

H2H Network After Action Report
Mozambique: Cyclone Idai
Learnings and Recommendations
September 2019



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Report summary

The H2H Network: Specialist and expert services for all humanitarian responders

The H2H Network consists of approximately 50 organisations that provide services to humanitarian responders. The network's members offer specialist services, developed and available to all humanitarian responders, that address cross-cutting issues to help the overall response be more effective, of higher quality, and more efficient. The H2H Network is supported by UK aid from the UK government and hosted by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

In March 2019, the network activated its H2H Fund for Cyclone Idai in Mozambique using an interim process designed to allow activation during the build phase. The H2H Fund was set up to support network members providing specific services in emergency responses. The fund was due to become operational in July 2019, however, given the scale of the Cyclone Idai emergency, the fund used an interim process to deliver a package of services to support the response.

Overall, the activation for Cyclone Idai was considered a success. The fund enabled network members to promptly provide their specialist services and there were indications that collaboration efforts strengthened their activities. This first activation of the fund represented an important learning opportunity for the network and several lessons and recommendations emerged from feedback from service users, funded agencies and the project's core team.

Key recommendations are:

- Use the fund's structure and ability to activate quickly to get key services into the field as soon as possible. This may include creating sample packages through a pre-approval process that allows for very fast funding.
- Work outside of response time and activations to establish collective and collaborative approaches within and across service categories.
- Recognize how needs change throughout a response and how services from members match different phases of the response.
- Become the chief advocate for the humanitarian-to-humanitarian concept during a response, including deploying a network team member, in order to help members reach more responders and collectively achieve the intended impact of a more effective and efficient response.

Background on the activation

The fund is set up to provide responders in rapid onset crises with services as quickly as possible. This activation for Cyclone Idai was the first time it was used.

The cyclone made landfall on 14 March 2019; the network's activation of its service package happened exactly one week later – an overview of the timing it took to activate the fund is as follows:

14 March: Cyclone Idai makes landfall

15 - 20 March: Network core team consults with experts and field responders to assess need¹. In the first few days, the need for services - and which services - from international experts was unclear given the access issues. However, after a few days, needs began to crystalize, especially after OCHA put out a call for much more information management support. It was clear that services around data visualisation, information management and analysis, and community engagement support would be needed in the weeks to come.

21 March: The core team activates the fund, asking members to submit proposals within 72 hours. Ten proposals are received. A grant panel is assembled with representation from DFID, the Danish Refugee Council and one independent expert.

28 March: Five funded agencies announced.

2 April: All funded agencies are operational, four deployed to Mozambique and one working remotely. The H2H Network core team begins periodic collaboration calls and develops communications to build awareness about the available services. The core team also begins investigating whether a second window of funding would be useful.

24 April: As the response evolves, the projects integrate into the response, most notably in the analysis and assessment cell and the community engagement working group. Many international projects plan to move out around end of April as recovery transitions to local actors. The H2H Network core team decides not to deploy a team member but continues to support the projects.

9 May: Projects officially end, but community engagement work overseen by CDAC continues with an extension through 9 June.

¹ Initial consultations with the consortium of international NGOs operational in Mozambique (COSACA), UNDAC and OCHA responders focused on assessment and community engagement, IFRC emergency responders, DFID humanitarian advisers on their way to the emergency, and two network member agencies who responded immediately, MapAction and Atlas Logistique.

H2H Fund Service Package

Seven days after the fund was activated, on 28 March, five network members are awarded funding to cover identified needs:

| Category of need | Details of service | Service provider |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| GIS, mapping | Data collection, base map data, daily updates (supporting all IM officers and OCHA IM team) | Humanitarian OpenStreetMap (remote support) |
| Community engagement (CE) | Coordination across response (in cooperation with OCHA), CE assessment, language support (focus on local languages) | CDAC Network (in-field) and |
| | | Translators without Borders (in-field and remote) |
| Analysis and assessment | Independent situation analysis and assessment support | ACAPS (remote and in-field) |
| Logistics | Detailed analysis of logistics vulnerabilities; access opening in Beira; rubble management (in cooperation with logistics cluster and WFP) | Atlas Logistique (in-field) |

In addition to these funded agencies, three other network members deployed in the response: MapAction, REACH, and iMMAP.

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL)

The Idai activation occurred before the network had established its longer term MEAL program which is being developed in collaboration with DFID. Once in place, it will include an externally hired research firm that will evaluate the network's overall response and create metrics to measure the impact of the collaborative and collective approach for every activation.

In the absence of this external research firm, for Idai, the core team oversaw a 'lighter' MEAL programme aimed at answering the following questions:

- Did the funded projects meet their objectives?
- Was there a perceived impact of the full H2H Network response, including funded and non-funded organisation's work?
- Was the H2H Fund activation and collective response effective for members and responders?

Project teams were asked to record learnings in a joint document during deployments and to assess outputs and record indicators in their final reports. The core team conducted three joint calls to check on progress and help to establish potential areas for collaboration and support. Once the activation was concluded, the core team also conducted 17 interviews with service users who had responded in Mozambique. The culmination of the MEAL programme was an after-action review with the five funded agencies on 27 June 2019 in Geneva.

Results and evidence

Organisational activities and outputs achieved

All five funded agencies met or exceeded their stated objectives. Highlights include:

Humanitarian OpenStreetMap (HOT) had one of their biggest responses ever, adding 501,930 buildings; 70,967 kilometers of road; and, 782,568 total features to its maps.

HOT reported a marked improvement in the quality of their data that was directly attributable to the H2H Fund grant. This response was the first time HOT was able to sufficiently provide its disaster services program to key partners (especially IFRC and MSF); as a result the response had more badly needed geospatial data.

HOT also noted that the funds afforded them resources to connect better with partners and potential partners, notably USAID and Project Last Mile (PLM). This partnership, which has extended beyond the activation, is exploring how the data collection by PLM teams can be incorporated into HOT's OSM and routing services, which USAID and PLM could, in-turn, use for planning and conducting service delivery.

The CDAC Network response resulted in improved community engagement and integration of the response. This was in part due to the deployment of a communicating with communities (CWC) expert who integrated well with OCHA (which was running the CWC working group), spoke the main local language (Portuguese) and knew the local context. In addition to supporting CWC coordination, CDAC focused on contacting national and community broadcasting with messages on many topics, including humanitarian assistance, cholera, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and calls for calm.

Translators without Borders (TWB) supported the response with community-facing information provided in six languages. There was evidence that the focus on local languages improved community engagement. For example, TWB translated a data collection tool for GOAL into Shona that GOAL reported improved the accuracy and credibility of the data and demonstrated respect for community culture and language.

TWB produced and disseminated a humanitarian glossary containing 209 key field-tested terms in six languages: English, Portuguese, Ndaou, Nyanja, Sena, and Shona. In addition, the glossary was uploaded to the [TWB web app](#) and the link was shared with responders.

TWB also supported the cross-cutting issue of PSEA by working with the inter-cluster coordination group to develop posters in local languages. TWB reported this work would not have happened without the H2H Network funding.

Through the establishment of the Assessment & Analysis Cell, and later the Assessment Working Group, **ACAPS** was able to collaborate with national and international responders to the crisis,

producing ongoing joint analysis of the situation by identifying priority needs, priority sectors for response, and severely affected geographic areas. This included cleaning, summarisation, analysis of KoBo primary data complemented by analysis and comparison of other assessment data, and support to the design and implementation of the Multi-sectoral Rapid Assessment (MRA) report and 13 profiles of the most affected districts in Sofala and Manica provinces. Following publication of the MRA, ACAPS was asked by the Government of Mozambique to provide analysis training to its National Disasters Management Institute (INGC) team; an ACAPS analyst subsequently spent five days providing introduction to humanitarian analysis training the team in Maputo.

Atlas Logistique provided a logistics assessment to the logistics cluster very early in the response, even before the agency had secured funding from the H2H Network. The agency produced 17 maps on logistic vulnerabilities and conducted a rapid axis evaluation for the logistics cluster that contributed to an update and improvement of the Access Constraints Map of the logistics cluster. Atlas also used its relationships with national and private sectors to feed real-time road condition updates to the cluster and provide a list of carriers. As part of its rubble management work, Atlas removed 1868 square meters of debris in collaboration with local municipalities.

Evidence of collaboration and its impact

A major goal of the H2H Network funding is to develop services that integrate with the response and are collectively greater than the sum of their parts. In the longer term, collaboration between funded agencies will be facilitated by the core team, through workshops which will allow member agencies to better understand each other's services and operations and identify ways they can work together. The Idai response took place before these workshops had taken place, but even so, there was evidence of collaboration between network members and with other service providers, including:

- ACAPS collaborated directly with REACH and MapAction as part of the Assessment and Analysis Cell. Joint data collection was conducted with the help of 19 partners, covering 189 localities. Thirteen district profiles were produced as well as the multi-sectoral rapid assessment.
- HOT collaborated with MapAction as well, but worked mostly with MSF and IFRC.
- TWB collaborated with a wide variety of actors and responders, including the community engagement working group and CDAC, and the inter-cluster coordination group and protection cluster (specifically in regards to PSEA). TWB also worked with ACAPS to make sure language data was included in the Mozambique Rapid Assessment (MRA) and with MapAction to make sure language data was included in map products.
- CDAC worked with OCHA, the emergency telecommunications cluster and First Response Radio to support national and community broadcasting of messages.

- Atlas Logistique worked within the logistics cluster, providing support to the logistic leads. Collaboration and interaction with other H2H Network members was minimal, especially because Atlas was not located in the same area as the other agencies.

Feedback from the field

The core team carried out 17 interviews with a selection of potential users of humanitarian services, all of whom had either been working in Mozambique or had worked remotely on the response. A list of agencies that provided feedback can be found in Annex A.

The interviews aimed to establish the extent that responders were aware of the H2H Network and the fund, whether they had made use of the network's services, how useful they had found them and to identify ways the network could have better engaged with and supported the response.

While the interview program was not intended to be comprehensive or quantitative, there were a few interesting metrics that will help the network with future activations:

- Eleven interviewees were either vaguely (five), or definitely (six) aware of the network; nine were aware of the fund.
- When asked about the individual service providers, all interviewees were aware of at least one, but less than half of those interviews had made direct use of the various services. The most used services were in assessments, analysis and mapping.
- The service provider with the highest awareness was MapAction (16), followed closely by ACAPS (14), and Translators without Borders (14). Lowest awareness was for iMMAP (6) and Atlas Logistique (8), both of whom were specifically servicing clusters within the response.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents (12) said that the network service package had an impact on the response; five said it was hard to say whether they did. The most common way in which impact was seen was by supporting the coordination of the response and by supporting the technical aspects of the response.

Key takeaways and insights

In addition to conducting interviews, the network held an after-action review with the funded agencies in late June. The insights from the interviews were discussed and overall main themes emerged as lessons learned for future activations and for humanitarian services overall:

There are core services that support sector-wide challenges. Some of the services offered by H2H Network members have become core to responses in general and are expected at the early stages of a rapid response. This is especially true of GIS and mapping. Other services, including analysis and assessment (including joint needs assessments) and community engagement were almost expected, begging the question as to whether these services should be provided at even more quickly through 'standard' packages. When asked about services that were missing, most interviewees did not have many ideas. This could be because the interviews took place some time after the hectic first days of the emergency. One area that was mentioned several times was design support for creating collateral materials, such as posters and designed pieces for community outreach.

The timing of the package was appropriate. How these services are funded is not really important to the users of the services, but having them there as quickly as possible is critical. There was broad agreement that the network's ability to fund quickly is helpful. However, there also was agreement that mapping is needed even earlier and that community engagement may require a longer engagement. There was some indication that despite rapid funding and activation, the network services should have been there even sooner and that, in some cases, it may make sense for a second window of funding that focuses on transition to the local response.

Expert human resources were a major need in certain areas of the response, while also a strain on members. More focus on developing longer term surge capacity may help. While there appears to be quick and adequate deployment of expert assessment and mapping staff, there are gaps in information management and community engagement. There was broad consensus that more experts are needed in information management (especially across more clusters) and in community engagement. At the same time, responding agencies in those categories – as well as in analysis and assessment – experience constant pressure to have the right staff or resources available when an emergency occurs. This is particularly difficult with small, lean agencies.

There was an awareness of collaboration by some service providers, but more is needed. The work between the assessment/analysis cell and the mapping team was evident and well received. There was also some acknowledgement of collaboration between assessment and community engagement (CE), especially with CE questions included in surveys (per REACH). However, this does not translate to community data and responses being included as a major part of data analysis and reporting. Further discussion with the responding agencies made it clear that when collaboration worked, it was because long-standing partnerships and relationships had been established outside of responses.

Real-time evaluation and design support were mentioned as desired services. Most respondents did not mention services that they would have liked to have, but two that stood out were cross-cutting real-time evaluation and design capabilities to support community engagement work.

Overall awareness of the network's added value is low. The high level of awareness among interviewees can be contributed to the fact that they almost all were involved with coordination of the response in some way, especially assessment, mapping or community engagement. There was consensus that beyond this group, awareness is low and that in order to increase awareness and ensure integration, a core team member should deploy with the package.

Hosting, security and logistics constraints. The funded agencies discussed this as an area of concern when they activate, especially if they need to do so quickly. In Mozambique, security

was not a major concern of those activating, but there were some delays to set up hosting and accommodations and, in general, the members cite these concerns as one area they must always address and for which they would welcome better solutions.

Conclusions and recommendations for future activations

The activation was successful in that the projects satisfactorily achieved their objectives. The extent of the impact was difficult to measure, but there were fairly good indications that the added capacity and skills from H2H members were useful and that, in general, this approach is helpful in a rapid onset emergency.

There are several recommendations that come out of the feedback from the interviews and the after-action review. Within each recommendation we discuss how the network's core team implement changes.

Recommendation: *Ensure that key services can be activated very quickly.*

The ability to fund quickly is critical in emergencies, and the network met that challenge in Mozambique, although it could have been even quicker. With a cyclone, there is typically some advance warning, unlike other emergencies like earthquakes. It should be possible for the fund to be pre-activated when a predictable emergency is imminent, with a final decision made very quickly following a quick needs assessment to avoid duplicating services that may already be available in country. Additionally, the network could create sample packages with pre-approved services that are 'ready to go' following a quick needs assessment.

Recommendation: *Work with network members outside of a crisis response to establish collective approaches within and across service categories.*

One way the network will encourage this approach is through a series of workshops with members, within categories and across services, to build upon existing partnerships. Another possibility will be to fund out-of-response partnership activities as part of the fund's new Get Ready Fund.

Recommendation: *React to changing needs throughout the response.*

While some services, for example mapping, are needed immediately, other needs are harder to determine right away. Equally, what is needed by responders changes as interventions shift to address the fluid situation. It is important for the fund to support its members with this flexibility. One approach is to develop a pre-set package for the transition phase in which immediate needs shift to recovery and long-term projects. This phase may include more localisation and capacity building services. The fund will consider second windows of activation and longer deployments for community engagement activities.

Recommendation: *Build awareness of the humanitarian-to-humanitarian concept.*

The members as well as the fund need to be integrated within the response and humanitarian responders need to be aware of them for them to be fully effective. The key message is that humanitarian services, if readily available and accessible to all responders, contribute to greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Awareness building can occur outside of emergencies by being involved in events globally and regionally, increasing overall communication activities and partnering with other organisations and networks with complementary goals. It also is important to build awareness during emergencies, both to augment members' projects within each emergency and also to reach responders who coordinate one emergency after another. A good way to build awareness and advocate for the concept during an emergency is to send a member of the core team into the field to represent the network at bilateral and coordination meetings.

Recommendation: *Support members' ability to deploy experts quickly.*

Expert human resources are a major need, especially in information management and community engagement, but it is very difficult for network members to make sure those resources are trained and ready to go. The network should devise ways to help members prepare expert resources. The network's *Get Ready Fund* for members, which is intended to support members' ability to be ready to respond quickly, can be used for training experts who would then be available on rosters.

Recommendation: *Consider broadening the membership with different categories of services.*

There were not many additional service areas identified as being needed during the Idai response, but there was an indication that community engagement and the resources that support community engagement – such as design capabilities – could be strengthened. The network could expand membership to meet these needs and others that are identified in future.

Recommendation: *Explore ways to assist members with hosting, security and logistics.*

This is a barrier that can impact whether members can deploy quickly or not. While not a major issue in Mozambique, there were minor issues and members have said in other contexts (ie the network's mapping exercise) that it is always a concern for small agencies. The network should look at ways to support members with hosting and/or security, either through network-wide MOUs with major agencies or, at a minimum, through knowledge sharing on how small agencies secure and address hosting arrangements.

Annex A

Cyclone Idai Interviews

Conducted May – June 2019

Individuals were involved in the Cyclone Idai response either in the field or remotely. In some cases, more than one individual from a particular organisation was interviewed:

Global Logistics Cluster coordinator

Food Security Cluster coordinator (WFP)

UNDAC team lead

OCHA community engagement focal point

OCHA humanitarian affairs accountability delegate

Humanitarian adviser for DFID (x2)

IFRC head of operations

Solidarité International emergency desk manager

IOM post-crisis director for southern Africa

CEO of UK-Med/EMT coordinator for WHO

DEC humanitarian adviser and lead coordinator

DFID southern Africa emergency response manager

DFID team lead

UNICEF head of C4D

UNICEF community engagement evaluation officer

IFRC community engagement and accountability delegate

The team asked to schedule 20 – 30 minutes per interview. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes.