Position-based Handover notes as a tool to enhance better and continues management in Emergency Response Unit's

Arvo, Johanna

2018 Laurea

Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Position-based Handover notes as a tool to enhance better and continues management in Emergency Response Unit's

Johanna Arvo
Degree Programme in Global Devel-
opment and Management in
Health Care
Master's Thesis
December, 2018

Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Global Development and Management in Health Care
Master's Thesis

Abstract

Johanna Arvo

Position-based Handover notes as a tool to enhance better and continued management in Emergency Response Units

Year 2018 Pages 43

The purpose of this study was to to identify possible gaps and needs in the current position-based handover process and to provide suggestions how the handover process in Finnish Red Cross Emergency Response Unit setting can be improved. The study was done in cooperation with the Finnish Red Cross international aid department and with the Finnish Red Cross international delegate reserve. The study aims at finding tools to ensure the quality of the operation and providing tools for Emergency Team Leaders to continue the operation proficiently and effectively from one person to another.

The framework of this study was built by providing background information of humanitarian response and quality, including the leadership and management in humanitarian operations and Red Cross reporting structure. The Core Humanitarian Standard on quality and accountability that has set out nine commitments were used to connect the Red Cross into a bigger humanitarian context, where these commitments are meant for any organizations and/or individuals that are involved in any kind of humanitarian response, to enhance the effectiveness and most importantly the quality of the assistance they provide through their programs.

The thesis was implemented as a qualitative study and was conducted during Autumn 2018. The research method used was semi-structured interviews, with 7 delegates from the Red Cross international delegate reserve (4 health care professionals and 3 logisticians). The interviews were done to find out how to improve the information sharing system and to enhance the continuity of the work in between different rotations. The data from the interviews was analyzed by using content analysis.

The results indicated that there is a need to develop a structured template to support the position-based handover process and to enhance the information flow between the different rotations. Even though the delegates have been providing handover notes to each other earlier, many delegates found it difficult to elaborate a well-structured report or handover note while there is a lot of pressure to perform the assigned tasks while on mission. According to the analysis, four (4) combining categories emerged from the interviews: Quality of the received handover, needs for improvement in position-based handover, Minimum standards for Handover and handover notes and Ensuring an effective and efficient handover process were highlighted in the interviews.

As a result of the thesis, the recommendation was that by developing a structured template to use for position-based handovers, as it would hopefully enhance the quality and quantity of the written handover notes. With the structured handover note template, the Finnish Red Cross ERU teams would be able to get more detailed information from the different technical sectors in the field that could be used primarily to support the team management (team leader, head nurse, senior medical officer) on their decision making and reporting.

Keywords: handover note, humanitarian response, emergency response unit

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

In the field of humanitarian aid, the leadership has been always challenging. There are various books and articles about leadership in political, commercial and military sectors but leadership in humanitarian operations has not been given too much attention as Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011) stated in their study. Humanitarian operations can be challenging to lead because of various reasons but often the issue rising above other challenges is the fact of the continues change among the personnel and leaders during the operations. One of the tools that has been in use in Red Cross to ensure continuity are position based written handover reports that give information of all the activities conducted since the beginning of the operations, but this has been challenging in practice as there is no formal template or format how to do the handover notes that would be always used. Some national societies have developed templates or log frames to support this process, but these are not globally in use among all Emergency Response Unit (ERU) deploying national societies.

Finnish Red Cross, like many other national societies, has had the handover process as part of their ERU operations for a long time and they have a recommendation that everyone going out on an ERU mission should write a handover repot. There are instructions for every delegate to write their individual handover note and to pass it on to the next person coming to continue the position and more preferably to handover the position with the notes. This for some reasons has been challenging in practice since it is not seen that important by some delegates and as IFRC doesn’t have a template or clear protocol agreed in their standard operating protocol (SOP) for handover notes to support the actual process (IFRC 2012). There is a template created by human recourses (HR) department of Finnish Red Cross (FRC) to support writing the handover notes but even the writer of this thesis, had never seen it before.

Why individual delegates don’t see this to be important could be because various reasons, but the challenge is that since handover report is not mandatory, some delegates might think that it doesn´t matter if they don’t write one or is it that they don’t know what to write. According to the experiences of the author, one of the underlying challenges could be that most of the time, there is no time to sit down and write the notes, as the work is demanding all possible time when not resting. As there is no official recommendation or SOP developed to guide on the process, even if one writes handover notes, the quality and content vary.

We can’t deny that cultural factors would not have any effect on not writing handover notes. Bowden and Smits (2012) summarized this well in their article on healthcare’s evolving culture that cultures develop in multiple levels of organized activity through shared learning. If you have not written a handover note ever before, why start now? If delegates have never done handover notes before, how and who can make the change. The learned experience within the group is often that handover notes aren't seen crucial for work to continue and even without proper handover notes or handover period the work got done. Gradually this becomes the culture of the group who share the responsibilities and values in the ERU. After a while this will become more unconscious than conscious and since there is no consequences when not sharing the handover notes, this will strengthen the challenge to change the existing routines.

In this study the framework is built on the theoretical background and semi structured interviews that were conducted to discover perceptions and experiences on the topic by interviewing delegates that have been deployed to ERU's in management role. The interview results were analyzed by using the inductive content analysis method.

The aim of this study is to find good practices that are already existing and ideas to develop the handover process to enhance the quality and continuity of information flow between rotations in ERU's, especially in the management level. Everyone working in the field of humanitarian operations are held accountable to collect, analyse and disseminate information form the beneficiaries, other stakeholders and from the team themselves (Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies, (CBHA) 2012, 6) and therefore it is important to develop the handover reporting system across the ERU system.

2 Humanitarian response and quality

Quality in one of the key words in many discussions nowadays in humanitarian world. When we are responsible of our actions and we want to be transparent, the quality has become more important to be also measured. All activities need to be systematically better managed, interventions need to be implemented effectively and the quality is expected to be excellent. The quality is highly depending on many factors including the continues reporting and sharing information when doing any kind of operations on humanitarian sector.

The responsibilities can be seen differently when talking about quality improvement in different levels. When looking at the position-based handover process, there are different responsibilities as the person working for example as a nurse provides a good handover of a position to the next one, versus when team leader hands over their position to the next one. Both need to provide handover notes and are expected to brief in the next person to the position, but in order the team leader to have a best possible knowledge of what is going on in their team, he/she needs to have the information from the whole staff available to make the decisions. As mentioned in World health Organizations Quality of Care; Process for making strategic choices in health systems (2006), in each case, everyone in the team are committed to the broader aim of quality for the whole system.

Red Cross along with several other non-governmental organizations have been involved in developing The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability that has set out nine commitments (Figure 1) and Red Cross is also committed to follow these standards. These commitments are meant for any organizations and/or individuals that are involved in any kind of humanitarian response, to enhance the effectiveness and most importantly the quality of the assistance they provide thru their programs (corehumanitarianstandard.org).

Figure 1: Nine Core humanitarian standards (corehumanitarianstandard.org)

To ensure the quality in all technical sectors and among all actors, everyone needs to know not only the common goal but also the indicators how to reach the goals. To achieve results and to be able to measure the achievements, we need to have continued flow of information from the first delegates setting up the operation, to the last delegate switching the lights off, when the operation is closed or handed over to the host national society. There is all the time increasing interest in the sector from the media and the public. Often NGO's need to respond and explain their decisions and activities in order to also avoid negative coverage and to mobilise support from the public. (Clarke & Ramalingam 2008, 27.)

Information flow and reporting is crucial especially in the settings like ERU, where the same team leader is not there to share their institutional memory since the beginning, but the leadership is shared among many people along the time. In humanitarian response we don't only need to hand over the information and the position but often also information about cultural habits and customs to avoid collisions. According to Taylor et al. (2012, 59) study, they are suggesting that lack of contextual knowledge or even lack of local language may cause decrease in impact in humanitarian operations. As ERU's are rarely deployed to English speaking countries the language becomes quickly an issue and therefore the knowledge of cultural issues become even more important to handover.

2.1 Leadership and management in humanitarian operations

There are various studies available about management and leadership but when it comes to humanitarian operations, the amount of studies is minimal. It has been debated if the leadership is any different in humanitarian sector or especially in humanitarian emergencies, but in Buchanan-Smith and Scrivens (2011, 8) study they did come into a consensus that there is a difference. Their study defines that even though the qualities needed to be effective and efficient leaders are not that much different from any other sector, but since the context and settings are different, leadership qualities needed are more demanding for example; working with beneficiaries whom are in highly stressful situation (refugees whom are escaping for their lives) or if the environment is hostile such as in conflict areas. Most leaders in Red Cross teams are defined as organizing leaders, people successfully implementing this role, often have a style of managing where they make things predictable and clear and they get the tasks done without wasting time.

Sometimes team leaders might be put in to a situation where their decisions will affect lives and livelihoods and the decisions are based on an incomplete or very vague information. Often decisions are made in an environment that is not stable and there are many other actors working in the same field and then again it is important to keep focus on a continuity (Buchanan-Smith & Scrivens 2011, 8; Sjöberg et al. 2011). From the experience of the writer it is important that whatever we promise to deliver, we need to make sure we deliver with the same level of commitment from the beginning to the end, regardless who is holding the team leaders or management positions in the team. Trainor and Velotti (2013, 39) state in their article Leadership in crises, disasters and catastrophes that leaders' continuous efforts to encourage and engage all team members of the organization through effective communication and practices will contribute to more effective leadership. To make better decisions, everyone's input in the team is needed.

When going more into the world of ERU rotations, the timeframe is remarkably different from many other workplaces where leadership has been studied. In ERU's, especially the emergency phase is normally four months (IFRC 2012). During that four months' time there can be up to four different team leaders, as the work is very demanding and is conducted in a highly stressful environment. To ensure the wellbeing of the staff, including the team leader, the staff is only working one month at a time.

On the other hand, Clarke (2013, 12) propose in his literature review suggest that most emergencies are marked by a series of conditions which, in combination, differentiate them from most other environments and which influence the effectiveness of any leadership approach provided and this would strengthen the thinking of leadership in humanitarian emergencies to be unique. Whether the approach is called distributed leadership or something else, tha fact remains that everyone had their own part to play in leadership and the accountability and ownership of organizational objectives becomes part of everyone's responsibility (Golsing et al. 2009, 301.)

Buchanan-Smith and Scrivens (2011, 24) organized in their study some qualities that emerged in several case studies in humanitarian and they ended up realizing that the qualities reflected the Zenger et al. model on leadership qualities:

- (i) Level where leadership competencies need to be related to the bigger picture
- (ii) Needed qualities are related to relational and communication
- (iii) Needed skills are on Decision making and taking risks
- (iv) Needed skills are related to managements and organizational issues
- (v) Needed skills are more focusing on personal qualities

These are all qualities that are needed to successfully complete a management level role in humanitarian operations, but to manage these all and to be on top of all needed decisions and information, the information flow needs to be fluent. All 5 qualities mentioned in Buchanan-Smith and Scrivens (2011, 24) study are essential but there is no "one-size fits all" solution when it comes to leadership. Some qualities are more related to leaders' personal values as others are more information bound. It is also important to understand that leaders often depend on their team when making decisions and the decisions are not really made by one person alone (Bonaccio & Reeshad 2006, 127). We can influence on strategic level and decision-making level by having leaders more effectively and efficiently informed when they start their rotation and by providing them as good handover as possible.

2.2 Reporting

Like in any company or industry, in humanitarian operations, Red Cross has also structured reporting system to ensure that the activities are done accordingly and to make sure the needs are met as well as possible. Unlike in many other industries, Red Cross among many other humanitarian organizations is also held responsible to its donors and this is one of the important perspectives also to take into considerations when talking about the importance of quality of operations thru the whole lifespan of ERU's. ERU's are working independently in many ways, they are deployed as fully independent module to often complement a bigger structure.

Although ERU's are very independent, they are still part of IFRC's coordinated response especially in bigger disasters where ERU's are integrated to the existing (often in emergencies, rapidly expanding) field structures. Operational management of IFRC will always have the final say in case of any violations of the code of conduct or a status agreement. Within the ERU team, all delegates report and are accountable to the team leader (IFRC 2012).

Team leader may have appointed some of the responsibilities to other management team members such as Senior Medical Officer (SMO) or Head Nurse (HN) but still the overall responsibility will be on team leaders' shoulders. Once the ERU is in the field, the ERU and the host National Society can communicate freely and directly to each other. Externally the team leader is responsible for the implementation of the ERU's, operationally and technically to the relevant sectoral counter partners in-country. In case there is no field-based sectoral delegate, the ERU team leader is reporting to the technical department at the secretariat in Geneva (IFRC 2012).

From the personal experience of the writer, there is a lot of reporting to do while in a management role and especially in the team leader role. The first weeks, the team leader is expected to produce ERU situation reports on daily basis during the first few weeks of the deployment. From the third week onward, the SOP for ERU's defines the reporting to be sufficient when done on weekly basis (unless, there is specifically requested still more frequent reporting). These reports are crucial when looking at all the technical ERU's working parallel in the same operation to ensure all needs identified, are met as well as it is possible, but also this means that the team leader needs to get information from their team (IFRC 2012).

According to IFRC standard operating protocol (IFRC 2012), at the end of each rotation, each team leader is expected to submit and end of mission (EOM) report for their team and deployment period. This is the only written and therefore the only mandatory report at the moment that the team leader officially is required to produce but at the same time, this end of mission report is rarely shared with the team or with their ancestor. As EOM is often seen as more personal feedback report to IFRC, the handover notes are still needed to pass the information forwards among the ERU team whom will continue the work on the next rotation. At the moment only, international staff is writing their handover notes, but during the study, the writer also started asking themselves a question, weather we should have the local staff providing handover notes as well. Often it is seen somewhat difficult to request local staff these kinds of tasks, but why we think it to be difficult? In Cosgrave's (1997) study he claims that the international staff is more difficult to manage in humanitarian operations than local staff, so why do we see this as a challenge that we have not yet encountered.

Finnish Red Cross had developed guidelines and a template for handover in 2015. This template has not been in active use and it came to authors knowledge while conducting the interviews for this thesis report. The template has not been systematically introduced to the delegates going out to ERU mission and therefore it is also not commonly known to be existing. As in any work where more than one person is responsible of tasks to be carries out, the handover reporting is crucial. There is a common phrase often said especially in the hospital world “what is not reported in written, has not been done” and it applies to ERU world even better than anywhere else. Jefferies et al. (2012) found in their study comparing oral and written reporting in nursing, that often the information from the oral reporting did not get recorded at all. This might lead even in to be a security and accountability issue, as if we don’t report everything essential in written, it is not there to trace if it was ever reported.

3 Aim and goal of the study

The goal of this study is to identify possible gaps and needs in the current position-based handover process and to improve the handover process in ERU setting to ensure the quality of the operation and give tools for Emergency Team Leaders to continue proficiently and effectively the operation from person to another. The aims of this study are
1) to improve the information sharing system and
2) to enhance continuity on the work in between different rotations

The assumption is that there is no structured handover system in use and the position-based handover is not formally guided. The quality of handover notes is purely based on the person’s ability and activity to provide written handover. Based on authors own experience there are people, who are more oriented into writing and they normally produce a thorough report of what they have done and accomplished during their mission.

According to authors own experience and by listening and discussing to ERU team leader colleagues in various missions, the variance of the quality on the handover notes varies a lot and after conducting the interviews my assumptions got validation by several interviewees agreeing that the quality and the process needs to be improved.

4 Methods

The process of this study began by identifying a topic, Position-based Handover notes as a tool to enhance better and continues management in Emergency Response Unit’s. As the writer herself has several personal experiences related to the chosen topic it helped along the process and the fact that Finnish Red Cross was open for the idea to later possibly further develop the subject based on the ideas and recommendations raised thru this study.

To identify topics related to developing position-based handover notes guidance and models used in this developing project author of this thesis study, following the instructions of Robson and McCartan (2011, 11-13) the Real World research seemed to be most suitable approach to this study. Robson and McCartan's approach emphasizes more interest in finding solutions or solving problems related to instructions and actual implementation that are crucial/important during position-based handover reporting where Elo and Kyngäs (2008, 109-111) provided more detailed method for the next steps towards qualitative content analysis of interview texts. The problems related to the chosen topic are based on authors several personal experiences and many additional challenges were revealed in the interviews that were conducted doing this study.

This study is based on the interviews conducted between 23rd of October and 8th of November 2018 to Red Cross ERU team leaders or persons whom have had managerial position within a medium or large scale ERU setting (e.g. Field coordinator or head nurse/hospital coordinator in ERU hospital setting or team leader position in other ERU settings). Author is reflecting their personal experiences when deployed in leadership roles in emergencies with Red Cross throughout this study.

Semi-structures interviews were chosen to be the method used in the research, as it provides comprehensive approach and it provides more freedom to modify the questions based on the flow of the interview, and also this method allows possibility to ask additional and often unplanned questions to follow up on something the interviewee says during the interview (Robson & McCartan 2011, 285-286).

The themes discussed during the interviews are based on the interviewer's own experiences and in discussions during the field missions when people have been sharing their experiences on position-based handovers previous to this study. In the preparatory phase two key informants were used to discuss some processes that were unclear to the writer within the Red Cross organization and to define the needs that could be develop thru this study. An inductive approach was used to analyze the interview results to define general data from the more specific results. Content analysis provided a new insight to represent findings from the interviews, still making the study replicable and valid inferences from the data to the context. (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 108-109.)

All interviews were audio recorded and stored in interviewer's personal mobile device that is protected by F-Secure SAFE. The calls were handled here as if they were normal interviews thru phone, but in fact the calls were done by using the internet technology, Skype and WhatsApp that are also referred previously as VoIP -Voice over Internet Protocol (Robson & McCartan 2011, 298-305).

Before the actual interviews, interviewer contacted each interviewee's by email to provide them information letter and all interviewees have also given their written approval using the consent form (Appendix 1), to use their interviews for this thesis study and they were all explained the possibility to withdraw their interviews away from this study at any time, if they wanted. As Robson and McCartan (2011, 291) recommended, the writer of this thesis study wrote also notes during the interviews, in case if there would have been any recording problems to ensure that there would be some material available to continue with the study without renewing the whole interview.

4.1 Emergency Response Units (ERU) setting

Emergency Response Units are one of the global response tools that International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) can use to provide support to any country anywhere in the world by the request of the affected country via National Society. An emergency Response Unit (ERU) can be deployed only if the National Society requests it and it is agreed with the government that they accept international assistance in to that country. ERU's can't be deployed without the governments permission to enter.

ERU is a concept. This concept contains a team of trained technical specialists such like doctors, nurses, technicians, lab-technicians etc, who are ready to be deployed within a short notice with all needed equipment. ERU deploying countries have their pre-packed sets of globally standardized equipment ready to go. ERUs are designed to be self-sufficient for the first one month including the delegates food but also all needed equipment. The Unit can operate for up to four months with the equipment that it comes with, even in challenging circumstances. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2018).

Originally the ERUs were developed in 1994 to give immediate support to National Societies working in disaster-affected countries. They provide specific support or direct services when local facilities are either destroyed, overwhelmed by need, or do not exist at all after the disaster has hit the country. ERUs work often together with Field Assessment Coordination Teams (FACT) that are deployed in to the affected country immediately after the disaster has happened. FACT teams' main purpose is to evaluate the needs and plan the upcoming operation and they are often the ones to define whether ERU's are needed or not and also to define, what kind of ERU's are needed. (IFRC 2018).

In some protracted crises the need for assistance may continue beyond an ERU's four-month operational period. If so, the service can be managed by the IFRC's ongoing operation, the host National Society, the local government or by other organisations.

Continuous development of the ERU system, including reviews of deployments, standardization and modifications to equipment are discussed at the ERU/Field assessment and coordination teams (FACT) working group and the ERU technical working groups, of which there is one per technical sector. Even though these meetings are taking place annually and there is development towards one global model in all activities. The position related handover or reporting process has not been developed to be one global tool yet.

The ERU team size and composition varies depending on the type of ERU. Teams can have male and female representation and can be made up of specialized personnel from different National Societies. Mission where two or more National Societies join their delegates and ERU's for same missions are referred to as joint deployments. Even in case of joint deployments, the equipment and the leadership to the ERU comes from one National Society and this is mutually agreed when deploying the unit. For example, if Finnish Red Cross has some equipment available but not the whole unit and some delegates, but not enough to deploy a whole unit, they may request HR and technical support from other National Societies. Finnish Red Cross would take the lead but in the team the staff could consist out of delegated from several different national societies.

In order to be deployed thru ERU mechanism, all personnel should have the necessary skills and experience outlined in the relevant job descriptions to undertake the mission and to ensure the similar level of knowledge, the ERU trainings have same modules nevertheless the country where a delegate undergoes the training. Not everyone can be experts with a lot of experience either and therefore the staffing is usually planned so that there are experiences staff mixed with first-timers to ensure the quality but also to pass on the non-written knowledge from experts to "novices".

4.2 Semi-Structured interview as a data collecting method

This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews and the content of those interviews were analyzed using inductive content analysis process. The semi-structured interviews were selected as a data collecting method because this method provides the interviewer more space to ask additional questions as the interview goes along. Especially as in this study the interviewer is themselves very much involved in the ERU world, she was able to go deeper into the "discussion" if anything interesting came out. (Robson & MCCartan 2011, 290-291.)

The interviews were completed via Skype or WhatsApp audio call except for one, that was done face to face, and all interviews were recorded. The interviews were conducted with audio only as the video makes the quality of connection so much worse. Interviews were conducted between 23rd of October and 8th of November 2018. While interviewing the writer also kept a diary of the interviews to record the atmosphere, non-verbal communication like gestures and general feelings. Diary was written after each interview and it was used later while analyzing the content to reflect to some of the interview moments. As some of the interviewees were somewhat reserved especially in the beginning of the interviews and one could even say that some answers were defensive, the diary helped to get that feeling back to understand some expressions.

Each interview was scheduled individually, and each interviewee gave few options when they would be available for the interviews to allow them to have a place and time when they would feel most comfortable and hopefully they would have a quiet and “Telephone” interview was chosen as a method to be used instead of having face to face interviews mainly because of the long distance between the interviewer (currently living in Malaysia) and interviewees (one in Africa, one in Asia and rest in Europe). Writer of this thesis acknowledges the fact that doing interviews without seeing the other person, it is somewhat more difficult as you do get their answers, but you miss a lot of the non-verbal communication.

Advantages of telephone interviews	**Disadvantages of telephone interviewing**
Cheaper (in this case it was the only option) and faster.	Potential bias for communicating everyone who are potential since no Skype/WhatsApp possibility.
Use of computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) may simplify the task (if in use).	Need to be short (usually less than 30min), when face to face interview should be up to an hour.
Monitoring the interviewer’s performance is easier as the interviews are recorded.	No non-verbal responses as no visual contact.
Possibly reducing the bias as the interviewer’s characteristics don’t affect the responses.	No contextual information available when in long-distance.

Table 1: Face to Face vs. telephone interviews (Robson & McCartan 2011, 296)

For this thesis study, the writer interviewed seven experienced ERU delegates, whom all have experiences from a management level positions from different ERU mission. Some of the participants have been in a Team Leader (or equivalent) position several times and few interviewees had only two or three experiences of management level role in ERU’s, so there is a good variety of different level of experiences in this study.

Six of the interviewees are Finnish Red Cross delegates and one interviewee, who’s interview was used primarily to validate the questions/results, was from another national society that also deploys ERU’s. All the interviewed delegates have done the Impact training (previously known as Basic Training Course, BTC) and they have completed the training between 1991 and

2016. After Impact training the interviewees have been qualified to work with the ERU system and they have been trained to be Team Leaders as well.

There was all together 4hours and 55min recorded speech collected from the interviewees. All interviewees were very co-operative and happy to participate to this study and most of them mentioned during the interview that they felt that this is an important topic to be addressed.

There were total 10 questions in the actual interview and in the beginning of all the interviews all the participants were asked to tell a short background on the recording. This was to define their level of expertise and to have an idea if they were maybe novice to Red Cross missions but had previous experience from other humanitarian organizations. Only two participants had previous experiences from another humanitarian organization, but interestingly one was novice to Red Cross and the other was also very experienced within Red Cross as well.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
When acting as a Team Leader or other management level role in ERU settings: - Do you remember receiving a handover notes/handover? (32 expressions)
When acting as a Team Leader or other management level role in ERU settings: - Do you remember, was it a good handover/notes? (27 expressions)
Was there something you wish to mention that was not so good, in your handover? (24 expressions)
Was something missing? Or do you think something could have been improved? (29 expressions)
As a handover process, what would be best way to provide you the most effective and efficient handover? (46 expressions)
What is the key information that are the minimum to receive? (52 expressions)
Are there elements in handover that can improve the quality of ERU when thinking of handover? (31 expressions)
To ensure effective actions in ERU, who do you see that needs to provide handover notes and to whom? (14 expressions)
How we could minimize the effect of a person and/or personality in the HO process? (27 expressions)
With whom should the handover notes be shared? (12 expressions)

Table 2: Questions made during the semi-structured interviews

Interview structure followed somewhat the example provided by Robson and McCartan (2011, 291) but instead of recording interviewees names, they were coded already at this phase to avoid any possibilities of breach of identity as the number of interviewees is only 7 and there is very limited number of team leader profile delegates among Finnish Red Cross.

All interviews were very fruitful, and all interviewees were using rich expressions to describe their experiences. Interviewer did not need to ask additional questions because of lacking information but with some participants, the discussion did meander a little as they brought up some interesting details what the interviewer had not thought of and some of these ideas and suggestions were very useful.

From the interviews the author was able to collect a very comprehensive results that were complementing each other. Even though the participants were with fairly different backgrounds and experiences, the results are similar along the line. The mutual positive attitude towards the thesis subject among all participants was interesting to find out but at the same time it strengthened the assumption that the handover process needs to be developed further. As the interviews continued one after another, some themes and started repeating or saturating and there were no major changes in the responses anymore. (Robson & McCartan 2011, 162.)

4.3 Qualitative content analysis process

Content analysis in general may be used with both qualitative and quantitative data. Content analysis is ultimately a one method of analyzing verbal, written and/or visual communication messages. It has been used in communications, sociology and psychology but lately it has been seen in use more also in psychiatry and public health studies. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 107-108.)

Content analysis allows flexibility and detailed descriptions of the data and was therefore chosen as a research method for this study. This approach that is based on inductive method is moving from more specific definitions towards more general was also found suitable for this study as the interviews were written in short descriptive sentences in the first phase. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 109.)

Data from the interviews was originally recorded during the actual interviews. Instead of writing the full transcription, author of this thesis wrote selective quotations from the interviews, picking out relevant passages and examples. (Robson & McCartan 2011, 305).

Following the instructions of Elo and Kyngäs (2007), writer of this thesis followed the three-step process described in their article for inductive approach:

1. Preparation phase
    - Selecting the unit of analysis
    - Make sense of the data and the whole entity. Familiarize with the data.

2. Phase to organize
    - Open coding
    - Coding sheets
    - Grouping
    - Categorization
    - Abstraction
3. Reporting the analysing process and the results
    - Model, conceptual map and/or categories

The process on familiarizing the data was done by writing the selected quotations from the recording. While writing down the quotations, the writer was simultaneously coding some similar answers already into themes that have similar kind of meaning. The data collected from the interviews was first written in quotations/sentences in an excel templates, one quotation per cell. This writing process was done either immediately after the interview was done of the following day as the interviews were all scheduled relatively close to each other and to avoid mixing up the interviews and coding. Interviews were done in English except for one, that preferred to do it in Finnish and after the interview was done, the writer of this study translated the quotations by her best ability. The complete transcript excel template included 17 pages, font used was Calibri (11). The collected data was read thru repeatedly to allow the writer of this thesis to get better understanding of the information provided by the interviewees.

The approach of the analysis started form more detailed data and quotes and was expanded into more wider categories and themes (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 109). The transcript was read thru several times and some of the categorizations were made several times as it was not at first clear how it should be done and some of the main- and sub-categories were too long.

Meaning Unit	Code: What is this all about?	Main category	Sub-category	Theme
There should be a template that you just fill in. When you are in a hurry all the time, you don't have time to create a new template.	Team leaders/head nurses don't have time to look for new tools/templates while in mission.	Ready-made template that is standardized and used by everyone is needed.	Template and/or tool is missing	Time management and missing tool
Time management from HQ to allow TL to have proper overlapping (2-3 days) with the new TL to do the handover would help.	Team leaders feel that they are in a hurry to do the handover. They are forced to do a poor handover.	Respecting TL work by allowing proper handover of the position	Handing over the position with overlapping time	Time
Handover notes and the reason why these needs to be provided needs to be explained in the trainings already to ensure its used.	Handover notes and handover in general is not a standard protocol and therefore not seen always as something that needs to be done if in a hurry.	Standard operating procedures (SOP)	Continuity of the work	Instructions or standard operations Protocol

Table 3: Example of the content analysis

5 Results

Delegates who participated the interviews were all members or Red Cross with variation of backgrounds. Six (6) delegates were from Finnish Red Cross and one (1) from Japanese Red Cross Society. Initially there was one (1) more delegate, who was supposed to participate on this study, but this person withdrew from the process before the interview took place as they thought they had nothing to give to this study as they had never had a good handover notes or handover in general. Three (3) of the delegates have their background on logistics and four (4) in healthcare. All interviewees have experiences on team leader positions and/or management roles in ERU settings.

Their initial approach towards the topic and study was extremely positive and everyone expressed their interest and support to this chosen topic. The writer of this study received plenty of feedback from other delegate colleagues about the topic in general and it was good initiative to an important issue. Many expressed during the interviews that it is great to finally have support to their own thoughts, as handovers are an important tool to manage information and to have continuity during the ERU operations lifespan.

The results are presented in four (4) main themes that were identified from the data. Although there were all together ten (10) questions, the results saturated similar kind of answers cross sectoral between different questions; Quality of the received handover, Needs for improvement in position-based handover, Minimum standards for handover and handover notes and Ensuring effective and efficient handover process.
The synthesis of the results and fragments are seen in Figure 2.

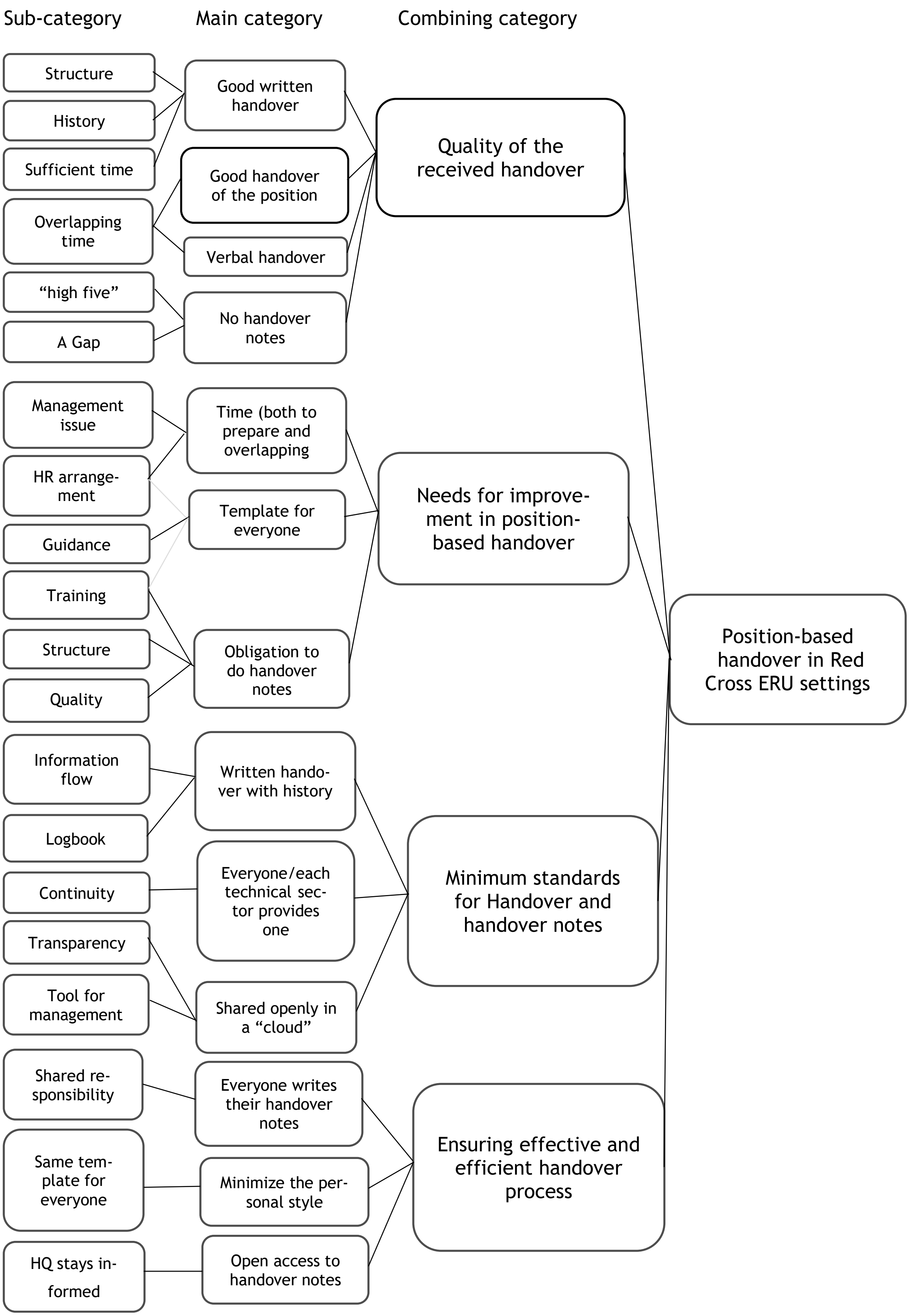

Figure 2: Synthesis of the results

5.1 Quality of the received handover

In the interviews the first three questions were about the handovers, if the interviewee had received handovers during their deployments with ERU and how was the quality? Everyone had experiences on some sort of written handover notes, but the quality seemed to be a big issue and it raised from all interviews. As there is no structured template that would be used in all missions regularly, the quality and content vary a lot.

Written handover notes were agreed to be the best option to provide the handover and that was indicated clearly. Interviewees saw the importance to have a document where you can go back and double check some information or in general to have it to go back. The difference with verbal handover is that you might forget some crucial details and then it might be impossible to get back to that issue once the previous team leader or head nurse has ended their mission.

> I had once a handover notes written in excel. I loved it! I like the boxes, it is so easy to follow that logic.
>
> It (handover notes) was good because it had so much details and it was well structured. It was also good because I could find all the answers from there and to get back to it whenever needed.

Some interviewees had less positive experiences with their handover reports. Again, the structure and content became an issue. One interviewee explained the situation where they received a long-written document via email. The interviewee and the person writing the handover report knew each other from some previous missions and this created an unusual situation where the whole handover document was filled with opinions instead of facts to know. Handover notes should be containing facts and need to know type of information and not to be anyone's brainstorming.

There can be also other type of challenges providing the handover. All interviewees mentioned that it would be optimal to have overlapping time with the previous team leader/head nurse. But what is an adequate time for handover time – too short time can be as difficult as then if there is too much time to spend together.

> That third mission was difficult. As the person who was supposed to give the handover, did not want to let go. This person did not use the time (2 weeks) in advantage but kept all the information and "power" to themselves until the last days. Then we ended up doing the handover in the last few days and it was more about the paper they had written and not so much of an orientation.
>
> We handed over not only the knowledge but also the position. We had 3 days together. The previous team leader was doing first day their work as usual and I followed. The next day I took over and held the team meeting and did all the daily tasks when the previous TL was still there. And then the last day they were still there but they did not attend any activities, but I could still go and ask questions. I liked that.

As the team leaders and other management roles are rotating during the ERU operation, also the computers are rotating from one person to another. Only one interviewee did not mention the importance of the structures filing system when talking about the handover. As the handover means handing over also the shared tools such a laptop and phone, the structured way of working is important also with the equipment. It does matter, how you file your documents when it should be also logical to the next user. The same goes with phone. When you save contacts to your phone; instead of writing people's names, you might want to consider saving the contacts with the organizations name and with the position e.g. WHO, nutritionist, John Smith.

> I did not get any written handover from the previous team leader, but I found a lot of relevant information from the TL computer from the previous rotations.

The history is important to have available. After few months the operations has been running, there might be situations where agreements made with the first rotation management are needed to be found to see who has promised and what. It is also important to acknowledge that all the documentation needs to be done properly so that it can be found in case of audits (internal or external).

Verbal handovers can be good when those are complementing the actual written handover, but not when those are the only one. Also, the responsibility to provide proper handover of the position is important. As one interviewee described, they had once a "high five" handover in the airport where the previous team leader left the country and the interviewee came in. There was no written note, only a quick "there is nothing major ongoing at the moment".

In summary, the handover note needs to be in written format, preferable complemented by overlapping time between the old and new management to ensure all possible issues can be asked and explained properly. The interviewees were all agreeing on the fact that there should be a well-structured template that everyone is using to create continuity and that would provide a possibility to do a quicker handover once you know what you can expect from the handover.

5.2 Needs for improvement in position-based handover

When the interviewees were asked, if something was missing from the handovers received or if they came up with ideas how the handover notes or the process could be improved, the flow of information was overwhelming. Interviewees were telling stories and sharing their experiences from the various missions. One interviewee was more reserved and gave a lot of explanations for why the handovers they had received had not been good. This was an interesting variation when everyone else were so eager to provide suggestions for improvement.

There were three (3) main themes in this combining category; time, template and possible obligation to provide a handover. Time and time management was one of the big and much talked issues. This topic has two dimensions in it. Time available while on a mission and overlapping time allowing the handover face to face.

> There should be time provided (in the roster) for everyone to do the handover notes. It is too late if you start writing the notes one hour before departure.

As the ERU missions are often done with very small staff, it also means that everyone is working every day. Once the operations go on and rotations three and four are in place, delegates have their weekly rest as well. But still the days are long, and the delegates commit their time to help people, reporting not being their priority. Most interviewees mentioned that if there were time appointed for reporting, that might help.

It was also interesting to notice how few interviewees realized during the interview that they were themselves in the position to provide this time when planning the rosters while on mission. One interviewee also mentioned that it would be beneficial to them as team leaders to know that everyone is regularly providing proper handover notes as then the work continues fluently instead of having information gaps between rotations.

> Time management is not only an issue in the field. HQ (Finnish Red Cross headquarters) needs to allow proper overlapping of two to three days with the new team leader to do the handover.
>
> Proper handover period is one to three days overlapping to ensure there is room for questions.
>
> Team leaders should have more time (than they do have now) for handover to ensure the position to be handed over properly as well.

There was no complaining about the overlapping time when interviewees talked about the time management and overlapping time, but at the same time this was mentioned repeatedly also in other questions and this was very important issue. Quality of management is depending greatly on the information provided by the previous delegates.

As the author reflected their own experiences as well, this is one of the crucial topics. If the information flow is not good and if there is no time to do the handover face to face, there is always some information missing. If the previous person was not really a writer kind of person, you may end up having zero written handover and you only receive short verbal brief.

Template was another big issue that everyone mentioned in their interviews. This was a topic also, where all seven interviewees shared the same suggestion for improvement. There should be a ready to use template, that is well structures, easy to use and would guide the delegate in writing a handover.

> To ensure continuity, information needs to be shared between the rotations.
>
> There should be a template that you just fill in. When you are in a hurry all the time, you don't have time to create a new template.
>
> Both times I have received notes, the notes were in a different kind of template (self-created). It was difficult to identify the most important key issues that were needed to know.

The method for writing the handover notes was also one issue that was mentioned several times. Should the handover notes be more a diary or a logbook type of a document, when delegates would be able to go back in history to the first days or should there be a file stored in team leader's computer where all previous handover notes could be found. There was not clear consensus on this issue among the interviewees.

Along with the template topic, three interviewees mentioned the filing system in the shared computers. Should there be a readymade structure in the filing, both for documents but also for the emails. Some interviewees sounded very frustrated as there is no agreed system, how the emails are filed or even if one should delete emails after their own mission.

This might be difficult task to actually implement or develop but at least this could be discussed in refresher training or other occasion when several delegates are gathered together. Interviewees had mainly bad experiences on inheriting the laptop from their predecessor as everyone has their individual habits in filing and storing information.

> We don't have agreed any standardized mailing and filing system and this is confusing.
>
> Some issues I had to look thru all the old emails to find the answers on what had been agreed (in the beginning of the operation).

The last topic in this combining category that was raised up was the obligation to produce a handover note or in general to do the handover in the end of the mission. This was interesting topic again as everyone agreed that every member of the ERU team should write a handover note. And it was also agreed that this is not the same as end of mission report as the content and the audience are completely different. But why then the end of mission report is mandatory, but handover notes are not?

> This (handover notes) should be mandatory.
>
> Handover notes and the reason why these needs to be done, should be explained in the trainings already.
>
> HR (human resources) should advice already in the briefing to do the handover notes and to mention that those are obligatory.

There were not so many ideas on how this could be improved but few interviewees did mention that when training new delegates for the ERU roster, maybe this should be added to the program. Once it is already mentioned in the ERU induction training and the template is introduced to everyone, it might be easier accepted in use. The bigger challenge is to change the handover culture of the more experienced delegates as they are not used to writing one.

5.3 Minimum standards for handover and handover notes

When talking about the minimum standards, there were three separate questions that are reflected on this section. The interviewees were asked about the most effective and efficient way to provide a handover to one self. The second question was about the minimum information what they thought should be received. And the third question was more about the elements that could improve the quality of the handover.

Again, the written handover and overlapping time to allow proper handover of the position were the most mentioned subjects. But in this section, there was also more talk about the quality of the actual handover that is provided. When interviewees spoke about the written documents there was two categories; handover note or a logbook that is a product of the person handing over and the general documents that are crucial especially when in management roles. Even though in this study the focus is on handover notes or handover report, it is important to remember that in humanitarian operations there is several actors that are also producing reports and data that is useful to have access.

> Handover notes should be consisting written handover document describing the operation and what has been done (history). It should also have attached latest situation reports, updates available from other NGO's, agreements with any external actors and SOP's.

How the history cold be brought into the handover can be challenging if we don't want to create a long documentation.

> Having a continues logbook style handover could work. You could go back to the day one and two if needed. But this might become too much.

Handing over the position was interesting topic that brought new perspective again to this study. The writer had not thought at all any gender issues while preparing this work. In one of the interviews the gender issue was brought up. When handing over the position to a female team leader, one should be sensitive if there is perhaps need for longer handover period. Especially in some male dominating cultures, women are not commonly seen in management positions and without proper introduction, the whole teams work might be endangered if the new team leader is not accepted.

> Having time to be introduced properly to all important stakeholders is important.

> Especially when a woman takes over in a male dominated society, the introductions are crucial to be able to work in close collaboration.

Not to emphasize more the gender issue, but it remains to be something to remember.
The most mentioned thing that raised up on this was the fact that the handover notes needs to be available once you arrive. To complement the handover notes if you have a chance to have overlapping time with the previous team leader or head nurse it is nice when you can read the handover notes and to have the opportunity to ask questions after reading the notes. Even if there is no overlapping time, there should be a custom to have a short skype call between the people who have handed over to have the opportunity to clarify anything that might need clarification.

For the minimum information to be received, the interviewer got a long list of very important issues. Basic information that nearly everyone mentioned were contact details to everyone in the team, all the important counter partners and stakeholders. In this part it was mentioned that a good practise is to store phone numbers in the mobile phones by the title an organization instead of having people's names. Red Cross is not the only organization who have short missions and people are changing frequently.
Good points that were mentioned by individual interviewees;

> Information of the meeting that are good and prioritizing the meeting so one can avoid spending time in useless meetings.
>
> What services are provided by the ERU.
>
> Matrix of already accomplished stepping stones.
>
> Pending issues and what is the plan to complete the task.

Interviewer had a discussion about agreements and contracts with some interviewees. It was mentioned that sometimes and, in some countries, verbal agreement is as good as written document. But it is good to remember that everything needs to be written as the next delegate arriving and taking over the position needs to be able to follow up on agreed things.

Third subject that was discussed during this theme was the possibility to have elements in handover that could improve the quality of ERU. In this section, there were many very general but important topics brought up; training, who does handovers in general, where are the handover stored or shared at and how to ensure the continuity.

If looking at these in chronological order, the briefing was mentioned quite often. Every delegate should go to the Finnish Red Cross headquarters before leaving to a mission and to receive a briefing. This was a place where the delegate should get their first proper introduction where they are going and what has already been accomplished (if there has been already more than one rotation in place). The more complicated part in this is the fact that handover notes are not always available for the HR people, whom are the ones providing the first briefing.

> Briefing in the HQ before going to the mission was not really good. No proper information was shared. Only things that were already available also in the news or media.

Should the handover notes be shared with headquarters or should they (HQ) have access to the cloud where all the handover notes are stored remains still unclear. Some of the interviewees said that handover notes should be shared within the Red Cross family and some thought that these documents should be kept within the team in the country of the operation. Overall there were few mentions about the transparency and by sharing the documents, it could be one way to develop transparency internally.

In general the handover notes and process was seen in very positive light and everyone agreed that structured and standardized templates would allow better and faster handovers in the field but also by sharing the handover document among the team, that wold increase the transparency. When all the documents would be easily accessible, the team leader would be also up to date, what the team is up to and doing even they don't have the opportunity to discuss as frequently as they would like to.

5.4 Ensuring effective and efficient handover process

The set of last three questions did not provide that much more new information as many of the issued were already discussed on the previous phases of the interviews. But again, there were three main categories identified; minimizing the personal style, open access to handover notes and obligation to share the responsibility to write the handover notes.

In the interviews, shared responsibility was strongly highlighted. Everyone mentioned how strong bond there is within the delegates when in ERU missions. Especially the interviewees with the health background mentioned also that the pride of good quality care and continuity in the patient care should be kept in mind. Often health delegates get very emotional about the work and the results what they achieve. When doing the handover, sometimes the emotions are there as well and this should not be so.

> Maybe some technical ERU's could have their own questions in the template but the basics are the same for all.
>
> Having a neutral template, will guide towards neutral handover with at least minimum basic information.

It was a consensus of all interviewees that some sort of structured template would be most suitable. It is also worth mentioning that even though there were a mixture of health care professionals and logistics interviewed, the themes the interviewees brought up were all the same and so it was with the template.

A structured template was also seen very positively as that would minimize the opinions and emotions from the report. There was also a suggestion from two interviewees that in bigger settings such as field hospital settings, the handover could be a shared document where everyone from one department could add their input.

> All technical teams, not necessarily on personal level but in teams could have a diary like handover notes. Midwifes, OT-nurses (operating theatre-nurses), technicians etc.

Taking the shared responsibility from the interviews to sum up the interviews, interviewees did mention repeatedly the fact that team leader cannot know what is going on in their team unless they have information and updated data available. There should be a template that is simple and easy to use that would be accessible to everyone in the team. And keeping the handover note separate from the end of mission report to avoid opinions, emotions and bad feelings mixing the ongoing operational issues.

6 Discussion

The topic of this study was very much welcomed by the ordered and it has raised a lot of positive encouraging among the delegate colleagues. There has been continues efforts to enhance the position-based handovers but as there is constant pressure to focus on operations, there has not been any human resources from the Finnish Red Cross to put in developing this further. In general, the reporting and especially the quality of reporting in humanitarian operations has been seen in more important role last few years as the donors and stake holders are more interested about the operations and the results. Need to develop this topic was not new but no-one has just not done it yet.

As Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011, 30-31) wrote in their study, the team management and team leaders need to have adequate and reliable information available of the ongoing activities to enable them to make decisions based on facts instead of assumptions. This study and the results of the interviews emphasizes this factor as most of the team leaders participating this study felt that enhancing the handover process would also make the information flow between all parties more fluent.

Having good quality reporting systems already in the implementing level, will allow management level to report more timely and accurate reports to whoever is requesting the data.

Handover reporting has been seen as an extra task and a burden to the field level staff instead of seeing it as a tool to make sure the effort made during the one-month rotation is not wasted as the next rotation starts again from the bottom. Similar to Lean methodology, in the process to enhance the handover reporting in ERU's, Lean could provide some useful tools to this.

As in many industries Lean methodology has been used to examine the organizational processes and perhaps it could be worthwhile to reflect on this subject as well. There is work to do, to prepare a structured reporting mechanism and to put it into practice. Delegates need to understand why this is requested and what is the benefit of doing it. In Lean the focus is often in cutting costs but in this case the focus is to increase productivity by providing better reports when writing position-based handover notes. Even if not going thru the entire Lean process, Red Cross could use the PDCA; plan, do, check and act cycle together with the A3 thinking. With these two tools we can identify better, where we are in the process and build consensus to identify where we are headings towards. (Kimsey 2010, 51-54.)

6.1 Evaluation of the research methods

The framework for the study was more to create some pre-understanding and to deepen knowledge and understand the concepts better before entering the interviews. As the writer of this study had strong background and knowledge in general to this topic, it both helped and at some points made it more difficult to avoid being bias to some content.
It was also challenging to the writer of this study to stay inductive as they already had pre-understanding towards the topic and even though the interviews were not yet done, when the writer already had their correlations already forming in their head. As Robson and McCartan (2011, 171) also mentioned, involvement over period of years close to the subject, may create potential for bias.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method to this research to gain as much ideas as possible from the ERU delegates whom have been deployed in a management role. Semi-structured interviews are used often when interviewer has a shopping list of topics but if the interviewer still wants to maintain the freedom of changing the wording or ask additional questions if the interviewee takes the discussion towards a new interesting area. (Robson & McCartan 2011, 290.) This method enabled interviewees to be more open and they had more space to explain their experiences.

While the semi-structured interviews were done via Skype or WhatsApp, this allowed the interviewer the possibility to write notes and diary notes while conducting the interviews as the interviewees did not see them. The disadvantage of this was the lack of visual contact and by that the interviewer could only interpret nonverbal communication thru the tone of voice, change in the speed of the speech or by the chosen words. (Robson & McCartan 2011, 290-291, 296.)

As an analyzing method, the content analysis method did prove to be quite demanding and difficult. Although it was interesting and nice to have such flexibility that this method allows, but the writer did doubt at some point if they had understood everything accordingly. There were challenges in categorizations and understanding on why and how the text boxes were formulated remained as a mystery until very last steps with the study (Elo & Kyngäs 2008,113).

In qualitative study such and this one, the core of the whole study is to choose the participants along with the method and presentation format. As this subject demanded to have very specific profiled people to be interviewed the writer selected heterogenous samples, the interviewee selected certain variables to be interviewed. (Robson & McCartan 2011, 281). This was challenging due to lack of profiles, who would have the needed experience and the limited time when the interviews needed to be completed.

6.2 Conclusions from the results

Quality of the handover is the key category when looking at the results and the needs. Quality in handover contains components of the end product that is the written report, but it is also time management, HR processes, history of the operations and many more practical pieces. The writer of this study was expecting more variance on the results as the results did support their thinking of the possible needs, gaps and strengths. It could be that as the writer of this thesis has been talking about this subject already for nearly 3 years, most comments that have been written into this study, have been heard already before.

Needs for improvement in position-based handover were clearly indicated in the results of the interviews. Time is often an issue and it was raised as a topic on this study as well. Time was mentioned in two different dimensions. Overlapping time to allow handing over the position. With this one there was relatively clear requests to the HR to plan the rotations so that the delegates would have the possibility to do handover face to face. The other time related request that was raised was to have time to write the handover notes. While on an ERU mission, people often don’t have time to sit down and write their handovers. As the interviewees mentioned, it would be good to revise handover notes once arrived in the country. Now the challenge remains to the fact that many delegates have time to write their handover once the new rotation has arrived and this created the difficulty. Handover notes are not ready to be handed over since there was no time to prepare those.

By creating a well-structured template many delegates thought that people would be more keen to do the handover notes. Good template with guiding questions would allow the delegate to concentrate on answering the questions instead of trying to create a new template for their handover. Also, by creating a good template, it would hopefully minimize the personal style and provide same information every time in a template where everyone knows where to find the key information.

Finally, the interviewees raised one more issue. When in a management role (team leader/head nurse/hospital coordinator/senior medical officer) the idea of having shared responsibility over the reporting was highlighted. The team leaders have a lot of pressure to produce written reports if not on daily but at least on weekly basis. These reports from different technical sectors would enhance the information flow among the team and especially help the team leader to base their decisions on facts. Having accurate and up to date information available, help the management in producing more quality reports but also in case there is any problems, the management can also get involved in earlier stage. The suggestion based on the interviews would be to have a “cloud” service in use where everyone can save their handover papers for everyone to see.

6.3 Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

Robson and McCartan (2011, 112) are debating about how the trustworthiness can be measured when using flexible qualitative research methods. They also do acknowledge that if the researcher provides detailed information of the methods that have been used and can justify why these methods were selected that this would provide enough evidence to say that the study is credible. Credibility is based on a framework that is built mainly upon IFRC (2012) guidelines that define ERU setting and mechanism. Emphases has been put on the study process, selecting the methodology and explaining the chosen methods and asking the best possible delegates with suitable experiences to participate the semi-structured interviews.

For the transferability, the similar rules as for the credibility applies. According to Robson and McCartan (2011, 112) the repot needs to provide sufficient amount of details of the procedures and needed equipment to enable reader of the study to replicate the exact same study. In this study the steps and methods are well described to provide information to anyone who would like to transfer the study in to their own organization.

Dependability has been secured by choosing approved and well-known methods for this study. Methodology is based mainly on two sources (Elo & Kyngäs and Robson & McCartan) that were used in this study to provide support on correct terminology, methodological approaches and to clarify the design. More knowledge and sources for methodology would have been helpful to get more detailed information on especially to content analysis process and to strengthen the knowledge of the author.

Confirmability or validation of the results was done when interviewing Japanese Red Cross ERU delegate. It showed that the issues are global, not only within Finnish Red Cross and verified also the fact no-one has been developing the position-based handover notes even though it seems that there is need for those in global scale. If this study would be arranged again with wider audience including other ERU equipped National Societies, probably there would be more variety of answers revealed, but the assumption in that there would be mainly similar issues rising as from this study.

6.4 Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations have been very much involved throughout the whole study proses especially since the research involved real people as informants (Robson & McCartan 2011 205-206). There is always potential stress, harm and other negative consequences for research participants, if the researcher is not considerate and careful with their work. This was taken carefully into consideration especially in the phase where expressions were put in the paper and then transferred into this thesis work.

As Finnish Red Cross international delegate reserve is quite small and the number of people who are qualified to do team leader or equal management role is even smaller, the writer of this study had to be extra careful not to use any expressions that would have been easily identified to protect the identity of the participants.

After interviews, all needed material was written into text on a paper. Audio sound will be deleted once the thesis has been approved and there is no longer a need to keep the recordings. All interviewees have also returned their signed consent forms and every one of them have been informed about the possibility to withdraw from the story at any point and their recorded interviews would not be used in any other purposes. (Robson & McCartan 2011 212-216).

6.5 Recommendations

This study contained only a very small sample of ERU delegates views as there were only seven participants in the interviews. Although the study was conducted with small group of delegated, their views were very similar and even among two different technical sectors, the answers were comparable. By developing a structured template to use for position-based handovers, it would enhance the quality and quantity of the written handover notes. With the structured handover note template, Finnish Red Cross ERU teams would be able to get more detailed information from the different technical sectors in the field that could be used primarily to support the team management (team leader, head nurse, senior medical officer) on their decision making and reporting.

There were two time related recommendations that raised above other issues. Almost every one of the interviewees mentioned that there is never enough time to do proper handover. Mostly this was appointed to the fact that often there is no overlapping time with people who come for the next rotation. New people come in and the previous rotation leaves if not the same day, early next day.

To have more time to allow not only the handover but to allow proper handover of the position, there needs to be one or two days of overlapping. It is important to have sufficient time to provide the handover notes to the next person, give the next person a proper introduction to the premises and explain the routines. This is something the field can follow-up, but this is something that needs to be taken into consideration in HR planning.

Related to time, there was also a concern that often people don’t have time to do their handover notes while on mission. Person responsible of rosters needs to arrange so that everyone has some ten minutes daily to write their handover. When management in the field is supporting the writing process and there is time provided to do the task, this will allow everyone the equal possibility to conduct the given task.

The existing a well-structured handover template is important to be introduced to the delegates in all ERU training modules from ERU induction training to specialized modules by HR and/or by experienced delegates, whom have experience from the field and can share their experiences at the same time.

To those ERU delegates, whom have already participated the basic training and are already deployed several occasions, the handover training session can be arranged as a refresher training. The experienced ERU delegates are the key people to train to ensure the position-based handover notes template is taken into use.

Position-based handover training should be included to all ERU training in all levels and even though this recommendation is made for Finnish Red Cross ERU’s, the same points apply globally.

References

Barry, D. 1991. Managing the bossless team: lessons in distributed leadership. Organizational dynamics 20(1), 31-47.

Bonaccio, S. & Reeshad, D. 2006. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 101, 127–151.

Bowden, E. & Smits, S. 2012. Managing in the context of healthcare's escalating technology and evolving culture. Journal of Health Organization and Management, Vol 26 (2), 149-157.

Buchanan-Smith, M. & Scriven, K. 2011. Leadership in Action: Leading effectively in humanitarian operations. London: ALNAP.

Clarke, P. 2013. Who's in charge here? A literature review on approaches to leadership in humanitarian operations. London: ALNAP.

Clarke, P. & Ramalingam, B. 2008. Organizational change in the humanitarian sector. London: ALNAP.

Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA), 2010. Core Humanitarian Competencies Guide Humanitarian Capacity Building: Throughout the Employee Life Cycle. Accessed 18 december 2018. http://www.start-network.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/01/Core-Humanitarian-Competencies-Guide.pdf

Core Humanitarian Standards. 2018. Accessed 9 November 2018. http://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

Cosgrave, J. 1997. Are international staff hard to manage? Disaster, Prevention and Management: An International Journal 6(4), 245-251.

Elo, S. & Kyngäs, H. 2008. The qualitative content analysis process. Journal of Advanced nursing 62(1), 107-115

Gosling, J., Bolden, R. & Petrov, G. 2009. Distributed Leadership in Higher Education: What does it accomplish? Accessed 18 December 2018. SAGE Publications 5(3): 299–310 http://lea.sagepub.com

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2012. ERU Emergency Response Unit Standard Operating procedures. Geneva: IFRC.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2013. The IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competency Framework. Geneva: IFRC.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2018. Accessed 11 August 2018 www.ifrc.org/eru

Jefferies, D., Johnson, M. & Nicholls D. 2010. Comparing written and oral approaches to clinical reporting in nursing. Contemporary Nurse: a Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession 42(1), 129-138.

Kimsey, B. 2010. Lean Methodology in Health Care. AORN Journal 92(1), 53-60.

Quality of Care: A Process of Making Strategic Changes in Health Systems. 2016. Accessed 16 August 2016. http://www.who.int/management/quality/QualityCare_B.Def.pdf

Robson, C. 2011. Real World Research. United Kingdom, John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Sjöberg, M., Wallenius, C & Larsson G. 2011. Leadership in complex and stressful rescue operations. Disaster Prevention and Management 20(2), 199-212.

Taylor, G., Stoddard, A., Harmer, A., Haver, K. & Harvey, P. 2012. The State of Humanitarian System. London: ALNAP.

Trainor, J. & Velotti, L. 2013. Leadership in Crises, Disasters, and Catastrophes. Journal of leadership studies 7(3), 38-40.

World Health Organization. 2006. Quality of care: a process for making strategic choices in health systems. Geneva: World Health Organization. Accessed 17th December 2018. http://www.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43470

Figures

Tables

Appendices

Appendix 1: Finnish Red Cross handover notes guidelines

Handover Notes –
Guidance and Template

Definition:
Handover Notes are documents created by the delegates who are about to leave their positions, to assist their successor to carry out their duties and ensure the continuity of the operation/program.

Purpose:
The handover notes have been developed to ensure that a consistent and thorough handover process is completed after each time delegates are ending their mission. By following the areas covered by the handover template, the successor should gain rapid understanding of their new role's key objectives as well as the people, processes and systems important to the performance of the role. They should also gain understanding of their role's impact and influence areas internally and externally.

Who:
Any delegate who is about to leave his/her position permanently is required to write a Handover Note. They shall be written even when a delegate is leaving his/her position to assume new duties within the same mission or office.

When:
Handover notes shall be finalized during the last two weeks of the mission. Ideally, there should be a minimum of a one week period of overlap with the delegate and successor. The length of the overlap period is determined case by case by Programme Officer and HR in consultation with the departing delegate.

If the overlap period is not possible, the delegate will send the handover note to his/her successor before departing and supplement the note with phone/Skype conversations or by e-mail. If the successor has not yet been appointed, the delegate will leave a handover note with his/her supervisor. When delegates assume duties at new positions, they should request a Handover Note from their predecessors, if one was not received already.

How:
Handover Notes should be no longer than 3-4 pages, excluding attachments. They should be factual rather than analytical. The attached template should be used. Sections of the template that do not apply to the delegate may be ignored.

Reporting:
Handover Notes do not need to be cleared by supervisors. The departing delegate should provide a copy of the Handover Note to his/her successor and his/her supervisor. Handover Notes are a required step of the end of mission process. The Team Leader shall save the Handover Note from the delegate to PIMS under the Project/Operation.

Distribution, archive and access:
A copy of the handover will be maintained in the physical file of the project/operation. If the information and knowledge is still valid and relevant, the successor may pass it on to the next successor, along with his/her own Handover Note. Handover Notes may be widely shared, with the consent of the author. They are not intended as confidential documents.

Handover Notes

Finnish Red Cross

4.8.2015

Template

Name:
Job Title:
Country of assignment:
Project/Operation:
Date of Handover Note:
Duration of Assignment (include start and end date):
Brief Description of key Duties:
This section may be kept brief when up-to-date Job Description/Terms of Reference (TOR) are attached.

-

Supervisor and reporting procedures, answer the following questions:

1. How is this position supervising the daily labor and other local staff
2. How is this position supervised and how is the reporting done

Regular/re-occurring meetings, reports or procedures:

-

Key Documents/reference material to read (attach when possible):

-

Status of recent and current projects/reports/meetings:

1. Name of project/report/meeting
    - Status
    - Action needed
    - Partners
    - Budget (if applicable)
    - Critical issues/challenges/priorities

2. Repeat as many times as necessary. Indicate priority projects.

Where to find files (hardcopy and electronic):

Calendar of major activities and/or events (optional):

Contacts (internal and external):

Name	Organization	Phone	E-mail	Comments

Your contact information after departure:

- Phone:
- E-mail:
- Skype:

Appendix 2: Participation letter and concent form

Dear Red Cross delegate colleague,

You are invited to participate in a study on "Position-based handover notes as a tool to enhance better and continues management in Emergency Response Unit's". You are eligible for the study if you have been deployed in Red Cross Emergency Response Unit in a management role (Team Leader, head nurse or other management role).

The study is the thesis study of Johanna Arvo, a nurse and master's degree student in Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland. The purpose of this study is to provide information to Finnish Red Cross, in order for them to be able to develop further the position-based handover guidance and later on to be able to create a Standard Operation Protocol (SOP) or another tool to have the handover notes more regularly used. The aim of this study is to identify practises that have been experienced good and practices that still need development. The study aims to provide a clear picture of the current situation, good practices and possible challenges from both perspectives: receiving the notes and providing the notes. The data collection of the study will be conducted from 15th October 2018 to 10th November 2018.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be interviewed once by the researcher via Skype or WhatsApp. The interview will be recorded, and the recorded material will be stored in assistance of the mobile phone of the interviewer. The time and place of the interview will be arranged to suite your schedule. You will be interviewed on your personal background and your experiences on position-based handover. The duration of the interview is estimated to be 30 minutes to 45minutes.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary, and if at any point you wish to discontinue your participation, you are free to do so by informing the researcher. All information you choose to give during the study will be handled confidentially, and all material will be disposed of after the study is completed. Your identity will only be known by the researcher, and no information in the study report can be traced back to you. Participation in the study will cause no harm for you. There will be no direct benefits to you from the study, but the information you share will provide valuable tools for Red Dross to develop position-based handover process in future.

For further information on the study, please contact the researcher: Johanna Arvo, Master's student johanna.arvo@student.laurea.fi

The supervisor of the study is Teija-Kaisa Aholaakko, Principal Lecturer and program Leader in Laurea UAS Finland.

I have read the information above about this study, and hereby agree to participate in it. I am aware that I can withdraw from the study at any point.

Name: ____

Address: ____

Signature: ____

Date and place: ____

Please provide contact information for the researcher to set up the time for the interview:

Phone number (if using WhatsApp): ____

Email: ____

Skype id:____