

ECB E-Newsletter September 2013

Dear Colleague,

As the Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project draws to a close, **the five consortia, six international humanitarian agencies** and the global team that make up the ECB Project, are going through a reflective process. Reports from this process will be made available on the **ECB Project website** as soon as they are finalized.

There have been important lessons learnt from **Phase II** of the project, and this edition includes articles about the successful ENHance (Expanding National Humanitarian Ability) program, the ECB Project's Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) experience in Indonesia and the use of simulations in the humanitarian sector. There is a forward looking article from the consortium in Bolivia about the implementation of a DIPECHO program and highlights from the ECB Project's learning event held in London in July.

As always, we welcome your **comments and questions**.

Warm Regards,

The ECB Project Team

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A Review of the ENHance (Expanding National Humanitarian Ability) Program

Many humanitarian learning initiatives focus only on the knowledge or understanding of participants. The ECB Project's ENHance (Expanding National Humanitarian Ability) program was designed for humanitarian staff to strengthen key skills and behaviours necessary to work effectively in a humanitarian response.

The ENHance program consisted of two learning streams:

- A six month Core Skills Development Program for national staff with very limited or no experience of working in emergencies.
- A nine month Management & Leadership Skills Development Program for national staff with some experience of working in emergencies and who manage people in their current roles.

Ten ENHance courses ran during 2012, training a total of 189 humanitarian staff from 18 countries. Following this, the ECB Project undertook a survey of participants and line managers in December 2012 and January 2013 which revealed great satisfaction with the program in a number of key areas.

Participants successfully applied learning in the workplace

Crucially, the overwhelming majority of participants' line managers observed this practical application in action, see pie chart.

Of the participants themselves:

- 99% found ENHance "very effective" or "effective" at helping them to apply humanitarian principles and standards
- 76% said their level of confidence and leadership skills had "improved a lot"
- 24% said it had "improved a little"
- 100% of participants felt they had improved in some way.

Nilema Jahan of Concern Worldwide, who undertook the ENHance Bangladesh Core Skills Development Program and who contributed to the survey, commented, "Active listening practice has helped the team to enhance performance. For example, service delivery time has reduced and open feedback has been provided by management."

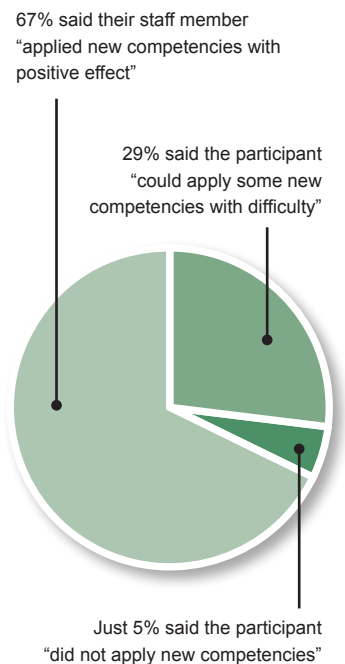
Unique combination of learning methods critical to success

The program focused on developing behavioural competencies set out in the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework: 91% of participants and 67% of line managers agreed this approach was "very important".

ENHance participants were supported through a mixture of different learning methods, including:

- Residential workshops
- One-to-one coaching
- Independent learning
- Buddy groups with fellow participants
- An emergency simulation and learning event.

Participants appreciated the blend of learning methods that were used over the program. Each method was considered to be either "very important" or



“important” by a clear majority of participants and 83% said that the way learning was spread over several months was “very important”.

Multi-agency participation

All ten ENHance courses had a mixture of participants from various international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as government officials in some cases.

This multi-agency approach improved understanding of different perspectives, vital to strong partnerships, and 98% of participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that working with staff from different organizations helped them to improve coordination and to form stronger working relationships with partners.



Participants involved in the Core Skills Development Program as part of the ENHance program in the Horn of Africa. Photo: © Stephen Blakemore, Horn of Africa, 2012

Line manager support and engagement

The ENHance program was based on the **Context training materials**, developed and piloted by the **Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA)** between 2010 and 2012. An evaluation of the pilot process noted that the level of support participants receive from their line managers was a critical factor in the effectiveness and application of learning. This was confirmed by course participants, 89% of whom agreed that support of a line manager is “very important”.

One way the ECB Project tried to increase engagement by line managers was by introducing participant charges for international organizations. While the pilot programs had been free to all, the official ENHance program was found to be more effective when free places were reserved only for local organizations and government staff. This is because 69% of line managers who paid participant charges “strongly agree” or “agree” that it made them put more thought into who should apply compared to if the programs had been free. 62% “strongly agree” or “agree” that they appreciated the cost and value of the program more. However, in a world of decreasing resources, line managers also expressed how difficult it was to find money for national staff training programs.

The future beyond ENHance

The full **Context training materials** for both learning programs are available open source and free of charge as a resource for any organization in the humanitarian sector. For example, the ECB Project’s **Bangladesh consortium** replicated the ENHance initiative earlier this year, with workshops in April and May and a simulation in June. Focusing solely on the Core Skills Development Program, which was translated into Bangla, the 2013 program was oversubscribed, with a range of participants from across the Bangladeshi humanitarian sector.

The ENHance program was funded by the **European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO)**, the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** and the six member agencies of the ECB Project. The ENHance pilot project was funded by **UKAid** from the Department for **International Development**.

The Evolution of a Joint Needs Assessment Approach in Indonesia

The consortium of agencies in **Indonesia**, working together as part of the Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project, carried out their first **joint needs assessment** (JNA) in conjunction with the Government of Indonesia and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Country Team, in early 2007, when extensive flooding affected Central and Eastern Java. During this process a single common data collection form was conceived of and used by a number of agencies. In March 2007 consortium members came together again to conduct an initial rapid assessment following an earthquake in West Sumatra. The benefits of this experience demonstrated the value of joint assessments and set in motion the development of a formal JNA tool, along with an associated database to facilitate collation and rapid dissemination of needs assessment information.

Evolution to a more comprehensive assessment approach

In late 2007 the consortium began work on the development of a more comprehensive JNA system, in consultation with the Government of Indonesia and the UN Country Team. The system included pre-agreements among actors to deploy a joint approach to needs assessments, a standard data collection instrument and an embryonic database for the management and analysis of data. ECB Indonesia tested the database prototype twice in 2008 in order to get feedback both on the JNA tool and on the database itself.



Photo: Residents hauling a car out of a basement garage in central Jakarta following flooding in January 2013. Photo: © Paul Dillon, January 2013, Jakarta, Indonesia.

JNA approach in action

The JNA approach was subsequently used during the West Papua earthquake in January 2009. **Indonesia consortium** colleagues Catholic Relief Services and Oxfam worked closely with the local government and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) to design priorities for the future using the results of the joint needs assessment. Again, in early September 2009, ECB agencies coordinated their deployments and the allocation of emergency resources through a JNA approach following the West Java earthquake.

Then within hours of the **West Sumatra earthquake** on 30 September 2009, the Indonesian Government, UN and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) leaders organized a joint assessment. On this occasion the process was led by the consortium in Indonesia, which compiled data with the support of other NGOs, UN agencies and UNOCHA. Eighty nine respondent sheets were collected, covering six districts, and the consortium shared initial data with UNOCHA and other stakeholders within 80 hours of the earthquake. Towards the end of October 2009, UNOCHA shared a draft report summarizing the various assessment efforts conducted in West Sumatra of which the JNA was the most collaborative.

Lessons learned

The ECB Project conducted a lessons-learned review to capture the experiences of agencies that used the JNA during the West Sumatra earthquake response. Agencies felt JNA processes improved coordination and reduced agency transaction costs and they identified areas for improvement including the simplification of formats, the need for more training and refinements of the database.

A joint evaluation of the Indonesia consortium's response to the **West Java and West Sumatra earthquakes** supported these findings and highlighted the need to develop guidance on data collection, data entry, data analysis, report writing and report dissemination, as well as the need to develop the JNA database.

In November 2010 the ECB Project agencies used JNAs during the Merapi volcanic eruption and the Mentawai tsunami twin disasters. In March 2011 a reflection process focused on issues with the approach and sought potential solutions.

Technical support

Throughout this process the consortium enjoyed technical support from the **Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)**, including four deployments.

The first ACAPS deployment, in September 2011, was a scoping mission to introduce global good practice on JNAs, including UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) Operational Guidance and the Multi Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) approach, and to identify steps required to operationalize the JNA, including a review of the JNA database.

The second, in November 2011, involved networking with ECB Indonesia's Steering Committee members and gauging the capacity needed to address the steps identified in the first mission.

In the third deployment, in February 2012, ACAPS refined JNA primary data collection tools, outlined training needs and planned field testing of the JNA to ensure it was operational. This deployment led to significant improvements in the questionnaire and methodology of the approach. Engagement with ACAPS and UNFPA ensured the methodology was in line with MIRA approaches, which were being rolled out by UNOCHA at this time.

Finalizing tools and approaches

The JNA approach was trialed and tested during the final ACAPS deployment in June 2012 and further feedback was collected. This feedback enabled the finalization of the JNA questionnaire for Key Informants (KI) and Community Groups (CG). The JNA Direct Observation (DO) guidance and JNA Methodology were finalized at the same time as the JNA online database.

The ECB Project also launched a **JNA manual** in English and Bahasa, which was distributed to ECB Project agencies, UNOCHA and Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management (BNBP) officials. Further training and socialization of the JNA approach was held in September 2012 with 20 participants from ten regions of Indonesia, including International NGOs (INGOs) and partner staff, to create JNA 'champions' and capacity in some of the most disaster vulnerable locations of Indonesia.

Throughout this process UNOCHA and BNPB have been closely involved as key partners in the launch, dissemination and socialization of the JNA approach during disasters, including the training of key members of the BNPB Emergency Response Team.

The future of the JNA approach in Indonesia

The JNA database was recently used in July 2013 by three of the Indonesia consortium agencies, Mercy Corps, World Vision and Save the Children, following an earthquake in Northern Sumatra. Save the Children has agreed to host and maintain the JNA database for a further year and the JNA approach is part of a collaborative protocol that has been agreed upon by the country directors of the consortium agencies.

Simulating the Worst to Prepare the Best: Simulations and their use in the Humanitarian Sector – a Case Study

The ECB Project has spent the past five years building the **capacity of national staff** to carry out faster and more effective emergency responses. There are many approaches to national staff capacity building but one of increasing importance is the use of **simulations**.

Simulations and drills are used in many industries to test and prepare specific skills and competencies, build working relationships and provide a safe learning space for participants to try out new behaviours or approaches. They are used by the emergency services, health professionals, the military and increasingly within the humanitarian sector.

In December 2012, for example, ECB Project agencies supported UNICEF, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the **Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)** and the World Food Programme (WFP), to deliver a successful **simulation in Nairobi, Kenya** ahead of the March 2013 national elections. Designed to test pre-election preparedness at the capital city level and in other major cities, the simulation was conducted as part of the **Kenya Initial Rapid Assessment (KIRA)** Initiative and in partnership with the Government of Kenya.

The ECB Project simulations case study

The ECB Project, with the help of key stakeholders in the humanitarian sector, recently published a collaborative **case study** which assessed six simulations that varied greatly in nature, from a simulation held in Madagascar at the national level involving national government officials, United Nations (UN) officials and other key stakeholders, to a simulation held in a disaster vulnerable community in the Philippines, with community members and local non-governmental organization (NGO) staff.

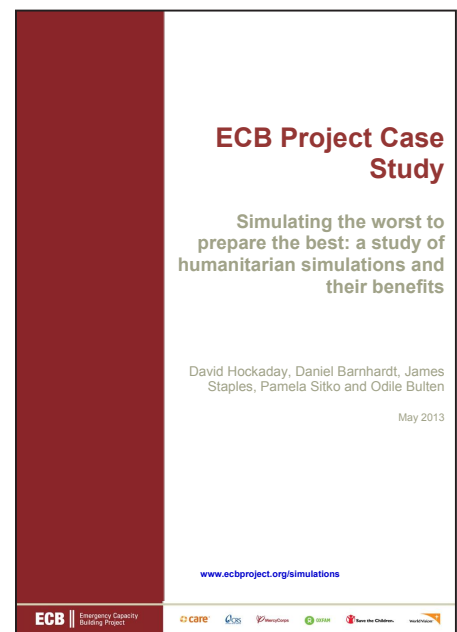
The case study yielded some interesting insights and conclusions about the use of the simulation as a training tool. Perhaps of most significance was the implicit finding that simulations are increasingly recognized by NGOs, the UN, donors, governments and the broader humanitarian community as a highly effective and engaging way of increasing disaster preparedness and building staff capacity.

Simulation tools and standards

Considerable progress has been made in the humanitarian community in the way that simulations have been resourced, prioritized and used as a preparedness tool.

Initiatives include:

- the ECB Project's **Simulation Administrators' Guide**
- the Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation Facilitator Guidelines (IAES)
- Government Emergency Simulation Guidelines (GES) produced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Sub Working Group on Preparedness
- the recently drafted Local Government Simulation Guide, piloted by the Philippine National Disaster Management Agency with assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP)
- a roster of trained simulation experts, developed by the IASC, which is available to others within the humanitarian community and can be found on the **Preparedness Tracker** website.



Front cover of the new ECB Project Case Study - Simulating the worst to prepare the best: a study of humanitarian simulations and their benefits. © ECB Project, May 2013.

These are all good examples of how the sector is increasingly professionalizing, codifying and sharing resources and guidance on simulation design and implementation.

Facilitating trust and strong working relationships

From a human resources perspective, the most interesting finding is that simulations present a universal opportunity for **building trust** and relationships.

These qualities are critical in humanitarian response and can be the difference between failed and successful coordination, determining the ultimate outcome of the overall response. The fundamental objective of the simulation in a humanitarian context is to pre-position relationships, in the same way that international and local NGOs might try to pre-position vital stocks of mosquito nets, water purification equipment or sanitation kits.

The study found five common reasons for holding a simulation:

- to identify the skills of individual staff members that need to be strengthened before an actual disaster occurs
- to develop and practice departmental level preparedness and contingency plans
- to develop and practice organizational preparedness and relationships
- to build trust in relationships and networks
- to build organizational capacity.

Common components and lessons

The stakeholders and organizations involved in the six simulations varied greatly, however the study revealed that successful simulation designs share four common elements:

- trained and skilled facilitators
- injects, provided by the simulation administrator to provoke a response from simulation participants, help move the fictional scenario along and test different components of planning, preparation, and coordination
- a debrief session held after the simulation so that key lessons from the event can be captured
- the development of an action plan (individual, organizational or institutional), that outlines how the capacity or skill gaps identified during the simulation and debrief will be addressed.

For managers within the humanitarian community there are valid concerns about the increasing frequency of disasters and the growing impact on human life and economic systems. This means that being well prepared for an emergency response in a timely and effective manner is even more critical for reducing the impact of the disaster, saving lives and ensuring a smoother recovery.

Read the full case study, **Simulating the worst to prepare the best: a study of humanitarian simulations and their benefits**, on the ECB Project website, available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

Download the ECB Project's first simulations case study, **Playing with Reality: The ECB experience using emergency simulations to improve humanitarian response**, available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

View and download the ECB Project's **Simulation Administrators' Guide**, a simple, adaptable simulation package enabling field teams to test their systems and skills in a realistic emergency scenario.

View this information at: www.ecbproject.org/simulations-humanitarian-sector-case-study

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Bolivia Consortium to Implement DIPECHO Program with Vice Ministry of Civil Defence

The ECB Project's **Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies in Bolivia**, and the Vice Ministry of Civil Defence, known as VIDECI, recently celebrated the approval of a project proposal made to the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO).

ECB Project agency **CARE** coordinated the submission of the proposal, entitled *Strengthening the capacity and coordination within the humanitarian community to respond to natural disasters in Bolivia*, which was produced for Phase VIII of DIPECHO, an ECHO program dedicated to disaster preparedness.

Staff from ECB Bolivia showcased the proposal to ECHO representatives at an event in La Paz in late May 2013, followed by an official launch in July 2013, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Project aims and activities

The aim of the project is to further develop disaster risk reduction (DRR) and response mechanisms in Bolivia, specifically:

"To strengthen the coordination ability of the many humanitarian actors at national, regional and local level, under the authority of VIDECI, in preparation for, and response to, natural disasters in Bolivia's nine departments".

The project has three key objectives:

- to improve the capacity of local and national public bodies and their use of tools in preparedness for, and response to, disasters
- to strengthen coordination mechanisms among state and non-state humanitarian actors at local, regional and national level
- to improve the capacity of NGO operators with regards to disaster preparedness, response, coordination and **accountability and impact measurement**.

The project began in August 2013 with the revision and systematization of government tools and Law 2140. This law led to the creation of risk management information systems in Bolivia, but was created in 2000 and is now in need of revision. Training workshops for agency staff and other humanitarian actors will be held during this time.

In October 2013 there will be a national **simulation** in collaboration with UNOCHA (The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), to validate the protocols and contingency plans of the consortium and other agencies.

Program design phase

The experience of the Bolivia consortium members in implementing DRR activities was clearly evident during the project design phase and was considered a great advantage by VIDECI.

Oscar Cabrera, Deputy Minister of Civil Defence, underlined the importance of working with the consortium when he discussed both its ability to execute concrete actions for disaster prevention and risk reduction, and how consortia *"[help] the Government to delineate guidelines in certain public policies"*.



Members of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies in Bolivia, Government departmental representatives and the authorities of the Vice Ministry of Civil Defence (VIDECI) during the launch event in July 2013. Photo: © ECB Project, July 2013, Bolivia.

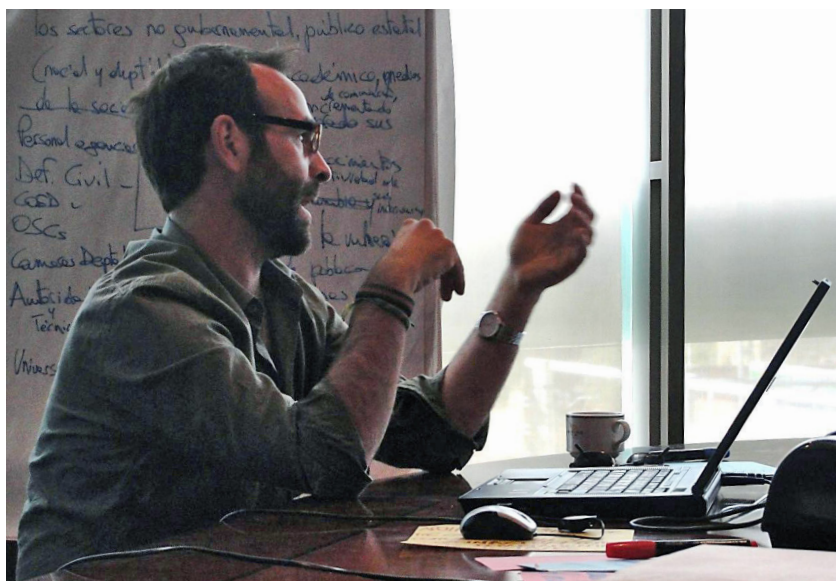
Sharing within the consortium

Member agencies of the Bolivia consortium recently reflected on the DIPECHO submission process during an internal consortium meeting. Participants concluded the initiative had been a success and a challenge and the lessons that were learnt will ultimately guide similar proposals in the future.

The major challenge faced by member agencies was in aligning the proposed project activities with their individual organizational plans. However, the duplication of agency activities was successfully avoided by long standing and trusted working partnerships, combined with a succinct and constant flow of communication among staff.

“ Francesco Gatta, coordinator of new initiatives at CARE and leader of the DIPECHO VIII proposal process, commented: *“The importance of this process is in the successful coordination of the agencies in the consortium and how their confidence, synergy and ability to compromise were put to the test.*

“It is valuable to see that we are learning how to share, be transparent, yield and listen to our partners, so we can move forward with initiatives which help not just single members but the consortium as a whole”.



Francesco Gatta of CARE led the DIPECHO proposal process, with a team made up of staff from other consortia agencies. Photo: © ECB Project, July 2013, Bolivia.

London Learning Event: Reflecting on Five Years of ECB Project Collaboration

With consortia and inter-agency collaboration increasingly a feature of the humanitarian landscape, the ECB Project hosted a learning event in July 2013 to reflect on five years of implementation of this innovative and unique initiative.

While not an exhaustive portfolio of learning, the event looked at some of the approaches taken to build and measure **capacity**, broad lessons learnt from **working in a consortium** and two **case studies** on collaborative tool development and collaborative fundraising.

Feedback showed that attendees appreciated the openness of the event and the honesty of the facilitators who discussed complex issues and inspired some very interesting discussion.



Participants in a group discussion during the ECB Project Learning Event. Photo: © ECB Project, London, July 2013.

Capacity building – a diverse portfolio of activities

The first session addressed the question “*How do you build capacity?*” with participants emphasizing that capacity building is much more than just training. Its function includes creating both organizational and individual improvements, modelling leadership and behaviour change – at individual, organizational and sector levels. The importance of resourcing efforts, measuring capacity and demonstrating impact were also discussed.

Over the years the ECB Project has taken a variety of approaches to capacity building which were discussed at the event:

- staff training featured strongly, with the development of the **ENHAnce program** and continued learning about the use of simulations as a training tool
- the creation of resources, such as *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*
- the formation of a **Standing Team** of accountability specialists, most of whom were national staff, to support country programs
- the improvement of agency capacity in helping to facilitate the passing of the **Disaster Management Act** in Bangladesh
- and the development of a collaborative **Key Elements of Accountability** document that was subsequently adopted by the UN as their Accountability Framework.

A key lesson from the ECB Project experience is that it is important to identify gaps and themes for capacity building and then ask when and why it makes sense to collaborate. Any joint actions need to have buy-in and to result in benefits for all the agencies involved.

Data collection and measuring capacity

The ECB Project had an overall goal “to improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian community to save lives, improve welfare and protect the rights of people in emergency situations”, and three objective areas (to improve capacity at the field, agency and sector level), each of which were broken down into a set of results statements and all of which had to be measurable.

In order to collect data to establish the extent to which results statements were addressed, the ECB Project monitoring and evaluation system had four key pillars of data collection and triangulation:

- reports (annual and quarterly)
- **simulations**
- external evaluations
- the primary tool, an **annual self-assessment survey**, conducted since 2010 at agency and consortium level.

The data was analyzed and released in a series of reports, disaggregated in different ways. ECB Project consortia and agencies used these reports to identify common capacity gaps and to launch new joint initiatives which addressed these areas for improvement.

Collaboration

In the afternoon, participants considered and discussed what leads to good collaboration. Ideas, generated by small buzz groups, included:

- defining governance structures
- establishing conflict resolution mechanisms
- clarifying roles and responsibilities and **building trust**.

These themes directly reflected the **10 key factors for successful collaboration** that the ECB Project identified in its resource *What We Know about Collaboration*, although an interesting addition to this list was “identifying risks”.

Afterwards, participants engaged in a plenary discussion which identified some important paradoxes. For example, attendees noted it was important, prior to collaborating, to ensure that key governance structures are in place, that ways of working are established and that a memorandum of understanding is signed. However, it is equally important that collaboration is not stifled by bureaucracy so that innovation, trust and relationships can flourish.

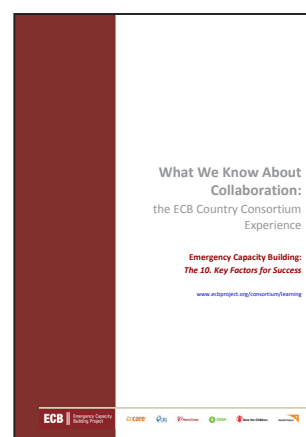
Case studies

The final session of the day focused on two important ECB Project case studies.

The first describes how ECB Project agencies carried out a process evaluation when they developed *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. The evaluation concluded that the process had been truly participatory, but some activities could have been improved if they had been done by smaller groups or individuals. In addition, ECB agencies realized they had underestimated the time, cost and resources required to implement such a participatory initiative.

The second case study *NGOs traditionally compete for funds – what happens when they joint fundraise?* shares ECB Project learning from collaborative fundraising, and some of the different models for fundraising that ECB agencies had to adopt in order to meet the challenges of a \$7m match requirement during the global financial crisis.

To find out more about the learning event, read the **comprehensive summary** which is available on the ECB Project website, along with the **morning** and **afternoon** presentations used on the day.



Front cover of *What We Know about Collaboration: the ECB Country Consortium Experience*. © ECB Project, 2012.

News in Brief

ECB Project resources success

Metrics for the ECB Project website show there have been over 96,000 unique visitors to the website since November 2008, with numbers growing substantially year on year. There have been over 50,000 downloads of ECB Project tools, newsletters and resources, and downloads took place in over 200 countries and territories. The ECB Project's *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation* has recently become the most downloaded resource on the ECB Project website with approximately 6,300 downloads since being launched in January 2013, overtaking the *Good Enough Guide to Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies*, which has been downloaded 5,600 times.

ECB Project website

The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) has agreed in principle to host the ECB Project website after the Project is finished. All tools and resources will still be available for download and more information will be posted on the ECB website when details are finalized.

Coming Soon:

The ECB National Government case study

Analyzing positive examples of International Non-governmental Organization (INGO) / Government collaboration from Phase II of the ECB Project.

The ECBinter-active impact evaluation report

Summarizing key results from the ECBinter-active humanitarian learning event survey that recently took place.

Funding and Support

All the ECB Project joint initiatives and resources including those mentioned above were developed thanks to funding support from numerous donors including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO).

Each ECB Project joint initiative is coordinated and supported by a multi-agency Steering Committee at the global and national level.

Thank you to our donors and to all those agencies that supported these joint efforts with their time and expertise.

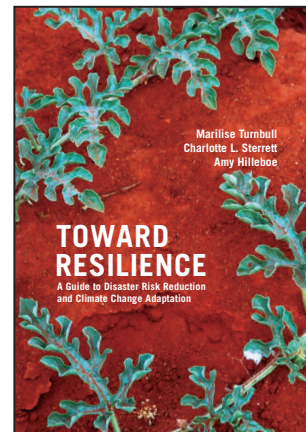
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Front cover of the ECB Project's *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. © ECB Project, 2013.