



INSARAG
Preparedness Response

30
YEARS

FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING 2.0

Final Draft for Pre-Endorsement

Presented

On behalf of the INSARAG Training Working Group

by

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Abbreviations:

EMS	Emergency Management Service
F2F	Face to Face
FR	First Responder
FRT	First Responder Training
IRNAP	INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation Process
ISG	INSARAG Steering Group
ToT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Training Working Group (of INSARAG)
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue

Hypothesis Summary - The new FRT 2.0, a modern resilience building tool

To be pre-endorsed by ISG:

- 1) The original FRT addressed the professional First Responders as target group. The training course is well accepted, from technical content still valid and very useful, same for the medical parts of the course. Thereof no changes in this course are needed
- 2) The times have changed, and the focus is now not only on existing professional FR in the quake prone member states of INSARAG, but also for the grass root level, citizens i.e., the community responders, like neighbours, family members and the like. For these persons the existing FRT does not fit for many reasons
- 3) To reach these potential FRT participants a revision of the FRT was planned, but over the past two years it became clear, that revision is not enough: A completely new training course must be designed
- 4) The new course must follow the standards of modern adult education as well as the state of art regarding didactics and methodology
- 5) **Thereof:** The FRT 2.0 was designed, using several FRT courses (F2F and virtual) in Iraq and Georgia as a base for the theoretical content. Still the manifold differences of potential participants (culture background, different construction types of buildings, gaps in technical understanding, lacks in reading and the likes) indicate that field tests are mandatory to test the new course
- 6) **Thereof:** The FRT 2.0 was internally revised within THW with expertise from teachers and trainers that are active in adult education to ensure that the new course will follow the standards of didactics and methodology
- 7) **Thereof:** The FRT 2.0 shall be tested before final endorsement in three countries and cultures to find out if the final concept works. These three courses are – depending on the continuation of the COVID pandemic – foreseen to be held in Northern Iraq (June 2022), Georgia (Autumn 2022) and potentially in Sri Lanka (Late Autumn 2022), or any another state in the AP regional group
- 8) **Thereof:** These FRT tests shall be observed by additional members of the TWG and other observers from training centre
- 9) **Thereof:** The FRT 2.0 course material shall be presented online for consultation by the Regional Groups at the end of 2022, to be finally endorsed by ISG in May 2023.

Introduction:

The initial First Responder Training is now in place for more than 15 years. After testing the prototype course in Singapore, THW Germany started the Implementation of the FRT in the Peoples Republic of China in 2009 which was part of the Sino-German Program on strengthening the Chinese Disaster Management System.

The success in China (Over 200 Master trainers in six FRT) led to a continuation of the FRT courses by the Chinese Government after the end of the Sino-German Program. That showed clearly that the intended Capacity Building effect was possible and could be an option for those quake prone countries with limited (USAR) crisis reaction capabilities. Strangely, the FRT had acceptance problems. Intended to be done by the member states themselves it seemed that an external assistance was needed to kickstart the FRT in a member state.

Germany is one of the founding member states of INSARAG and has a strong interest in capacity building, thereof the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) as the Operational Focal Point for INSARAG decided to implement FRT in the various projects of THW in quake prone countries. In 2019 the first FRT for Iraq started as a ToT for members of the Iraqi Civil Protection. Two trainings were done and more planned as well as for the Georgian EMS staff.

Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic stopped the F2F trainings and thereof a virtual FRT was conducted. All these experiences were used for the work on the FRT 2.0 but however as field tests are essential, the endorsement of the FRT 2.0 was not possible so far.

There are now several member states that do FRT like recently Sri Lanka. And even more FRT are planned in 2022. Many of them will be used for new FRT 2.0 to be tested in the field.

This final draft will explain the ISG members why an update of the old FRT was needed and especially why this FRT 2.0 will be so different from the old one.

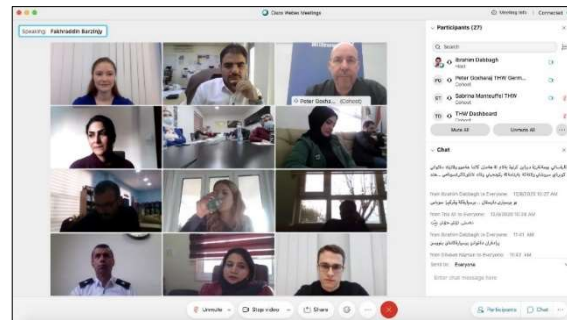


Excursion: The COVID Impact on the FRT 2.0 development

From February 2020 onward THW had to stop all international F2F activities which hampers the original implementation of the FRT as F2F events are essential for testing a new training!

To avoid furthermore delays many parts of the FRT material were redesigned for virtual FRT courses that have full theoretical content, but lack of the practical training parts. The theoretical lessons were even designed to be split over several weeks if needed.

Finally, the full stop of the COVID pandemic was not a real problem for the new FRT (but a delay problem) and even helped to address new content for the FRT as well as some enhancement of existing sessions(content).

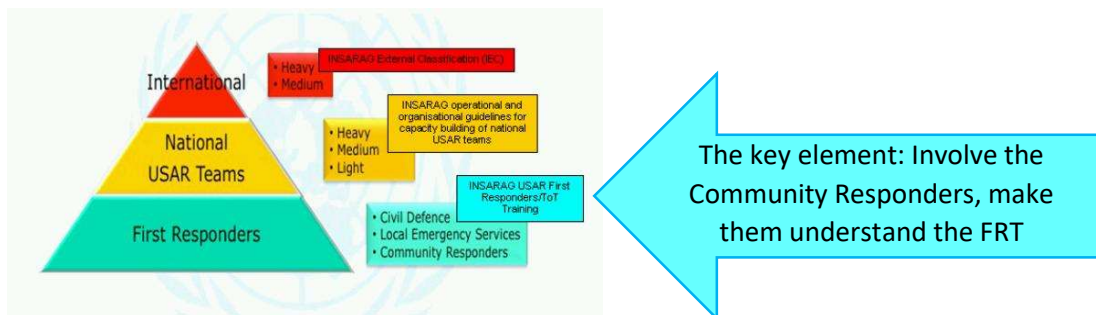


Lessons Learnt from the virtual trainings:

- A splitting of the course into virtual (theory) sessions and final practical day is possible but should be well thought and not exceeding a maximum period of a month
- The delivery of the content in a virtual training needs real experienced trainers to avoid tiredness and distress as well as to keep the participants on the topic
- Training sessions that need interpreters should be avoided due to additional technical problems as well as these sessions tend to be too long
- A maximum of four sessions of 45-60 min (two in the morning, two in the afternoon) should be kept as tiredness (staring to the screen) reduces the learning effect
- It should be avoided to have participants joining virtual sessions via smartphone as the power point slides will be difficult to read
- Content should be summarized after each coffee/tea break (appr. 15 min.) as well as after the lunch break that should be minimum 60 minutes
- A whiteboard tool is essential for a good session.

The importance of the FRT in the INSARAG methodology

Having the INSARAG methodology as a guidance, it is obvious that the bottom-up approach of INSARAG sets a clear signal: First Responders are the ones that start USAR work while the international USAR Teams are still in the process of mobilising. In these early hours most rescues happen, and even more rescues might be possible if the first level of crisis response becomes bigger in numbers! Therefore all potential FR should be in the focus of a training that enhances their performance:



It is fact that the number of community responders is way higher than those of the professionals, such as Fire Fighters, Police, Civil Protection.

To enhance crisis response the easiest way would be more FRT but because the existing training was designed long ago with a focus on the professional FR, the INSARAG methodology forces the TWG to have a more coherent approach on the FRT courses.

The FRT's which THW was conducting for Iraq and Georgia showed clearly that the INSARAG methodology is right, but the participants are the key factor. For Iraq two courses were mixed with operational and more administrative staff members and the THW trainers noticed that several participants had difficulties to understand/follow the course content. Same was noticed in the virtual FRT's in the COVID period (for Iraq and Georgia EMS). In all cases the "problem" was found within the non-operational participants, the existing base of USAR knowledge was not sufficient to fully adopt the course content, therefore the foreseen revision of the FRT was simply useless: A completely new training would be the only solution to follow the INSARAG methodology. To reach the whole target group the trainings must be different, accepting the diverse levels of basic USAR knowledge of the community responders and bringing them first to the basic level of USAR knowledge before training them as FR.

FRT as a resilience building tool

The advantage of the FRFT courses can be found in the simple fact, that **building capacity** is a process that needs many resources: Mainly budget to buy new equipment, pay new rescuers, build training centre etc. In addition, the process itself needs time and many existing human resources to be implemented.

Resilience building via FRT is the opposite: Needed human resources are few (minimum 2 trainers: one for USAR and one for Medic), the course itself is short (max. 4 days) and the needed equipment so basic that 1.000 € per course might be already too much money. It can be done a realistic work site as well as on a very basic training site.

Each course can have up to 25 participants that will be possible master trainers for their community!



These participants can be anybody, age, gender or schooling background does not matter! If there is a basic understanding of the local language and minimum fitness, the FRT 2.0 is open to all. At this stage the inclusion of handicap persons is not foreseen as such a FRT needs higher funding, special teachers (for example those using sign language) and of course a specific customized FRT course.

In average the participants will be able to train new trainers (or end user i.e., citizens, neighbours) after a self-study/rehearsal time of 6-8 weeks that is needed to be settled in the topic.

This kind of resilience building is needed most in all those remote regions where even local professional rescuers or First Responders might ever go or arrive days after the earthquake.

By implementing the FRT 2.0 an INSARAG member state can be pro-active, starting preparedness on any community level within a short time (compared to other capacity building projects).

The challenge

The difference between a First Responders with professional (operational) background (such as Fire Fighters, Police, Civil Protection) and those of non-professional background is the reason why the implementation of the FRT as a tool for resilience building on grassroots level (or “Citizens-Level”) is so difficult, mainly because of two reasons:

- 1) The professional language is unknown (easy language is needed!)
- 2) The content can only be fully understood if there is already a wide knowledge of USAR methodology (the content needs to start at basic level)

In addition, several aspects of the old FRT are not in line with the actual state of adult education, especially:

- 3) The existing course material has not enough visuals (50% of the participants need graphics to understand)
- 4) The number of repetitions is not enough (Anchoring new knowledge in the long-term memory needs more than one repetition)

Furthermore, the course is written in technical English and uses pictures from western and/or modern infrastructure:

- 5) Localisation of the training course is difficult as technical English cannot be translated with using specialized translators (Some languages are much older than the new technical English and the terms do not exist. In other cases, translators have lacks in finding the correct description)
- 6) Participants need to feel home i.e., understanding what they see (It is very difficult to explain things that are unknown, or to memorize something that is content wise not fitting to the picture).

Finally, it must be said that the TWG is aware of the world being diverse and that there is no real “one site fits it all” approach for training. Nonetheless it was intended to have new course that will – at least – address the topic much better to the participants than the old FRT. Many tests showed good results and the ability of participants to do something totally unknown in the field exercise after attending three days of the course gave valuable feedback to the TWG.



Work frame

What initially started as a revision process, quickly became a challenge for the TWG as the frame of work was much bigger than expected and in addition, had to be done mainly by one member of the TWG as the overall workload was high for all TWG members.

Very soon it was clear that the new FRT offers chances – not only of modernisation – but also of new teaching methods such as virtual sessions. Thereof the TWG designed the FRT 2.0 for community responders plus a guidance on how to do both FRT as a virtual event (of course with a final practical exercise). The Technical Guidance Note will be part of the final documentation to shared for comments in late Autumn 2022 and will be based on the experience of Iraq and Georgia FRT's of 2020-21.

It was understood within TWG that the medical part of the training is still “state of the art” as it deals with basic First Aid. Thereof the medical content was not changed only the practical part adopted to community responders i.e., the possible absence of medical goods mentioned and suggestions made for an interim solution by using cloth, scarfs etc.

The language barrier

While doing the “old” FRT for civil protection staff in Northern Iraq it became obvious that some languages such as the locally spoken “Sorani” need careful adjustment and support by the master trainer as the translators and interpreters had difficulties to find the correct terms.

Correct language is essential, not only to transport the new knowledge to the recipient but also to make sure that the later practitioner is doing the right thing! Translating from the original language into the new language thereof must avoid traps, bridge gaps and needs final proof reading by the master trainer to avoid that even he/she struggled by teaching content that is not understanding.

Translating English text extends the amount of text (words) in some language up to 20 percent, causing problems to use the original page. Furthermore, even a simpler English still causes text extension as some languages are not that “tight” in using words or have problems to address the topic correctly in fewer text!

To avoid the language barrier all content was checked for difficult sections, some already simplified, some still waiting for it. These parts will be crosschecked by using three different countries with specific cultural and language background in the final field tests in 2022.

Finally, many participants from the community level might not have full schooling, many will have only the basic years (four to six) while others still struggle to read text in their old age. Having all this in mind it was understood that all difficult topics will need more pictures to support the text.

The mandate of didactic and methodology

Producing a new training for the world is a challenge regarding didactic. What is logic and well implemented in one region such as AEME might cause severe problems in another region. The TWG tried to find consensus in using didactic methods that are used in most of the member states. Still, it is a challenge for each trainer of the FRT 2.0 to find the right balance and in some cases, there might be some localisation still needed.

However, the approach is to make this training course as effective as possible by using the usual minimum standards of didactic and methodology.

From the point of didactic it was essential to structure the lecture in a more detailed way, embedding more repetitions by using interim summaries to “illustrate” the sub processes. By splitting the whole process (for example: assessment) into these sub processes the non-USAR participant is having a better understanding and at the same time starts deeper learning effects (transformation to long-time memory).

Depending on the person, training material must be more visual or more (detailed) written to learn the new content. Only by strictly following the rule to always support text by pictures the continuous learning effect is given.

As the world is divided into three main ways to write (left to right, right to left, downwards from top) it is quite difficult to say which way is the one of the majorities. Thereof the minimum to do was for TWG to have at least only one way to write the PowerPoint slides, so that in case of translation no additional work in re-designing the slides is needed.

The hand-on aspect is the most important one to add that extra percentage of learning effect to the participants. To support this, TWG has written additional information for the master trainers to mix the lecture with questions to the participants, small interactions such as group work and re-structured the small practical sessions to have more interaction.

Content enhancement

The original FRT course was addressing professionals and thereof spared many topics as they were already well known by participants.

Addressing the community level requires a different approach: No knowledge is the starting point and so a huge amount of content had to be added as well as existing stuff had to be explained in detail.

A typical example is the original chapter of “Managing the scene”. Already the title causes problems in translation and the content is hard to understand for participants that know nothing about USAR, rescue methodology etc.

The TWG was adding new chapters, split “one pager” into a series of 3-4 pages to ensure that all participants understand the whole work process. Processes needed new more detailed pictures. Also, most existing pictures needed to be replaced to show rescuers looking like community responders: no uniform, no helmet, just a cap, no boots etc. It is understood that this is not the minimum standard on PPE, but if there is no PPE available, some alternative options are more realistic than picturing a fire fighter.



So, it was not only the COVID pandemic that delayed the work on the FRT 2.0, but it was also the fact that nearly very slide of the old FRT had to be changed. The FRT grew up to dozens of new slides to be written, some of them still not tested. When the final tests are done the FRT will have appr. 50% more pages due to more visualisation (pictures, graphics, flowcharts etc.).

The USAR work itself will have new chapters on how to do an assessment, how to form a First Responder team and how to manage it (Leadership). There are new explanations for difficult topics such as HazMat. Some topics disappeared as they had no real benefit for community responders, while others were shortened or replaced by some easier to understand content.

The work challenge still is to have a training course that could be used in most areas of the work without bigger localization work than translation into local language!

Finalizing the work

To date, the various versions of enhancing the training material were checked in several virtual FRT, also the new content was verified and transformed into easy English language. What is missing, is the verification of translated course sessions in different languages to test if the understanding and the training result will be identical.

In addition, the so far participants had made their comments on different methods to do the teaching: It is understood that a whiteboard in virtual trainings is useful as well as a flipchart for F2F trainings. But from the point of didactic it is needed that the participants from the community level need to be able to re-read the session. This led to several new slides in the sessions that illustrate in bigger graphics topics such as rescue methodology or work site assessment.

Some may say that all these changes can be easily verified in virtual trainings. The answer in principle is yes, but many participants are too shy to ask questions and it is impossible for the trainer to have all 20-25 windows in parallel view as none of the software tools offer this choice. Also, it should be considered that the needed “real end users” rarely have a strong and reliable internet connection neither a tablet. So only field courses in a plenum will enable the TWG to find out which of the drafted options will be the best.

Thereof TWG was writing this final draft to get a pre-endorsement from the ISG to continue with the tests for a final and optimal result that will help to strengthen resilience in the INSARAG member states that are earthquake prone.