

# Simulations in the humanitarian sector; *the ECB Simulation Initiative*

Connections UK

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[www.ecbproject.org](http://www.ecbproject.org)

# What is the ECB Project?

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- The Emergency Capacity Building Project
- 5 year collaboration amongst six of the worlds largest international non-governmental organisations
- Improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of emergency response through targeted staff capacity building initiatives (national level)
- Phase II runs from 2008 - 2013

# What is capacity building?

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- An individual skill or organisational improvement process such as;
  - A self guided learning process
  - Training, workshops, meetings or seminars
  - Coaching or mentoring
  - Undertaking (and acting on) evaluations / AARs
  - Joint actions
  - Recruiting more staff
  - Simulations

# How do simulations build capacity?

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- Simulations provide an excellent opportunity to
  - Build relationships,
  - Test individual competencies
  - Provide a safe learning space for participants to try out new behaviours or approaches
  - Lead to organisational or individual improvements
- Simulations provide staff a safe space to succeed (and fail)

# Why do we need to build capacity?

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- Disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity (Feinstein Centre and UNEP)
- UN estimates by 2025, 50% of the world's population will live in disaster prone locations
- Critical that agencies / staff are prepared for an emergency response

# Simulations and the wider humanitarian sector

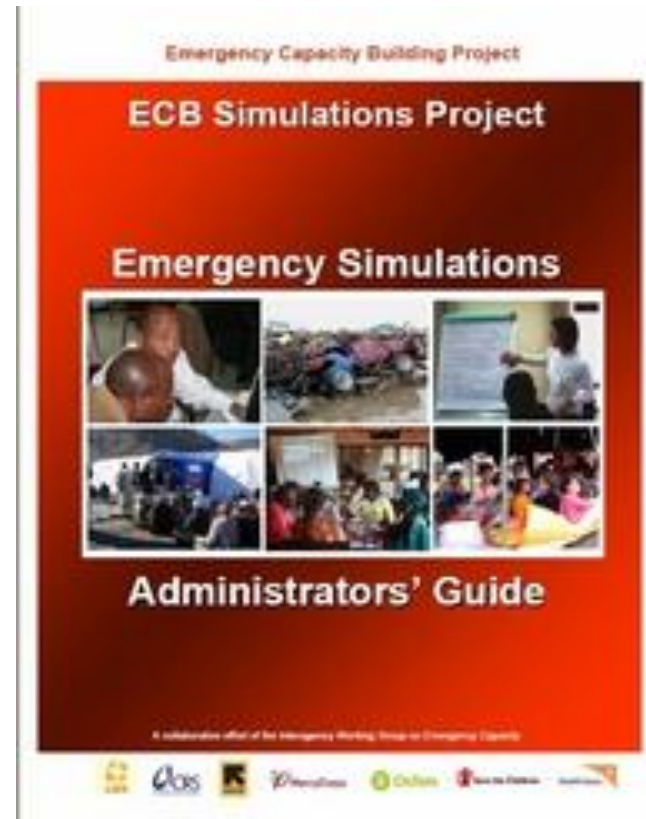
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- Simulations are increasingly recognized by the broader humanitarian community
- Harvard University, UNICEF, World Food Programme, governments, UNDP (see ECB Case Study)
- Tools and guidance exists ([www.preparednesstracker.org](http://www.preparednesstracker.org))

# The ECB Project and simulations

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- Simulations Administrators Guide produced in Phase I
- Provides guidance on single and multi agency simulations
- Top ten downloaded tool



# The ECB Project and simulations cont....

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- 17 simulations held over 5 years in 5 pilot countries / regions
- Bangladesh, Bolivia, Horn of Africa, Indonesia, Niger
- Involving many I/NGOs, governments, UN, donors
- Simulating floods, cyclones, drought and conflict



# What does an ECB Project simulation look like?

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- 30 – 40 participants
- Held over two days (one full day for the simulation)
- Participants are organised into agency teams
- Spread over many rooms / locations
- Tech can be used

# What are the objectives of an ECB Project simulation?

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1. To identify the skills of an individual staff member that need to be strengthened before an actual disaster occurs.
2. To develop and practice preparedness and contingency plans.
3. To develop and practice organisational preparedness and relationships.
4. To build organisational capacity

# What else can simulations do?

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- Build trust and networks
- Pre-position relationships
- Build staff confidence



# What are the key features of successful simulations

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- Trained and skilled facilitators
- Injects
- A debriefing session
- The development of an action plan, (individual, organisational or institutional)

# Are simulations successful?

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91% of evaluation respondents from 7 simulations between 2010 - 2012 reported simulations to be “good” or “useful”

- 96% of 140 evaluation responders from a separate suite of simulations reported being “very” or “quite satisfied” with the simulations
- 100% of 139 respondents reported that simulations are a useful way to test or apply learning following a learning event

# Key lessons from successful simulations

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- Choosing the right simulation for the context; (realism helps)
- Ensure attendance of the right people
- Good planning improves a simulation
- Management commitment and appropriate budgetary support are key

# Conclusions

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- Simulations are an excellent tool to
  - Develop staff skills and capacity
  - Test procedures and contingency plans
  - Build relationships and trust
  - Bring a greater degree of predictability into humanitarian planning and response

# For more information

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- [www.ecbproject.org/simulations](http://www.ecbproject.org/simulations)