

TRAINING

Strengthening of humanitarian aid workers' psychosocial skills

CONCEPT NOTE

PROJECT RELEVANCE

After more than 20 years of international experience in the fields of humanitarian relief and development assistance, we have found that the psychosocial skills capacity building of humanitarian workers hasn't drawn the attention it deserves.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), psychosocial skills represent the ability of an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Psychosocial competencies enable individuals to maintain a state of mental well-being and positively adapt to the situations encountered, while interacting with others and his/her culture and environment in a constructive way.

These skills are not limited to the health sector, they have a wider global impact. They are now an integral part of professional skills required by UN agencies and non-governmental organizations as they are essential to the effective implementation of aid programs. Humanitarian aid workers' motivation can be sorely tested if regular and appropriate support is not provided. To be exposed to different cultural environments, armed conflicts, natural disasters, being away from family, the delicate balance between professional and private life, consecutive missions in "difficult countries", and relations with a hierarchy far away from the field are all integral parts which require special attention to make aid to beneficiaries more effective while at the same time optimizing resources.

An inadequate physical and psychosocial preparation and an incomplete or flawed risk analysis of the country and context in which the mission will take place are contributing factors to frustration that can lead to the weakening of some individuals and may result in a "burn out" (professional exhaustion syndrome).

While Institutional donors and international organizations aren't oblivious to the issue, the response is often too little, too late. Yet, many resources and tools exist to develop social (or interpersonal), cognitive and emotional skills. If regularly strengthened and maintained, these skills increase personal effectiveness, self-esteem and confidence, and allow professional and personal development.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Humanitarian personnel: To self-assess their motivation and own interpersonal, cognitive and emotional skills required to carry out their mission and reinforce their operational performance.

Human resources officers: To analyze psychosocial training tools at their disposal and assess their relevance to meet the strategic challenges of the organization and needs of their personnel.

Managers: To identify the management style they are using with their teams and question its relevance to reinforce their leadership skills.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The project targets humanitarian personnel, human resources officers and managers who supervise field teams.

Humanitarian personnel

These are the primary target. Their needs deserve serious attention and consideration. Several different options can be developed depending on the time and the resources allocated to the training. It is advisable to include resourcing activities together with other more directly targeting personal and professional development. Humanitarian field workers are faced with pressures: long work hours and high-stress environments, and the proposed training should not add stress and fatigue but, rather, to allow a moment of release and stepping back, raise self-questioning to better know and understand its role within the organization. It is also important to identify skills and expertise which can be increased and to obtain the necessary tools to pursue their mission and strengthen their performances.

Human resources officers

Depending on the size and the status of the organization (UN agencies, international or national NGOs), human resources departments have the possibility to provide trainings in order to further develop the skills and experience of their staff.

The project will offer to human resources officers the opportunity to analyze the resources available within the organization. What would be the tools they would need to assess managerial principles and to adapt them to the complex demanding and stressful contexts, in which field teams operate?

Managers

A dedicated program to its managers will have a significant impact on the organization. The fourth industrial revolution and several societal changes are transforming missions and changing the role of the managers. It is proposed to conduct an environmental scan and to provide to managers concrete tools to develop situational and transformational leaderships. Field teams will therefore be able to mobilize their driving forces.

SAMPLE PROGRAM FOR HUMANITARIAN PERSONNEL

Programs are tailored made to the specific objectives and environments of each organization. Resourcing activities aim at supporting the introspection and review of professional accomplishments, and the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Patrick Charignon and la Tour d'Oncin personnel handle organizational and logistical aspects as well as resourcing activities. A coach will be selected to conduct the activities dedicated to the development of professional skills.

Day 1	<p>Welcome and check-in of participants the day before</p> <p>Morning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the program • Mapping of experience and level of competence of the participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drawing and analysis of the participants career path - Writing and sharing of participant successes/accomplishments, identification of talents and strengths <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking with reading of short stories in order to reflect in a playful way on what was discussed in the morning (everyone writes his/her reflection on a logbook) • Activities to integrate body and mind with health and spirit
Day 2	<p>Morning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work life balance, tasks and missions achieved, and recommendations on the way forward <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities on how to revitalize your body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathing and cardiac coherence - Naturopathy assessment - Sophrology, yoga and meditation • Activities to integrate body and mind with health and spirit
Day 3	<p>Morning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on personal aspirations and core values, and how to align them with participant career plan <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal health and well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eating differently: how to feed my “second brain” (this activity can be combined with a treasure hunt walk) - Learn how to rest and recharge (restful sleep, sports activities etc.) • Activities to integrate body and mind with health and spirit
Day 4	<p>Morning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to mobilize my skills and talents, and work with pictures to prepare for the next steps • Debriefing <p>• Departure after lunch</p>

LA TOUR D’ONCIN TO HOST THE TRAINING

The project works with a unique residency location - La Tour d’Oncin (TdO) - www.latourdoncin.com in Montagnieu Village in the Ain Department located less than an hour from Lyon and an hour and a half from Geneva. The village is nestled in the foothills of the Bugey, in the heart of an AOC vineyard, with breathtaking views of the Chartreuse, and Vercors. This geographical location provides an ideal environment that favors introspection work.

La Tour d’Oncin upholds the values of social economy based on the principles of solidarity and social utility. Since 2016, it has welcomed company seminars and organizations that share the core values of social economy, personal and professional trainings, residencies for artists, and offers healing and well-being retreats.

La Tour d'Oncin has 14 bedrooms with private or shared bathrooms and can accommodate up to 25 people with full board and lodging. Each room has a RJ45 or WIFI internet socket. La Tour d'Oncin also has two equipped meeting rooms of 80 and 35 square meters which can be configured in multiple ways to accommodate 50-60 people, a professional kitchen, a dining room, three treatment rooms and a sauna. The interiors are prolonged by two terraces and a garden offering a beautiful look on a countryside landscape.

Your hosts

- **Patrick CHARIGNON** has worked for more than 20 years in the humanitarian and development sectors in Europe, Asia and Africa for the European Union, Caritas and the UN International Organization for migration (IOM). His expertise includes management of large funding and personnel, designing strategies promoting community-based poverty reduction, livelihoods and disaster risk reduction in post-conflict contexts, strengthening of civil society organizations, rehabilitation of small- and large-scale infrastructure, and development of conflict prevention and peace building initiatives. He currently devotes himself to the development of projects where he can share his experience and knowledge gained through his career.
- **Christian CHARIGNON** is an architect and urban planner with a focus on sustainable buildings and facilities with minimal ecological footprints. Christian is also trained in vocal euphony, lyric singing, enneagram, and is also a mid-mountain hiking guide.
- **Anne-Marie GALONNIER** is a professionally trained musician and choir director, has a music and eurythmy teaching career spanning more than 20 years. Also trained in naturopathy, aesthetics, and dietetics, Anne-Marie oversees well-being courses and prepares healthy and tasty organic foods.

OUR PARTNERS AN ACTIVITIES

At la Tour d'Oncin, we have developed a network of professionals in the domains of personal and professional development, naturopathy, biophilia and the cultural and artistic world. These resources persons will be selected based on the needs of your organization, and their contribution will add on the already proposed available activities:

- Hiking in an exceptional landscape
- Physical awakening, sophrology, meditation and yoga sessions
- Naturopathy assessment
- Cooking workshops to learn to eat well
- Massages, sauna and body care

La Tour d'Oncin uphold humanist values and individuals are welcome just as they are, ensuring a convivial, productive, and reinvigorating professional and/or personal development journey – all in an intimate setting designed around each guest. It would be the ideal place to host the proposed training for humanitarian aid workers.