

Accepting a Borderless Workforce through Change Management: Remote Work Integration within Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA)

Agnes Mwela Musonda

Department of Business Administration and Management, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

Email: agnesmwela@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Musonda, A. M. (2023). Accepting a Borderless Workforce through Change Management: Remote Work Integration within Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA). *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, 11, 272-289.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2023.112017>

Received: May 4, 2023

Accepted: June 9, 2023

Published: June 12, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Remote working has been explained by numerous academicians as form of employment conducted outside the confines of any organization physical scope and hours. Working without borders has now become more than ever an important working domain especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of economic lockdowns led to innovation in working models across all sectors therefore increasing the important realization that work can be conducted in almost any environment apart from being confined to one specific physical space and hours. Humanitarian organizations have also engaged remote workers as part of their human resource. The specific problem is that remote work has been implemented within MSF OCA with no clear standard support systems to ensure its sustainability. The other problem being that there is no focused study on the improvement and integration of remote working within humanitarian organization such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Operational Centre Amsterdam (OCA) has been conducted. Key to note is that in addition to the general and specific management problem, there is also literature gap that addresses remote work improvement and integration within humanitarian organization. The purpose of this exploratory case study, using a critical incident technique (CIT), was to create a taxonomy of responses to the incidents that are critical for integrating and improving remote working within Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA). Data was collected through in-depth interviews and transcripts from 16 research participants as the sample size. This study was anchored by a central research question, what are the employees and managers perception of remote work integration and how can remote work be improved upon. Data analysis was conducted using a 9 step

data analysis process. The results revealed two primary themes and two secondary themes; the primary themes were human resources and onboarding and the secondary themes were employee wellbeing and employee development. Study therefore concludes that for effective remote work improvement and integration within MSF OCA, the use of change management strategies is key. The study comprised of recommendations and limitations. The study recommends that an integrated review of the current existing organizational remote working policy consisting of the actual policy reviews and remote workers consultation be conducted so as to attain a more updated and inclusive standardized remote workers policy.

Keywords

Remote Work Integration, Change Management, Humanitarian Organization, MSF OCA

1. Introduction

Globally before the COVID-19 pandemic almost all work was done within the confinement of an office or any form of a physical space and within a specified time period. But by 2020 after a century of this traditional mode of working, the world quickly realized that work can still be executed efficiently away from the traditional office. The International Labour Office (ILO) on remote work statistics indicates that in 2019 only 7% of the global population was working remotely and within in the same year but in Europe alone about 5.4% of the workers were working remotely, the same statistics also indicate that among the self-employed workers only 36% of them worked from home. But during the pandemic the number of employees working remotely increased to 50%, with 62% of workers now expecting their employers to allow them to work remotely [Gartner \(2020\)](#). Globally, remote working has now become a norm across all forms of organizations including humanitarian organizations as they are a critical component of the non-governmental response towards the public health needs of the vulnerable, underprivileged and under serviced population communities across the globe.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has carefully implemented and conducted remote management that has been well achieved through the process of cross border negotiations and implementation of its organisational activities of providing humanitarian assistant through other humanitarian agencies ([Donini & Maxwell, 2013](#)). This is well articulated by [Hofman & Pérache \(2014\)](#) who have on gone to provide evidence, of MSF successfully implementing remote management within insecure contexts. One of the key organisational mandates for MSF is resource management and it is clearly embedded in the two principle documents that universally govern the organisation, and these are the MSF Charter and the Chantilly Principles. All MSF members, employees and volun-

teers are all required to understand and adhere to these principles. Included in these key documents is also the guidance for MSF as a medical humanitarian organisation, regarding its organisational obligation to mobilise and develop its resources (Médecins Sans Frontières, 1995; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2021).

With evolution of the traditional working methodologies post COVID-19 pandemic, MSF has since increasingly implemented hybrid working methodologies and allowing for certain job profiles to completely work remotely and be based anywhere within the globe, though with an increased desire of the remote position ideally, still hosted in specified nearby offices mainly for administrative purposes (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2023). The organisation has categorically stated that it remains committed to having a culture that is inclusive, a culture that is in support of having diverse voices of its employees and therefore welcomes job applications from the individuals of all genders, ages, sexual orientations, nationalities, races, religions, beliefs, ability status, and all other diversity characteristics (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2023).

The integration of the role and art of remote working within the context of humanitarian work has not yet been closely studied. Research on the concept of remote management especially in conflict environments and humanitarian response is what has been the focus for numerous humanitarian organizations. As much as remote management and process of humanitarian response are important, at the core of these activities are remote workers who enable the continuous delivery of humanitarian-based services to those in need, even though their job profile is inefficiently integrated. Scholarly analysis has revealed the need to explore how change management can be used to address sustainable remote work integration within the humanitarian organization, as many of these studies have focused on remote management (ACF, 2011 cited in Izzy, 2020; Donini & Maxwell, 2013; Howe et al., 2015; WHO, 2018; Fradejas-García, 2019; Humanitarian Advisory Group & CARE, 2020; VENRO, 2020) and not on remote workers themselves. Therefore this study seeks to add to the body of knowledge on remote work improvement and integration strategies using change management within humanitarian organizations.

2. Research Background

Médecins Sans Frontières Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) also known as Doctors Without Borders is an international, independent medical humanitarian organization (Médecins Sans Frontières International, 2022). According to Médecins Sans Frontières International (2022), MSF was founded by a group of doctors and journalists namely; Dr. Jacques Beres, Dr. Jean Cabrol, Dr. Marcel Delcourt, Dr. Xavier Emmanuelli, Dr. Pascal Greletty-Bosviel, Dr. Bernard Kouchner, Dr. Max Recamier, Dr. Jean-Michel Wild, Dr. Gérard Pigeon, Vladan Radoman, Philippe Bernier, Raymond Borel and Gérard Illiouz in 1971 in France. Its formation came about as a consequence of the war and famine in Biafra, Nigeria, and was founded on the belief of equity in the accessibility of

health care services, irrespective of sex, creed or political affiliation with an emphasis that the medical management of mankind exceeds the regard for state borders. Established as an independent organization that focuses on providing impartial emergency medical intervention, the MSF has grown from having three hundred volunteers namely doctors, nurses and other staff, including the 13 founding doctors and journalists to over 65,000 staff employed locally to provide lifesaving medical services to individuals who contrarily be ostracised in accessing healthcare services, shelter, clean and safe drinking water in more than 70 countries (Médecins Sans Frontières International, 2022). MSF operates independently. It conducts its own evaluations on the ground to determine people's needs. More than 90 percent of its overall funding comes from millions of private sources; predominantly for its individual members, not governments. MSF speaks out case studies openly that have led it to speak out, these include denouncing the forced relocation in Ethiopia in 1985, the inaction of the international community during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that demanded an end to indiscriminate bombings of civilians in Chechnya (SoukMSF, 2022). Since 1980, MSF has opened offices in 28 countries. They are bound together by MSF International, based in Geneva, Switzerland, which provides coordination, information and support to the MSF Movement. Among these offices, five country offices are directly implementing projects and called "Operational Centers". They are known as Operational Center Amsterdam (OCA), Operational Center Geneva (OCG), Operational Center Paris (OCP), Operational Center Barcelona and Athens (OCBA), and Operational Center Brussels (OCB). The rest of the offices provide human, financial and logistical and other resources for these offices. Thousands of health professionals, logistical and administrative staff most of whom are hired locally are working on programs in 71 countries worldwide (SoukMSF, 2022).

Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA) MSF OCA is also known as MSF-Holland is one of the operational centers that has many projects around the globe, its head quarter (HQ) is in Amsterdam, Holland. SoukMSF (2022) states that MSF OCA directly provides humanitarian assistance in 26 countries, through a global workforce recruited from over 70 countries. As an OC, MSF OCA has established partnership of sections in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK, as well as developing offices in India and Ireland. Its organizational evolution has resulted into a rapid expansion placing MSF OCA in a much a stronger developmental position that can be built on., the organization has identified the need to fully harness the skills and abilities of its workforce, the need to fully capitalize on the opportunities to deepen its engagement with, and learn from, local and regional networks and civil society groups, to enrich and diversify its organizational thinking (SoukMSF, 2022). With most of MSF OCA support services being predominately located in Europe, therefore having the organizational leadership and senior management predominantly from the high- and middle-income countries. The organizational

workers from other parts of the world are calling for greater equity of opportunities and the agency to proactively take responsibility for MSF's medical humanitarian work. MSF OCA therefore aims to harness the capacities and capabilities of the whole MSF movement to build an effective organization for the future. MSF OCA will strive for greater diversity, particularly among our senior managers and leaders, so they are more representative of our overall global workforce. In addition, it aims to enhance its decision-making through diversity of thought and experiences, the organization also aims to work towards ensuring that it has a work environment where staff feel valued and included and that it will address inequities in opportunities for personal and professional development by recognizing its own blind spots and systematically tackling any biases and structural barriers within the organization. According to SoukMSF (2022), MSF OCA aims that by this year 2023 it be considered the preferred employer for future staff looking to work in the medical humanitarian sector, as the organization fosters a culture that is built on an inclusive, healthy and safe environment for all its employees and works toward diverse representation at the highest-level executive leadership platforms. MSF OCA continues to invest in its employees, particularly those delivering healthcare, so that they have opportunities for personal and professional growth within the organization.

2.1. Research Questions

The focus of this study is: Accepting a borderless workforce through change management: Remote work integration within Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA), a humanitarian organisation. The following are the research questions:

- 1) How do MSF OCA employees and managers interpret remote working?
- 2) What critical factors should MSF OCA consider to make remote working successful?
- 3) In what ways does MSF OCA attempt to integrate the culture of remote working?
- 4) What aspects of remote work integration does MSF OCA need to improve on?

2.2. Research Objectivities

The template is used to format your paper and style the text. All margins, column widths, line spaces, and text fonts are prescribed; please do not alter them. You may note peculiarities.

Research Objectivities

The following where the research objectivities:

- 1) To understand the interpretation of remote working by MSF OCA employees and managers.
- 2) To understand the critical factors that MSF OCA should consider to make remote working successful.

- 3) To understand the processes that MSF OCA has used in attempting to integrate the culture of remote working.
- 4) To understand the aspects of remote work integration that MSF OCA needs to improve on.

3. Literature Review

Working minus frontiers has increased over the years as most workers choose to work virtually, limiting therefore their interactions with colleagues to simply that of being electronically and device based (Brunelle, 2012; Shekhar, 2006) and they mostly discharge their duties away from their headquarters or the main office (Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003). The body of literature on virtual, remote, telecommuting and telework reveals a work description that is diverse. Telecommuting Nilles et al. (1976); explained as workers whose job is conducted from their houses Olson & Primps (1984) and as a proxy to commuting and is telecommunication based (Nilles, 1994). Discharging their duties away from their headquarters or the main office is also referred to as teleworking Kraemer (1982); and is referenced either as remote work with Nilles et al., 1976 highlighting the actual replacement workers having to commute daily to work and virtual work following an addition of the words time, geographical position and technology to the same description (Olson, 1987; Handy, 1995; Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003; Kraemer, 1982; Pauleen & Yoong, 2001). Virtual work is further explained as having a proposition of geographical location plus work outsourcing (Chudoba, Wynn, Lu, & Watson-Mannheim, 2005; Kirkman & Mathieu, 2005; Siebdrat, Hoegl, & Ernst, 2009). The year 2020 saw a reduced labour demand across the global (ILO, 2020; Lee, Schmidt-Klau, & Verick, 2020) translated as a decrease in employment, that lead to increased joblessness and within the same year saw an increase of remote working. This surge was strongly associated with the COVID-19 prevalence, which brought about a notable reduction in employment search. Within the same year the COVID-19 pandemic lead to increased innovations in working methodologies that saw an increase in remote working across all sectors and according to the European Commission (2020) the COVID-19 pandemic enforced remote working as a survival mode for all institutions, therefore foregoing the aspect of flexibility or personal choice (Blomqvist et al., 2020). The past decades has seen a notable increase in the studies related to remote work, mostly related to human resources policies that focus on work flexibility and employee choice of working methodology Blomqvist et al. (2020) conducted research to determine the remote work employees experiences during the pandemic. van Zoonen et al. (2021) conducted a cross sectional study to determine the factors influencing the adjustment to remote work during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stasiuk-Piekarska (2021) conducted a study to determine the impact of remote work on human being.

Other studies conducted on remote work improvement include Canary (2021) and EY (2021) that need for management's commitment to investing and supporting remote workers with the provision of the correct tools and equipment

for them to strategically conduct their work efficiently and effectively. This includes organisations providing extra office furniture and equipment for home use, organisations providing financial support such as working from home allowance (Canary, 2021; EY, 2021). The other studies indicate the need for organisations to provide standardized communicative software's and platforms for remote workers to utilize Gajendran & Harrison (2007) this should be backup with the necessary user training and back office support (Canary, 2021). Remote work improvement studies also indicate the need for organisations to have standardized communication platforms that are collaborative such as SharePoint where all organisational documents, data and information can be easily uploaded and accessible by all employees (Canary, 2021).

Organisations should establish clear roles and responsibilities as well as reporting channels. Improvement in remote employee welfare should be done through offering subsidized access to health fitness centres as well offering psychological support Alexander et al. (2020) especially that most organisations do not provide such stating remote workers do gain extra saving from less commuting (Pokojski et al., 2022). The culture of remote working can be improved by creating an environment of safe, honest and open communication for employees to express themselves, Karandish (2020) acknowledging the achievements being made by all employees. Culture can also improved upon within remote working setting through focusing more on the job outcomes and creating platforms of engagements where employee can easily log in and have confidential discussions (Gratton, 2020).

But these studies have been conducted, key to note is that these studies are mainly focused on the remote workers within the general public sector and not focused on the humanitarian sector, and to be more specific within humanitarian organization such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Operational Centre Amsterdam (OCA). With no previous research findings within the humanitarian setting, the results of this study contributes to the body of knowledge on understanding what is required for the improvement and efficient integration of remote work within humanitarian organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA). The findings of this study has provided data that organizational leaders may utilize to make evidence-based decisions on remote work improvement and integration within their humanitarian organization and furthermore the findings of this study provide sufficient data for researchers to further expand on the remote work relational change management concepts attained from this study. Define abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used in the text, even after they have been defined in the abstract. Abbreviations such as IEEE, SI, MKS, CGS, sc, dc, and rms do not have to be defined. Do not use abbreviations in the title or heads unless they are unavoidable.

4. Methodology

This was a qualitative study utilizing an exploratory case study approach. The

qualitative research method was best suited for this research since it has the potential to offer in-depth information while utilizing a small number of participants. The research process consisted of primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with MSF OCA employees and secondary data collected from academic literature and articles.

5. Participants and Sample Size

The participants sample consisted of 16 MSF OCA employees. Non-probability sampling was utilized in this study because it would not have been practical to draw a random probability-based sample of the population due to time as well as the cost considerations (Dudovskiy, 2022). The other justification for non-probability sampling was that it enabled the researcher to target particular groups of the population (Galloway, 2005) and assisted in determining a suitable sample size that was representative of the population and that it awarded the researcher the possibility to reflect the descriptive comments about the sample, the cost effectiveness and time effectiveness compared to probability sampling (Dudovskiy, 2022).

6. Data Collection

Primary data was collected through Individual semi-structured interviews with MSF OCA employees. Secondary data was collected from academic literature and articles, and a reflective journal of the researcher. The individual remote working interviews were held online via Microsoft teams and lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. Four standard questions namely; 1) How can change management models help humanitarian organizations analyse remote work integration? 2) How do employee and managers perceive remote working within the humanitarian organization? 3) What are the similarities and differences of remote workers profiles within humanitarian organization? 4) What factors do employees and management perceive as critical in making remote working successful? Will be used throughout the 16 interviews with expected minor adaption of the questions to fit the diverse roles of the participants. The study included different follow up questions being asked but documented based on the diverse roles and outputs research of the participants. Continual ethical adherence was observed throughout the study. The questions were intended to elicit enough data from which themes could be discovered to answer the research questions regarding remote work perception, integration and improvement within MSF OCA.

7. Data Analysis

A critical incident technique (CIT) was utilized so as to adequately categorize and summarize the data in preparation for data analysis (Douglas et al., 2009). To ensure academic rigor, order, structure, and efficient data interpretation, a nine-phased process that contains the following processes was conducted: 1) Data recording; 2) Data review; 3) Open coding; 4) Selective coding; 5) Pattern

matching; 6) Providing explanations; 7) Conducting an examination; 8) Preparing a composite description; 9) Repeating the process. The data was analysed to provide a data-supported perspective on the responses to the incidents critical for accepting a borderless workforce through change management. Classes of responses were developed.

8. Discussion and Findings

The study conducted 4 staged interviews, consisting of 16 participants; 4 officially employed remote workers, 4 officially employed as non-remote workers and 4 management employees 2 from human resources and 2 supervisors of remote workers and 2 supervisors of non-remote workers. Every research participant agreed on a voluntary basis to play an active role in the research and communicated an aspiration to share their personal experience as remote workers. The following information are the findings of the interview questions as they associate to the study.

The summary of the participants' ages is shown in **Table 1**. The findings indicate that 38% of participants were between the ages of 40 and 49, 31% were between the ages of 50 and 59, 19% were between the ages of 30 and 39, and 13% were between the ages of 60 and 69.

Table 2 summarizes each participant's geographic location and indicates whether they have moved (NR), have moved (R), or are in the process of moving (FR) for their current job. According to the study's findings, 63% of the participants had relocated, 25% had not, and 13% had only done so because of their current job.

Table 3 shows the findings of the open coding study, which produced 25 unique emergent codes and 8 resulting themes.

The two categories, four themes, and fifteen codes gleaned from the thematic data analysis are shown in **Table 4**. Participants in 342 incidents mentioned the theme and its associated category; the data analysis from those 342 incidents 145 incidents (42%) had a human resources component, with shared personal experiences with onboarding accounting for 95 (28%), employee wellbeing-related incidents at 65 (19%), and employee development-related incidents at 7 (11%).

Table 1. Participants demographics (age) and (N = 16).

Participants Demographics		
Age (Years)	N	%
Under 30	0	0
30 - 39	3	19
40 - 49	6	38
50 - 59	5	31
60 - 69	2	13
Above 70	0	0

Table 2. Participants demographics (geographical location) and (N = 16).

Participants Demographics (Geographical Location) and (N = 16)		
Status	N	%
NR	4	25
R	10	63
FR	2	13

Table 3. Themes and codes.

Themes and Codes		
Theme	Code	Code Type
Social Wellbeing	Work Life Balance Family Connection	Emergent
Career Development	Professional Growth Career Growth Decentralization	Emergent
Onboarding	Roles & Responsibilities Capacity Building Diversity Clear Job Expectation	Emergent
Character	Self-Disciplined Practical Reliable Accountable	Emergent
Human resources	Compensation & Benefits Host Agreements Reporting Mechanisms Remote Working Costs	Emergent
Policy	Remote Working Policy Remote Working Guidelines	Emergent
Information Technology	IT Support Equipment Tools	Emergent
Employee Mental Welfare	Trust Team Dynamics Micromanagement	Emergent

Table 4. Thematic analysis.

Category	Theme	Code	# of Incidents	Percentages
Change Management	Human Resources	Compensation & Benefits	145	42.0
		Host Agreements		
		Reporting Mechanisms		
		Equipment		
		Micro management		

Continued

	Onboarding	Roles & Responsibilities Organization culture Team Dynamics IT Support Tools	95	28.0
Inclusion	Employee Wellbeing	Work Life Balance Family Friendly Environment Trust	65	19.0
	Employee Development	Diversity Career Development Detachment	37	11.0

9. Summary for Results and Findings

The detailed research interviews and rich descriptions provided the means to explain the participant's remote working experiences and perceptions and therefore lead to the discovery of the emerging phenomenon that could be subsequently be coded, allocated thematically and categorized accordingly. The results of the coding process produced two primary themes and two secondary themes. The primary themes were human resources and on boarding. The secondary themes were employee well-being and employee development. The themes were divided into primary and secondary themes based on the frequency of the word and word phrases within the incidents that were presented by the research participants from the data on the transcripts. The following information presented in this section is the interpretation of the findings in comparison to the literature review:

9.1. Human Resources

These findings are in line with the research provided in the literature review. According to [van Zoonen et al. \(2021\)](#), high work independence and clarity of job criteria are described as structural factors ease the process of employee adjustment to remote work. [Stasiuk-Piekarska \(2021\)](#) revealed key information that can be utilized to efficiently implement remote working from the perspective of employee wellbeing. When asked about their perceptions of remote work, 16 out of 16 participants said they appreciated remote working as it provided a work-life balance that enabled them to plan their work so as to incorporate family life activities, and personal career development and therefore enhancing their career progression. The study results indicate respondents felt the major obstacles to the efficient integration and management of remote work lies within the component of human resource.

9.2. Onboarding

Throughout the study there were many references made by participants in relation to the theme of on boarding. The on boarding theme involved word phrases that are related to this incident such as roles and responsibilities, organizational

culture, team dynamics and IT support tools. When asked, all the participants (100%) provided several incidents where they have experienced low levels of on boarding, because of the prevalent human resources culture. In comparison with the literature review and conceptual framework based on research of [Tushman & Nadler \(1986\)](#) and [Cummings & Worley \(2015\)](#). The findings of this study are in alignment with their findings. [Cummings & Worley \(2015\)](#) clearly showed that transformational organizational change mainly occurs when there is a significant cause to do so this is clearly in alignment with this study findings that show that the main cause for MSF OCA to change and officially engaging in remote work was firstly the COVID-19 pandemic and then the need to have a more diverse workforce following a great for more diversity, equity and inclusion across all levels. When asked to determine what makes remote work successful, the concept of on boarding was highlighted as key by all research participants (16 out of 16) stating that it's a critical component for any employee to understand their position, roles and responsibilities within an organization, it also assists all employees understand organizational culture. This is alignment with previous studies that have highlighted on boarding [Bradt & Vonnegut \(2009\)](#); [Cesário & Chambel \(2019\)](#) and [Plunkett \(2010\)](#).

9.3. Secondary Themes

I had two emerging secondary themes during the coding phase. These two secondary themes are employee wellbeing and employee development.

9.3.1. Employee Wellbeing

The theme of employee wellbeing is under the category inclusion, and it included word phrases such as finding work life balance and able to plan with my family at the center, family friendly environment where my family is accepted as part of me and trust where I am trusted that I will do my work without constant supervision. This was mentioned 65 times by research participants during the process of the interviews recording 19%. Employee wellbeing is a critical component of remote working as it is significantly associated with increased levels of a productive work life balance, increased job enthusiasm and job satisfaction ([Blomqvist et al., 2020](#); [Stasiuk-Piekarska, 2021](#)). The literature review provided the foundational context for understanding how employee wellbeing impedes the remote workers ability to positively contribute to organizational productivity. If remote workers do not feel trusted enough and are not able to have a work life balance then they feel excluded and less connected to the organization.

9.3.2. Employee Development

The theme employee development under the category of inclusion was mentioned 37 times by research participants forming a rate of 11%. It included words such as diversity seeing more people of color within the Amsterdam office, career development being able to rise through the career ladder without actually being physically present within the head office and detachment gaining

more work experience through being attached to various working environments. The findings presented in this study are also in alignment with the study by Mayo (2000) that states that a continuous creation and exchange of information and experience is deduced to be the key driver of value growth in any organization. Research participants also felt that remote work brings diversity to work without being physically present in the headquarters. This finding is in alignment with Agovino (2022) that states that remote work increases diversity, equity and inclusion as employees are no longer restricted by geography. The research participants provided incidents where remote work was referred to as a great opportunity for career growth and development and remote work guidelines should be enhanced to support this.

10. Conclusion

The purpose of this exploratory case study, using a critical incident technique (CIT), was to create a taxonomy of responses to the incidents that are critical for integrating and improving remote working within Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA). This study was anchored by a central research question, what are the employees and managers perception of remote work integration and how can remote working be improved upon? Data was collected through in-depth interviews and transcripts of 16 research participants. The detailed research interviews and rich descriptions provided the means to explain the participants remote working experiences and perceptions and therefore lead to the discovering the emerging phenomenon that could subsequently be coded, allocated thematically and categorized accordingly. The results of the coding process produced two primary themes and two secondary themes, the themes were divided into primary and secondary themes based on the frequency of the word and word phrases within the incidents that were presented by the research participants from the data on the transcripts. The primary themes were human resources and on boarding.

The secondary themes were employee wellbeing and employee development. The research findings showed day to day occurrences of incidents that have major impact on the process of remote work improvement and integration as follows; That within MSF OCA there is a detailed understanding of the definition of remote working. That the critical strategic guidance bordering on the management of human resources is missing within the MSF OCA remote working policy. The research findings indicate the need to conduct a comprehensive and integrated review of the current existing organizational remote work policy. That change management strategies that focus on addressing the challenges that remote workers experience need to be utilised and that the need to strengthen the current operational systems and policies so that they become more supportive towards remote working. That the literature gap on remote work improvement and integration within humanitarian organisations that was observed during literature review has been addressed.

These research findings are in alignment with other previous studies, that showed that utilisation of employees perspectives in the efficient implementation of remote work (Stasiuk-Piekarska, 2021). The research findings is in alignment with other previous studies that showed that transformational organizational change mainly occurs when there is a significant cause to do so (Tushman & Nadler, 1986; Cummings & Worley, 2015; van Zoonen et al., 2021). The research findings are in alignment with other previous studies that showed the importance of conducting on boarding (Bradt & Vonnegut, 2009; Cesário & Chambel, 2019; Plunkett, 2010). The research findings are in alignment with other previous studies that showed the impact of remote work on human being (Stasiuk-Piekarska, 2021). The research findings are in alignment with other previous studies that showed that remote work increases diversity, equity and inclusion as employees are no longer restricted by geography (Agovino, 2022). The research findings are in alignment with other previous studies that showed a continuous creation and exchange of information and experience is deduced to be the key driver of value growth in any organization (Mayo, 2000). The research findings are in alignment with other previous studies that showed employee wellbeing is a critical component of remote working as it is significantly associated with increased levels of a productive work life balance, increased job enthusiasm and job satisfaction (Blomqvist et al., 2020; Stasiuk-Piekarska, 2021). The main conclusion therefore is that within MSF OCA there is need to comprehensively review the current remote working policy, following a consultative process and the utilisation of change management strategies. This process will therefore ensure that remote work is efficiently improved upon and well integrated within the humanitarian organisation.

11. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations from the study *Accepting a Borderless Workforce through Change Management: Remote Work Integration within Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF OCA)*; That a comprehensive and integrated review of the current organizational remote work policy be conducted. That change management strategies that focus on addressing the challenges that remote workers experiences be incorporated in the review. That the MSF OCA remote working strategy be updated to include critical strategic guidance bordering on the management of human resources and that the MSF OCA remote working strategy be strengthened so that the current operational systems and policies become more supportive towards remote working.

Recommendations for future research include further examination of remote working improvement and integration within humanitarian organizations, this should include a focus on the cost of remote working and understanding other causes of remote working. Future research should include a quantitative exploratory multi-case study that could be used in conjunction with the result of this study to provide a more complete analysis of the experiences of remote workers.

Future research should include how organizational remote work cultures and relational change management concepts affect remote work integration within humanitarian sector. Future research should further examine what forms of negative behaviours can negatively impact and impair remote work integration. Future research should include how to determine effective measures for diversity, equity and inclusion and how to pre-determine a would be effective remote worker.

More research needs to be conduct to provide relevant data that organizational leaders, key stakeholders and management community of practice can utilize as best practices in the recruitment and in the day to day operational management of remote workers within humanitarian organizations. Future research should further investigate and examine how the themes of information and technology, organizational management, workplace flexibility and organizational fit affect workplace engagement. This study contributes to providing evidence that remote work within humanitarian organizations is an emerging organizational culture that is distinctly different from that of the conventional organizational culture. Therefore the findings of this study can be used to continue to explore the phenomenon of remote work improvement and the overarching phenomena of remote work integration workplace.

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to the management of MSF OCA Amsterdam Office for approving the participation of their employees in this study and approving the access to the information that was required for this study. I thank all the participants for their time and effort rendered to this study.

Conflicts of Interest

With regard to the publication of this paper, the author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- Agovino, T. (2022). *Will Remote Work Undermine Diversity Efforts? Many Women and People of Color Prefer Working from Home. But at What Cost?* HR Magaine. SHRM. <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/19616>
- Alexander, A., De Smet, A., & Mysore, M. (2020). *Reimagining the Postpandemic Workforce*. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/mihir-mysore>
- Blomqvist, K., Sivunen, A., Vartiainen, M., Olsson, T., Ropponen, A., Henttonen, K., & Von Zoonen, W. V. (2020). *Remote Work in Finland during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results of a Longitudinal Study*. <https://cocodigiresearch.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/remote-work-in-finland-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.pdf>
- Bradt, G. B., & Vonnegut, M. (2009). *Onboarding: How to Get Your New Employees Up to Speed in Half the Time*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118256145>
- Brunelle, E. (2012). Virtuality in Work Arrangements and Affective Organizational Commitment. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3, 56-62.

- Canary, A. (2021). *21 Ways to Improve Remote Work for Your Employees in 2021*. <https://www.rev.com/blog/author/austincanary>
- Cascio, W. F., & Shurygailo, S. (2003). E-Leadership and Virtual Teams. *Organizational Dynamics*, 31, 362-376. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0090-2616\(02\)00130-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0090-2616(02)00130-4)
- Cesário, F., & Chambel, M. J. (2019). On-Boarding New Employees: A Three-Component Perspective of Welcoming. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27, 1465-1479. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-08-2018-1517>
- Chudoba, K. M., Wynn, E., Lu, M., & Watson-Manheim, M. B. (2005). How Virtual Are We? Measuring Virtuality and Understanding Its Impact in a Global Organization. *Information Systems Journal*, 15, 279-306. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2575.2005.00200.x>
- Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2015). *Organization Development & Change*. Cengage Learning.
- Donini, A., & Maxwell, D. (2013). From Face-to-Face to Face-to-Screen: Remote Management, Effectiveness and Accountability of Humanitarian Action in Insecure Environments. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 95, 383-413. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383114000265>
- Douglas, J. A., McClelland, R., Davies, J., & Sudbury, L. (2009). Using Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to Capture the Voice of the Student. *The TQM Journal*, 21, 305-318. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17542730910965038>
- Dudovskiy, J. (2022). *The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Dissertation in Business Studies: A Step by Step Assistance* (6th ed.).
- European Commission (2020). *European Semester: Commission Communication on Country Specific Recommendations*. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2020-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en
- EY (2021). *EY Report: Work Organization during the Pandemic. Challenges for HR in 2021*. https://www.ey.com/pl_pl/workforce/raport-hr-organizacja-pracy-w-czasie-pandemii
- Fradejas-García, I. (2019). Humanitarian Remoteness: Aid Work Practices from 'little Aleppo'. *Social Anthropology*, 27, 286-303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12651>
- Gajendran, R. S., & Harrison, D. A. (2007). The Good, the Bad, and the Unknown About Telecommuting: Meta-Analysis of Psychological Mediators and Individual Consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1524-1541. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.6.1524>
- Galloway, A. (2005). Non-Probability Sampling. In K. Kempf-Leonard (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement* (pp. 859-864). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-12-369398-5/00382-0>
- Gartner (2020). *Gartner Survey Reveals 82% of Company Leaders Plan to Allow Employees to Work Remotely Some of the Time*. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-07-14-gartner-survey-reveals-82-percent-of-company-leaders-plan-to-allow-employees-to-work-remotely-some-of-the-time>
- Gratton, L. (2020). *Four Principles to Ensure Hybrid Work Is Productive Work*. <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/four-principles-to-ensure-hybrid-work-is-productive-work/>
- Handy, C. (1995). Trust and the Virtual Organisation. *Harvard Business Review*, 73, 40-50.

- Hofman, M., & Pérache, A. (2014). From Remote Control to Remote Management, and Onwards to Remote Encouragement? The Evolution of MSF's Operational Models in Somalia and Afghanistan. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 96, 1177-1191. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383115000065>
- Howe, K., Stites, E., & Chudacoff, D. (2015). *Breaking the Hourglass: Partnerships in Remote Management Settings—The Cases of Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan*. Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. <https://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/organization-partnerships-remote-settings>
- Humanitarian Advisory Group & CARE (2020). *Remote Humanitarian Management and Programming: Guidance Note*. Work in the Age of COVID-19 Guidance Note Series. Humanitarian Advisory Group, CARE. https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HH_PP_Guidance-Note_Remote-Management_electronic_FINAL.pdf
- International Labour Office (ILO) (2020). *COVID-19 and the World of Work: Impact and Policy Responses*. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_738753.pdf
- Izzy, B. (2020). *Remote Management Programming and Donor Policy*. https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/15814/926_Remote_programming.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Karandish, D. (2020). *Three Ways to Improve Remote Work in 2020*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2020/08/24/three-ways-to-improve-remote-work-in-2020/>
- Kirkman, B. L., & Mathieu, J. E. (2005). The Dimensions and Antecedents of Team Virtuality. *Journal of Management*, 31, 700-718. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279113>
- Kraemer, K. L. (1982). Telecommunications/Transportation Substitution and Energy Productivity: A Reamination. *Telecommunications Policy*, 6, 39-59.
- Lee, S., Schmidt-Klau, D., & Verick, S. (2020). The Labour Market Impacts of the COVID-19: A Global Perspective. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63, 11-15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41027-020-00249-y> https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:spr:ijlaec:v:63:y:2020:i:1:d:10.1007_s41027-020-00249-y
- Mayo, A. (2000). The Role of Employee Development in the Growth of Intellectual Capital. *Personnel Review*, 29, 521-533. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480010296311>
- Médecins Sans Frontières (1995). *Chantilly Principles*. <https://www.msf.org/sites/default/files/Principles%20Chantilly%20EN.pdf>
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2021). *The MSF Charter*. <https://www.msf.org/msf-charter>
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2023). *Job Offers in MSF Offices Worldwide*. <https://www.msf.org/jobs>
- Médecins Sans Frontières International (2022). *Who We Are*. <https://www.msf.org/who-we-are>
- Nilles, J. M. (1994). *Making Telecommuting Happen: A Guide for Telemanagers and Telecommuters*. Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Nilles, J. M., Carlson, F. R., Gray, P., & Hanneman, G. G. (1976). *The Telecommunications, Transportation Tradeoff*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Olson, M. H., & Primps, S. B. (1984). Working at Home with Computers: Work and Nonwork Issues. *Journal of Social Issues*, 40, 97-112.

- <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1984.tb00194.x>
- Olson, M. H. (1987). Telework: Practical Experience and Future Prospects. In R. E. Kraut (Ed.), *Technology and the Transformation of White-Collar Work* (pp. 135-152). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1987-97294-008>
- Pauleen, D. J., & Yoong, P. (2001). Relationship Building and the Use of ICT in Boundary Crossing Virtual Teams: A Facilitator's Perspective. *Journal of Information Technology*, 16, 205-220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02683960110100391>
- Plunkett, M. (2010). On-Boarding in a Global Workplace. In K. Lundby, & J. Jolton (Eds.), *Going Global: Practical Applications and Recommendations for HR and OD Professionals in the Global Workplace* (pp. 175-199). Pfeiffer.
- Pokojski, Z., Kister, A., & Lipowski, M. (2022). Remote Work Efficiency the Employers' Perspective—What's Next? *Sustainability*, 14, Article No. 4220. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14074220>
- Shekhar, S. (2006). Understanding the Virtuality of Virtual Organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 27, 465-483. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730610687755>
- Siebrat, F., Hegel, M., & Ernst, H. (2009). How to Manage Virtual Teams. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 50, 63-68.
- SoukMSF (2022). *The International Movement*. <https://www.soukmsf.org/en/international-movement>
- Stasiuk-Piekarska, A. (2021). The Impact of Remote Work on Human Well-Being. *European Research Studies Journal*, 24, 726-741. <https://doi.org/10.35808/ersj/2762>
- Tushman, M. L., & Nadler, D. A. (1986). Organizing for Innovation. *California Management Review*, 28, 74-92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41165203>
- van Zoonen, W., Sivunen, A., Blomqvist, K., Olsson, T., Ropponen, A., Henttonen, K., & Vartiainen, M. (2021). Factors Influencing Adjustment to Remote Work: Employees' Initial Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, Article No. 6966. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18136966>
- VENRO (2020). *Humanitarian Assistance from a Distance: Recommendations for Remote Programming*. https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/VENRO-Dokumente/Venro_Remote_Programming_Engl.pdf
- WHO (2018). *Programming in Access-Constrained Environments: Practical Guidance*. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/260514/9789241513722-%20eng.pdf;jsessionid=809BD6879C0EFECAED435C79DC156018?sequence=1>