling that I am being personally stretched and challenged	30.6%
The way this job helps me understand myself and the world differently	26.4%
Relationships with colleagues and other friends based here	25.0%
Provides personal direction to my life and future work	20.8%
The various “adventures” that come with this work	19.4%
The intensity of this work, and the fact that it helps me feel more fully “alive”	9.7%
Other*	1.4%

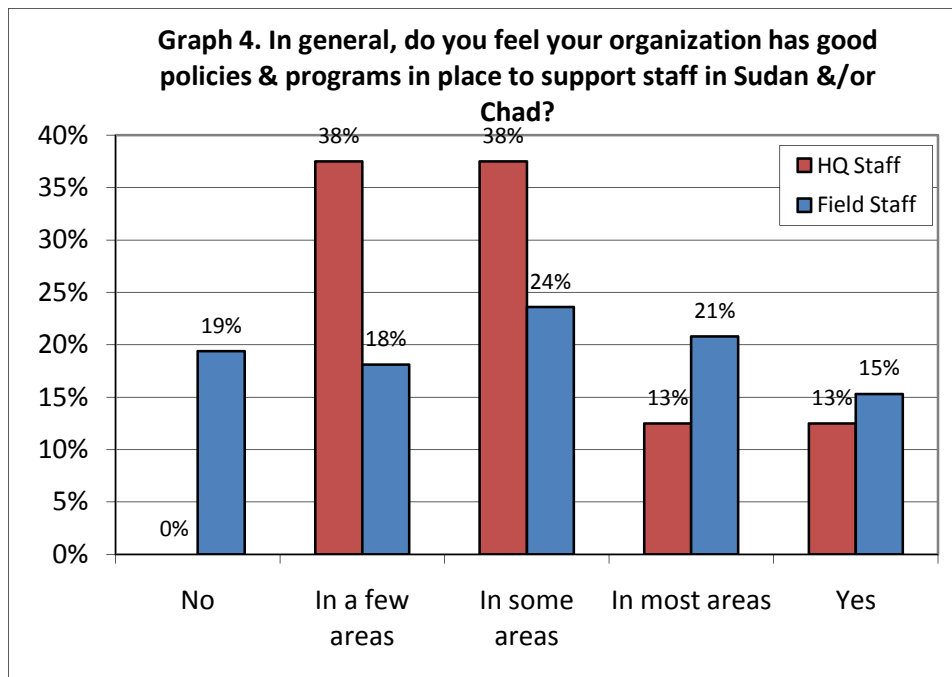
*The only additional significant source of satisfaction listed under “Other” was: *“the feeling I can make a difference in the organization.”*

5. OVERALL VIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO SUPPORT STAFF IN SUDAN AND CHAD

5.1 Key Survey & Interview Data

Both headquarters management and field staff were surveyed regarding whether they felt their organization had good policies and programs in place to support staff in Sudan and/or Chad. Responses to this question are presented in the graph below. The majority of headquarters management personnel believed their organizations had good policies and programs in place to support staff in only some or a few areas.

The opinions of field staff varied more widely. Almost 20% of field staff did not think that their organization had good policies and programs in place to support staff in any area. However 36% of field staff felt their organization had good policies and programs in place to support staff in Sudan and/or Chad in most or all areas.



The following five chapters of this report (Chapters 6-10) will explore policies and procedures specifically related to selecting staff; preparing and orienting staff; supporting staff during their assignments; and supporting staff at the end of the assignment or contract; and managing in crises situations. The following section outlines

general findings related to the existence and adequacy of policies and programs to support staff in Sudan and Chad.

5.2 Existence & Adequacy of Policies & Programs Currently in Place

Collectively the survey and interview data suggested the following points of interest:

1. There is a growing awareness of the need for suitable policies and programs to support staff in high stress situations.
2. There is a wide variety of policies, programs, practices, and perceptions, apparent across organizations.

“I do not feel that my organization has any real support mechanisms in place for staff here, despite “lip-service” about the importance of taking care of oneself, etc. There is a complete lack of team building, personal interest in most expatriate staff, encouragement or support from management at the field level. We have no opportunities for training on security, stress management, or psycho-social issues, let alone ongoing training programs. There is a lot of pressure to work very long hours--in fact, to work almost constantly--with very little time off. The management and staff structures feel quite unstable (due to retention issues but also due to discontent and frustration among staff), creating a permanent sense of instability which is itself stressful. Interpersonal issues among senior staff also create a stressful work environment. One of the most challenging aspects of the work here is the lack of any true support structure, including close friendships or relationships. As these would most likely come from fellow staff (due to the isolation and lack of other social outlets in our location), the lack of team-building and failure to create any sense of team unity seems to me to be highly problematic.” (Field staff)

3. Some organizations are actively working on strengthening their staff wellness and staff care capacities and programs, and all organizations desire to improve their staff wellness and staff-care capacities and programs.

“More recently, [Organization’s name] has been mainstreaming wellness and care-support of all issues of concern trying to promote personal care of self and emphasizing the importance of wellness, especially in field situations of high stress.” (Headquarters management)

4. Relatively few agencies have clearly articulated a commitment to staff well-being in organizational handbooks and other policy documents, or outlined proactive plans for staff support.

“No. [Organization’s name] does not have good policies and programs in place to support staff and enhance staff wellness yet. Nothing of a proactive nature”
(Headquarters management)

5. Follow through and implementation of existing policy is often uneven.

“Generally, there are good policies in place at [Organization’s name]. There are some if’s and but’s, but reflecting on the last 18 months of review, the policies and protocols are good of the agency. Where [organization’s name] falls down is the implementation. Follow through is not quite as good.” (Headquarters management)

“[Organization’s name] has comprehensive HR and management policies and guidelines for staff support and well-being. The major issue is implementation in some areas.”
(Headquarters management)

6. Field staff are frequently not aware of specific policies and programs that are in place to support staff.

The following are seen by staff as key over-arching issues related to staff support policies and programs:

1. The critical role of skilled managers in effective staff support;

“The key impediment to follow through and implementation is having the right skills set for managers.” (Headquarters management)

2. The equity of policies and programs as applied to national and international staff;

“The issues of equity and appropriate support for BOTH international and national staff is critical in my mind and it would be useful for this to be explored in the interviews.”
(Headquarters management)

“I am very concerned about the wellness of local staff and the unique wellness issues they face. Most of the [organization’s name] employees worldwide are local staff and they often have unique needs, no less familiarization about what it means for self care, and community wellness. There is inequity about what local staff get and international

staff are provided. The benefits are much better for international staff” (Headquarters management)

3. The availability of funding and other resources for staff support purposes;

“In terms of staff policies in place, basically they are OK. There are areas where we need to strengthen them. Some things we could do are cost prohibitive and we don’t have the resources to carry them out.” (Headquarters management)

4. The complexity of the situations in Sudan and Chad, and the challenge this poses to designing and implementing relevant and appropriate policies and programs from headquarters.

“The extreme and complex circumstances in Darfur/Sudan mean that implementing and maintaining existing policies with regard to staff support is very hard to achieve. Our focus is on improving compliance and enhancing managers’ ability to be consistent in all field office locations when supervising staff” (Headquarters management)

“In our organization, our operations are very decentralized with the Country Office taking the lead on many of these issues. It presents organizational challenges when working from HQ--it's difficult to mandate policies, services, programs. The role of HQ is one of an influencer and persuader. This has advantages and disadvantages.” (Headquarters management)

Resources were seen as a key constraint. Other constraints identified as affecting the ability of organizations to provide adequate support to staff based in Sudan and Chad include:

1. Difficulty securing entry and exit visas for staff travel, which impedes staff training at headquarters, R & R entitlements, and leave;
2. The unstable and fluid security situation;
3. High turnover rates among field staff, and the short-term nature of many contracts; and
4. Isolation of location, limiting email and phone access.

“I have not personally heard concerns expressed from the field staff but I am aware that more could be done but resources are a serious constraint. It is tough to talk about wellness when you don’t have a lot of money to work with. It is also an access issue for field staff.” (Headquarters management)

“Resources are such a constraint that we cannot even think about sending gym equipment or things like that to help staff get their minds off the work and away from the workplace.” (Headquarters management)

“When managers recognize a need for mental health intervention and support, [organization’s name] tries not to let finance impede support and help. Money never is a barrier to support needs of staff, at least to this point.” (Headquarters management)

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the survey, interview, and focus group findings reported above, we make the following recommendations:

1. Agencies should articulate a commitment to staff well-being, and demonstrate that commitment by evaluating and developing clear organizational policies related to staff well-being and wellness. Agencies should further demonstrate their commitment to staff well-being by including a budget for staff care as a regular part of operating expenses.
2. As part of this process, supervisors should be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to promoting and enhancing staff wellness. Key actions and performance indicators for managers in this area should be considered. For example:
 - a. The issue of staff wellness should be included in position descriptions;
 - b. Staff wellness should be discussed during the performance review processes;
 - c. After minimum standards are identified and endorsed, outcomes tied to these minimum standards should be included as a key performance indicator for supervisors.
3. Provide national and international staff with equitable access to resources related to staff well-being (including Rest and Relaxation leave).
4. Procedurally, it is recommended that agencies adopt a two-pronged approach to the issue of staff wellness:
 - a. Develop policy and procedure around the aspects of work that the majority of staff find most satisfying. For example, this research suggests the following:
 - i. Tell “success stories” and seek reasonable ways to help staff feel less isolated from beneficiaries and more connected to the results of their work;
 - ii. Invest in training and skills building; and

- iii. Ensure staff have opportunities to work closely with teams of colleagues.
- b. Develop policies and procedures focused on providing support in key areas that staff are likely to experience as stressful, utilizing methodologies staff are likely to access. For example, this research suggests the following:
 - i. Provide staff support workshops and/or discussion groups focusing on issues associated with vicarious trauma, the cumulative stress of living in a dangerous environment, self care, communication skills, team-building, the moral dilemmas of humanitarian work, cultural issues related to the beneficiary country, other skill-building topics, security training and risk assessment; and
 - ii. Design processes and provide opportunities to assist staff in connecting more regularly with family and friends.

6. STAFF SELECTION FOR WORK IN SUDAN AND CHAD

6.1 Key Survey Data

Headquarters management personnel from five humanitarian agencies working in Sudan and Chad were surveyed regarding their organizations' standard hiring practices. The table below lists the number of organizations where at least one staff member indicated that they generally used this method when hiring staff to work in Sudan and/or Chad.

Table 7. Number of Organizations Utilizing the Various Recruitment Methods

Recruitment Processes	Organizations Utilizing Process
Review of resume	5
Phone interview	5
Reference checks	5
In-person interview	4
Standardized assessments	1
Multi-day assessment-center interviews*	0

*Multi-day assessment-center interviews constitute multi-day sessions in which candidates are tested on their skills relative to the job for which they are applying

Staff from all five agencies indicated that their organization generally reviewed resumes, checked references, and conducted phone interviews when hiring new staff to work in Sudan and Chad. In four of the five agencies at least one staff member indicated that the organization generally conducts in-person interviews. One staff member from one agency indicated that their organization used some form of standardized assessment. None of the organizations generally use multi-day assessment center interviews.

6.2 Key Interview Data

Interviews with headquarters management personnel and country directors in the field yielded some additional information on this topic, specifically:

- In two organizations staff differed regarding standard hiring practices. In both cases, one staff member indicated that their organization generally uses in-person interviews when hiring for positions in Sudan and Chad, and the other staff person disagreed.
- Participants from 3 of the 5 organizations indicated that screening, assessment, and recruitment procedures were “lacking” or “weak”.

- When asked what staff support policies, programs, and procedures they would like to see developed and implemented “if resources were not a constraint” participants from 2 of the 5 organizations specifically mentioned better screening and assessment procedures during recruitment.
- The one participant who indicated their organization uses some form of standardized assessment reported that their organization provides a psychological assessment with a counselor pre-deployment for the purposes of orientation and preparation, rather than using the assessment results to inform decisions regarding selection.

6.3 Existence & Adequacy of Policies & Programs Currently in Place

This section highlights key findings that have bearing on any conclusions regarding the adequacy of policies and programs related to assessing and selecting staff to work in Darfur and Chad.

It was frequently acknowledged by headquarters management personnel, and by some country directors, that there was significant room for improvement in the existence and efficacy of policies and procedures related to screening and assessment of staff for work in Sudan and Chad. While resume review, phone interview and reference checks are all being used regularly during the selection process, there was debate among headquarters management personnel regarding whether face to face interviews were regularly conducted, and the use of standardized assessment tools or more comprehensive interview processes was almost non-existent. Assessment and selection procedures were mentioned repeatedly by key organizational personnel as “lacking”, as was the observation that the emphasis to hire and get people out on the field as quickly as possible makes more comprehensive processes difficult to implement.

“I’d like to have a more robust assessment of a candidate. For example, [Organization’s name] is not really into complex assessments to get a good baseline assessment of a candidate.” (Headquarters management)

“Hiring procedures and screening of potential employees to go to the field is weak” (Field staff)

Inconsistent policies and practices related to assessment and selection were evident at the field level. In cases where hiring was the responsibility of the country or project management, it was clear that selection methods varied within organizations.

Significant tension was felt by most parties between the desire to assess candidates as thoroughly as possible and the pressure to fill vacant posts as soon as possible. Many headquarters management staff expressed a strong desire for more robust policies and procedures related to assessment and staff selection, as well as additional knowledge on key factors related to resilience, hardiness and vitality in high-stress situations. However, the most frequently cited factor that prevented this was the pressure to fill vacant posts as soon as possible.

“Presently there is considerable frustration with the length of time positions go unfilled. I would like to see positions filled faster. It is stressful to have to wait for much needed positions to be filled.” (Field staff)

The majority of international field staff interviewed were selected for their posts utilizing a telephone interview process. Expatriate field staff who were interviewed reported that in most cases there was little, if any, direct face-to-face interaction with supervisors prior to hiring. Field staff who were hired by telephone consistently named this as problematic. They wanted an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting and thought this would provide a better sense of the agency’s position on wellness, and clarity about their roles with the organization.

Field staff frequently mentioned that the job description they were provided at the time of hiring did not reflect what they actually ended up doing for the organization.

“One of the common issues for [organization’s name] is the issue around job descriptions: from what I thought I would be doing in the job description versus what I actually ended up doing on the ground. This is something the managers need to deal with.” (Field staff)

The issue of staff retention was frequently mentioned as a significant challenge in conjunction with discussions of recruitment and assessment. Both headquarters management and field staff from multiple organizations named the issue of staff retention as a significant challenge. Short-term contracts result in frequent turnover and some international staff, in particular, leave their postings early. Headquarters management staff indicated that finding replacements has become more and more difficult.

“If this is the most serious humanitarian crisis in the world, why can’t we find the staff we need? What is happening to the humanitarian community?” (Field staff)

Among the agencies and personnel surveyed, there was little evidence of any intentional focus on assessing resiliency, self care skills, coping mechanisms, and psychological health (past and present) in their screening and hiring processes.

Headquarters management personnel consistently stated that they would like to see a focus on hiring people who understand self care and workplace wellness and resilience. None of the staff interviewed identified that their organizations had any policy regarding minimum health and resiliency requirements for high stress assignments, or minimum “down-time” between very high stress assignments. However, a number of staff suggested that more questions need to be built into the interview process that help assess a candidate’s resilience, hardiness, vitality and general coping and self-care strategies and abilities. There were also suggestions that tools or procedures to help candidates assess their own hardiness, resilience and vitality be used during or after the assessment phase to help candidates better determine whether the position they are applying for is right for them at that time. It appears that few organizations are using such tools or procedures at present, and even then only sporadically.

In a perfect world, [I] would like to see a process in hiring where there is focus on hiring people that understand self care and workplace wellness and resilience. We want people who can maintain wellness in a stressful environment. [I] suggest asking questions of interviewees for a position in the field about their coping skills and how do you take care of yourself? Such questions should be built into the interview process.”
(Headquarters management)

“As an example of screening, selection and hiring practices, recently a person was selected [for a senior management post]. The hiree had just come from a very complex, high stress humanitarian situation and was now being hired to go to another stress-filled assignment. Is this a good hiring practice?” (Headquarters management)

“Technical or administrative expertise and human resources management capacity are two different things and both of them need to be assessed during recruitment process to identify gaps and provide people with the necessary coaching when needed” (Field staff)

6.4 Recommendations

1. Recognizing the strategic importance of the staff selection process, agencies should make every effort to strengthen assessment and recruitment policies and procedures by:
 - a. Ensuring that hiring managers utilize appropriate skills and interview questions to assess applicants’ strength and risk factors related to resilience, hardiness, vitality, and vulnerability to traumatic stress;

- b. Conducting interviews in person;
- c. Developing job descriptions that accurately reflect the job responsibilities, and security and living conditions; and
- d. Assessing the potential of cumulative stress of new hires with a series of past high stress assignments before posting them to another complex emergency situation.

7. PREPARATION AND ORIENTATION FOR WORK IN SUDAN AND CHAD

7.1 Key Survey Data

Headquarters management staff were asked whether they felt that their organization adequately prepared and oriented staff for working in Sudan and Chad. All eight respondents (100% of the sample) answered “No” to this question.

Field staff were a bit more forgiving. When asked whether they felt their organization had adequately prepared and oriented them for working in Sudan and Chad thirty nine field staff (54.2%) answered “yes” to this question. Thirty one (43.1%) answered “no”.

Headquarters management staff and field staff were also surveyed regarding various aspects of orientation that was provided by the organization (headquarters management survey) and received (field staff survey) before or immediately upon arrival in Sudan or Chad. Responses to this question are presented in the table below.

Table 8. Components of Orientation Provided Before or Immediately Upon Arrival in Sudan & Chad.

	Headquarters management survey (N=8)	Field staff survey (N=72)
Review of job descriptions (clear task description & expectations)	100.0%	73.6%
Briefing on current security situation	100.0%	50.0%
Review of mission, values, and structure of the organization	75.0%	66.7%
Personal security training	50.0%	36.1%
Cultural briefing	37.5%	23.6%
Stress management training or coaching	12.5%	18.1%
Language training	0.0%	4.2%
Other*	12.5%	18.1%

*Additional topics noted by staff that they provided or received orientation regarding were:

- Organization policy (e.g., related to R&R leave and finances) (N=4)
- Peace building and other programming concept (N=2)
- Medical (N=1)
- “Come and see” visit prior to hiring (N=1)

All eight headquarters management personnel who completed the headquarters management survey indicated that the organization reviewed job descriptions and briefed new hires on the current security situation in Sudan and Chad. However, only about three quarters of field staff surveyed reported that their job description had been reviewed with them and only about half stated that they had been briefed on the current security situation as part of their orientation.

7.2 Key Interview Data

Participant interviews and focus groups with field staff yielded additional information on the topic of orientation and preparation, specifically:

- Multiple staff from six organizations expressed the belief that staff needed to be better prepared to work in an humanitarian emergency situation, particularly in those as complex as Sudan and Chad. Aspects of orientation highlighted by field staff as important included:
 - Better security training;
 - Self-care and stress management training;
 - Capacity building;
 - Female specific cultural orientation; and
 - Management inductions and trainings.
- Multiple staff members from two organizations questioned whether job descriptions provided to staff at the time of employment were clear and accurate.
- Multiple staff from two organizations suggested that information about stress management, in particular, should be included in the organization's orientation/field manual. Staff from one other organization reported that information about stress management was already included in the organization's field manual.
- Multiple staff from three organizations highlighted language barriers and cross-cultural communication difficulties as a major cause of stress and as a vital component lacking in their orientation process.

7.3 Existence & Adequacy of Policies & Programs Currently in Place

This section highlights key findings that have bearing on any conclusions regarding the adequacy of policies and programs related to orienting and preparing staff to work in Darfur and Chad.

Despite a strong desire to ensure appropriate preparation and orientation, it was generally acknowledged that field staff are being inadequately prepared and oriented for work in Sudan and Chad. Survey responses revealed that all eight headquarters management personnel surveyed did not feel that their organization adequately prepared or oriented staff for work in Sudan and Chad.

“There are concerns about what is not in place. I am concerned about the lack of screening and orientation of staff being hired to go and work in the field, particularly in high stress humanitarian situations. In general, not a good job is done of preparing staff to work in high stress environments. Orientation and preparation of staff after being hired and pre-arrival at the location of work is weak.” (Headquarters management)

In contrast, more than half of the field workers surveyed indicated on this forced-choice question (where respondents were given only the options “yes” and “no”) that they *did* feel adequately prepared and oriented, despite the fact that field staff generally indicated that they had received orientation on specific topics (such as personal security) at a lower rate than headquarters management reported offering orientation on those same topics. For example, despite the fact that 100% of headquarters management personnel indicated that field staff were briefed on the current security situation in Sudan or Chad, about half of field staff surveyed reported that they had not been briefed on the current security situation before or immediately upon arrival.

“They told me it was gonna be a hell of a job - and they were right :)” (Field staff)

“Helpful thing is the security briefing because we are working in a war zone and 95% of the security is in you. Orientation was clear because since I came in I was promoted 3 times. That means it is adequate for me.” (Field staff)

“My organization was very helpful as well as coaching and training received from field office” (Field staff)

“My boss gave me some chance to master my job. Also my boss and staff helped me to master computer.” (Field staff)

Despite the fact that survey data would seem to indicate that at least half of staff perceived they had been adequately prepared and oriented, preparation and orientation was often named by field workers during interviews and focus groups as an important process that was usually short-changed. For example, field workers from various organizations commented that their orientation had been “too short in length” and represented an “information dump of printed materials” that were never actually reviewed by staff.

“Orientation is critical to getting off to a good start particularly in a complex situation like this. Understanding the vision, the values and the goals of the organization is very important. Orientation needs to be thorough and a priority. Currently, about all you get is a big thick packet to read with lots of information and most of it is related to your work in the job description and your responsibilities. This causes problems later, when people haven’t had time to read this material.” (Field staff)

There were a wide variety of orientation practices evident between organizations, and within the same organization for different staff. Between and even within the agencies that participated in this assessment there were many differences apparent in the existence, understanding, and application of preparation and orientation resources for staff working in both Darfur and Chad. There were, however, some aspects of policy and practice that were common across most organizations.

1. Relatively few international staff, and no national staff, were brought to the headquarters office for orientation.

“Orientation usually only happens for the country directors or high level field staff. The cost of bringing all staff to [Headquarters] for orientation is prohibitive.” (Headquarters management)

“When I arrived in Darfur I felt that I was over prepared, I expected things to be worse than they actually were. I thought that my time at HQ was especially helpful in coming "up to speed" on our projects.” (Field staff)

2. Any orientation apart from the provision of printed materials was generally deferred to the country or project level rather than conducted by human resource staff based at headquarters.

“Outside of general information provided to new hires as part of their new hire paperwork, orientation is largely delegated to the field offices. The items checked in #13 [Before or immediately upon arrival in Sudan or Chad, does your organization provide some orientation to staff in any of the following areas?...] are assumptions made that the field office is handling when the new hire arrives in country but there may be times that certain steps are missed or that additional orientation is provided.” (Headquarters management)

“There is a lot of trial and error and learn by doing. The sink or swim theory is applied. Not a lot of support or team spirit. From the home office there is very little support especially from HR. Getting my paperwork and benefits sorted out was a nightmare and poorly handled. Orientation and preparation needs to be from all levels and not just when I am in my post.” (Field staff)

3. More commonly than not, orientation appears to have consisted of nothing more than reviewing a staff member's job responsibilities, organizational structure and mission, some policy and security information. Interview and focus group data suggest that there is generally little, if any, meaningful orientation about an organization's mission and approach, the cultural context, or what resources were available for supporting staff wellness, much less more extensive training in stress management or other topics related to staff wellness.

"A very thorough orientation with HR and program specialists could have made things better." (Field staff)

"In my opinion, [organization's name] for the most part prepares staff well. I personally did a lot of reading before going on assignment. I spent 3 days at headquarters mostly to go over the grants I will administer as part of my role and responsibilities. I also had some briefings about the security situation on the ground in Darfur. I had some briefings about self-care and the importance of self care however I have an academic background in psychology and this was good preparation for me. Being aware of potential burnout encouraged me to prepare before my assignment and to keep self-care in mind." (Field staff)

4. There was less formal and comprehensive orientation provided for national staff than international staff.

"We need standardization of our orientation process--not all staff receive the same preparation, information and orientation. We also need to prepare national and international staff for their assignment." (Headquarters management)

There were inconsistent perceptions or understandings of the content or adequacy of orientation policies or programs even among staff working for the same organization.

There were discrepancies between reports made by staff working for the same organization. More than once, headquarters management staff from the same organization made contradictory statements about what was provided in terms of orientation, or who was responsible for orienting new staff. For example, one participant indicated that they believed their organization provided a thorough and "good" orientation for field staff working in Darfur and Chad, including security and emergency plans. Another staff member from the same organization, however, stated that orientation and preparation of staff were "weak".

While most agencies had general information in their orientation materials on staff welfare in emergencies, there was little articulation or awareness of concrete plans for proactive staff support. Some agencies had a sprinkling of information on staff wellness in their orientation materials, but rarely was there a solid resource provided during orientation that defined the agency commitment to staff wellness and, more importantly, named resources or materials that were available to build and support self-care skills and staff wellness through interventions and resources/programs. Furthermore, there were inconsistencies regarding awareness of the resources that were available.

“International staff received one week of orientation in Khartoum. The orientation included culture, security and job descriptions, and organization goals. There was nothing about self care or stress management. There is no orientation for local staff and there should be.” (Field staff)

No consistent process emerged that ensured that all staff were briefed on a spectrum of stress identification and stress management techniques or strategies or on any existing organizational policy for opportunities for psychosocial support to staff. Respondents expressed a desire to understand how the agency approached the issue of staff wellness and what the process was for accessing support. Preparation and orientation in terms of where responsibility for staff wellness was lodged in the organization were also lacking.

“It would be good if material was available about stress management and even better if this topic could be incorporated into the [organization’s name] manual... Staff preparing to go to the field to work in an emergency humanitarian situation need to be better prepared with orientation, security training, self-care and stress management and capacity building.” (Field staff)

Solid preparation and orientation was frequently named as key in reducing stress and frustration at the field level. Many field staff who were interviewed or participated in focus groups identified better orientation around security training, self-care and stress management, and capacity building as a high priority. Many also suggested that they would like to see much more time devoted to having staff oriented and familiarized with the value of “care” and “wellness” as key values of the organization.

“The current orientation does not really cover satisfactorily the explanations about isolation, common living, curfews and security and working conditions. There should be more clarity shared around these topics before the employee reaches the destination of work.” (Field staff)

Many field staff also indicated that they would like to see stronger orientation programs that include solid resources on self care and staff wellness and an ongoing element available through written materials or workshops.

“There should be at least one week of security training and stress management before any staff person is sent to Darfur. The reasons that cause stress are many and a staff person going to work in Darfur should be fully apprised of the conditions they will be working in.” (Field staff)

“What would be most useful is having a thorough orientation for staff going into an emergency. Stress management would be very useful. Orienting staff before they get to their field location is much better than letting them try to figure things out after they get there.” (Field staff)

7.4 Recommendations

1. Recognizing the strategic and foundational importance of the orientation process in employees’ professional efficacy and personal well-being, agencies should make every effort to ensure that the orientation process is as comprehensive as possible, with policies and procedure in place outlining who is responsible for covering what orientation topics, and when, during the first three to six months of employment.
2. Orientations should not rely solely on printed material, especially when there is no accountability mechanism in place to ensure that staff have read that material or that questions can be addressed.
3. The orientation process for staff working in complex emergency environments should include review or training on:
 - a. Agency mission and values;
 - b. Job descriptions and responsibilities;
 - c. Policy, procedure, and personal skill building related to security issues (including any female-specific cultural orientation issues);
 - d. Cross cultural communication and management training;
 - e. Agency approach to staff wellness and stress management (including self-care skills, procedures for accessing counseling and staff support services, critical incident policies and procedures, and information about where staff can access written self care and stress management resources);
 - i. Whenever possible, agencies should provide a confidential psychological orientation with a mental health professional

external to the agency very early during the orientation process (for international staff, preferably before they arrive in the complex emergency situation to begin their posting). A confidential psychological orientation can involve the use of assessment tools to examine issues related to burnout, compassion fatigue, strengths and weaknesses related to resilience, hardiness, and vitality, and the development of a self-care and support plan for the upcoming assignment. This orientation should be used to help the individual self determine if the timing and position are right for them.

- f. In the case of continuing projects, ensure that incoming staff have the opportunity for a face to face handover with outgoing staff, or at least are provided with a written handover document drafted by outgoing staff.

8. SUPPORT DURING ASSIGNMENT

8.1 Key Survey & Interview Data Related to Support Policies & Programs During Assignments

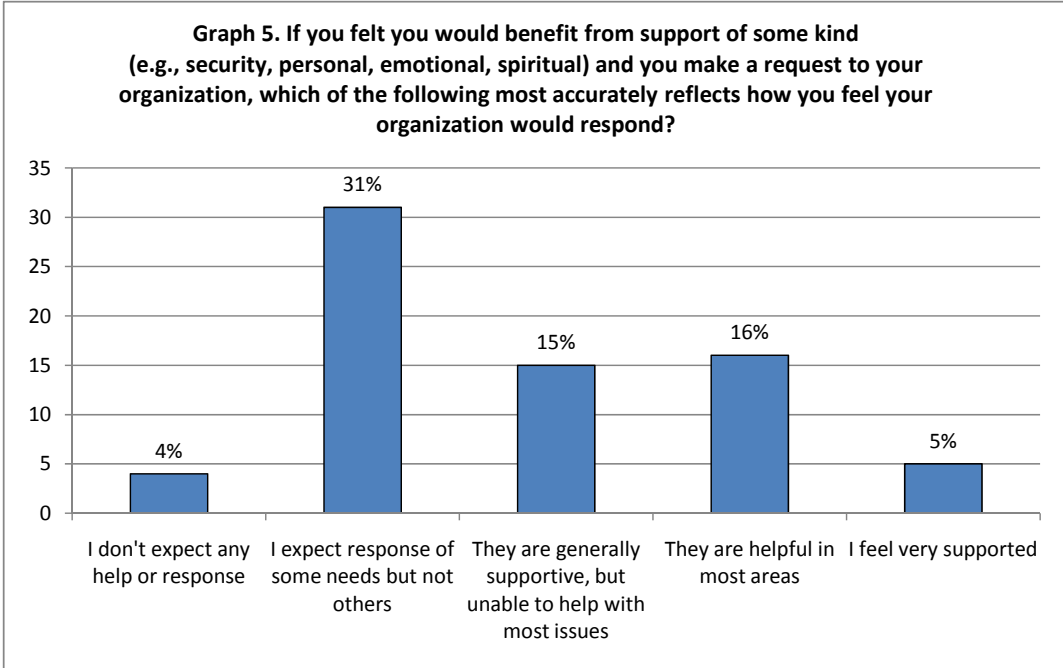
Headquarters-based management staff who were surveyed were asked to note areas for which they had received requests for support while in their current position. The six headquarters management personnel who would receive such requests in their position indicated that they had received requests for support related to concerns in the following areas:

Table 9. Areas for which Requests for Support from Staff were Received (N=6).

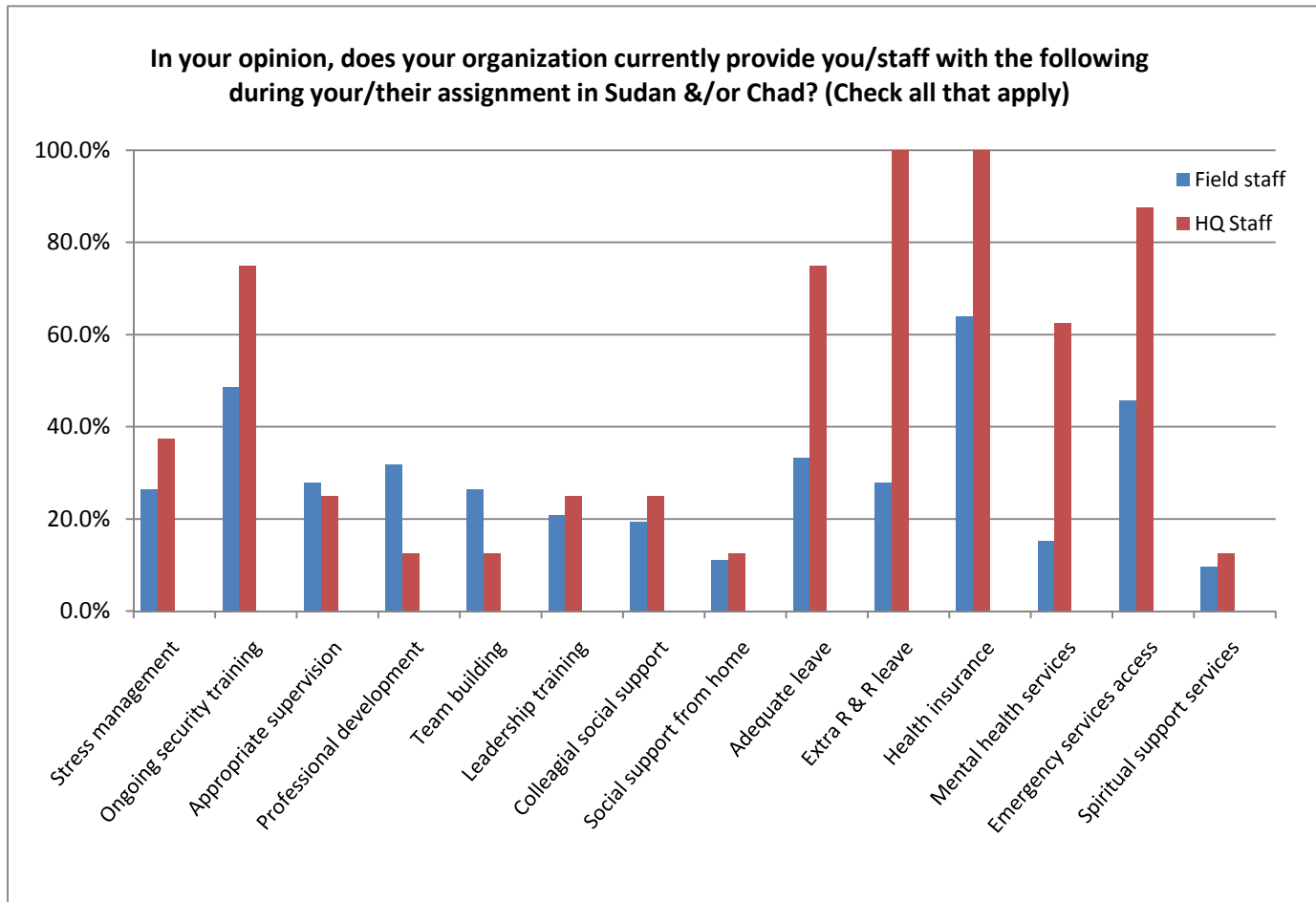
	<i>Percent</i>
Personal safety	100.0%
Cross cultural communication	83.3%
Personal mental and/or spiritual well-being	83.3%
Team member communication	66.7%
Gender restrictions/sexual harassment	66.7%
The mission and its effectiveness	66.7%
Physical resources	50.0%

When asked to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = “not at all well” and 10 = “very well”) how well they felt their organization was able to address these concerns, two thirds of headquarters management staff marked 3 or 4, indicating that they believed their organization was generally able to address staff’s concerns at a below-average level. One individual marked 5, and another, 7.

In contrast, field staff were asked how they felt their organization would respond to their request for support. Their responses are presented in the graph below.



Headquarters management staff and field staff were also surveyed regarding various aspects of their working environment, benefits, and additional support activities or programs that are provided to staff working in Sudan and Chad. Responses to this question are presented in the graph below.



In a follow-up question, field staff were asked for examples of these or other programs they felt helped to support staff. Answers to this question involved the following policy and program areas (listed in order of frequency of citation):

- Stress management training, debriefing, counseling, and/or mandatory leave post-critical incidents (N=14)
- Rest and relaxation leave, annual leave (N=12)
- Training in capacity building and professional development (N=6)
- Recreational opportunities and group activities (N=6)
- Additional security training (N=3)
- Health benefits (N=3)
- Increased pay or hardship allowance (N=2)
- Technical or administrative support (N=2)
- Contact with regional office and assistance from management (N=2)
- Ability to call family (N=1)

8.2 Key Survey & Interview Data Related to Issues of Stress & Trauma Management

When asked whether they felt they could benefit from stress management or coaching, 82% of field staff answered “yes”. However, 50% of field staff indicated that they did not know where to go or whom to contact to find good resources on stress management and trauma support if they wanted them.

Finally, field staff were asked which types of resources they thought they would be most likely to use if they needed stress or trauma support. The majority of staff felt they would use workshops or training events, or regular, themed, discussion groups with colleagues. Responses are presented in the table below in order of frequency of citation.

Table 10. Anticipated Use of Stress or Trauma Support Resources by Field Staff.

	Percent
Workshops and other training events	52.8%
Regular, themed, discussion groups with colleagues in my organization	50.0%
Peer support network composed of colleagues that work in other organizations	38.9%
Regular individual and private counseling sessions	33.3%
Printed materials (e.g., handbooks)	33.3%
Internet-based education services (e.g., online training modules)	29.2%
Internet-based interactive services (e.g., webinar discussions)	22.2%

Interviews and focus groups suggest that within the various agencies, awareness about stress and trauma management is beginning to gain currency. For example:

- Field staff from five organizations reported that they had attended some stress management training in Sudan and/or Chad, or that their organization provided online training resources for staff. However, even within these 5 organizations, employees expressed a desire for more training in this area. Others were unsure if the online training materials were widely known about or being accessed.
- Multiple staff from five organizations expressed a desire for counseling to be made available to assist in coping with stress and trauma associated with critical incidents, burnout, and vicarious trauma. A staff member in one organization indicated that a counselor *was* available to staff following critical incidents, yet other staff members of the same organization were apparently unaware of this service and expressed a desire for a counselor to be made available following critical incidents.
- Multiple staff from two organizations referred to the use of a peer support network and volunteers as a policy for staff wellness and stress management.

8.3 Existence & Adequacy of Policies & Programs Currently in Place

This section highlights key findings that have bearing on any conclusions regarding the adequacy of policies and programs related to supporting staff during their assignments in Darfur and Chad.

Despite a strong desire to appropriately support staff during their assignments in Darfur and Chad, it was generally acknowledged by headquarters management personnel that staff support policies and practices for field staff in Sudan and Chad could be strengthened. When asked whether they felt their organization had good policies and programs in place to support staff in Chad and Sudan, more than 80% of headquarters management personnel said they had good policies and practice only in “a few” or “some” areas, rather than “most” or “all”. In addition, two-thirds of headquarters management staff indicated that their organization was able to respond to requests for support from field staff at a below-average level.

Data from the field staff surveys support this assessment, with approximately 45% of field staff reporting that they expect a response to some needs but not others, and approximately 21% reporting that they feel their organizations are generally supportive, but unable to help in most cases. However, 30% of staff did report that their organizations were helpful in most areas and/or that they felt very supported.

There was a wide variety of supportive policies and practices evident between organizations, and within the same organization for different staff.

“One challenge we face is the unevenness of support of our staff. International staff have better health coverage than national staff. Some managers receive leadership training; others do not. Some staff have received stress management training, others have not. For every example of policies, guidelines and program that helps staff, it is possible to identify staff that haven't received or felt adequately supported.” (Headquarters management)

There were inconsistent perceptions, or understandings of, the content or adequacy of staff support policies or programs even among staff working for the same organization. Generally, headquarters management personnel felt that the organization was providing more supportive programs and opportunities than field staff reported. For example, 75% of HQ staff reported that the organization provided adequate leave but only 35% of field staff agreed. Sixty two percent of HQ staff indicated that the organization provided access to mental health services when needed, only 16% of field staff agreed.

This discrepancy of opinion was particularly obvious in the case of R&R leave. When asked whether they provided extra rest and relaxation leave for those posted in extreme conditions, 100% of HQ staff reported that the organization did provide this R&R leave, but only 29% of field staff agreed. It is possible that this discrepancy is at least partly due to different interpretations of the word “extra” by headquarters management and field staff.

“In terms of programs or policies specific to Darfur, we do pay people hardship pay...[organization’s name] also [has] a specific policy for field staff working in Darfur with R & R.” (Headquarters management)

On a more positive note, proportionally more field staff (34%) than HQ staff (12.5%) felt that staff in Sudan and Chad were being provided with opportunities for professional development. Similarly, proportionally more field staff (28%) than headquarters management staff (12.5%) felt that staff in Sudan and Chad were being provided with opportunities for team-building.

Headquarters management personnel most frequently reported receiving requests for support for concerns related to personal safety, personal mental and emotional well-being, and cross cultural communication difficulties. Some of these key areas are clearly being attended to more fully than others. For example, both HQ staff and field staff report the existence and implementation of security training policies and programs at a rate far higher than that for specific stress management and staff wellness policies and programs.

Rest and relaxation leave was frequently cited by staff as crucial to staff wellness. R&R policies that provided staff with the opportunity to remove themselves from the stressful environment of their work were frequently cited both in the survey data and interviews as being most contributive to their wellness and ability to cope with the stress of work.

Key issues related to R&R that staff highlighted, however, included differences in the policies between different organizations, and inconsistencies between R&R policies for national staff and international staff. For example, in some organizations, national staff are required to utilize annual leave days for R&R, whereas international staff are provided extra R&R days in addition to their annual leave allowance. Field staff generally felt that R&R policies should be reviewed and adjusted to accommodate for travel time to and from home location for nationals wishing to visit their families, and that R&R destinations should be evaluated in terms of whether they are meeting the objectives of providing an escape from the pressure of work and the ability to temporarily relax and unwind. Both field and headquarters management staff also felt that the opportunity for staff to debrief before and after R&R would be helpful.

“The bureaucratic impediments related to travel permits makes it difficult, if not impossible, for our staff to use all their leave and R&R. We changed our R&R policy--lengthening the time between weeks off because it had become so burdensome to obtain travel permits.” (Headquarters management)

“Many of the local and international staff balance their wellness by trying to keep in touch with their families. It is very important for them.” (Field worker)

“What is missing is field staff interviewed or debriefed before and after R and R. It would be good if, at the very least, the office manager could have a debrief with staff and ask questions like “How are you? What are your plans for R and R” and when they return ask, “How was R and R? How are you feeling now?” (Headquarters management)

The overwhelming majority of staff (82%) felt they could benefit from stress management training or coaching during their time in Sudan or Chad. In terms of stress and trauma management, field staff reported that they would find workshops and training, as well as discussion groups with colleagues, most useful.

“Staff need to recognize that the important thing is stress management. Once there is recognition of stress and talk about stress, there can be some answers as to how to manage that stress level.” (Field staff)

“It would be good if material was available about stress management and even better if this topic was incorporated into the [organization’s name] manual. It would also be good if a counselor or social worker was available.” (Field staff)

“[Person’s name] has just completed a stress management training workshop a few days ago here in Khartoum. The feedback from the workshop participants was positive.” (Field worker)

There is a general lack of knowledge among field staff in Sudan and Chad about where to go or whom to contact to find good resources on stress management and trauma support if they want them. More than half of staff reported they did not know where to find resources on stress management and trauma support.

“The [intranet website] is a valuable resource but it only works where there is reliable electricity and reliable internet connection. Online there are topics about safety and security, and stress management but I doubt most staff utilize this resource. Staff should be required somehow to access the security and safety topics and stress management but presently there is not a good way to make this a requirement. Also, for local staff, these two topics should be in Arabic and currently it is only in English.” (Field staff)

8.4 Recommendations

1. Agencies should invest in increasing awareness about self-care and stress management through regular field-based workshops, peer-support or peer-discussion programs, and/or coaching opportunities.
2. Agencies should provide, on a continuing basis, printed or online materials on self care and stress management for use in field locations in relevant languages and ensure that staff are aware of the availability of these printed or online resources.

3. Agencies should locate or invest in qualified local counseling resources that can be made available to field-based staff. Agencies should also recognize that, generally, counselors working for normal, western-based, EAPs (Employee Assistance Programs) lack the experience to assist field staff in complex emergencies effectively in considering and addressing the issues they are facing.
4. Agencies should develop internal capacity or source external capacity to support field-based managers in assessing general staff wellness, and in assessing and responding to critical incidents.
5. Agencies should identify minimum standards for staff living and working conditions in complex emergency situations focusing on such issues, for example, as training cooks for staff, providing effective mosquito netting, and providing air conditioners for living and working quarters.
6. Agencies should ensure access for field management to experienced security professionals to discuss specific concerns regarding site security and staff safety.
7. Agencies should establish and review Rest and Relaxation (R&R) policies to ensure that frequency, time, and destination are appropriate.
8. R&R should include external debriefing opportunities for all staff as part of the R&R cycle.
9. In complex emergency situations of high confinement, agencies should have a proactive plan to provide access to recreational possibilities, including recreational equipment.
10. Agencies should ensure that every location has access to the most reliable available form of communication, such as mobile phones, landline telephony, satellite phones, internet, voice over internet protocol capacity etc. Agencies should also use those resources to provide staff members with the means to regularly contact their loved ones.
11. Agencies should invest in training and other skill-building opportunities for staff. For example:
 - a. Agencies should consider designing and instituting a skills-building program specifically for local staff during their tenure with the agency to assist in building local capacity and career planning for local staff.
 - b. Agencies should consider providing all staff with training opportunities in various aspects of capacity building and skills development.

9. SUPPORT AFTER ASSIGNMENT

9.1 Key Survey Data

Headquarters management personnel were surveyed regarding the support their organization provided to staff at the end of their assignments in Sudan or Chad, or the end of their contract. Field staff, in contrast, were surveyed regarding what they felt would be helpful when they left their current organization or role. Responses to these two questions are presented in the table below.

Table 11. Support Organizations Provide to Staff at the End of their Assignment in Sudan & Chad.

	HQ management staff [Question: When staff leave the organization does your organization provide...?]	Field staff [Question: When you leave your organization, what do you feel would be helpful?]
Practical assistance with relocation	75%	40%
Operational debrief	50%	46%
Transition coaching and career planning	38%	60%
Psychological debrief	13%	31%

Field staff were also surveyed regarding whether they thought that their organization would provide appropriate practical and emotional support when they left their current assignment. Sixty one percent of respondents answered “no” and thirty three percent answered “yes”.

Headquarters management personnel were asked whether they felt that their organization effectively assists staff in transitioning out of their roles in Sudan and Chad at the end of their assignments. Seventy five percent answered “no”.

9.2 Key Interview Data

Participant interviews and focus groups with field and headquarters management staff yielded additional information on the topic of support following assignments or the end of contract, specifically:

- Expectations as to what organizations are responsible for extending to staff during this period of end-of-assignment or post-assignment are generally low (among both headquarters management and field staff).
- Lower than expected responses to what the field staff might find helpful following the end of their assignment (e.g., the question about practical assistance with relocation) is at least partially due to the fact that relocation is often not necessary for local staff following the end of their contracts.
- Handovers were often poor or nonexistent.

9.3 Existence & Adequacy of Policies & Programs Currently in Place

This section highlights key findings that have bearing on any conclusions regarding the adequacy of policies and programs related to supporting staff after their assignments in Darfur and Chad.

In general, few organizations had clearly-outlined policies and procedures related to supporting staff at the end of their assignment or contract. Overall, it appears that organizations have very little policy in this area that extends beyond the financial. There is little standard procedure, even within organizations. What is being offered is being offered at the initiative of the various HQ management departments and personnel and many field staff appeared unaware of additional support services they may be eligible to access.

“I would like to see more creative thinking about what could be done for and with field staff in transition.” (Headquarters management)

“The biggest hole in the entire process is post-employment. There is a weakness in the debriefing process and the debriefing usually follows more along the sectoral lines so that the replacement or next person will be better prepared to handle the sectoral work. There is virtually nothing on self-care nor what the personal cost is to staff when self-care is ignored. [Organization’s name] also does not look carefully about how well staff cope during their assignment.” (Headquarters management)

“I would like to see more information go out to the national and overseas staff, in basically one page format, about what benefits staff can take advantage of including stress management, health and self care.” (Headquarters management)

Exit interviewing and/or operational debriefing does not appear to be standard procedure. Only four of the eight headquarters management staff surveyed and interviewed said that their organizations regularly conducted operational debriefs with departing staff.

“Where things fall down is with the pre and post assignment briefing. No one really is sure what debriefing means beyond a security briefing.” (Headquarters management)

“Sadly, [organization’s name] does little in this regard. After a major emergency response [organization’s name] does have a standard lessons learned debriefing that might (but often does not) reflect staff support issues.” (Headquarters management)

Very few organizations offer psychological debriefing with staff at the end of their contracts. Only 13% of headquarters management staff surveyed indicated that their organizations provide psychological debriefing to departing staff.

“The biggest source of stress and distraction for me right now is thinking about jumping back into ‘real life’. This has been a tough assignment and there won’t be any break. I know when I leave here I’ll have to hit the ground running at home. It makes me exhausted just thinking about it. I would really like an opportunity to decompress somewhere restful before returning home.” (Field staff, three weeks before the end of their contract)

“In theory, field staff have access to EAP for three months after the end of the assignment. There are no debriefings at the end of tour. [Organization’s name] does not bring field staff back to headquarters mostly because it is cost prohibitive.” (Headquarters management)

The key issue for most field staff in Sudan and Chad (especially nationals) appears to be job security, and what field staff feel would be most helpful upon leaving their organization is transition coaching and career development. A majority of field staff felt they would find transition coaching and career planning helpful upon leaving the organization – this was ranked as valuable by more field staff than assistance with relocation, operational debriefs, or psychological debriefs. The importance of this issue to field staff is also reflected in survey results on what field staff find the most satisfying aspects of their job (“learning new skills that will serve me well in the future” was ranked # 3). Practical training, skills development, and capacity development was also the third most commonly mentioned issue when field staff were asked what policies and programs they would find supportive during their assignments in Sudan or Chad.

“My only goal is to retain my job because I have to support my family, so I am not going to show any weakness for fear of being let go.” (Field staff)

“National staff are particularly interested in more types of training especially around capacity building, skills building and sectoral skills building. This would not only make it

possible for them to perform better currently but they are nationals so they must think about their future and work in Sudan.” (Field staff)

9.4 Recommendations

1. Agencies should evaluate or develop the policies around ensuring that departing staff participate in a standardized lessons-learned operational debrief or exit-interview.
2. Confidential psychological debriefings should be a standard part of the post assignment process and agencies should consider providing access to follow up counseling on an as-needed basis.
3. All departing national and international staff should be clearly briefed on their benefits (including procedures and time-frames for accessing additional counseling support)
4. Agencies should consider providing relevant transition coaching to staff at the end of their contracts (e.g., training on re-entry and reverse culture shock and/or assistance in preparation for searching for new employment by assisting with resume review and discussions of whether opportunities for continued employment exist within the agency).

10. MANAGING IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

One over-arching issue that emerged as a consistent thread throughout this assessment was the critical role that skilled managers and healthy management systems play in effectively supporting staff. In every area explored – staff selection, orientation and preparation, and staff support during and after assignments – it was evident that the strengths and weaknesses of organizational management systems and/or individual managers were, in part, responsible for significantly magnifying or mitigating the level of stress experienced by staff and their functional ability. In complex emergency settings, field managers and HQ supervisors face some unique management challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities.

A focus on strengthening the self-care and stress-management skills of individual staff deployed to complex emergencies without a concomitant focus on strengthening organizational management skills, systems and structures seems unlikely to result in enduring improvements in staff well-being. **Any systemic strategy aiming to enhance staff well-being should prioritize strengthening individual management skills and organizational management systems.**

Given the importance of good individual leadership and management systems in staff well-being this chapter explores key survey and interview data related to the topic, and offers some recommendations related to strengthening management skills, strategies, and systems.

10.1 Key Survey Data

The response rate of headquarters management and field staff to survey questions related to management practices were, for the most part, similar:

- Only 25% of headquarters managers and 29% of field staff felt that their organizations provided, “appropriate supervision and time with management.”
- Only 25% of headquarters managers and 22% of field staff reported that their organizations provided leadership training for management.
- Only 12.5% of headquarters managers and 28% of field staff reported that their organizations provided team-building activities.

10.2 Key Interview Data

Discussions during interview and focus groups often focused on:

- The general importance of good management practices and supportive and responsive management structures;
- The central importance of clear and effective communication between staff, and particularly between headquarters and field offices; and
- The specific importance of cross-cultural communication and solid leadership skills.

“Part of that capacity to perform can be influenced by the way the staff are valued and how the management reaches out to the staff. Communication is important. Cultural sensitivity is important. Realistic expectations are important. All of this adds up to promoting wellness. In the end, staff need to feel there is a brighter tomorrow.” (Field staff)

Examples of helpful and supportive management actions and processes included:

- Disseminating management information in a timely, accurate, and consistent manner;
- Clearly communicating realistic management objectives and expectations;
- Proactively addressing safety, security and living space and workplace environment concerns;
- Providing safe outlets for employees to voice concerns and express fear and anxiety;
- Adapting human resource policies to appropriately respond to the situation and employees' needs; and
- Appropriately responding to the different needs of international and national staff.

Both field and headquarters management staff frequently called for the following:

- Improved induction for managers at HQ and field levels, including orientation to the issue of staff wellness and “people management” skill-building that is focused on management skills in complex emergencies; and
- Ongoing training for managers to build up their management skills (in particular, team-building and communication skills).

“The key impediment to follow through and implementation is having the right skills set for managers. In general, the required skills sets are more defined for country directors, managers (objectives) and field staff particularly in sectoral work. The people

management skills are not so good...focus more intentionally on building the skills set of country directors with training and awareness building about creating a workplace environment of wellness...providing more comprehensive training in people skills for country directors, and supervisors” (Headquarters management)

10.3 Recommendations

Agencies should:

1. Provide staff with training and educational opportunities on topics such as: cross-cultural communication; conflict management; team leadership and communication skills; signs of psychological trauma including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma, and ways they can respond to affected staff; and how to cope with the pressures of management in a high-stress/high-risk environment. Training and educational resources should not rely solely on printed material, especially when there is no accountability mechanism in place to ensure that staff have read that material or that questions can be addressed.
2. Provide key management staff access to experienced mental health professionals to discuss specific concerns regarding staff well-being, crisis management, critical incidents, and self-care.
3. Provide key managers with access to experienced managers for coaching and consultations related to management skills, practices and concerns.
4. Provide key managers with access to experienced human resource/staff care professionals to discuss specific questions regarding organizational policies, benefits, and practices in these locations.
5. Encourage the formation of regular on-location inter-agency “Management Support Discussions” to facilitate mutual support, discussion of management best practices, sharing of resources, and problem solving. This could take place as an additional agenda item within the on-going weekly inter-agency coordination and sectoral meetings held in the field.
6. Given the changing nature of complex emergencies, agencies should mobilize regional management support opportunities, utilizing qualified management resource persons to provide quarterly agency specific or inter-agency consultations in strategic locations for management training, encouragement, information, and advice. This activity could build upon and be coordinated with recommendation #5.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTERACTION FOR ACTIVITIES AND/OR DELIVERABLES THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVED PRACTICE WITHIN THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

Recent research and expert opinion suggest that humanitarian relief and development staff worldwide, and especially those in complex humanitarian emergency situations, will continue to face increasing challenges to their physical security and psychological well-being. In the current climate, particularly where complex humanitarian emergencies are becoming more prevalent, there are both pragmatic and ethical reasons to prioritize caring for the most valuable resource available to humanitarian organizations – their staff.

The last decade has seen humanitarian organizations increasingly prioritize the issue of staff security. However, while the issue of staff wellness (or “psychological security” as one manager recently phrased it) has been gaining currency as an organizational priority during the last five years, it has not yet been similarly mainstreamed. A concerted effort is needed within the community to mainstream staff wellness as an important value and component of humanitarian action and ethos.

Several types of resources are available to assist the humanitarian community in considering the issue of staff care as a community and organizational value, and in evaluating and developing appropriate and realistic policies, programs and procedures related to staff wellness. A number of organizations have produced valuable resources, guiding principles, and guidelines for good practice related to these issues (e.g., www.headington-institute.org, www.peopleinaid.org, www.antaesfoundation.org). In addition, section 4 of the recently launched *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* addresses the issue of preventing and managing problems in mental health and psychosocial well-being amongst staff and volunteers. Finally, there is a growing pool of individual and organizational expertise related to topics of staff wellness and support. Several agencies are well down the path of developing comprehensive organizational policy and resources for supporting staff-care and wellness, and an increasing number of mental health professionals are committed to working with humanitarian personnel and organizations to develop staff wellness policies, programs and appropriate interventions.

However, community-wide there remains significant discrepancies in the following: vocabulary used to refer to staff wellness issues; organizational and individual awareness and understanding of appropriate and helpful self-care and stress management models; articulation of the importance of staff wellness; and expertise and

accountability in evaluating, developing and implementing adequate and effective staff wellness policies and programs.

As stated in its mission, InterAction brings the values and experience of the NGO community into the broader development and humanitarian assistance community through strategic alliances with key partners around particular issues and objectives. As the largest coalition of US-based international nongovernmental organizations, InterAction is uniquely positioned to organize an inter-agency effort among its membership to advocate for the issue of staff wellness through coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate appropriate, informed, and realistic policies and practices related to staff wellness and support, and to provide strategic programs designed to contribute to staff wellness in the humanitarian community and particularly in complex emergency settings.

The effectiveness of any such efforts will likely be contingent upon some or all of the following:

- There is an increasing awareness of the pressing need for effective staff care programs for humanitarian staff, especially those working in complex emergency situations.
- InterAction and humanitarian organizations are committed to aggressively advocating for adequate staff care and well-being;
- Donors and agencies are committed to providing adequate funding for staff care and well-being initiatives;
- Inter-agency cooperation has identified achievable staff care “minimum standards” and led to the sharing of resources to provide adequate support for staff working in the region;

It is also likely that the following considerations will continue to present challenges to these efforts:

- There are currently limited resources available for staff care programs;
- Especially in complex emergencies, there are generally serious security concerns that result in significant limitations of personal freedoms, travel, and activities that present some unique constraints to staff care efforts;
- Mental health and psychosocial programs are poorly understood resources and typically under-appreciated;
- The critical wellness needs of staff demand an immediate response, yet the highly complex humanitarian emergencies and the multicultural nature of teams working for humanitarian organizations interact with a challenging

environmental and political context to create complex situations that require a unique blend of experience and training on behalf of mental health professionals and other staff support personnel.

The following are recommendations to InterAction for activities and/or deliverables that would contribute to improved policy and practice within the humanitarian community.

Within Six Months

- 1. In direct response to the immediate needs of humanitarian staff working in Darfur and Chad, in order to provide the single most requested resource from field staff during this assessment, Interaction should advocate for funding to support a series of interagency workshops for staff in Darfur and Chad.** These events should be conducted by a team of 3 to 5 experienced mental health professionals and include basic stress/trauma management training, self-care training to promote hardiness and resilience, cross cultural communication skills and an opportunity to access counseling. The events could be in three or four centralized locations and open to management and field staff from NGO's in each region.
- 2. To address and strengthen management training for agencies working in Darfur and Chad, Interaction should advocate for funding to support a series of interagency management training and education workshops for management staff in Darfur and Chad.** These events should be conducted by a team of experienced trainers and hosted as a management training conference for middle and upper level managers of NGO's working in Sudan and Chad. The events should include presentations and discussion groups on topics focusing on management challenges unique to crisis environments, cross-cultural communication, conflict management, team leadership, signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and vicarious trauma, ways to support staff with those signs, and how to cope with the pressures of management in a high stress/high risk environment.

Within One Year

- 1. Form a Minimum Standards for Staff Care (MSSC) Task Force:** InterAction should form and advocate for funding for an inter-agency task force among its membership to review existing staff care standards and guidelines, and propose a widely agreed upon set of standards to be adopted by all InterAction members as part of InterAction's Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) Standards.

The following issues should be taken into consideration in the development of MSSC:

- a) Agreeing on standard vocabulary in relation to common terms used to refer to aspects of staff wellness;
 - b) Reviewing existing guidelines, standards and best practices, and staff needs;
 - c) Collaborating with and utilizing the existing knowledge of organizations, mental health professionals, and other individuals who have experience in this area;
 - d) Institutionalizing staff wellness objectives into organizational planning and management structures;
 - e) Advocating for donor support of staff wellness programs and resources;
 - f) Developing senior management understanding and support of staff wellness initiatives;
 - g) Developing standards for management practices to enhance and support staff wellness;
 - h) Developing standards for staff wellness training and educational materials;
 - i) Developing standards for staff care in complex emergencies;
 - j) Developing standards and protocols for critical incident response methodologies;
 - k) Developing standards for staff selection and screening methodologies;
 - l) Developing standards for staff orientation and preparation methodologies;
 - m) Developing standards for on assignment support components;
 - n) Developing standards for after assignment support components; and
 - o) Devising ongoing evaluation and research methodologies.
- 2. Disseminate the MSSC to all InterAction members and other Humanitarian consortia:** Widely disseminate the MSSC among humanitarian organizations worldwide via workshops, conference presentations, printed brochures, and webinars, or other electronic means and devise a mechanism for ongoing feedback and modifications.
- 3. Incorporate the MSSC standards into future USAID *Requests for Proposals*:** Advocate for the inclusion of a specific staff care plans and allowable funding

lines for staff wellness programs in grant proposals submitted to PRM and USAID/OFDA.

Within Three Years

- 1. Adoption of the MSSC:** Through the PVO standards process, require all InterAction members to demonstrate adoption of and compliance with the MSSC.
- 2. Compliance Audit:** Provide periodic assessments of membership compliance with the MSSC and resulting outcomes, using a monitoring protocol similar to that used by *People-in-Aid*.
- 3. Programmatic research:** Provide funding for a longitudinal study to assess the effectiveness of various staff-care programs and interventions, leading to a revised set of data-based recommendations for future staff-care programs.

12. SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment Findings	Recommendations
<i>Overall View of Policies & Procedures to Support Staff in Sudan and Chad</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a growing awareness of the need for suitable policies and programs to support staff in high stress situations. 2. There is a wide variety of policies, programs, practices, and perceptions, apparent across organizations. 3. Some organizations are actively working on strengthening their staff wellness and staff care capacities and programs, and all organizations desire to improve their staff wellness and staff-care capacities and programs. 4. Relatively few agencies have clearly articulated a commitment to staff well-being in organizational handbooks and other policy documents, or outlined proactive plans for staff support. 5. Follow through and implementation of existing policy is often uneven. 6. Field staff are frequently not aware of specific policies and programs that <i>are</i> in place to support staff. <p>The following are seen by staff as key over-arching issues related to staff support policies and programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The critical role of skilled managers in effective staff support; ii. The equity of policies and programs as applied to national and international staff; iii. The availability of funding and other resources for staff support purposes; iv. The complexity of the situations in Sudan and Chad, and the challenge this poses to designing and implementing relevant and appropriate policies and programs from headquarters. <p>Resources were seen as a key constraint. Other constraints identified as affecting the ability of organizations to provide adequate support to staff based in Sudan and Chad include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Difficulty securing entry and exit visas for staff travel, which impedes staff training at headquarters, R & R entitlements, and leave; ii. The unstable and fluid security situation; iii. High turnover rates among field staff, and the short-term nature of many contracts; and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agencies should articulate a commitment to staff well-being, and demonstrate that commitment by evaluating and developing clear organizational policies related to staff well-being and wellness. Agencies should further demonstrate their commitment to staff well-being by including a budget for staff care as a regular part of operating expenses. 2. As part of this process, supervisors should be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to promoting and enhancing staff wellness. Key actions and performance indicators for managers in this area should be considered. For example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The issue of staff wellness should be included in position descriptions; b. Staff wellness should be discussed during the performance review processes; c. After minimum standards are identified and endorsed, outcomes tied to these minimum standards should be included as a key performance indicator for supervisors. 3. Provide national and international staff with equitable access to resources related to staff well-being (including Rest and Relaxation leave). 4. Procedurally, it is recommended that agencies adopt a two-pronged approach to the issue of staff wellness: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop policy and procedure around the aspects of work that the majority of staff find most satisfying. For example, this research suggests the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tell “success stories” and seek reasonable ways to help staff feel less isolated from beneficiaries and more connected to the results of their work; ii. Invest in training and skills building; and iii. Ensure staff have opportunities to work closely with teams of colleagues. b. Develop policies and procedures focused on providing support in key areas that staff are likely to experience as stressful, utilizing methodologies staff are likely to access. For example, this research suggests the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide staff support workshops and/or discussion groups focusing on issues associated with vicarious trauma, the cumulative stress of living in a dangerous environment, self care, communication skills, team-building, the moral dilemmas of humanitarian work, cultural issues related to the beneficiary country, other skill-building topics, security training and risk assessment; and

iv. Isolation of location, limiting email and phone access.	ii. Design processes and provide opportunities to assist staff in connecting more regularly with family and friends.
<i>Staff Selection</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was frequently acknowledged by headquarters management personnel, and by some country directors, that there was significant room for improvement in the existence and efficacy of policies and procedures related to screening and assessment of staff for work in Sudan and Chad. 2. Inconsistent policies and practices related to assessment and selection were evident at the field level. 3. Significant tension was felt by most parties between the desire to assess candidates as thoroughly as possible and the pressure to fill vacant posts as soon as possible. 4. The majority of international field staff interviewed were selected for their posts utilizing a telephone interview process. 5. Field staff frequently mentioned that the job description they were provided at the time of hiring did not reflect what they actually ended up doing for the organization. 6. The issue of staff retention was frequently mentioned as a significant challenge in conjunction with discussions of recruitment and assessment. 7. Among the agencies and personnel surveyed, there was little evidence of any intentional focus on assessing resiliency, self care skills, coping mechanisms, and psychological health (past and present) in their screening and hiring processes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognizing the strategic importance of the staff selection process, agencies should make every effort to strengthen assessment and recruitment policies and procedures by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensuring that hiring managers utilize appropriate skills and interview questions to assess applicants' strength and risk factors related to resilience, hardiness, vitality, and vulnerability to traumatic stress; b. Conducting interviews in person; c. Developing job descriptions that accurately reflect the job responsibilities, and security and living conditions; and d. Assessing the potential of cumulative stress of new hires with a series of past high stress assignments before posting them to another complex emergency situation.
<i>Preparation & Orientation</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Despite a strong desire to ensure appropriate preparation and orientation, it was generally acknowledged that field staff are being inadequately prepared and oriented for work in Sudan and Chad. 2. There were a wide variety of orientation practices evident between organizations, and within the same organization for different staff. 3. There were inconsistent perceptions or understandings of the content or adequacy of orientation policies or programs even among staff working for the same organization. 4. While most agencies had general information in their orientation materials on staff welfare in emergencies, there was little articulation or awareness of concrete plans for proactive staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognizing the strategic and foundational importance of the orientation process in employees' professional efficacy and personal well-being, agencies should make every effort to ensure that the orientation process is as comprehensive as possible, with policies and procedure in place outlining who is responsible for covering what orientation topics, and when, during the first three to six months of employment. 2. Orientations should not rely solely on printed material, especially when there is no accountability mechanism in place to ensure that staff have read that material or that questions can be addressed. 3. The orientation process for staff working in complex emergency environments should include review or training on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agency mission and values; b. Job descriptions and responsibilities; c. Policy, procedure, and personal skill building related to

<p>support.</p> <p>5. Solid preparation and orientation was frequently named as key in reducing stress and frustration at the field level.</p>	<p>security issues (including any female-specific cultural orientation issues);</p> <p>d. Cross cultural communication and management training;</p> <p>e. Agency approach to staff wellness and stress management (including self-care skills, procedures for accessing counseling and staff support services, critical incident policies and procedures, and information about where staff can access written self care and stress management resources);</p> <p>i. Whenever possible, agencies should provide a confidential psychological orientation with a mental health professional external to the agency very early during the orientation process (for international staff, preferably before they arrive in the complex emergency situation to begin their posting). A confidential psychological orientation can involve the use of assessment tools to examine issues related to burnout, compassion fatigue, strengths and weaknesses related to resilience, hardiness, and vitality, and the development of a self-care and support plan for the upcoming assignment. This orientation should be used to help the individual self determine if the timing and position are right for them.</p> <p>f. In the case of continuing projects, ensure that incoming staff have the opportunity for a face to face handover with outgoing staff, or at least are provided with a written handover document drafted by outgoing staff.</p>
<i>Support During Assignment</i>	
<p>1. Despite a strong desire to appropriately support staff during their assignments in Darfur and Chad, it was generally acknowledged by headquarters management personnel that staff support policies and practices for field staff in Sudan and Chad could be strengthened.</p> <p>2. There was a wide variety of supportive policies and practices evident between organizations, and within the same organization for different staff.</p> <p>3. There were inconsistent perceptions, or understandings of, the content or adequacy of staff support policies or programs even among staff working for the same organization.</p> <p>4. Headquarters management personnel most frequently reported receiving requests for support for concerns related to personal safety, personal mental and emotional well-being, and cross cultural communication difficulties.</p> <p>5. Rest and relaxation leave was frequently cited by staff as crucial to staff wellness.</p> <p>6. The overwhelming majority of staff (82%) felt they could benefit from stress management training or coaching during their time in Sudan or</p>	<p>1. Agencies should invest in increasing awareness about self-care and stress management through regular field-based workshops, peer-support or peer-discussion programs, and/or coaching opportunities.</p> <p>2. Agencies should provide, on a continuing basis, printed or online materials on self care and stress management for use in field locations in relevant languages and ensure that staff are aware of the availability of these printed or online resources.</p> <p>3. Agencies should locate or invest in qualified local counseling resources that can be made available to field-based staff. Agencies should also recognize that, generally, counselors working for normal, western-based, EAPs (Employee Assistance Programs) lack the experience to assist field staff in complex emergencies effectively in considering and addressing the issues they are facing.</p> <p>4. Agencies should develop internal capacity or source external capacity to support field-based managers in assessing general staff wellness, and in assessing and responding to critical incidents.</p> <p>5. Agencies should identify minimum standards for staff living and working conditions in complex emergency situations focusing on such issues, for example, as training cooks for staff, providing effective mosquito netting, and providing air conditioners for living and working quarters.</p>

<p>Chad.</p> <p>7. There is a general lack of knowledge among field staff in Sudan and Chad about where to go or whom to contact to find good resources on stress management and trauma support if they want them.</p>	<p>6. Agencies should ensure access for field management to experienced security professionals to discuss specific concerns regarding site security and staff safety.</p> <p>7. Agencies should establish and review Rest and Relaxation (R&R) policies to ensure that frequency, time, and destination are appropriate.</p> <p>8. R&R should include external debriefing opportunities for all staff as part of the R&R cycle.</p> <p>9. In complex emergency situations of high confinement, agencies should have a proactive plan to provide access to recreational possibilities, including recreational equipment.</p> <p>10. Agencies should ensure that every location has access to the most reliable available form of communication, such as mobile phones, landline telephony, satellite phones, internet, voice over internet protocol capacity etc. Agencies should also use those resources to provide staff members with the means to regularly contact their loved ones.</p> <p>11. Agencies should invest in training and other skill-building opportunities for staff. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agencies should consider designing and instituting a skills-building program specifically for local staff during their tenure with the agency to assist in building local capacity and career planning for local staff. b. Agencies should consider providing all staff with training opportunities in various aspects of capacity building and skills development.
<i>Support After Assignment</i>	
<p>1. In general, few organizations had clearly-outlined policies and procedures related to supporting staff at the end of their assignment or contract.</p> <p>2. Exit interviewing and/or operational debriefing does not appear to be standard procedure.</p> <p>3. Very few organizations offer psychological debriefing with staff at the end of their contracts.</p> <p>4. The key issue for most field staff in Sudan and Chad (especially nationals) appears to be job security, and what field staff feel would be most helpful upon leaving their organization is transition coaching and career development.</p>	<p>1. Agencies should evaluate or develop the policies around ensuring that departing staff participate in a standardized lessons-learned operational debrief or exit-interview.</p> <p>2. Confidential psychological debriefings should be a standard part of the post assignment process and agencies should consider providing access to follow up counseling on an as-needed basis.</p> <p>3. All departing national and international staff should be clearly briefed on their benefits (including procedures and time-frames for accessing additional counseling support)</p> <p>4. Agencies should consider providing relevant transition coaching to staff at the end of their contracts (e.g., training on re-entry and reverse culture shock and/or assistance in preparation for searching for new employment by assisting with resume review and discussions of whether opportunities for continued employment exist within the agency).</p>
<i>Managing in Crisis Situations</i>	
<p>1. One over-arching issue that emerged as a consistent thread throughout this assessment was the critical role that skilled managers and healthy management systems play in effectively supporting staff</p> <p>2. It was evident that the strengths and weaknesses of organizational management systems and/or</p>	<p>1. Provide management staff with training and educational opportunities on topics such as: cross-cultural communication; conflict management; team leadership and communication skills; signs of psychological trauma including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma, and ways they can respond to affected staff; and how to cope with the pressures of management in a high-stress/high-risk environment.</p>

<p>individual managers were, in part, responsible for significantly magnifying or mitigating the level of stress experienced by staff and their functional ability.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A focus on strengthening the self-care and stress-management skills of individual staff deployed to complex emergencies without a concomitant focus on strengthening organizational management skills, systems and structures seems unlikely to result in enduring improvements in staff well-being. 4. Any systemic strategy aiming to enhance staff well-being should prioritize strengthening individual management skills and organizational management systems. 	<p>Training and educational resources should not rely solely on printed material, especially when there is no accountability mechanism in place to ensure that staff have read that material or that questions can be addressed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Provide key management staff access to experienced mental health professionals to discuss specific concerns regarding staff well-being, crisis management, critical incidents, and self-care. 3. Provide key managers with access to experienced managers for coaching and consultations related to management skills, practices and concerns. 4. Provide key managers with access to experienced human resource/staff care professionals to discuss specific questions regarding organizational policies, benefits, and practices in these locations. 5. Encourage the formation of regular on-location inter-agency “Management Support Discussions” to facilitate mutual support, discussion of management best practices, sharing of resources, and problem solving. This could take place as an additional agenda item within the on-going weekly inter-agency coordination and sectoral meetings held in the field. 6. Given the changing nature of complex emergencies, agencies should mobilize regional management support opportunities, utilizing qualified management resource persons to provide quarterly agency specific or inter-agency consultations in strategic locations for management training, encouragement, information, and advice. This activity could build upon and be coordinated with recommendation #5.
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13. REFERENCE SECTION

13.1 Key Resources

Many humanitarian agencies do not currently have the necessary capacity to provide some of the specific services recommended in this report (for example, certain training workshops). The following are key organizations and documents that can provide additional information and/or services regarding staff care training and education resources, counseling, consulting, and staff care policies and programs.

Headington Institute

www.headington-institute.org

The mission of the Headington Institute is to provide psychological and spiritual support to humanitarian aid and disaster relief personnel worldwide.

People In Aid

<http://www.peopleinaid.org>

The People In Aid mission is to promote, support and recognize good practice in the management of aid personnel.

(See the People In Aid Code of Good Practice)

IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/products/docs/Guidelines%20IASC%20Mental%20Health%20Psychosocial.pdf>

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) issues these Guidelines to enable humanitarian actors to plan, establish and coordinate a set of minimum multi-sectoral responses to protect and improve people's mental health and psychosocial well-being in the midst of an emergency.

Antares

<http://www.ataresfoundation.org>

The mission of the Antares Foundation is to improve the quality of management and staff support and care in humanitarian and developmental organizations.

(See Managing stress in humanitarian workers - Guidelines for Good Practice)

13.2 References

The following were referenced in this report:

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. 2007. Available at:

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/products/docs/Guidelines%20IASC%20Mental%20Health%20Psychosocial.pdf>

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Sudan - Complex Emergency. Situation Report # 18, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. October 2, 2007. Available at: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/YSAR-77LT8K-Full_Report.pdf/\\$File/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/YSAR-77LT8K-Full_Report.pdf/$File/Full_Report.pdf)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID): Sudan – Complex Emergency. Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. November 16, 2007. Available at: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/RMOI-7932F8-Full_Report.pdf/\\$File/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/RMOI-7932F8-Full_Report.pdf/$File/Full_Report.pdf)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID): Chad – Complex Emergency. Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. Revised October 18, 2007. Available at: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EDIS-783R6Q-Full_Report.pdf/\\$File/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EDIS-783R6Q-Full_Report.pdf/$File/Full_Report.pdf)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Relief Web & United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) Sudan September 22, 2007. Sudan-Darfur: Humanitarian Profile – Sept 2007. Available at: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/AHAA-77CNV5?OpenDocument&emid="ACOS-635PJQ"&rc=1](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/AHAA-77CNV5?OpenDocument&emid=)

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Headquarters Management Staff Survey

Introduction

Welcome to the Headington Institute’s survey of staff support policies, programs and practices for staff working in Sudan and Chad. This survey contains 22 questions, and should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be private and confidential. Headington Institute staff will analyze the data gathered through this survey and include some of it in a report to InterAction. All data will be presented in aggregate (without names, addresses or contact details attached) and no responses will be attributable to any single person or organization.

If you are completing the online version of this survey your responses will be submitted to the Headington Institute via a secure, encrypted connection after you have are finished. When you are ready to begin, click the “Next” button at the bottom of this page.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It is our hope that your thoughtful responses will help improve staff support services offered to staff working in Sudan and Chad.

If you have any questions or comments about this survey please contact the Institute via email (info@headington-institute.org) or phone (626-229-9336) and we will be happy to assist you.

All the best,
Headington Institute Staff

Survey

Demographics

1. Sex
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
2. Age
 - a. 20-24
 - b. 25-29
 - c. 30-34
 - d. 35-39
 - e. 40-44
 - f. 45-49
 - g. 50-54
 - h. 55-59
 - i. 60-64
 - j. 65 or older
3. Nationality
 - a. _____
4. Marital status
 - a. Single with no children
 - b. Divorced
 - c. Widowed
 - d. Married or long-term partner
 - e. Married or partnered with children
 - f. Single parent with part-time custody
 - g. Single parent with full-time custody

Organization and role details

5. How long have you been employed full time in humanitarian relief and/or development work?
 - a. _____ (years)
6. What country do you think of as home?
 - a. _____
7. In which country are you currently based most of the time?
 - a. _____
8. What is the name of the organization you currently work for?
 - a. _____
9. What is your current job title?
 - a. _____
10. Please list three major areas of responsibility in your job
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Overall view of support, policies, and procedures

11. In general, do you feel your organization has good policies and programs in place to support staff in Sudan and/or Chad? (Check one)
- a. No
 - b. In a few areas
 - c. In some areas
 - d. In most areas
 - e. Yes

Staff selection

12. In general, which of the following has your organization used when hiring new staff to work in Sudan and Chad (Check all that apply)
- a. Review of resume
 - b. Phone interview
 - c. In-person interview
 - d. Reference checks
 - e. Standardized assessments (pen and paper)
 - f. Multi-day assessment center interviews

Preparation and orientation

13. Before or immediately upon arrival in Sudan or Chad, does your organization provide orientation to staff in any of the following areas? (Check all that apply)
- a. Review of mission, values, and structure of the organization
 - b. Review of job descriptions (clear task description and expectations)
 - c. Stress management training or coaching
 - d. Personal security training
 - e. Briefing on current security situation
 - f. Cultural briefing
 - g. Language training
 - h. Other (please specify): _____
14. Do you feel that your organization adequately prepares and orients staff working in Sudan and/or Chad?
- a. Yes
 - i. If yes, what do you see as especially important elements of successful orientation? _____
 - b. No
 - i. If no, what are some things your organization could do to better prepare staff for working in these environments? _____

Support during assignments

15. In your opinion, during their time in Sudan and/or Chad, your organization currently provides staff with which of the following (check all that apply):
- a. Training in stress management

- b. Ongoing security training
 - c. Appropriate supervision & time with management
 - d. Professional development and career planning
 - e. Team building activities
 - f. Leadership training for management
 - g. Activities to promote social support networks with colleagues
 - h. Activities or avenues to promote staying connected with social support networks at home
 - i. Adequate leave
 - j. Extra rest and relaxation leave for those posted in extreme environments
 - k. Health insurance/coverage
 - l. Coverage for ongoing mental health services if needed
 - m. Access to emergency services (e.g., evacuation and mental health services following trauma)
 - n. Access to spiritual support services
16. Can you think of specific examples of these or other internal policies, guidelines and programs your organization has that you feel helps support staff and mitigate stress during their assignments?
- a. Yes
 - i. If yes, please give one or more examples _____
 - b. No
 - i. If no, please give one or more examples of internal policies or programs you feel would more effectively help support staff and mitigate stress _____
17. Can you think of specific examples of these or other external policies or constraints that affect your ability to provide adequate support for your staff?
- a. Yes
 - i. If yes, please give one or more examples _____
 - b. No
 - i. If no, please give one or more examples of external policies or programs you feel would more effectively help support staff and mitigate stress _____
18. Select any areas for which you have received requests for support from staff while in your current position:
- a. Concerns about personal safety
 - b. Concerns about physical resources
 - c. Cross-cultural communication concerns
 - d. Team member communication concerns
 - e. Gender restrictions/sexual harassment
 - f. Concerns about the mission and it's effectiveness
 - g. Concerns about personal mental and/or spiritual well-being
19. Overall, how well do you feel your organization was able to address such concerns:
- 1 = not at all well
 - 2

- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

10 = very well

20. In general, do you feel your organization has good policies and programs in place to support staff during their assignment in Sudan and/or Chad? (Check one)
- a. No
 - b. In a few areas
 - c. In some areas
 - d. In most areas
 - e. Yes

Support after assignments

21. When staff leave their positions which of the following does your organization offer them? (Check all that apply)
- a. Operation debrief
 - b. Psychological debrief
 - c. Transition coaching & career planning
 - d. Practical assistance with relocation
 - e. Other (please specify)
22. In general, do you feel that your organization effectively assists staff in transitioning out of their roles in Sudan/Chad when they leave their assignments there?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

If you have any additional comments on topics relevant to this survey please write them here: _____

APPENDIX D

Field Staff Survey

Introduction

Welcome to the Headington Institute’s survey of staff support policies, programs and practices for staff working in Sudan and Chad. This survey contains 28 questions, and should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be private and confidential. Headington Institute staff will analyze the data gathered through this survey and include some of it in a report to InterAction. All data will be presented in aggregate (without names, addresses or contact details attached) and no responses will be attributable to any single person or organization.

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All the best,
Headington Institute Staff

Survey

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 - h. 55-59
 - i. 60-64
 - j. 65 or older
3. Nationality
 - a. _____
4. Marital status
 - a. Single with no children
 - b. Divorced
 - c. Widowed
 - d. Married or long-term partner
 - e. Married or partnered with children
 - f. Single parent with part-time custody
 - g. Single parent with full-time custody

Organization and role details

5. How long have you been employed full time in humanitarian relief and/or development work?
 - a. _____ (years)
6. What country do you think of as home?
 - a. _____
7. In which country are you currently based?
 - a. Sudan
 - b. Chad
 - c. Elsewhere, but with frequent travel to Sudan or Chad (enter below the country where you are currently based)
 - i. _____
8. What is the name of the organization you currently work for?
 - a. _____
9. What is your current job title?
 - a. _____

10. Please list three major areas of responsibility in your job
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Preparation and orientation

11. Before or immediately upon arrival in Sudan or Chad, did your organization organize some orientation in any of the following areas? (Check all that apply)
- a. Review of mission, values, and structure of the organization
 - b. Your job descriptions (clear task description and expectations)
 - c. Stress management training or coaching
 - d. Personal security training
 - e. Briefing on current security situation
 - f. Cultural briefing
 - g. Language training
 - h. Other (please specify): _____
12. Do you feel that your organization prepared and oriented you adequately for your current job?
- a. Yes
 - i. If yes, was there anything that was especially helpful to you as you prepared for this job? What was it? _____
 - b. No
 - i. If no, what are some things your organization could have done to better prepare you for this job? _____

Current coping and experiences

13. Think about the last two weeks. Overall, how have you been feeling? (Select all that apply)
- a. Physically stressed (e.g., headaches, sleep disturbances, stomach upsets, tense muscles)
 - b. Mentally stressed (e.g., difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness)
 - c. Emotionally stressed (e.g., irritability, mood swings, feeling depressed, anxious, or numb)
 - d. Interpersonally stressed (e.g., withdrawn, overwhelmed by people, lonely, avoiding being alone)
 - e. Spiritually stressed (e.g., feeling “empty”; feeling as if you have lost your sense of meaning, purpose, hope or connection; questioning or doubting some of your core beliefs)
 - f. Not all that stressed
14. Do you feel you are currently under more stress than normal for you?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
15. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1=“very bad” and 10=“very good”) how would you estimate your overall well-being at the moment?

1 = very bad

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 = very good

16. Do you feel you currently have a healthy work/life balance
- Yes
 - No
17. During the time you have been in your current job, what have been the most significant sources of stress for you? (Select up to five of the following):
- Highly traumatic events that have happened to me (e.g., highly traumatic events such as shootings, kidnappings, and severe car accidents)
 - The feeling that a highly traumatic event *might* happen to me
 - Witnessing or hearing stories of personal tragedy, suffering and devastation
 - Being separated from family and friends
 - Not being able to communicate with family and friends as much as I would like to
 - Culture shock and communication difficulties that arise from working in a multicultural environment
 - Being separated from a familiar faith framework (e.g., a church or community group)
 - Questioning my core beliefs about meaning and purpose
 - Feeling overwhelmed, and like there are not enough resources available to combat the problems I see here
 - Struggling with moral dilemmas related to humanitarian work and wondering about issues related to whether “we are really doing any good here”
 - Communication difficulties with colleagues and team members
 - Communication difficulties to and from headquarters
 - Feeling like I don’t know what I’m supposed to be doing in my job
 - Feeling like there is not enough time or resources available to do my job properly
 - Heavy workload
 - Long working hours
 - Not enough time off work
 - Inadequate management/supervision
 - Other (Please specify) _____
18. What are the most significant sources of satisfaction for you in your current job? (Select up to five of the following):
- The feeling that I am helping others

- b. The sense of meaning or purpose I find through this work
 - c. Opportunities to learning about a new culture
 - d. Opportunities to contribute to an issue of global importance
 - e. The feeling that I am being personally stretched and challenged
 - f. Learning new skills that will serve me well in the future
 - g. The various “adventures” that come with this work
 - h. The intensity of this work, and the fact that it helps me feel more fully “alive”
 - i. Working closely with a team of colleagues
 - j. Relationships with colleagues and other friends based here
 - k. The way this job helps me understand myself and the world differently
 - l. Provides personal direction to my life and future work
 - m. Other (Please describe) _____
19. Think about the last two weeks. Overall, do you feel that you have employed good lifestyle balance and stress management strategies to care for yourself? (Check one)
- a. No
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. About half the time
 - d. Mostly
 - e. Yes
20. Do you feel you could benefit from training or coaching in stress management?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
21. Do you know where to go, or whom to contact, to find good resources on stress management and trauma support if you wanted them?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
22. If you needed stress or trauma support resources, what do you think you would be likely to use (check all that apply)
- a. Regular, themed, discussion groups with colleagues in my organization
 - b. Peer support network composed of colleagues that work in other organizations
 - c. Regular individual and private counseling sessions
 - d. Workshops and other training events
 - e. Internet-based interactive services (e.g., webinar discussions)
 - f. Internet-based education services (e.g., online training modules)
 - g. Printed materials (e.g., handbooks)
 - h. Other (please specify): _____

Perceived support, policies and procedures during and after assignment

23. In your opinion, does your organization currently provide you with the following (check all that apply):
- a. Training in stress management
 - b. Ongoing security training

- c. Appropriate supervision & time with management
 - d. Professional development and career planning
 - e. Team building activities
 - f. Leadership training for management
 - g. Activities to promote social support networks with colleagues
 - h. Activities or avenues to promote staying connected with social support networks at home
 - i. Adequate leave
 - j. Extra rest and relaxation leave for those posted in extreme environments
 - k. Health insurance/coverage
 - l. Coverage for ongoing mental health services if needed
 - m. Access to emergency services (e.g., evacuation and mental health services following trauma)
 - n. Access to spiritual support services
 - o. Any additional comments on this topic: _____
24. Can you think of specific examples of these or other policies and programs your organization has that you feel helps support staff and mitigate stress?
- a. Yes
 - i. If yes, please give one or more examples _____
 - b. No
 - i. If no, please give one or more examples of policies or programs you feel *would* help support staff and mitigate stress _____
25. If you felt you would benefit from support of some kind (e.g., security, personal, emotional, spiritual) and you make a request to your organization, which is the following most accurately reflects how you feel your organization would respond (select one):
- a. I don't expect any help or response
 - b. I expect response to some needs, but not others
 - c. They are generally supportive, but unable to help with most issues
 - d. They are helpful in most areas
 - e. I feel very supported
26. When you leave this position, which of the following do you feel would be helpful in your transition? (Check all that apply)
- a. Operational debrief
 - b. Psychological debrief
 - c. Transition coaching & career planning
 - d. Practical assistance with relocation
 - e. Other (please specify) _____
27. Do you anticipate that your organization will offer you appropriate practical and emotional support when you when you leave your current assignment?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
28. In general, do you feel your organization has good policies and programs in place to support staff during their assignment in your current location? (Check one)

- a. No
- b. In a few areas
- c. In some areas
- d. In most areas
- e. Yes

If you have any additional comments on topics relevant to this survey please write them here: _____