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Building Stress- Resilience among Swedish Humanitarian Aid Workers

- The Pre- Deployment Preparation from the Humanitarian Aid Workers' Perspective

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to examine how well MSB (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency) prepare the Swedish humanitarian aid workers to face stressful situations, looking at the pre- deployment preparation received. The study investigates how effective and relevant the pre- deployment preparation is in terms of building resilience against stress, according to the humanitarian aid workers' experience.

This study has been conducted with a quantitative online survey, combined with a qualitative open- ended survey. The surveys were based on research models on work- related stress and on resilience- building among humanitarian aid workers. The frameworks point out criteria needed to be fulfilled by an organization in order to build sufficient stress- resilience among humanitarian aid workers in the pre- deployment phase.

The results reveal that MSB is able to fulfill most of the criteria set in accordance with the theoretical framework. The one and only criterion MSB fails in providing is an open, in- depth discussion about mental health before the aid worker is deployed. This also corresponds to the aid workers experience of not being provided with this. The aid workers' experience reveals that resilience against stress is important, however, many seem to build resilience independently from MSB.

Keywords

Humanitarian aid, Humanitarian aid workers, Humanitarian interventions, Pre- Deployment Preparation, Stress- Resilience Building.

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List of Abbreviations

EU European Union

ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross

ICT Information and Communications Technology

MSB Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap / Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

RnR Rest and Recuperation

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UN United Nations

WFP World Food Programme

1 Introduction

Humanitarian aid work is a complex field challenged by social, political as well as cultural difficulties, which can be found in any humanitarian crisis.¹ Humanitarian aid is needed not only in man-made conflict areas but also in areas affected by natural disasters. The field of humanitarian aid work has in the past not received adequate attention.  was first after the Cold War that more resources were devoted to it and in recent days, the interest in humanitarian aid work has increased.²

Humanitarian interventions include third parties consisting of governmental organizations as well as non- governmental organizations.³ The humanitarian interventions are often distinguished by the third part entering the conflict.⁴ In recent years it has become more difficult for the affected countries to refuse help from the international community.⁵ Humanitarian aid is increasingly important, however less attention has been devoted to the humanitarian aid workers, who have been overlooked, despite the fact that humanitarian interventions has become more important. The fact is that the humanitarian aid workers conducting the humanitarian interventions many times work under harsh conditions in complex environments. The context for humanitarian aid workers during the past years has been more highlighted, where the issue of the stress the humanitarian aid workers are facing is gaining attention. One study highlighting this issue was published in 2001 in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* with the main result revealing that 30 per cent of returning humanitarian aid workers reported stress symptoms and out of these about 10 per cent showed symptoms that could have led to a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁶ Another study concluded that humanitarian aid workers many times face intense stress, equal to the stress the local population is exposed to. Therefore they share the same risk of those they try to help, which adds another complexity to the field of conducting humanitarian aid work.⁷

¹ Beristain, M. (2006) Foreword

² Ibid., (2006) Introduction

³ Wallensten, P. (2015) p. 266

⁴ Hehir, A. (2013) p. 19

⁵ Wallensten, P. (2015) p. 266

⁶ Eriksson, C, et. al., (2001)

⁷ Vaughan B, et al., (2005) p. 122

1.1 Thesis Statement, Research Aim and Research Questions

The effectiveness and quality of the performed work conducted by the humanitarian aid workers during a humanitarian mission are dependent on the aid workers physical- and mental condition. The preparation that the humanitarian aid workers receive before being deployed is crucial in the way the humanitarian aid workers respond to stress during a mission, as well as how well they respond to stressful situations they are exposed to.⁸ This study examines how MSB (The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency)⁹ in the pre- deployment phase enable for resilience building among Swedish humanitarian aid workers and the effectiveness and relevance of the pre- deployment preparation, according to the humanitarian aid workers' experience.

The aim is to examine how well MSB prepares the Swedish humanitarian aid workers to face stressful situations, looking at pre- deployment preparation received. The study investigates how effective and relevant this preparation is, departing from the humanitarian aid workers own experience, while working directly for MSB or being seconded¹⁰ by MSB for a humanitarian mission.

Specified research questions are as follows:

- How well does MSB enable the Swedish humanitarian aid workers to build resilience against stress before deployed, in regards of pre-deployment preparation?
- In what specific ways does MSB enable the Swedish humanitarian aid workers to build resilience against stress in regards of pre- deployment preparation, looking at tools being used?
- To what degree is the pre- deployment training important when building stress- resilience?

⁸ Eriksson, B., et. al., (2011) p. 36

⁹ Editor's note; MSB is the abbreviation from the organizations Swedish name; "Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap".

¹⁰ Editor's note; seconded is a term used for personnel with a MSB contract on temporary duty for another organization, for example the UN or EU.

1.2 Definition of Humanitarian Aid, Stress and Resilience

After a man- made crisis or a natural disaster, humanitarian aid has the objective to save lives, maintain human dignity and to alleviate suffering. Humanitarian aid should follow the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. The actions taken should be based on needs, without any discrimination and humanitarian aid shall stand neutral in the conflict or crisis without hidden agendas. Humanitarian aid is an umbrella that includes different parts such as; protection of civilians, water and sanitation, shelter, health services, food delivering- which all should be provided in order to benefit the affected people, in order for them to be able to return to a normal life.¹¹

Stress is something we cannot live without and despite this, too much stress can kill us. There are several different definitions of stress and the definition used in this study is defined as the body's response to a demand for change. Stress is not over all bad, it also functions as something positive, something that gives excitement and that makes us strive to achieve certain things. However, working within emergency response, stress becomes a challenge in the every- day work as well as a lifestyle.¹²

Resilience in this paper is referred to the individual's capability to face stressful circumstances and events and to be able to bounce back from these negative experiences in order to return to "normal".¹³

1.3 Previous Research concerning Resilience Building among Humanitarian Aid Workers

Importance of Building Resilience against Stress

In order for the individual to be able to cope with stress, there is an importance in building resilience which refers to the individual being given tools needed in order to

¹¹ Good Humanitarian Donorship. (2016)

¹² McEvoy, M. (2004) pp. 1-2

¹³ MSB resilience. (2016)

bounce back from setbacks and stressful events, and to be able to still function in an effective way during harsh conditions and stressful events.

According to an article written within the field of social science by Blanchetière, the thousands of humanitarian aid workers working in disaster contexts need to have a strong commitment and professionalism, in order to be able to respond to the populations' need.¹⁴ By doing this, they will often face dangerous situations that they might not have been prepared for, which results in the individual developing coping mechanisms in order to handle the situations. These coping mechanisms might be crucial in order to be able to perform the work, but it might also be harmful for the individual's well-being in the long run. Blanchetière argues that the humanitarian aid workers therefore would benefit from enhanced resilience in order to mitigate the harmful effects of stress and trauma. Also emphasizing this is The Headington Institute who state at their web-site that humanitarian work can be so intense that the individual often need to intentionally build their resilience in order to cope with the intense situations and stress they might be exposed to during an assignment.¹⁵

The Antares Foundation believes that the humanitarian aid workers are exposed to stress to a higher extent compared to employees in other fields of work. The purpose of their foundation is to offer advice, training and support in regards to stress. The Antares Foundation conducted a study including humanitarian aid workers that were European, British and American working for NGOs. The objective of the study was to assess the level of experienced stress among the humanitarian aid workers. The result revealed that approximately 20 per cent of 1,032 participants, at the end of their deployment reported significant levels of depression. This was twice the pre-deployment rate. Approximately one fifth reported feeling emotionally exhausted due to their work. Three to six months post deployment, 20 per cent still showed symptoms of depression.¹⁶ The Antares Foundation emphasizes the importance of having resilience against stress and has therefore made a comprehensive guideline for

¹⁴ Blanchetière, P. (2006)

¹⁵ The Headington Institute. (2015) Resilience

¹⁶ Antares Foundation. (2012)

good practice for managing stress in humanitarian workers. The guideline include information about stress and events that causes stress, that might face the humanitarian aid worker in the field, but also conducted studies looking at stress levels for specific professions. According to the Antares Foundation, it is crucial in more than one way to be able to handle stress among humanitarian aid workers. Firstly it is important in order to enable the organization and the humanitarian aid workers to fulfil their objectives. Secondly it is important and necessary to protect and ensure the wellbeing of the humanitarian aid workers.¹⁷

Another importance of building stress- resilience derives from the still existing stigma concerning mental health. A survey made by McCall, M and Salama, P in 1999, targeted leading relief organizations and looked at training, support and follow up for aid workers workers. The survey concluded that the stigma associated with psychological illness was more heightened among certain professions within humanitarian aid, where medical professions were one of them. The survey revealed that there was a fear of being perceived incapable of carrying out their professional responsibilities, hence many avoided professional assistance.¹⁸

Consequences and Risks of Stress

According to a study of McFarlane, humanitarian aid work is demanding and the humanitarian aid workers have an overwhelming workload, together with several other difficult factors of working in a humanitarian context.¹⁹ These factors might lead to mental health difficulties according to a study of Miin- Harris.²⁰ According to Sanderson and Andrews, such difficulties, and exposure to single traumatic incidents, can lead to a build- up of stressful experiences resulting in stress, which is commonly experienced in the workplace.²¹ Despite this, humanitarian aid workers are in general able to, and good at, adapting to activities, events or other stimulus that causes acute and chronic stress in their work where they demonstrate substantial resilience,

¹⁷ Antares Foundation. (2012)

¹⁸ McCall, M and Salama, P. (1999) pp. 114-115

¹⁹ McFarlane, C. (2003)

²⁰ Min-Harris, C. (2016) pp. 1-2

²¹ Sanderson, K & Andrews, G. (2006)

according to McFarlane. In order to preserve such resilience, the awareness and support for the potential difficulties the humanitarian aid workers are exposed to must be acknowledged.

According to the study of Miin- Harris, there was a common theme expressed by the humanitarian aid workers, of the systems not being developed in an adequate way to address stress.²² According to Miin- Harris, Lisa McKay at the Headington Institute once said that the reason for this is grounded in agency ego. There is commonly an organizational culture of independence, strength and “machismo” within humanitarian agencies. Although the humanitarian aid organizations are tasked to help others, there is an unspoken message tended to be “If you can’t take the heat, get out of the kitchen”. According to Hoffman this is the reality, grounded in the struggle for founding and market share.²³

Also arguing that there is an increase in work-load for humanitarian aid workers is a survey made in 2009 by Curling and Simmons, targeting humanitarian aid workers within a large humanitarian organization.²⁴ The survey claims that targeted violence against humanitarian aid workers have escalated in recent years and numerous of reports have documented the increased risks to the security of humanitarian aid workers in many countries. This leads to stressful experiences among the humanitarian aid workers and can in the same way as the exposure of single traumatic incidents, result in depression, anxiety, burnout and post-traumatic stress disorder. The survey conducted, revealed that female respondents in general reported higher levels of stress compared to males. Although both males and females working within an emergency context reported higher level of stress compared to personnel working in offices. The survey also concludes that the deteriorating security for humanitarian aid workers most likely will result in the need of extensive support strategies for the humanitarian aid workers.

²² Min-Harris, C. (2016) pp. 1-2

²³ Hoffman, et al. (2006)

²⁴ Curling, P & Simmons, K. (2010)

Another survey made by Lopez in 2012, measured the consequence of chronic and traumatic stressors among humanitarian aid workers within non- governmental organizations.²⁵ The results showed that numerous of humanitarian aid workers were exposed to stressors and experienced high levels of stress. This resulted in the recommendation for deploying organizations, to decrease chronic stressors and to strengthen social support in order to enhance resilience for the humanitarian aid workers.

A survey made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2014, targeted personnel within the agency.²⁶ The survey included 2,431 respondents which was equal to 21% of the staff. One of the aims of the survey was to understand the risks related to psychological hazards such as exposure to traumatic stress, in order to be able to prioritize the focus for staff wellbeing. The survey was conducted by measuring the risk of mental health outcomes such as post- traumatic stress disorder and secondary stress. The outcome revealed that staff within UNHCR was in greater risk of being exposed to mental health outcomes compared to the general population. The importance of resilience among humanitarian aid workers was raised as a factor needed in order to cope with stress during humanitarian work.

An article published in 2001 in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, revealed that as many as 30 per cent of returning humanitarian aid workers reported stress symptoms and out of these about 10 per cent showed symptoms that could have led to a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).²⁷ The article concludes that this is risks the humanitarian aid workers are exposed to. During a humanitarian mission the humanitarian aid worker might be exposed to direct- or indirect traumatic events that could lead to PTSD. The study had 113 participants from five different agencies that recently had returned from a humanitarian aid mission. The result of the study argued for the benefits of pre- deployment training as an example for enhancing the individual's preparedness before a mission.

²⁵ Lopez, C. (2012)

²⁶ UNHCR. (2016) pp. 24-25

²⁷ Eriksson, B., et. al., (2011) p. 1.

A book discussing the aid workers safety and security argues that humanitarian aid workers many times face intense stress equal to the stress the local population is exposed to, and therefore they share the same risk of those they try to help. This was based on a survey where humanitarian aid workers worked in Sudan and in environments similar to Kosovo in 1999 and Rwanda in 1994. The author of the book also emphasize that it is well known that the physical health might be in risk when working in dangerous environments. The conclusion is that there is less focus on the humanitarian aid workers mental health compared to their physical health, although they both are as important.²⁸

According to the Antares Foundation, the humanitarian aid workers do not only experience stressors from the work itself, but also from factors like being apart from family and friends. The Antares Foundation conducted a study revealing that around 30 per cent of humanitarian aid workers and staff of development agencies had symptoms of PTSD. Antares Foundation recommend for organizations and agencies to conduct training and briefings for their humanitarian aid workers in the pre-deployment phase. The recommended content is; comprehensive information regarding stress and stressor that might face the humanitarian aid worker once deployed, information about team management, safety and security, detailed information about conditions in the field and preparation for dealing with the emotional response of people affected by the crisis or disaster as well as care for own personnel.²⁹

As shown above, there are extensive materials and studies made concerning stress among international humanitarian aid workers; however there seem to be a lack of equal made for Swedish humanitarian aid workers. Especially studies focusing on how the humanitarian aid workers, in the pre- deployment phase, are being prepared to manage the stressful situation which might face them during their humanitarian mission. Moreover, there seem to be a lack of studies made focusing on how effective

²⁸ Vaughan B., et al., (2005) p. 122

²⁹ Antares Foundation. (2012)

these tools are according to Swedish humanitarian aid workers' experience. Therefore, this study has an important gap to fill when looking at MSB, as a Swedish governmental organization and the preparation the humanitarian aid workers receives in the pre- deployment phase. This study does not only focus on the preparation they receive, but also includes the voices of the humanitarian aid workers that have been working directly for- or being seconded by MSB. This component of the study complements to the importance of looking at the effectiveness and importance of the pre- deployment preparation in regards of stress- resilience building. 

1.4 Disposition

This thesis is structured in six chapters. This introduction chapter is followed by a methodology chapter, explaining the choice of method and data, the online surveys and risk of biases. In the third chapter, the theoretical framework, consisting of different criteria to be fulfilled in order to build sufficient resilience among humanitarian aid workers, is explained. In the fourth chapter, a background about MSB as an organization is presented together with how well MSB enables for stress- resilience building among humanitarian aid workers, according to the criteria based on the theoretical framework. In the fifth chapter, the results of the surveys are presented. In the sixth chapter, the conclusions are drawn from the analysis and a suggestion for further research is made. 

2 Method

As a first step in examining the Swedish humanitarian aid workers' experience of the effectiveness of the pre- deployment preparation, a quantitative online survey was conducted. It targeted humanitarian aid workers that had conducted the MSB induction course³⁰, and that had been working directly for- or had been seconded to a minimum of one humanitarian mission by MSB. The online survey had the focus on comparing the tools provided within the pre- deployment preparation, in accordance with the official web- site of MSB and the humanitarian aid workers' experience of which tools that actually were provided. The results are represented in two categories within pre- deployment preparation; training and briefing. The results were based on criteria taken from the theoretical frameworks applied for this study, which is explained more in detail under chapter 3.

The second step is a qualitative assessment of the humanitarian aid workers' experience of the effectiveness of the pre- deployment preparation, which was conducted with online open- ended surveys. The open- ended surveys were conducted with three humanitarian aid workers that had been, or currently were working directly for- or being seconded by MSB. The open- ended surveys allowed for open questions in order to elucidate the humanitarian aid workers' experience from how well the tools provided in the pre- deployments phase had been efficient, while being on a mission in regards of having resilience against stress.

The theoretical frameworks used in this study do not have the aim to test new theories and neither to develop already existing theories. Rather the theoretical frameworks are theory consuming and are used in order to explain the chosen case of the study, with the aim to explain the effectiveness of resilience building among humanitarian aid workers.³¹

³⁰ Editor's note; MSB induction course is the name of the introduction course all listed field staff shall attend before deployment, according to MSB.

³¹ Maoz, Z. (2004) p. 282

2.1 Materials

Due to time limitations, already existing material from MSB was used in order to find out what tools MSB provided for the humanitarian aid workers in order for them to build resilience against stress, looking in particular at pre- deployment preparation. This information is presented more in detail in the next chapter. When it comes to the empirical study, a quantitative survey was conducted as well as a qualitative open-ended survey with three field workers from MSB. These surveys aimed to discover the actual tools provided and their effectiveness and importance according to the humanitarian aid workers' experience. When it comes to secondary data and literature, material in both Swedish and English were used. A critical source evaluation was made where the sources were chosen after careful consideration with the respect to the aim of the research questions and with a variation in origin. The material used included books and scientific reports, official web- sites and articles. Information in regards of tools within the pre- deployment preparation provided by MSB was gathered from the official web- site of MSB. A number of delimitations were made due to time limit and aim of the study. I tried to be critical towards- and identify possible biases before and during the research as well as being aware of that biases within case studies are very common and that biases within research design might affect the findings.

By using material in English in addition to Swedish, it is believed to contribute to a broader inclusion of material to the study compared to if only material in Swedish was used. This study do not include covering how MSB define concepts like humanitarian interventions and conflict resolutions since this was not the intention of the study, and not defining it was not believed to affect the findings for this study.

2.2 Online Survey and Open- ended Survey

The initial intention was to conduct the survey and open- ended survey for this study in cooperation with MSB, who was positive towards this study being conducted, but were unfortunately not able to assist with names of personnel from their list of field staff.

The methodological strategy preferred for the open-ended survey would have been semi-structured questions made face-to-face with the respondents. This would have been the best option for maintaining high reliability of the study. However this was impossible for practical reasons and a careful consideration was made in order to maintain reliability of the study and to be able to get good candidates for the open-ended survey. Therefore, the open-ended survey were made with an online tool which enables for an online survey to be made where the creator of the survey decide if the answers are to be shown confidential or not. This tool is called Survey Monkey. Open questions were asked to the participants of the study where they answered in written format. This was due to the participants not living within a close range and where one participant was currently abroad at the time being, which excluded also open-ended survey over phone due to practical reasons. I am aware of that this might have excluded opportunities to ask follow-up questions as well as not being able to read body language. However, I believe that the questions were asked in a way which allowed for the respondents to answer freely and the quality of the answers is considered to be in accordance with the aim of the study.

As I have personal relationships with some humanitarian aid workers that have been working for- or being seconded by MSB I consciously excluded them in order to avoid possible biases. Therefore the selection for the open ended survey was made from social forums where I have selected in total three people that received a question of participation for the study. The online social forums were in closed groups on Facebook where all members had been identified through the admin of the forums as either working for MSB or having worked for MSB. Therefore I as a researcher can guarantee that the people selected for both the survey and the open-ended survey of this study either had been working- or were at the time currently working for- or being seconded by MSB. The survey and open-ended survey were made through Survey Monkey, independently from MSB.

Both the online survey and open-ended survey questions started with an explanation of the purpose of this study and the criteria for participating in the study. The survey

remained open for nine days, between 28 November 2016 and 6 December 2016. The open- ended survey were made between the 3 December and 10 December 2016. See Appendix 1 and 2 for more detailed information about the survey- and open- ended survey questions.

The online survey conducted through Survey Monkey reached in total 50 people in three different forums. In total 10 people answered the survey, seven females and three males. The case selection was randomized but controlled. In order to avoid the same person answering twice it was included in the criteria set for the survey that only one answer was allowed per person and in addition the survey was blocked from more than one answer from the same IP address. In the survey, only gender and number of international missions were displayed in order to keep the confidentiality of the respondents. Since the aim of the survey was to elucidate if the tools given in the pre-deployment phase had been efficient or not according to the aid workers, the findings were not compromised by excluding information about the respondents name. The qualitative open- ended survey were conducted with a strategic case selection and allowed for more detailed information compared to the quantitative survey 

2.3 Case Selection

For this study MSB as a governmental organization was selected. I also considered using a non- governmental organization for this study but decided not to do so after conducting a pre- study. The pre- study included comparing the tools within the pre-deployment preparation provided by MSF (Medicines Sans Frontiers/ Doctors Without Borders) and MSB which would be used in order to build resilience against stress. When conducting the pre- study I used the same theoretical framework as used for this study. I discovered that MSF failed in providing briefings for all humanitarian aid workers before deployments, hence they were no able to meet the criteria set for this study in regards of briefings being conducted in the pre- deployment phase. MSB in a higher degree succeeds in doing so. In order to compare the tools provided against the humanitarian aid workers' experience of the effectiveness of the tools, MSB was therefore selected for this study.

When selecting the case for this study the selection was made out from the pre- study already made together with my own knowledge of MSB seconding a numerous number of humanitarian aid workers per year. The case was therefore selected, not only out of interest but from the understanding that the case would be able to respond to the overall research questions asked for the study.

Only one case was selected for this study in order to reach a deeper understanding of how MSB enable for resilience building among the Swedish humanitarian aid workers in order for them to cope with stress and the humanitarian aid workers' experience, rather than only measuring it like a quantitative study would have done. The case enabled for a broader conclusion with a comparison between the tools provided and their actual effectiveness and importance according to the humanitarian aid workers' experience. A larger number of organizations, used in a quantitative study, could have led to a generalization of the results and the research would have lost the depth of the analysis.³²

The motives among humanitarian interventions are widely discussed and the interventions might involve the use of force. Some say that the use of force needs to be in proportion. It is also discussed if there needs to be humanitarian intents or not for the interventions to be classified as humanitarian.³³ When making the case selection I consciously excluded the humanitarian interventions conducted by the Swedish military since it was hard to define if the interventions were made with a humanitarian intent or not, or if there were political agendas behind the decision to intervene.

Regardless of the different views discussed above, this study aimed to describe how MSB enabled for stress- resilience building among the humanitarian aid workers with their experience of the tools provided and their effectiveness. This study does not explore further how MSB classifies a humanitarian intervention, instead it focuses on

³² Lamont, C. (2015) p. 137

³³ Hehir, A. (2013) pp. 23-24

and associates MSB with being a traditional humanitarian organization that stands neutral during the humanitarian interventions where the focus is on humanitarian needs and relief. 

2.4 Risk of Biases

I as a researcher have a background of humanitarian work where I have been seconded by MSB. Therefore, I have preconceptions that might have affected the analysis of this study. During the study I was aware of this but believe that this was used to strengthen the analysis of the study rather than the opposite. Parts of the analysis that are believed to be biased will be clearly identified as such for the reader.

³⁴ Hehir, A. (2013) p. 17

3 Theoretical Framework

A broad theoretical framework was selected in order to enable for the major elements to be included.³⁵ Since there seemed to be a lack of already existing theoretical frameworks applicable for how organizations and agencies enable for resilience building among Swedish humanitarian aid workers, this study was partly based on a theoretical framework made for work- place related stress aiming for managers and organizations having the tools to build resilience among their co-workers.³⁶ This framework was used together with a framework taken from an article with focus on stress resilience- building among humanitarian aid workers.³⁷ These two combined theoretical frameworks were tested in the pre- study and were proven to be successfully applicable in the context of humanitarian work. Therefore they functioned as the framework for this study. The two theoretical frameworks were applied in order to in a sufficient way cover the humanitarian aid workers' experience of the tools provided by MSB within the pre- deployment preparation.

The first theoretical framework consists of three levels of stress management intervention that starts with the primary level, which aimed to reduce and remove stressors from the work environment. The second level aimed to improve the employee's ability to manage stress and to build up resilience. The third level aimed to help individuals to recover from work- related stress which might include counseling.³⁸ This study will focus on the second level, to elucidate if MSB provide necessary tools for building up resilience to manage stress. The primary level was excluded in this study due to the fact that the context of being deployed for a humanitarian mission automatically includes situations causing stress that cannot be reduced or removed. The third level, the recovery process, was excluded due to the aim of the study where the focus was to examine the tools given in the pre- deployment phase. The second framework focuses on how building resilience among humanitarian aid workers could help in mitigating the negative effects of stress and

³⁵ George, B. (2005) pp. 92-93.

³⁶ Cooper, C et al., (2013) p. 77

³⁷ Blanchetière, P. (2006) pp. 12-13

³⁸ Cooper, C et al., (2013) p. 77

trauma, which in its turn would have an impact on the humanitarian aid worker's personal life as well as their professional life. This framework derives from an article written as a part of development projects in the United Kingdom. According to the framework there were two ways in which resilience could be improved by, which would help the humanitarian aid workers to manage stress; from the aid workers' perspective and from the organization's perspective.

The first perspective put the responsibility on the aid worker to for example, reflect on their own motivations and expectations as well as to gain understanding and information about the geopolitical context of the mission. It also included to develop basic conflict resolution strategies as well as to be aware of gaps that might occur with family and friends while on mission. Addressing resilience from the organization's perspective included for the organization to limit the causes of stress and also to limit the impact of stress and trauma as well as to support with the recovery process. There were several different steps included for the organization in regards to this aspect and this study focuses on addressing resilience from the organization's perspective in regards to what is being done in the pre- deployment phase, in regards of build stress-resilience building among the humanitarian aid workers.³⁹

In order to analyze the results, the components of training and briefings within the pre- deployment preparation were assessed for MSB. Training refers to the induction course provided by MSB. Briefings should be conducted before deployment in order to enhance the aid workers' resilience and does not have to be in connection with the induction course. According to Blanchetière, training should include an awareness session on resilience factors at individual level as well as on environmental level which can be done using simulation that models the demand. The training could provide frames of reference in regards to team management and conflict resolution as well as in terms of threat perception, detailed information on work tasks to be performed when deployed, organization's procedures, security, logistics and

³⁹ Blanchetière, P. (2006) pp. 12-13

administration. All these aspects aimed to increase the aid workers ability of self-control.

According to Blanchetière, briefings should be conducted in the pre- deployment phase. This has been proven to enhance resilience among the aid workers by the organization spending more time with the aid worker during recruitment. This in order to get to know the person and spending more time between the recruitment and starting date in order to ensure commitment and to make sure the aid workers share the value of the organization. The briefing also allows for the aid worker to gain a clear and realistic picture of the mission and should also allow for an open in depth discussion on mental health and the resources available for support. Briefings before the mission should always be conducted despite possible time limitations.⁴⁰

The framework for this study include exploring the ways in which an organization enables for resilience building for the humanitarian aid workers in regards of pre-deployment preparation. This is summarized in Table 1 which also functions as the framework for the survey- and open- ended survey questions 

⁴⁰ Blanchetière, P. (2006) pp. 12-13

Table 1: Criteria an Organization need to meet in order to allow for sufficient Stress- Resilience Building

General criteria
The organization;
- Providing tools to build resilience in the pre- deployment preparation?
- Enabling building resilience before the mission with training?
- Enabling building resilience before the mission with briefing?
Criteria regarding Training
The organization providing;
- Awareness session about resilience factors at individual- and environmental level
- Information and/or training regarding team management
- Information and/or training regarding conflict resolution
- Information and/or training regarding threat perception
- Information and/or training regarding detailed information on tasks to be performed
- Information and/or training regarding the organization’s procedures
- Information and/or training regarding security
- Information and/or training regarding logistics procedures
- Information and/or training regarding administration procedures
Criteria regarding Briefing
The organization providing;
- Briefing in the pre- deployment phase
- Open, in depth discussion of mental health before deployed
- Information about resources available for mental- and medical support

Source: Blanchetière, P (2006) pp. 12-13

4 Historical Background

4.1 MSB (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency)

MSB is a Swedish governmental organization that was implemented in year 2009 as a successor organization to the Swedish Rescue Service Agency (SRV) that reorganized in 2008, after being an agency between year 1986 and year 2008.⁴¹ MSB came to consist of three different agencies including, apart from SRV, also the agency for emergency preparedness⁴² and the board for psychosocial defence.⁴³ The first international mission was conducted in 1988, and since then MSB has recruited around 2,000 field staff personnel to 600 different missions in 80 countries.⁴⁴

MSB is under the regime of the Swedish Government and is responsible for measures taken before, during and after an emergency or crisis, on a national- and international level. This is in concern of civil protection, public safety, emergency management and civil defence, with the criteria that no other authority already has the responsibility. This is conducted by MSB supporting national actors as well as providing support to other countries as well as to the UN and EU.⁴⁵ In order for MSB to conduct international missions, two criteria need to be met; first MSB need to receive a request from the affected country and secondly, there must be a decision made based on the request. So therefore MSB are not able to conduct international missions only from own initiative. Mostly the decisions are taken within MSB, apart from decisions regarding civil conflict management where the Swedish government has to approve. The missions are conducted with MSB field staff personnel that have conducted the mandatory courses within MSB.⁴⁶

During year 2014, MSB conducted 212 missions where 176 were humanitarian aid missions and 36 were missions on a national level. During year 2014 MSB received more funding compared to year 2013 in order to be able to cope with the Ebola

⁴¹ The Swedish name; "Statens Räddningsverk"

⁴² The Swedish name; "Krisberedskapsmyndigheten"

⁴³ The Swedish name; "Styrelsen för psykologiskt försvar"

⁴⁴ MSB internationella insatser. (2016)

⁴⁵ Information MSB. (2016)

⁴⁶ MSB internationella insatser. (2016)

outbreak in Western Africa and the typhoon in the Philippines. MSB conducted, among other missions, missions with focus on humanitarian explosive ordnance disposal and mine- clearance in Central African Republic and at the Gaza-strip in Palestine. On a national level MSB supported the extinguishing of the forest fire in Västmanland, Sweden and gave support to the flooding in the western parts of Sweden.⁴⁷

During year 2015 MSB conducted in total 226 missions and out of these 126 missions were humanitarian, which took place in 33 different countries. On a national level MSB conducted 54 missions. The missions on a national level increased compared to year 2014, mainly due to the large number of refugees arriving to Sweden during fall 2015. On an international level most of the focus was on natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Nepal, and on missions with a logistic focus, where accommodation and offices were created in order to enable for coordination in the field between different agencies, which in its turn could provide humanitarian assistance.⁴⁸

During year 2016 MSB have conducted a number of missions including the support and management after hurricane Matthew in Haiti. Support was provided to the EU and UN in order to enable and strengthen their humanitarian support. The most current international mission (January 2017) is taking place in the northern part of Nigeria where MSB is constructing a base camp for 100 humanitarian aid workers and eight smaller camps for a minimum of 15 people per camp. The conflict between Boko Haram and national- as well as international security forces has created one of the most severe humanitarian crises in Africa, where 14 million people are in immediate need for humanitarian support. The aim is to enable for an increase of international actors working with humanitarian support, by providing a safe place to live and work.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, MSB. (2015)

⁴⁸ Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, MSB. (2016)

⁴⁹ MSB internationella insatser. (2016)

4.2 How does MSB provide tools for Stress- Resilience Building among Humanitarian Aid Workers?

According to MSB, all staff being a part of the field staff roster needs to conduct the induction course held by MSB in order to be able to be a part of the international missions conducted through MSB. This course aims to develop the capacity among field staff registered within MSB. After a successful completion of the induction course, the field staff member might be offered to participate in courses specialized towards the staff member's area of competence. All courses are aimed to be mixed in its layout and might include lectures, individual tasks, group discussions, seminars, role plays, open- ended surveys and practical exercises in order to develop the individuals capacity to work independently, take responsibility as well as to be able to work in groups and to work with a problem focused orientation.

The induction course, mandatory for all field staff members, should be conducted before the member can take part in an international mission and aims to contribute to knowledge about MSB as a civil agency, the mandate, the different types of missions and the different partners working with MSB. The course also includes gaining knowledge about cultural awareness, gender questions and the code of conduct of MSB. The different subjects covered in the course are; the operative function of MSB, types of missions and different partners, the mandate of MSB and the different fields of activity, communication and information management, security and safety, human rights, gender and diversity, cultural awareness, ethical questions, health, team development and conflict management and environment and disaster risk reduction.⁵⁰

Before deployed to a mission MSB should, according to themselves, conduct a briefing with detailed information about the mission and the possible agency/organization that the mission member will be seconded to. Information should also be provided in regards of material to bring and to handle while on mission as well as information about economy and how to handle the administrative issues while on mission. Extended information should be given in regards of safety, gender

⁵⁰ MSB courses. (2016)

information and general information should be given on how to handle issues related to health and stress during the mission.⁵¹ MSB also provide all mission members with a field staff handbook containing information about all topics already mentioned, as well as information about the psycho- social and medical support that MSB offers to all mission members which includes information of personal stress, crisis reactions and extra ordinary events. The mission member has the opportunity, during the briefing conducted before the mission, to ask specific questions about health and stress that are relevant for the mission.⁵²

MSB provide on their web-site information focusing on resilience when experiencing stress, where the term is defined and explained. Tools are also provided for the humanitarian aid workers, used in order to cope with stress with the use of different exercises such as relaxation exercises. MSB state that research shows that 60-80% of people being exposed to life threatening events or equaling stress have resilience which allows them to bounce back from the stressful event and return to normal life without any professional support.⁵³

⁵¹ Information before deployed, MSB. (2016)

⁵² MSB handbok för insatspersonal, före under och efter internationell insats. (2013) pp. 38-42

⁵³ MSB resilience. (2016)

Table 2: Criteria MSB meet in order to build sufficient Stress- Resilience

General criteria	MSB
The organization;	
- Providing tools to build resilience in the pre- deployment preparation?	YES
- Enabling building resilience before the mission with training?	YES
- Enabling building resilience before the mission with briefing?	YES
Criteria regarding Training	
The organization providing;	
- Awareness session about resilience factors at individual- and environmental level	YES
- Information and/or training regarding team management	YES
- Information and/or training regarding conflict resolution	YES
- Information and/or training regarding threat perception	YES
- Information and/or training regarding detailed information on tasks to be performed	YES
- Information and/or training regarding the organization's procedures	YES
- Information and/or training regarding security	YES
- Information and/or training regarding logistics procedures	YES
- Information and/or training regarding administration procedures	YES
Criteria regarding Briefing	
The organization providing;	
- Briefing in the pre- deployment phase	YES
- Open, in depth discussion of mental health before deployed	NO
- Information about resources available for mental- and medical support	YES

Source: Blanchetière, P (2006) pp. 12-13 and MSB courses (2016).

The table shows that most of the criteria are met for MSB who in general provide tools to enable to build stress- resilience. MSB enable to build up resilience before the mission with training consisting of nine different criteria, where MSB meet all of these criteria. The second part consists of the humanitarian aid worker being able to

build up resilience before the mission with briefing. MSB provide two out of three criteria and fails in providing an open, in depth discussion about mental health before deployed. This due to the aid worker having the opportunity on own initiative to ask specific, in depth- questions in regards of mental health which is not equal to MSB providing and opening up for this discussion for all humanitarian aid workers. The results found shows that MSB enable for the humanitarian aid workers to build up resilience before deployed in regards of training but when it comes to briefing conducted in the pre- deployment phase, MSB are able to provide this but not with all the criteria set in accordance with the theoretical framework. MSB provide different ways in order to build up resilience with training and briefings, where the tools within trainings consists of courses/lectures and exercises.

5 Results

5.1 Quantitative Assessment of the Humanitarian Aid Workers' Experience of the Pre- Deployment Preparation

The survey aimed to compare the criteria provided according to MSB with the humanitarian aid worker's experience. The questions asked in the survey were based on the questions within the framework used for this study, which together with the criteria provided by MSB can be found in Table 2. In total 10 people participated in the survey.

Table 3: Criteria fulfilled according to the Humanitarian Aid Workers

Question	YES	NO	Don't Know	No Answer
Induction course including;				
Building stress- resilience?	7	3		
Information/training about resilience factors?	4	4	2	
Information/training about team management and conflict resolution?	5	4	1	
Information/training about threat perception and security information?	7	3		
Information/training about tasks to be performed	4	4	1	1
Information/training about logistic and administration	5	5		
In the pre- deployment phase MSB provided;				
One or more briefings	8	2		
Briefing/s including an open, in depth discussion of mental health?	2	8		
Briefing/s including information about resources available for mental- and medical support?	8	2		

Editor's note; For full survey questions see Appendix 1.

The frequency table above show that the humanitarian aid workers' experience of the training received varies, which might be explained by the aid workers own personal experiences before attending the course. According to the results, the number of conducted missions among the respondents ranged between two and 11, with the mean value of approximately 4 conducted missions per person. According to Table 3 above, the results are in general spread more or less equal when looking at training received, whereas more unevenly spread when looking at briefings received.

When looking more into detail to the humanitarian aid workers' experience, seven respondents received pre- deployment training/exercises within the induction course for building resilience against stress and three respondents did not. This results in at least three people not being given or not taking the opportunity to build resilience against stress. Eight out of ten took part in one or more briefings in the pre-deployment phase. All of these eight did receive information about resources available for mental- and medical support. Although, only two out of these eight were provided with an open, in depth discussion about mental health. Seven respondents were provided with information regarding stress- resilience, but only four out of these were provided with information about stress- resilience factors. According to the results, only half of the participants received information regarding team management, conflict resolution, tasks to be performed, logistics and administration.

Interesting also is the possible differences between genders, where in total seven females participated compared to three males. The main differences between the sexes is in the number of conducted missions, where for the females the lowest number of conducted missions was two and the highest number was 11. Among the males the lowest number of conducted missions was four and the highest number of missions was eight. Despite this difference, the answers were spread relatively equal regardless of the respondent being female or male.

As the main results indicate, three out of ten were believed not being provided with information regarding stress- resilience and only two out of ten were provided with an

in- depth discussion about mental health before deployed. Interestingly is also the fact that all the ten respondents did participate in the induction course, although their experiences of what the pre- deployment preparations included, differs a lot 

5.2 Qualitative Assessment of the Humanitarian Aid Workers' Experience of the Pre- Deployment Preparation

The open- ended survey questions asked in the survey were based on the criteria within the framework used for this study. Detailed questions can be found in Appendix 2. In total three respondents participated in the open- ended survey. Due to confidentiality the respondents are not mentioned by name and will therefore be identified as Respondent 1, Respondent 2 and Respondent 3.

The open ended survey aimed to elucidate the humanitarian aid workers' experience of the effectiveness and importance of the pre- deployment preparation, while being on mission. It also aimed at exploring the tools received during training/s and briefing/s used in order to build resilience against stress.

Within the Pre- Deployment Preparation, did MSB allow for Stress- Resilience Building?

According to one respondent, the MSB induction course included lectures which included how to manage stress during missions. Practical exercises were conducted were one exercise included having armed people at checkpoints and own staff being abducted and separated from the group. Exercises included negotiations with people threatening with guns, according to the respondent. These lectures and exercises allowed for resilience building used in order to be able to cope with stress.⁵⁴ One of the other respondents received anti-stress and relaxation exercises by audio before deployment.⁵⁵ Another, more critical voice came from another respondent who

⁵⁴ Respondent 1. (2016)

⁵⁵ Respondent 3. (2016)

believed that the MSB induction course were to no use, due to not being offered to attend the induction course before the first deployment;⁵⁶

“Since I got my training after my missions, I haven’t been able to use these tools. But, I felt that I could contribute to answer questions and tell about my experiences to others on the course, who had not been on missions before”.⁵⁷

Once attending the course, the respondent experienced it to include discussions and group activities with the psychosocial worker at MSB within the topic of stress. One positive aspect of attending the induction course post- mission was the possibility of contributing to answer questions and to share own experiences among others attending the course that had not been on a mission before, according to the respondent.⁵⁸

According to all of the respondents, MSB did allow for stress- resilience building; however one of the respondents were not able to take part in the trainings before being deployed.

Was the Pre- Deployment Preparation Effective, while on Mission?

According to one respondent, the tools provided by MSB in the pre- deployment phase were in some way effective while on a mission. There were relaxation exercises on audio provided by the psychosocial- worker at MSB which were used occasionally while on mission; “To have (...) anti-stress tools available has always done the trick for me”,⁵⁹ according to the respondent. The same respondent believes that the best way to prepare new staff for going into the field is to prepare for everything that you do not expect. This includes preparing for waiting, doing other stuff than you are assigned to do and to try to cope with each situation as it appears. The best way of doing this is to have experienced people sharing different scenarios from real life.

⁵⁶ Respondent 2. (2016)

⁵⁷ Ibid., (2016)

⁵⁸ Ibid., (2016)

⁵⁹ Respondent 3. (2016)

Preparing people to be as flexible as possible is a key to success, according to the respondent.⁶⁰

According to the same respondent, the best preparation for going into mission was not believed to be the MSB induction course, but rather the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) specialist training.⁶¹ This was the respondents thoughts about the training; “All the way along the training we were presented with examples from the field and that really prepared me for being prepared for anything”.⁶² According to another field worker, it was not mainly the MSB induction course that helped in managing the stress;

“With over 30 years of service as a firefighter, I have learned to manage stress during pressured situations. There are always small things in MSB's training that can be good to bring with you”.⁶³

According to the respondents, the pre- deployment preparation was effective to some extent. However, all of the respondents had been able to build stress- resilience external from MSB as well, which they seemed to believe to be more effective while being on mission.

How were the tools provided within the Pre- Deployment Preparation used, while on Mission and are there examples of not having enough Resilience?

According to one of the respondents, there has not been a need for using tools in order to be able to cope with stress while on mission. There is no concrete example of a situation where there has not been enough resilience for the respondent to handle a stressful event or situation while being on a mission working for MSB.⁶⁴ One person believed that the tools provided during the MSB induction did not help to build resilience since the training was received post- deployment. Although, the same

⁶⁰ Respondent 3. (2016)

⁶¹ Editor’s note; The ICT specialist training is external to the MSB induction course.

⁶² Respondent 3. (2016)

⁶³ Respondent 1. (2016)

⁶⁴ Ibid., (2016)

respondent believed that it is difficult to prepare completely for being able to handle stress if you do not have personal experience before attending the induction course.⁶⁵

One of the respondents had a practical example of one team leader, on the way to Central African Republic, who explained in detail to the respondent how the arrival at the airport in Central African Republic would be like; “That really helped me a lot. If I hadn't been prepared I would have been really stressed at that point (...)”⁶⁶, according to the respondent. In order to manage stress while on mission, it is important to be prepared, according to the respondent.⁶⁷

Another way of coping with stress is to get some personal time, according to another field worker; “I usually try to get personal time, physical exercise and listening to music helps my mind relax and let go of stress and work-related stuff.”⁶⁸ The same respondent had a difficult time while being on mission;

“I personally had a tough time in Libya with a heavy workload handed to me by my team leader. Team leader didn't listen to my ideas about work and being seconded to ICRC makes you very vulnerable with no superiors that are interested in helping in that matter. The RnR (Rest and Recuperation)⁶⁹ saved me in that matter (...) I could recharge mentally for the remaining part of the mission”.⁷⁰

According to one of the respondents, the anti- stress tools received by MSB was available for use while on mission, which helped to cope with stress while being on a mission. Also a good way to limit stress is to be prepared for anything and to expect some waiting- time before action as well, according to the respondent; “I try to do the best possible in all situations instead of focusing on what I was hired to do or not to

⁶⁵ Respondent 2. (2016)

⁶⁶ Respondent 3. (2016)

⁶⁷ Ibid., (2016)

⁶⁸ Respondent 2. (2016)

⁶⁹ Editor's note; RnR is a term used, where the humanitarian aid worker usually leave the mission area in order to get a break from the mission. The RnR cycle is decided by MSB or the seconded agency.

⁷⁰ Respondent 2. (2016)

do”.⁷¹ One of the respondents did not have any examples of when not having enough resilience to handle a stressful event or situation, but believed that day might come in the future and then it is good to have the training behind you.⁷²

Only one of the respondents used tools provided by MSB while on mission. Another respondent had not been needed to use tools to cope with stressful situations and a third used tools to some extent by physical exercise and listening to music.

Why is Building Resilience against Stress Important according to the Humanitarian Aid Workers?

According to the respondents, there were different views of why building resilience is important. This is the thoughts of one of the respondents;

“I think it is an important training to understand how yourself and other people may react under stress and where help is available if needed”.⁷³

Another respondent believed it to be important to talk in groups about stress; however this can only prepare you in theory. What is happening to you in the field, in regard of stress, is very individual. Therefore, it is of importance to continuously having discussions about stress with your superior/counselor when out on mission, which is a good addition to the training provided at the induction course, according to the respondent.⁷⁴

There are examples from the respondents of additional trainings, external from MSB, which have helped in building resilience against stress. According to one respondent the best training concerning humanitarian aid work was through World Food Programme (WFP) and Emergency ICT Management training. Practical training was there provided with scenarios of being taken hostage, where the instructors really

⁷¹ Respondent 3. (2016)

⁷² Ibid., (2016)

⁷³ Respondent 1. (2016)

⁷⁴ Respondent 3. (2016)

pushed it hard. According to the respondent, the training included over four hours with a hood over the head, water splashing in the background, listening to babies crying and women being raped etc. According to the field worker the training was though;

“It really made me being aware of how I as a woman always will be the weak link of the group. It was a really good exercise and I sincerely do hope that I will never be taken hostage, but somehow, I think this training really opened my eyes and if in worse case, I think it will do some good”.⁷⁵

According to the field worker, women suffer a greater risk of being raped when deployed in the field and might therefore be more vulnerable.⁷⁶ Another respondent had experience from being on a mission, other than with MSB;

“Being on mission with Swedish armed forces with very high threat levels before MSB, was helpful and did help me very much in knowing what to expect from me and my performance while under stress in a mission.”⁷⁷

All of the respondents believed building stress- resilience were of importance; however the general belief among the respondents were that training can only prepare you in theory, therefore practical and personal experience is important and needed as well.

Background of the Respondents and their conducted Missions through MSB

Respondent 1 is a male, 55 years of age who has conducted 19 missions working for MSB. These missions took place in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, South Sudan and Philippines. During these missions Respondent 1 held positions as Camp Technician, Water Technician, Team Leader and Logistics Officer. The security level during these missions ranged between

⁷⁵ Respondent 3. (2016)

⁷⁶ Ibid., (2016)

⁷⁷ Respondent 2. (2016)

3-5 according the old UN security scale.⁷⁸ R1 participated in the MSB induction course in 2008.

Respondent 2 is a male, 32 years of age who has conducted two missions through MSB. The first mission in 2011, seconded to the UN in Ivory Coast where he worked as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) operator.⁷⁹ His second mission was in Libya in 2012 where he was seconded as an EOD operator for the International Committee of the Red Crescent (ICRC). The security level during these missions is unknown but was substantial to moderate with occasional incidents to international- as well as national staff which temporarily increased the security level. In 2013 Respondent 2 attended the MSB induction course.

Respondent 3 is female, 44 years of age. R3 has conducted in total seven missions through MSB. These missions have been in Central African Republic, Kosovo, South Sudan, Philippines, Malawi, Nepal and Haiti. The security level in Central African Republic, South Sudan and Haiti was high and in Kosovo, Philippines, Malawi and Nepal the security level was low. Respondent 3 attended the MSB induction course in 2008.

⁷⁸ Editor's note; The old UN security scale consisted of five security phases where five were the worst, indicating for evacuation. The new security level system is threat based upon five different threats and consists of levels 1 to 6 where 6 being the worst. On the old security scale phase 2 indicated restricted movement, phase three relocation, phase four emergency operations only and phase 5 where the indication for evacuation from the area. (UN Security levels, 2010.)

⁷⁹ Editor's note; EOD refers to the detection, identification, on- site evaluation, rendering safe, recovery, and final disposal of unexploded explosive ordnance. It might also include explosive ordnance which has become hazardous by damage or deterioration.

6 Analysis and Conclusion

6.1 Pre- Deployment Preparation provided According to the Humanitarian Aid Workers' Experience

Regarding the research question of how well MSB enable to build stress- resilience, the tools provided within the pre- deployment preparation mostly corresponded to the humanitarian aid workers' experience of tools being provided. The most distinct result was that **only two out of ten respondents experienced that they had received an in-depth discussion about mental health before being deployed.** According to the criteria set which were based on the theoretical framework, this was also the criteria MSB failed in providing, hence the results corresponds. Another important result is that three out of ten respondents were not able to build resilience against stress with training and/or exercises. Out of these three respondents not being provided with training according to the criteria set, one respondent did not receive briefing in the pre-deployment phase either. According to MSB all members of their field staff shall attend the induction course before deployed, which fails, according to the results of the open- ended survey. The tools MSB provided were different forms of training and briefing where MSB did provide this to a sufficient extent according to the respondents, but failed in some criteria regarding briefings. Over all, MSB seem to be good at providing information about medical support but fails in providing a more in-depth discussion about mental health, where MSB put the responsibility of this on the field worker rather than the opposite.

6.2 The Importance of Stress- Resilience from the Humanitarian Aid Workers' Perspective

Regarding the research question of the degree of importance in the pre- deployment training, the main conclusion based on the humanitarian aid workers' experiences is that majority believed that they could build resilience against stress independently from the MSB induction course. Hence, one can ask how important the preparation is in regards of building stress- resilience. The respondent who did not receive the training before being deployed believed that he could use his personal experiences and the training received by the Swedish army. However, the previous research and

statistics revealed that humanitarian aid workers are suffering a greater risk of being exposed to stress and to take harm from it, compared to professions not working in the field.

The results found implied specifically that more focus need to be made on briefings in the pre- deployment phase. According to previous research, the theoretical framework and the surveys made, more awareness would be needed in order to understand that the briefings are as important as the training when building resilience against stress among humanitarian aid workers.

Based on the humanitarian aid workers' experience, there are parts of the induction course held by MSB that are important and valuable when on mission. One of the respondents had use of the relaxation exercises handed by MSB. Another respondent had a challenging time in the mission due to a team leader not willing to listen to ideas, which resulted in mental stress for the respondent. The mandatory RnR gave the respondent a needed break from the mission, with time to reload and to get resilience to continue with the mission. Another respondent believed that his resilience came from his own personal experiences and his civilian work. The conclusion drawn from this, is that all of the respondents had their own way in which to build resilience against stress before being deployed, and while being on a mission.

6.3 Discussion based on Previous Research and the Pre- Deployment Preparation provided

Within international relations, the subject of war, peace and great powers are often mentioned and discussed from different angles. This study have taken a slightly different approach, focusing in a broad perspective on humanitarian interventions, but more importantly, focusing specifically on the humanitarian aid workers conducting these missions. Without the humanitarian aid workers, there would be no humanitarian interventions. In the challenging times we have in the world today, there is a lot of focus on humanitarian interventions. Hence, there should be as much focus on the humanitarian aid workers as well. Sweden is believed to be a great power

within humanitarian aid. Each year, Sweden deploys a large number of humanitarian aid workers, from different sectors, into the field. It would be assumed that Sweden would be eminent at not only deploying the aid workers, but also at taking care of them. Since there is none, or little research done, looking at how the humanitarian aid workers are prepared in the pre- deployment phase, it is difficult to know exactly how good Sweden are at preparing the aid workers in order to build stress- resilience. Therefore, this study have together with previous research and the theoretical frameworks used, contributed to this field of research 

Both previous research and findings based on the theoretical framework imply the importance of pre- deployment training regarding stress. As showed by the surveys made, not all humanitarian aid workers were able to attend the MSB induction course or being provided with briefings in the pre- deployment phase. **I believe it is of great importance that all members are being allowed to attend the induction course before the first mission in order to be given the chance to build resilience against stress.** The briefings before the first- and following missions will function as a good and important complement. These surveys also brought up, apart from the importance of personal experience, that the response to a stressful situation or event is very individual. Since personal attributes plays such an important part in the individual's ability to bounce back from stressful events, I believe it is even more important that all humanitarian aid workers receive the same training and the same tools that could be used to build stress- resilience in the pre- deployment phase. This could be used in order to decrease the gaps of personal ability to handle stress among the humanitarian aid workers and in such ways reduce the number of people not having enough resilience to handle the stressful situations while on mission

Based on the above discussion, I believe that briefings face to face with humanitarian aid workers before being deployed are needed and that this is a very important part in the pre- deployment preparation. This due to the issue of mental health possibly being a sensitive question to many people and due to the stigma that still exist around the subject. As previous research revealed, humanitarian aid workers share the same risk

of being exposed to stress, as those they try to help. In order to acknowledge this fact, I believe it is important to start with addressing stress in an adequate way, in which one way could be through briefings. During training in groups the question might not have the same chance of being raised as in a small groups or face to face. Therefore, briefings should be mandatory for all deploying field workers. The still existing stigma around the subject of mental health enable us from taking for granted that the humanitarian aid workers by them self's will raise the need of support. Therefore, the support should be offered and addressed from the sending organization, for each member, before each humanitarian mission. This regardless of age, sex, number of previous conducted missions and regardless of the aid worker stating that is needed or not.

As mentioned in the previous research, there seems to be an inadequate way in which organizations addressed stress and that one explanation for this could be grounded in agency ego. Also mentioned was the humanitarian organizational culture of independence, strength and "machismo" and the expression of "If you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen". According to previous research this could be based on the struggle for funding and market share, but I do believe it is as important for non-governmental organizations as for governmental organizations like MSB, to be aware of this expression and to work against it. As pointed out in previous research there is an increased risk of stress and even PTSD among humanitarian aid workers and by recognizing the expression above, the risk of stress and PTSD could be limited. This also supports the importance of addressing mental health among humanitarian aid workers in the pre- deployment phase.

Within the missions I have conducted through MSB, I have meet colleagues whom have stated themselves that they were not mentally prepared in the beginning of their missions. Many of them said that they were not prepared to face the many security threats existing in the field. Some were not mentally prepared to witness the suffering among the local population and some got too involved with caring for the local population, resulting in lost focus on the actual job they were hired to conduct. Some

of these persons did receive briefing from MSB before deployed, but once being in the mission area, realized that they had not received adequate information about the challenge and the mental stress that being in a mission area really meant. Some of these colleagues did seek professional support after their missions and one of them were in a later stage diagnosed with PTSD. I believe many of these cases, never reaches the agency the aid worker are deployed by. Hence, the agencies are not aware of the mental stress the aid workers are experiencing. With proper preparation in the pre- deployment phase I believe, as said before, that the risk of the aid workers experiencing stress of this kind, can be reduced and to some extent limited.

Information on the web- site of MSB, state that research show that 60- 80 per cent of those who have been exposed to life threatening events or equaling stress, return to normal without professional support. The source of the research is not mentioned on the web- site but it is assumed that the research is not conducted by MSB, but rather aiming to aid workers in general. The online survey of this study revealed that three out of ten did not experience that they had received information about stress-resilience. These three persons did attend the induction course. So one can ask why they did not receive the information. Is it simply due to lack of interest from the aid worker, or is it the information given at the induction course not sufficient enough? This also raises a follow- up question. Is it these persons, not having received the information, also the persons who cannot bounce back from stressful events due to lack of resilience? If so, it would then include them in the 20- 40 per cent, who cannot handle the stressful event without professional support, as according to the information provided on the web- site of MSB. This once again supports the idea of briefings being necessary in the pre- deployment phase, due to the information then having a better chance of being properly transmitted when having a discussion face to face.

According to the web- site, this would conclude that 20- 40 per cent of the humanitarian aid workers, do not have enough resilience to bounce back from life threatening events or equaling stress, which then would lead to the conclusion of these

persons not having received proper pre- deployment preparation, or simply do not have the personal ability that it takes to be deployed in the field. I personally believe all deploying organizations should ask the question if these numbers can be limited, and if so how. The organizations need to be aware of these facts and also inform the aid workers about the risks of stress, that being deployed in the field means.

6.4 Suggestions for further Research

This study focused on the humanitarian aid workers' experience of building stress-resilience within the pre- deployment preparation. As important is also the support received during a mission as well in the post- deployment phase. It would be of interest for future research to look at how MSB or other organizations addresses stress among Swedish humanitarian aid workers during a mission and in the post-deployment phase. Due to time limitations for data collection, I was not able to undertake a statistical analysis of the number of humanitarian aid workers affected by stress during and after their mission working for- or seconded by MSB or other organizations. A quantitative approach in regards of this would however be important, interesting and useful as complement to this study in future research.

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7.4 Open- ended Survey

Respondent 1, Male 55yrs, 2016-12-03

Respondent 2, Male 32yrs, 2016-12-08

Respondent 3, Female 44yrs, 2016-12-10

8 Appendix 1: Quantitative Survey Questions

Dear MSB colleagues,

I am currently writing my bachelor thesis within International Relations through the university of Dalarna where the overall aim of the study is to discover if the Swedish humanitarian aid workers seconded by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) find the tools given by MSB, in the pre- deployment phase, used in order to build resilience- to be efficient when it comes to cope with stress while being on a mission. In order to discover this, I first need to elucidate how well the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) enable for the Swedish humanitarian aid workers to build resilience against stress before deployed in regards of training and briefing, looking in specific at tools being used.

Resilience is referred to the individual's capability to face stressful circumstances and events and being able to bounce back from these negative experiences in order to return to "normal".

This study is made independent of MSB; however they are aware of this study being made.

The results are anonymous and I cannot see who answered what.

The survey takes around 5 minutes to answer and the criteria to participate is that you have conducted the induction course held by MSB, that you have conducted at least one humanitarian mission working for- or seconded by MSB and that you are a Swedish citizen. Please only answer the survey once.

The survey will remain open until 06 December 2016.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me;

Phone: 073- 7161626

Thank You for Your participation!

Best regards,

Emelie Bjällfalk

1. Please write if you are female or male and how many missions you have conducted through MSB?

2. Did MSB's pre-deployment induction course include training and/or exercises for building resilience against stress?

Yes

No (continue to question 8)

Don't know/ remember

3. Did the training/ exercises include awareness session about resilience factors at individual level as well as on environmental level?

Yes

No

Don't know/ remember

4. Did the training/ exercises include information and/or training concerning team management and conflict resolution?

Yes, the training/ exercises included information about team management and conflict resolution

Yes, the training/ exercises included information about team management but not about conflict resolution

Yes, the training/exercises included information about conflict resolution but not about team management

No

Don't know/ remember

5. Did the training/ exercises include information and/or training concerning threat perception and security information?

Yes, the training/ exercises included information concerning threat perception and security information

Yes, the training/ exercises included information concerning threat perception but not about security information

Yes, the training/ exercises included information concerning security information but not about threat perception

No

Don't know/ remember

6. Did the training/ exercises include detailed information on tasks to be performed when deployed as well as how to perform them?

Yes the training/ exercises included information concerning tasks to be performed when deployed as well as how to perform them

No

Don't know/ remember

7. Did the training/ exercises include information about logistics and administration?

- Yes, the training/ exercises included information concerning logistics and administration
- Yes, the training/ exercises included information concerning logistics but not about administration
- Yes, the training/ exercises included information concerning administration but not about logistics
- No
- Don't know/ remember

8. In the pre- deployment phase, were you provided with briefing/s by MSB?

- Yes
- No (continue without answering question 9 and 10)
- Don't know/ remember

9. Did the briefing/s include an open, in depth discussion of mental health before deployed?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/ remember

10. Did the briefing/s include information about resources available for mental- and medical support?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/ remember

9 Appendix 2: Qualitative Open- ended Survey Questions

Dear MSB colleague,

I am currently writing my bachelor thesis within International Relations through Dalarna University where the overall aim of the study is to discover if the Swedish humanitarian aid workers seconded by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) find the tools given by MSB, in the pre- deployment phase, used in order to build resilience- to be efficient when it comes to cope with stress while being on a mission. In order to discover this, I have as a first step made a survey in order to elucidate how well the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) enable for the Swedish humanitarian aid workers to build resilience against stress before deployed in regards of training and briefing, looking specific at tools being used. For this second part, which I hope you can participate in, I am looking for the humanitarian aid worker's experience of the tools effectiveness, if the tools have contributed to you being able to handle stress in a better way than without the tools, while you have been seconded to a mission by MSB.

Resilience is referred to the individual's capability to face stressful circumstances and events and being able to bounce back from these negative experiences in order to return to "normal".

The criteria to participate are that you have conducted the induction course held by MSB and that you are a Swedish citizen and that you have conducted at least one humanitarian mission working for- or seconded by MSB. This survey/ interview has been sent to in total three persons that I know has been or are currently working in the context of a humanitarian mission through MSB.

This study is made independent of MSB; however they are aware of this study being made. The answers will be presented anonymously. The validity of the study will be strengthen if you can share all data requested for the study, but if you don't wish to, you decide how much information you would like to share about yourself in regards of age, gender, number of mission etc.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me;

Phone: 073- 7161626

Thank you for your participation!

Best regards,

Emelie Bjällfalk

1. Please write;

Are you female or male?

What is your age?

How many missions have you conducted through MSB?

In what countries have you been working when working for, or being seconded by MSB and what has your occupation been on these missions?

Was the security level low or high in the countries you worked?

What year did you take part in MSB's induction course?

2. During the induction course, in the pre- deployment phase, did MSB allow you to build resilience, used in order to be able to cope with stress, with training and/or exercises and if so, can you please explain in what ways and what the training and exercises included?

3. Do you believe that the tools MSB provide in the pre- deployment phase, used in order to be able to build resilience to cope with stress have been effective while being on a mission seconded by MSB? If no, please explain why.

4. Can you please give an example of when you on a mission have been using tools, provided by MSB in the pre- deployment phase, in order to be able to cope with stress, and what kind of tools were you using?

5. Do you have any example/s of when you felt that you did not have enough resilience to be able to handle a stressful event or situation while being on a mission seconded by MSB, and if so, what trainings and or briefings do you believe could have helped you to handle this situation?

6. Is there any additional information you would like to provide regarding this issue? Please feel free to add this here