

Community Adaptation Evaluation Interview

Interview Details

- Date/time: Thursday July 31, 2025
- Interviewee name: Chris Johnson
- Lead interviewer's name: Carol Chang
- Notetaker's name: Sanaa Mugharbil
- Type of interview: Community Stakeholder
- Relevant DRO number: DR139
- Consent to participate confirmation: Yes
- Consent to record confirmation: Yes

Brief Overview/Reflections:

Main themes/highlights under each section:

Quality	<p>Communication, Integration, and Coordination Challenges and Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of pre-disaster relationship building: Pre-Disaster Relationship Building Enables Rapid Resource Mobilization ▪ Clear Role Definition and Communication Prevents Confusion: Need to establish clear roles of the COAD vs. CAP so that there's no duplication of services. – Reducing duplication of efforts through coordination <p>Enhancing service quality and speed via flexible resource use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leveraging Trusted Local Partnerships and Community Engagement: Being active and building relationships and trust with the community. <p>Extended and sustained support beyond immediate disaster response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuous Partner Engagement, Adaptation, and Capacity Building for Year-Round Support: Partners would adapt their services to the disaster context but then revert back to their core mission.
Cost	<p>Offsetting Red Cross resource burdens with local assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Contributions and Cost Savings from Local Partner Resources: CAP partners used their own local supplies, volunteers, and resources which helped speed up the disaster response process.
Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The impact of disaster on response staff slowed down the speed of response slightly. ▪ Already built connections and trust between partners in blue skies helped to facilitate a speedy response.
Scalability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leaders to be intimately tied to the COAD and LTRGs. This needs to be continued in other disaster responses. ▪ Revise how CAP operates in different communities. Example one that has a COAD, need to revise their role.

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Section 1: Quality

EQ1.1. Describe your role and experience in this disaster response, including your work with the CAP program. Prompts: What worked well? What could be improved?

- LTRG started after Ian (2022), partnered with agencies under COAD.
- Worked on each stage of disaster: response and assessment to rebuilding homes.
- Resiliency and education.
- Strength: Importance of building relationships and connecting with other partners in blue skies.
- Weakness:
 - Needs better coordination at the state level to avoid duplication of services.
 - Conducted Hot Wash of what happened to try to improve this coordination process.
- Transition from Blue Sky to Grey Sky:
 - Didn't seem difficult – partners/organizations kept to their core missions, however they adapted it to the disaster context to address the different disaster-specific needs.
 - Fast transition. Partners knew exactly how they could and couldn't help with. That made the transition easier and faster as they were able to quickly identify gaps.

EQ1.1 Compared to past disasters, how was your community's experience receiving help this time? Prompts: Was this disaster response better or worse than others you remember? What felt different this time?

- Staff changes:
 - EOC chief change: new chief had a different way of doing things.
 - Internal staff transitions on the county level: During Ian, there was no one to connect to the nonprofit community. This time, they had COAD. Big change here and having meetings at EOC with leads of agencies and organizations was different – people were more involved and that improved coordination.
- People who shifted in the organization were more disaster focused – this created a different connection to the clients. Ensuring meetings were going on, consistency in communication.
- A lot of “people movement” and people wanting to make sure things are being done well.

EQ2. During Hurricane Debby, did you notice any of the listed partners (like All Faith's Food Bank, Church of the Palms, EPIC Community Resource Center, Harvest Tabernacle of Sarasota, Mote Marine Laboratory, and Mothers Helping Mothers) working in your community? What kinds of help did they offer? Prompts: Did you see or hear about these groups providing food, shelter, supplies, or information? Did they come to your neighborhood, or did people need to go to them?

- Mothers helping mothers: actively helping clients and identifying populations in need. Provision of NFIs.
- All Faith's: food distribution.
- EPIC: direct client work with debris clean up, raising funds for rebuild.
- Other organizations didn't stand out.

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EQ1.3 How easy or hard was it for people in your community to get help from CAP and CAP partner during Hurricane Debby? *Prompts: Did people know where to go? Were there groups that got help more easily than others? Did the partners we mentioned help make it easier for people to get services? How does this compare with other organizations in your community?*

- Clients were easily able to get services from CAP partners.
- No known barriers.

EQ1.4 Were there people who usually get overlooked who got help this time? *Prompts: Did the CAP and CAP partners do a good job of reaching the people who needed help the most? How does this compare with other organizations in your community? Can you give any examples?*

- Interviewee did not know who is normally overlooked in the community.
- During Milton and Helene: people who are overlooked were people living on the barrier island. There is an assumption that they are rich so they don't need help. A lot of people have had their homes there for a very long time and bought at older rates – not necessarily rich.

EQ1.5 Were the services offered by the CAP and CAP partners a good fit for your community's cultural or language needs? *Prompts: Were interpreters available? Was the food, information, or support appropriate for the people affected? How does this compare with other organizations in your community?*

- Services provided were culturally appropriate.
- Language interpreters were limited (other than Spanish).
- Food was appropriate to different phases of disaster.

EQ1.6 During Hurricane Debby, were there any new types of help available that hadn't been offered in past disasters? *Prompts: Did these come from any of the CAP partners we mentioned? Who did they help the most?*

- Interview did not know.

EQ1.7 Did CAP partners help people for as long as people needed services? *Prompts: Were there services that continued even after the Red Cross ended its help? Who provided those?*

- The community and agency will always find ways to meet the needs, but it changes on the means of support and who is providing it.
- Goes back to the primary mission of the organization: they can help disaster response for a short period of time, but then they'd have to back out a bit.
- For example, Salvation Army: offers canteen until no longer needed then they offer case management. On the other hand, All Faith's will provide food indefinitely coz that's their core mission.
- Roles change according to the need, however they stick to their core mission.

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EQ1.8 Were there any services provided by CAP partners that would not have been delivered if the CAP partners had not been engaged?

- The interviewee was not certain.
- CAP Partners would have still provided the services, to what extent the CAP program impacted that is unclear.

EQ1.9. Conversely, were there any challenges, breakdowns, or unmet expectations?

- No response

EQ1.10 Did the CAP and CAP partners coordinate well with each other and other local organizations? *Prompts: Did it feel like services were duplicated, or were groups working together to cover more ground?*

- Coordination between CAP and other established groups/nonprofits needed improvement: COAD and CAP were having separate meetings. People struggled to know where to go. Divisive as opposed to duplication of services.
- To avoid this, there needs to be a better understanding of CAP and the role they play. Areas that already have COAD need to rethink CAP's role.
- Need to understand that CAP enhances what the community already has.

Section 2 Cost

EQ2.1 From what you observed, did the CAP partners use their own local supplies, services, and volunteers during the response? *Prompts: Did that help things run more smoothly?*

- CAP partners used their own local supplies. That helped to run things more smoothly. CAP agencies used their own people to volunteer and brought in new people to volunteer.

Section 3: Speed

EQ3.1 Was there any delay between when the disaster happened and when people got help? Did CAP and CAP partners help provide services quickly? *Prompts: How did this compare with your previous experience with disasters? How did this compare with other organizations?*

- The response was immediate.

EQ3.2 What helped the CAP and CAP partners respond quickly, or what slowed them down? *Prompts: Was communication good? Did the organizations have what they needed to get started right away? Did being local help speed things up?*

- The interviewee did not know.
- If staff were impacted by the disaster, they couldn't help so that many have slowed down response.
- Partners were all communicating before the storm (during blue skies), so that helped the response be more efficient.
- County and COAD are key players in immediate response.

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Section 4: Scalability and Recommendations

EQ4.1 What was most helpful about CAP and CAP partners during the disaster response?

Prompts: *Did they bring in useful supplies or tools? Build relationships? Help connect people?*

- Presences and provision of services: partners were willing to do what needs to happen.
- The interviewee did not know the enhancements CAP offered.

EQ4.2 Are there things that worked well during this disaster that you think should be done again in future responses? Prompts: What do you think should definitely be repeated?

- Leaders to be intimately tied to the COAD and LTRGs. This needs to be continued in other disaster responses.

EQ4.3 What should CAP and CAP partners do differently next time? Prompts: Are there any changes you think would help your community get better support during a disaster?

- Revise how CAP operates in different communities. For example, one that has a COAD, CAP would need to revise their role.

EQ4.4 Is there anything else you think is important to share about how the CAP and CAP partners helped during Hurricane Debby?

- CAP partners did great responding. They were at the table, asking questions, offering services.
- CAP as a program is good but best if CAP had a solid beat on how we integrate and become part of the response group as a whole.