Hiring managers for adaptive management - from recruitment to retainment

BEAM Exchange webinar

30 March 2017

BEAM EXCHANGE

Adaptive management

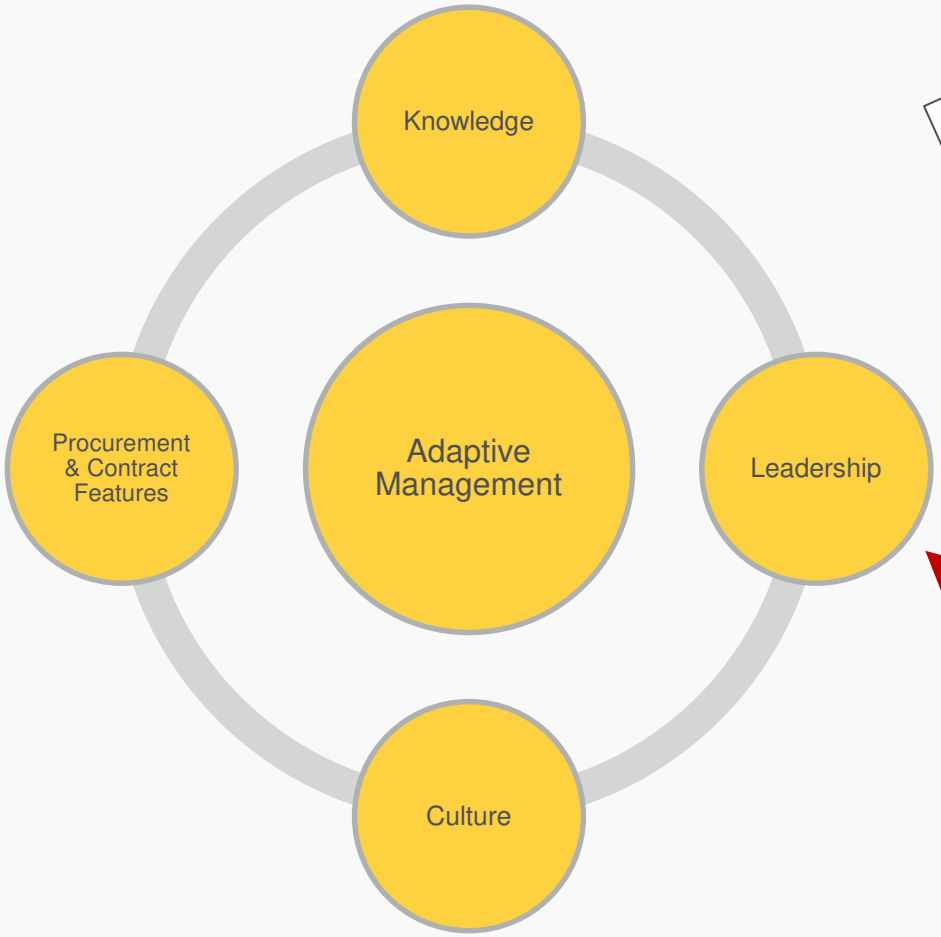
An approach to programme design, tender, implementation, and evaluation that involves:

- Deliberately gathering and processing new information
- Purposeful experimentation
- Pivots in strategy, interventions, and work plans

Assumes that the system in which the programme intervenes is dynamic and partially 'unknowable'

- Patterns of behavior, motivations
- Market and political changes
- Cultural beliefs and norms

The focus of this webinar is one aspect of enabling adaptive management: recruiting team managers



Presenters

David Ratliff

USAID

Alison Hemberger

Mercy Corps

Matthias Herr

HELVETAS

Amir Allana

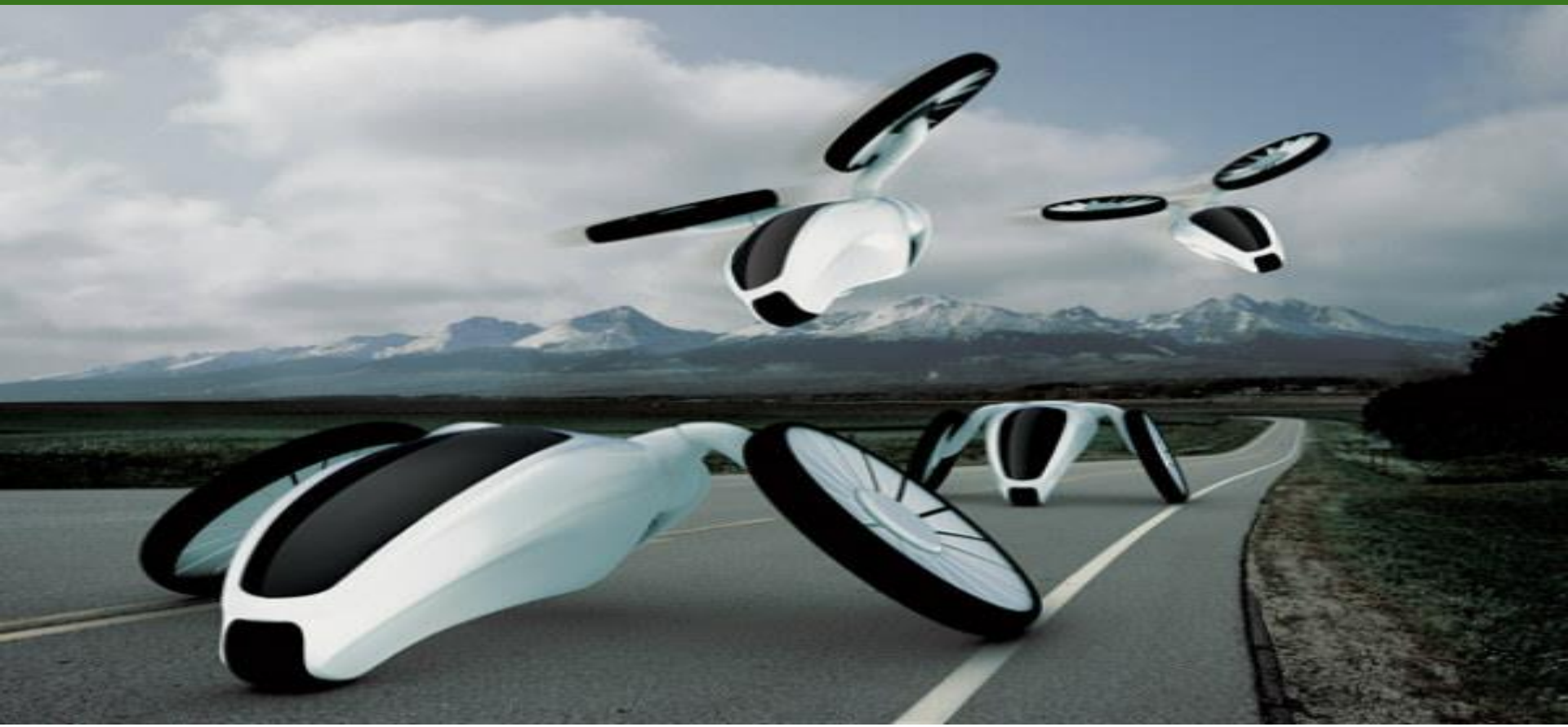
(Moderator)

David Ratliff

What we are doing!

What we should be doing!

How do we get there?



Alison Hemberger

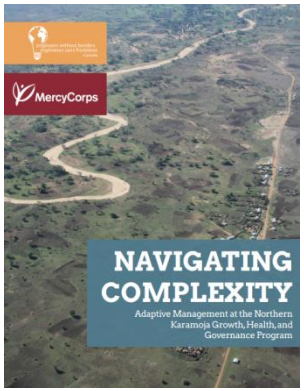
BUILDING ADAPTIVE TEAMS

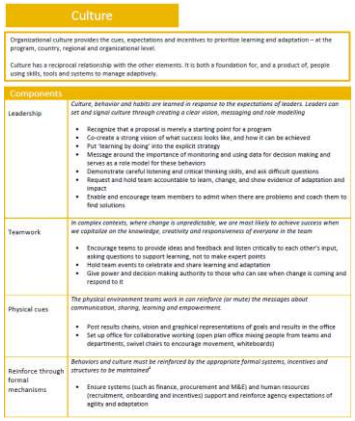
Agency-level Efforts

Alison Hemberger
Senior Advisor: Markets and Learning

MERCY CORPS

Mercy Corps' journey





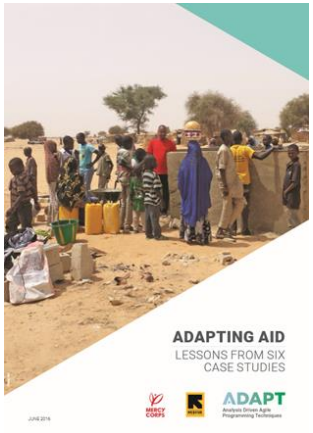
Culture

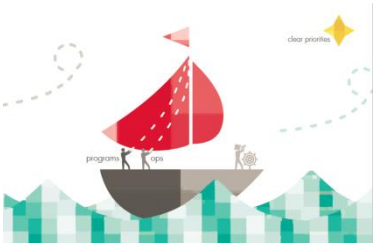
Organizational culture provides the cues, expectations and incentives to prioritize learning and adaptation – at the program, country, regional and organizational level.

Culture has a reciprocal relationship with the other elements. It is both a foundation for, and a product of, people using skills, tools and systems to manage adaptively.

Components

Leadership	*Culture, behavior and habits are learned in response to the expectations of leaders. Leaders can set and signal culture through creating a clear vision, messaging and role modeling* • Recognize that a proposal is merely a starting point for a program • Co-create a strong vision of what success looks like, and how it can be achieved • Put 'learning by doing' into the explicit strategy • Message around the importance of monitoring and using data for decision making and serves as a role model for these behaviors • Demonstrate careful listening and critical thinking skills, and ask difficult questions • Request and hold team accountable to learn, change, and show evidence of adaptation and impact • Enable and encourage team members to admit when there are problems and coach them to find solutions
Teamwork	*In complex contexts, where change is unpredictable, we are most likely to achieve success when we capitalize on the knowledge, creativity and responsiveness of everyone in the team* • Encourage teams to provide ideas and feedback and listen critically to each other's input, asking questions to support learning, not to make expert points • Hold team events to celebrate and share learning and adaptation • Give power and decision making authority to those who can see when change is coming and respond to it
Physical cues	*The physical environment teams work in can reinforce (or mute) the messages about communication, sharing, learning and empowerment.* • Post results chains, vision and graphical representations of goals and results in the office • Set up office for collaborative working (open plan office making people from teams and departments, swivel chairs to encourage movement, whiteboards)
Reinforce through formal mechanisms	*Behaviors and culture must be reinforced by the appropriate formal systems, incentives and structures to be maintained* • Ensure systems (such as finance, procurement and M&E) and human resources (recruitment, onboarding and incentives) support and reinforce agency expectations of agility and adaptation





ADAPT

MERCY CORPS

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

Dynamic teams

Appropriate analysis

Responsive decision making

Agile operations

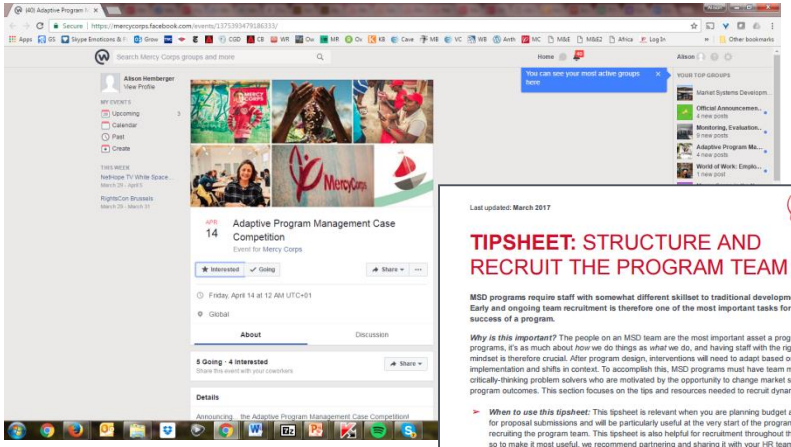
Flexible funding and trusted relationships

Dynamic teams

- Hire local and adaptive
- Foster an open communication culture
- Provide mentorship and coaching

Programs: Dynamic teams

- Collecting examples
- Showcasing programs
- Sharing (multiple channels!)



Last updated: March 2017

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TIPSHEET: STRUCTURE AND RECRUIT THE PROGRAM TEAM

MSD programs require staff with somewhat different skillset to traditional development programs. Early and ongoing team recruitment is therefore one of the most important tasks for supporting the success of a program.

Why is this important? The people on an MSD team are the most important asset a program has! For MSD programs, it's as much about *how* we do things as *what* we do, and having staff with the right skillsets and mindset is therefore crucial. After program design, interventions will need to adapt based on learning from implementation and shifts in context. To accomplish this, MSD programs must have team members who are critically-thinking problem solvers who are motivated by the opportunity to change market systems and reach program outcomes. This section focuses on the tips and resources needed to recruit dynamic teams.

- ***When to use this tipsheet:*** This tipsheet is relevant when you are planning budget and staff structures for proposal submissions and will be particularly useful at the very start of the program when you are recruiting the program team. This tipsheet is also helpful for recruitment throughout the program cycle, so to make it most useful, we recommend partnering and sharing it with your HR teams.
- ***What's next?*** After recruitment, move onto Orient the Team and Establish the Team Culture.

1. Tips

This tipsheet is separated into three steps:

1. Establish the team structure
2. Develop job descriptions and identify key characteristics for recruitment
3. Attract, interview and recruit staff

1. Establish the team structure timelines

MSD programs require slightly different approaches to team structure compared with traditional development programs, in particular due to the need to be flexible and adaptive. Make sure you partner closely with your HR team so that they can understand and support your team needs. Here are some tips to keep in mind and share with HR as you plan your team structure and recruitment:

- MSD programs may have ***smaller teams*** than direct delivery programs because they work through partners who interact with target groups rather than relying on large numbers of field

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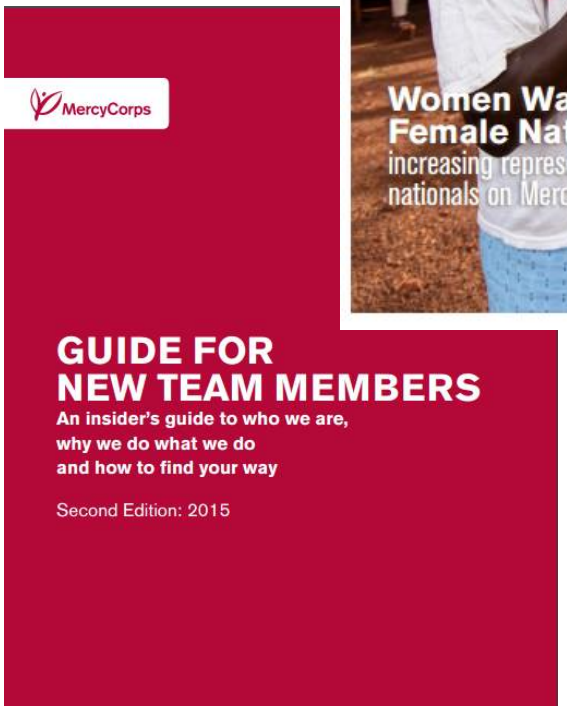
Agency: Dynamic teams

- Build on existing resources
- Remember the basics
- People team efforts
- Internal collaboration!



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Champion adaptive leadership

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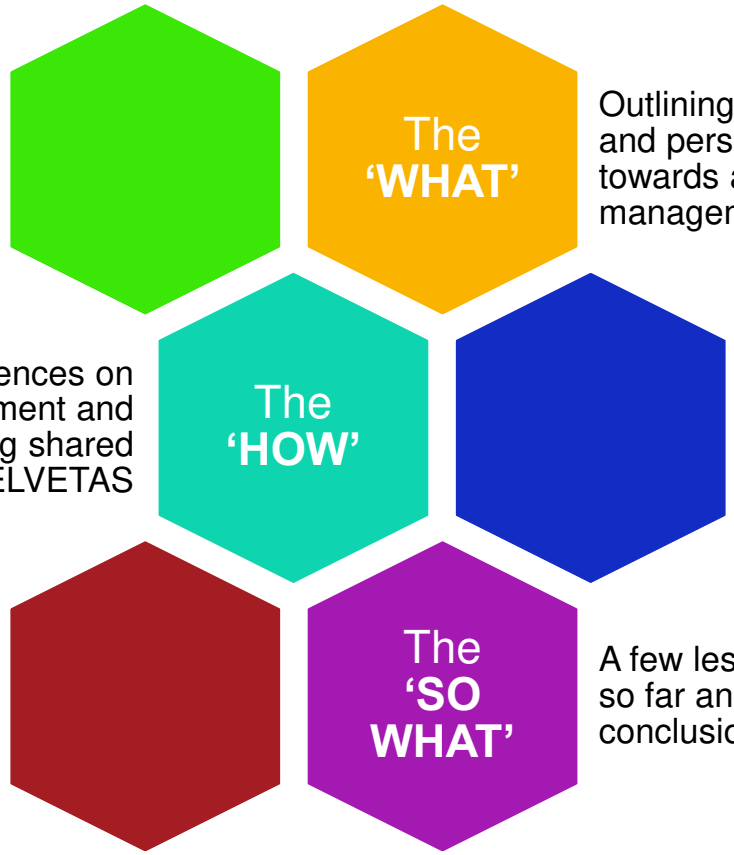
Challenges to tackle

- Policy into practice
- Syncing up systems and processes

Matthias Herr

HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

An implementer's view on hiring & retaining managers



Outlining challenges and personnel needs towards adaptive management

Experiences on recruitment and retaining shared from HELVETAS

A few lessons learnt so far and conclusions

Matthias Herr

Co-Team Leader Eastern Europe regional programme

Bern (Switzerland), 30.03.2017

The '**WHAT**': context and challenge

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ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Complex programmes with systemic change ambitions require facilitative projects that are responsive to changing realities, upcoming opportunities and continuous learning

Finding superman/-woman

Implementers and donors tend to look for managers with super-natural skills in a thin market: a few stars, little upward mobility and willingness to invest into capacity building and innovative management solutions

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The '**HOW**': Key questions

http://bricker.info

WHAT are the requirements towards project managers? (**recruitment criteria**)

HOW do we find the right people? (**recruitment process**)

What are the organisational structures in which managers are embedded? (**retainment strategy**)

The '**HOW**': selection criteria

Analytical and strategic thinking

Understanding of systemic approach

Communication and social skills

THE 'MUST HAVES'

Broad match with organisational values

Leadership experience

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THE 'NICE TO HAVES'

Many years of experience as PM

No, he/she does not have to be Swiss

Sector-specific expertise/experience

Regional/country knowedge and experience

The HOW: recruitment process

INVESTMENT

CONSULTATION

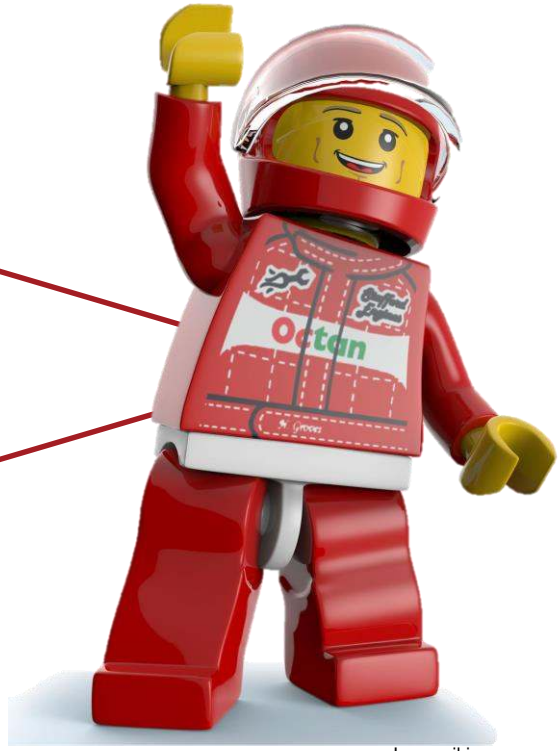
TOOLS

SEARCH

INTERACTION

PROCESS

TIME



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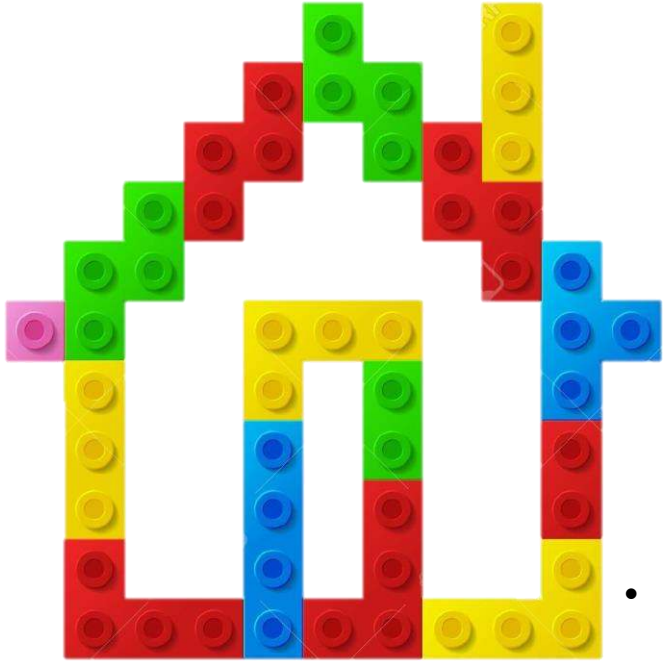
Your adaptive manager

The HOW: retainment through support

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

IMPLEMENTER

- **Backstopping**
  - Management/admin
  - strategic
  - technical
- **(Learning) culture**
- **Perspectives**
- **Processes**
- **Pay & benefits**



DONOR

- **Shared vision and understanding**
- **Flexibility**

(strategy vs. tactics)

- **Understanding of requirements towards personnel**
- **Communication**
- **Participation and interest**

(partnership vs. contracting)

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Being project manager is the most important position in your organisation

The ‘SO WHAT’: some conclusions

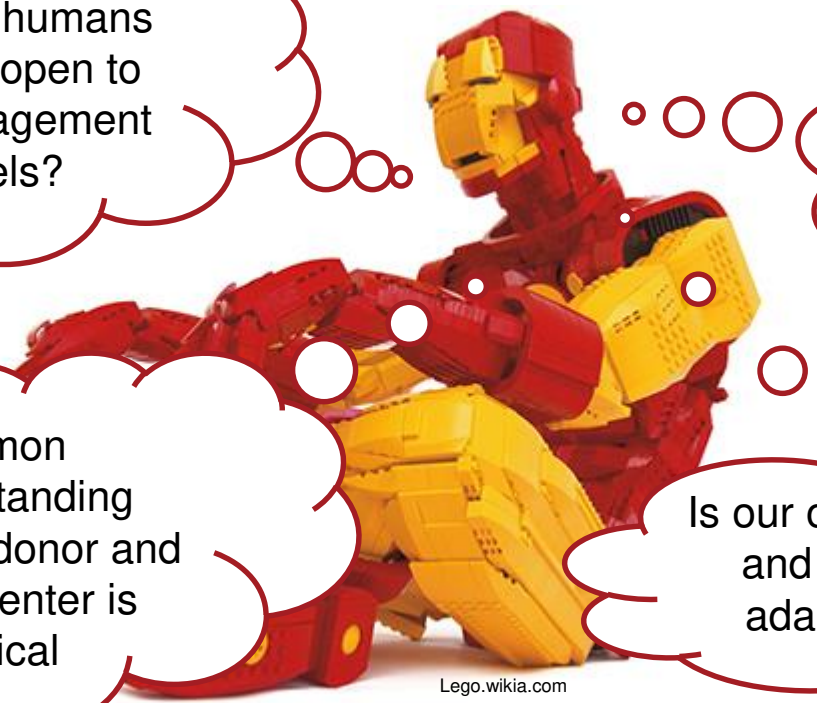
HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

Are our (recruitment) processes conducive?

Do we know what we need and how realistic are our expectations?

We are just humans – are we open to new management models?

How much are we willing and able to invest into people ourselves?



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Common understanding between donor and implementer is critical

Is our organisational culture and setup conducive for adaptive management?

Discussion and Q & A

David Ratliff

USAID

Alison Hemberger

Mercy Corps

Matthias Herr

HELVETAS

Amir Allana

(Moderator)

Thank you

Webinar recording will be made available

We value your feedback. Please take a few minutes to do the survey (link in the chat box)

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