Welcome to:

**Addressing retention issues &
increasing employee engagement
for programme managers**

This training is sponsored by the:

Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project

Horn of Africa Consortia:

a collaborative effort of the inter agency working group on emergency capacity.

The session was prepared by People In Aid.

Aims of this training

- Enhance participant knowledge and understanding regarding staff turnover and retention issues.

- Equip participants with strategies, tools and techniques for enhancing retention / addressing staff turnover.

- Ultimately to improve your staff / team engagement.

Overview

1. Introduction
2. Understanding retention
3. Addressing retention
4. Mitigating retention

Turnover and Retention Research

2006 – ECB research into employee perspectives and the paper produced during ECB Phase One entitled "Understanding and addressing staff turnover in the humanitarian sector" (HPN Network Paper Number 55).
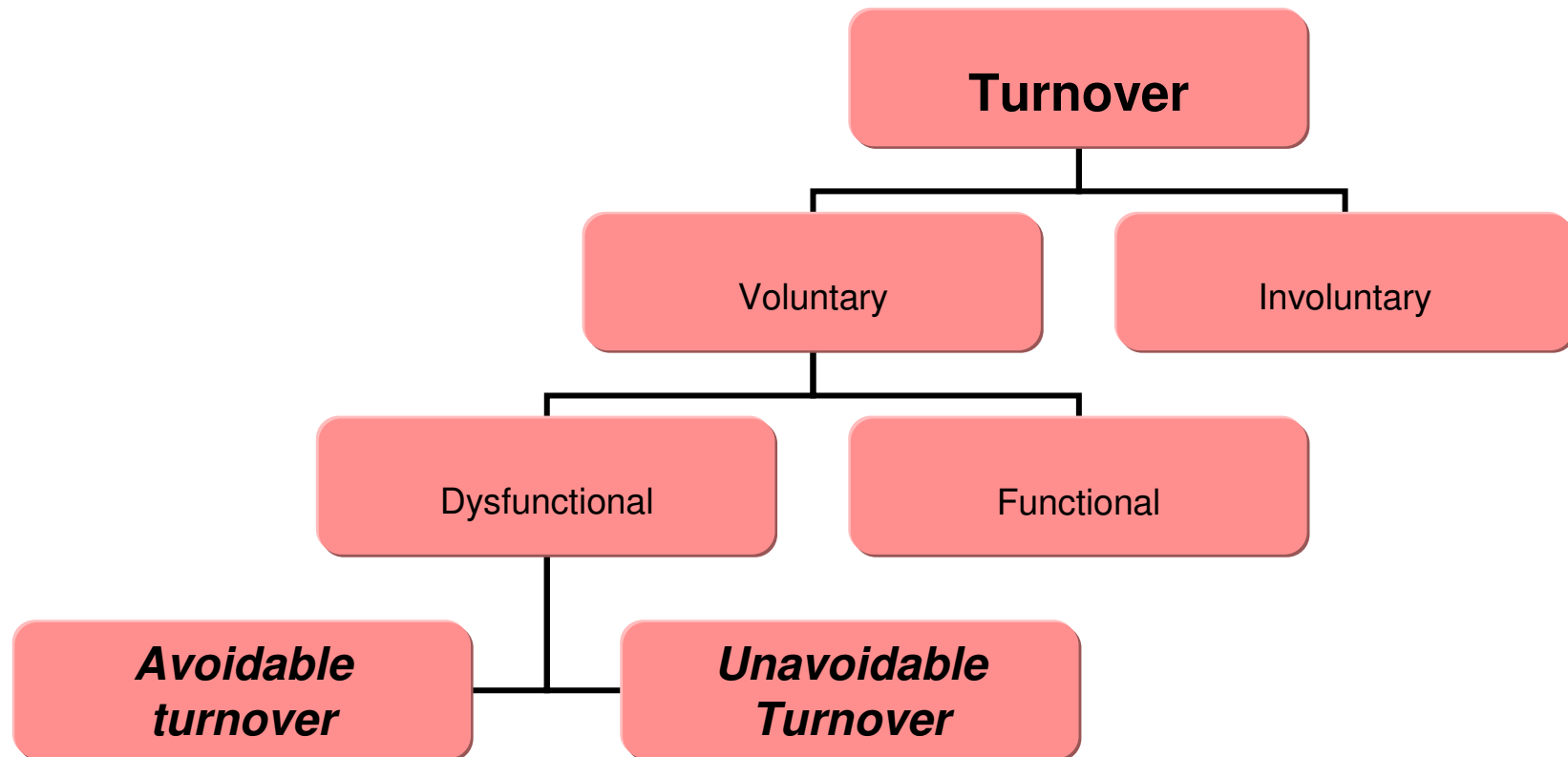
2009 – ECB assessment of how Horn of Africa consortia agencies are presently handling retention and staff engagement issues

Understanding Retention

Why is retention an issue and whose problem is it?

What are the causes of poor retention in your organisation?

Understanding retention

Note on involuntary turnover

1. Involuntary turnover is caused by organisations: programmes ending, lack of funding, poor management, restructures and lack of alignment between emergency and development agendas.

2. People not intended to leave may leave anyway – unsure about their future or the negative experience of colleagues

3. Organisations can control the impact of these factors and need to mitigate the consequences of staff turnover on the organisation.

What are the consequences of staff turnover?

Whose responsibility is it to address retention?

Voluntary, dysfunctional and avoidable turnover is a management issue!

Push factors, pull factors & retention strategies

Environmental factors
Health and social environment –
security conditions and other local stress
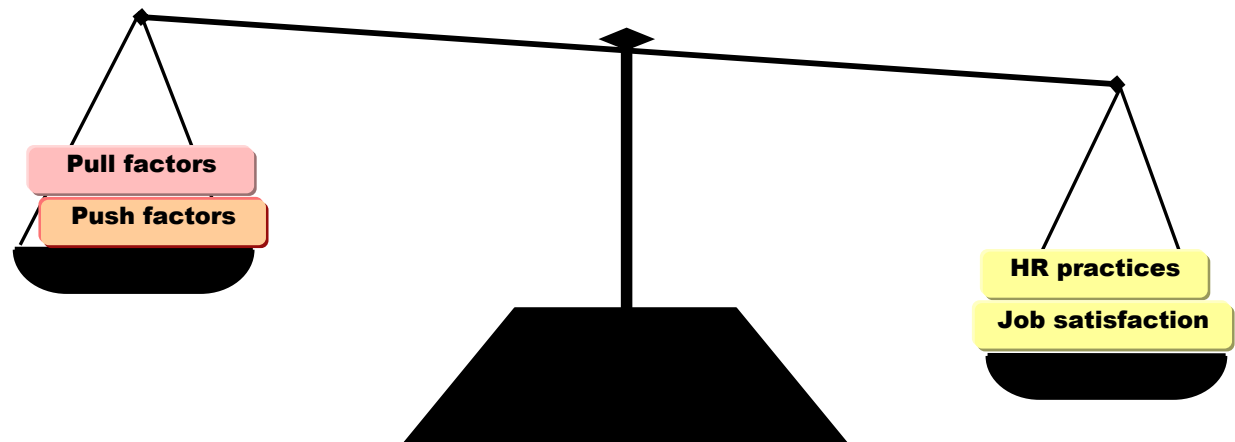factors

Organisational factors
Deliberate policies of the agency,
values and management of staff,
poor support, inadequate terms and conditions
of service

Good HR practices
Adequate terms and conditions of service,
policies ensuring appropriate selection,
management and development of staff

Programme factors
Project-based funding and
job insecurity, pressure on overheads and
under-investment in training

Pull factors

Push factors

HR practices

Job satisfaction

Personal factors
Workload, career concerns, burnout,
disillusionment, desire to start a family

External factors
Better professional opportunities elsewhere
in terms of salary, benefits or promotion

Meaningful work
Fit between individual and organisational
values, motivational work and leadership

2006 Why do people stay and perform?

- **Presence of:**
  - Good team / colleagues (32%)
  - Challenge / variety (24%)
  - Learning / innovative culture (23%)

- **Absence of:**
  - Excessive workload (36%)
  - Excessive impact on personal / social life (29%)
  - Bureaucracy / poor systems (25%)

2006 Why do our staff leave?

1. Better pay / terms and conditions elsewhere (50%)
2. Poor leadership / values / culture (40%)
3. Lack of career opportunity and growth (38%)
4. Burnout, disillusionment and frustration (29%)

Retention scenarios

Scenarios	Potential push factors	Potential pull factors
Poor retention **across the whole** region	•Remuneration Packages •Profile / Image •Restructuring / new strategy	Other organisations offering senior positions, better salaries, or terms and conditions.
Poor retention in **country programme**	•Line management •Poor programme design or funding •Development v emergency agenda	
Poor retention in **one field location**	•Line management •Living conditions •Poor programme design or funding •Security	
Poor retention in **one team or position**	•Line management •Workload •Wrong job description and competencies	

What scenario best fits your retention challenge?

Retention Findings

1. Organisations are not in control of the underlying causes behind mobility of staff in the sector

2. Line managers have little control over many Push factors such as environment, short term contracts (Staff often leave in the 3rd quarter of programme cycle) , family pressures and poor alignment between development and emergency agendas.

3. Even if funding continues there are other barriers to retention – ethnicity, not speaking the local language, remoteness

4. However other push factors such as management style, staff engagement, job satisfaction and terms and conditions can be influenced.

Retention Findings

1. Overall Pull factors are dominant in decision-making in East Africa

2. Individual's personal and professional expectations are met by their employees.

3. Staff still leave their organisations and move to new positions.

4. Retention is a factor of individual self-interest.

5. Any values-driven organisation is a potential vehicle for achieving an individual's goals.

Exercise

- What can you do as a manager to mitigate push factors in your team / programme?
- Brainstorm ideas in pairs for 3 minutes
- Feedback to the group ideas

Retention Findings

Introduce / improve career paths and professional development (49%)

1. Organisations' investment in their staff and improvement in human resources is contributing to a pool of talent which benefits all organisations.

2. Talent development, competitive recruitment and the alignment of personal and organisation agendas are necessary to engage staff.

3. Utilise the psychological contract to better understand expectations and improve engagement

Retention Findings

Better pay / terms and conditions, including contracts, accompanied status (43%)

Better work-life balance / family friendly policies (24%)

1. Good HR practices are the foundation for improved retention and engagement
2. Flexible approaches such as improved salary or terms and conditions work well in the short term
3. Implementing the People In Aid Code
4. Employee engagement surveys, and follow up

Retention Findings

Better leadership (14%)

1. Good management practices
   I. Managers behaviour is a significant catalyst for turnover especially amongst international staff but their behaviour is not always intentional.
   II. Self development is important -use formal and informal feedback methods to know what your impact is
   III. Use formal management approaches in a consistent way
   IV. Use informal management approaches in a transparent way

Retention scenarios Part II

Scenarios	Who is responsible	Potential push factors	Potential pull factors	Action Check list - consider each of the following options
Poor retention **across the whole** region	HQ	•Remuneration Packages •Profile / Image •Restructuring / new strategy	Other organisations offering senior position, better salaries, or terms and conditions.	Strategy and Structure – focus, priorities, and overall set up Operations – security, living conditions, systems, operating procedures Programmes – type, design, funding People – salary, terms and conditions, talent development, work load Management – style, behaviour, performance Leadership – team work, 'esprit de corps' , communication , culture
Poor retention in **country programme**	Regional or HQ office	•Line management •Poor programme design or funding •Development v emergency agenda		
Poor retention in **one field location**	Country office or HQ	•Line management •Living conditions •Poor programme design or funding •Security		
Poor retention in **one team or position**	Country office management and HR	•Line management •Workload •Wrong job description and competencies		

Exercise

- What can you do as a manager to improve your impact on staff motivation and engagement?
- Brainstorm ideas in pairs for 3 minutes
- Feedback to the group ideas

Retention Findings

1. Using ICT to best effect, e.g. the office in a box
2. Rapid inductions especially advice on how to navigate their way in the organisation
3. Learning and development on the job
4. Succession and continuity planning based on strategic foresight anticipating future deployment and programme needs
5. Mechanisms for preserving institutional memory

Exercise

- As a manager how can you improve your working relationship with HR and ensure HR and Retention best practice is put in place?

- Brainstorm ideas in pairs for 3 minutes

- Feedback to the group ideas

Top Ten Tips

1	Know your organisation's retention issues
2	Agree retention indicators and targets
3	Prioritise retention as a management responsibility
4	Mitigate push factors
5	Mitigate pull factors
6	Improve engagement through conversation
7	Encourage personal development
8	Plan for the end at the beginning
9	Ensure a fast response
10	Ensure systems are transparent and practices consistent.

Action Planning

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