bioforce

SOHP
THE STATE OF HUMANITARIAN PROFESSIONS
2020

Bioforce is a humanitarian organisation that works in the preparation and response to crises relating to conflict, natural catastrophe, and epidemics.

Bioforce provides solutions to enable vulnerable populations to have access to efficient and high-quality aid through training, accompanying and structuring of humanitarian actors.

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The contents of this report represent an attempt to capture the experiences, views and opinions of people working in the humanitarian sector today. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Bioforce.

With the support of Gouvernement Princier PRINCIPAUTÉ DE MONACO

Suggested citation:
Bioforce (2020) The State of Humanitarian Professions.

ISBN 978-2-9538789-7-4
Date of publication: December 2020
Cover photo: Aid worker speaks to a group of Syrian refugees during a group meeting, in an informal tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, on July 2014. NRC/Sam Tarling - ECHO / CC
Design by Agence Lapin Rouge (lelapinrouge.com)

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Acronyms

Acronym	
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AMD	Arms Management and Destruction
AMP	Association for Project Management
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CartONG	CartONG is the full name of an NGO specialising in information management
CBHA	Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CDAC network	The Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities network
CHCF	Core Humanitarian Competency Framework
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CILT	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Professional Development
CMAM	Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition
CPiE	Child Protection in Emergencies
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPPS	Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DPET	The Policy, Evaluation and Training Division within the UN DPPA
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs/ Department of Peace Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EISF	European Interagency Security Forum
EMT Initiative	Emergency Medical Teams Initiative
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
EUHAP	European Humanitarian Action Partnership
FS&L	Food Security and Livelihoods
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
GIS	Geographic Information Systems

GWC	Global Wash Cluster
HI	Humanity and Inclusion/Handicap International
HLA	Humanitarian Logistics Association
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICLA	Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IEDD	Improvised Explosive Device Disposal
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IM	Information Management
IMAS	International Mine Action Standard
IMMAP	Information Management and Mine Action Programs
IMPA	International Project Managers Association
INEE	Inter-Agency Network of Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INSO	International NGO Safety Organisation
INSSA	International Safety and Security Association
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IT	Information Technologies
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
JD	Juris Doctor/Doctor of Law
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MA	Master of Arts
MAMI	Management of At-risk Mothers and Infants
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MD	Medicinae Doctor/Doctor of Medicine
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
MLS	Master in Life Sciences
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MSc	Master of Science
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
NORCAP	Norwegian Capacity (A deployment roster managed by NRC)
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (department of USAID)
PHAP	Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PM	Project Management
PMD Pro	Project Management for Development Professionals
PMI	Project Management Institute
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMART	Standardised Monitoring Assessment of Relief and Transitions
SOHP	State of Humanitarian Professions
TOR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WATHAB	Water and Habitat
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Acknowledgements

This first edition of *The State of Humanitarian Professions (SOHP)* report has been an ambitious and challenging venture, namely with respect to the scope of data collected and analysed. We are aware that there may be many imperfections but are proud to share this first attempt at providing a general picture of what humanitarian professions look like and where they are going.

This report has been developed and produced by Bioforce, coordinated by Rory Downham (Director of Learning and Development) with the key support of Charlie Dalrymple (consultant) who has played the central role in organising the research and drafting the report – and to whom we would like to express our sincere gratitude. Our thanks also go to Myrthe den Ouden, research assistant, who played a key role in research and data analysis.

We are also particularly grateful to the members of the study's Advisory Group, for their wisdom, support and enthusiasm for this initiative: Florence Daunis from Humanity and Inclusion; Angharad Laing from PHAP; Gozel Baltaeva from the CHS Alliance; Leah Campbell from ALNAP, Geneviève Wills from WFP; James Munn from NRC; Andrea Pink from ICRC.

Additionally, a special mention to the members of the Bioforce team who made direct contributions to this study, either through technical support (all the members of the Learning and Development team), communications services, or operational support (our Regional Training Centre for Africa and our careers advisor).

Our sincere gratitude goes to the numerous partners and "friends" of Bioforce who helped spread the initiative within the humanitarian community, with a special mention for PHAP and their support in developing and distributing the survey.

Many thanks to the 98 key informants we interviewed and the hundreds of survey respondents, who provided essential information and resources for this study (cf. list Part 3, section 9), and to the following organisations that very generously contributed by hosting and facilitating one of the country workshops: TPO Uganda, COAST Trust (Bangladesh), IMMAP (Colombia), ALNAP, CHS Alliance, Humanity and Inclusion, Humentum, RedR UK.

And last, but not least, this initiative would not have been possible without the support of the Government of Monaco who generously provided funding for this study.

We hope that this first edition will demonstrate all the attention and investment in human resource management that is required to support the evolution of the humanitarian sector

Gilles Collard

Managing Director of Bioforce

PART 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a study, undertaken by Bioforce, to describe the "State of Humanitarian Professions" (SOHP) in 2020.

The study recognised 24 profession areas and, through consultation with humanitarian professionals, documented the key characteristics and changing nature of each. The study examined the extent to which each work area was considered a profession and whether it demonstrated indicators of professionalisation. In addition, the study captured the views of humanitarians on the competencies required for humanitarians operating in their profession area and which of those competencies, if any, distinguished it from equivalent non-humanitarian work. See Part 3 of the report.

As well as results for each profession area, this report presents findings gathered from across all 24 profession areas. This broad analysis also covers the extent to which humanitarians identify with a single profession, and how different profession areas have professionalised. It attempts to identify distinguishable humanitarian competencies that apply across all humanitarian work. In addition, the analysis attempts to identify common changes in humanitarians' jobs, as well as trends in recruitment, professional development and career progression. See Part 2 of the report.

In keeping with the consultative nature of the study, recommendations were generated by humanitarians who attended the SOHP Conference. See Part 4 of the report.

Introduction

The objective of the SOHP study is to support individuals and organisations to drive professionalisation and continuous improvement in humanitarian action.

The study aims to meet this objective by gathering useful, up-to-date information on humanitarian professions and sharing it with individuals and organisations involved in humanitarian work, as well as organisations that support humanitarians to learn and improve.

The study focuses on humanitarian action in order to provide specific and useful information on a defined group of professions, not to reinforce silos. It is hoped that the findings presented in this report will provide information that will assist individuals and organisations to collaborate across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Through consultation with nearly 1000 humanitarians, the study provides a snapshot of humanitarian professions, today. Rather than attempt a definitive account of such a large and complex sector, the study set out to capture the experiences, views and opinions of people working in the humanitarian sector today.

- 98 interviews were undertaken with key informants representing the 24 profession areas
- 753 humanitarians contributed through a survey
- Findings from the interviews and survey were then discussed in eleven local workshops with 121 participants in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, France (2), Senegal, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Uganda, UK and USA.

These contributors, as well as the workshop hosts and facilitators, volunteered their time and expertise, for which Bioforce is very grateful. Any such community-approach to research incurs limitations. As an NGO based in France, the Bioforce community is weighted towards Europe and francophone countries. The selection of interviewees was based on the knowledge and networks of the study team, and the locations of workshops were determined by the willingness of host organisations. Participants in the survey and workshops were self-selecting. In short, the contributors to this study are not representative of any complete profession area, or the humanitarian sector as a whole. Their contribution, however, remains fascinating.

Humanitarian Environment

Changes in socio-economic patterns, politics, and power dynamics are affecting the rules and regulations governing humanitarian operating environments. Security challenges and changing meteorological conditions affect both the needs of affected communities and humanitarian access to them. Humanitarian organisations are being challenged to respond in several ways. In turn, these are also influencing humanitarian professions. The study highlighted four areas of change:

Adaptation – organisations need to react faster, be more agile in project implementation, work across sectors and traditional operational boundaries, deliver in protracted complex situations with reduced access and politicisation of aid. Humanitarian staff need to be multi-skilled, creative, problem-solvers.

Localisation – despite global agreement, localisation is slower than desired. International organisations are expected to accelerate this. They will continue to shift from implementation to advice and capacity building, refocus activities and funding, and engage local staff who will lead the change.

Technology – digital technology is changing the nature of humanitarian assistance and allowing for greater scrutiny of every aspect of aid programming. Cash programming is influencing all aspects of humanitarian work and digital competency is a baseline requirement for staff.

Coordination & Collaboration – organisations need to decide whether to collaborate or consolidate; and adjust their workforce and geographical presence accordingly. As needs grow faster than funding, and more non-traditional actors become involved in humanitarian work, competition for funds will increase.

Humanitarian Professions

The study identified 24 profession areas, categorised under two headings:

Functional Professions – Advocacy, Cash & Vouchers, Communications, Donor Relations & Grant Management, Finance Management, Human Resource Management, Information & Communication Technology, Information Management, Interagency Coordination, Logistics, MEAL, Project Management, Safety & Security.

Thematic Professions – Camp Coordination & Camp Management, Education, Food Security & Livelihoods, Health, Legal Aid, Mine Action, Nutrition, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding, Protection (including Diversity & Inclusion), Shelter & Non-Food Items, WASH.

Many contributors found it unusual to describe their work area as a profession, and when asked which profession areas they affiliated to, nearly half of all survey respondents selected the maximum number they could – five. When asked to select a single profession that they most closely affiliate to, 16% of all respondents chose Project Management. Protection, Logistics, Health, WASH and MEAL were the next highest, each accounting for between 6% and 8% of respondents.

Interviews identified that several profession areas had developed standards, agreed good practice and associated learning programmes. However, very few humanitarian profession areas had developed agreed competency frameworks or certification mechanisms for individuals. None has a formally recognised professional association, although coordination bodies, membership networks and active communities of practice are numerous.

Individual profession areas vary significantly in terms of professionalisation. Some profession areas do not recognise themselves as a profession, whereas others have taken significant steps to professionalise. Some profession areas, where there is a long-established profession beyond the humanitarian sector (such as Finance Management), may see less incentive for humanitarian-specific professionalisation. Others seem to have significant opportunity to advance professionalisation because they have clear knowledge and skill requirements (Donor Relations and Grant Management) or because they can adopt professionalisation infrastructure from outside the sector (Project Management). It is interesting to note that some younger profession areas appear to have moved to professionalise quickly.

Individual humanitarian professionals are experiencing change. More than 55% of respondents identified that recent changes in the sector had caused significant changes to their job. Contributors to the study highlighted areas of change that appear to be common across all professions, and demonstrated agreement on five areas in particular:

- Humanitarians are required to have greater skills in new technology.
- The work humanitarians do has changed significantly to adapt to Cash & Voucher programming.
- Humanitarians work more closely with colleagues from other humanitarian profession areas.
- Humanitarians spend more time responding to compliance demands from donors.
- Humanitarians use remote management more and more.

Recruitment, Professional Development and Career Progression

Organisations frequently cite challenges in recruiting adequately skilled staff, and even talented individuals find it hard to break into the humanitarian sector. The study showed that supply and demand related to candidates for humanitarian roles seems to be highly specific to context and, overall, quite balanced. This reinforces the idea that the challenge lies in matching candidates with opportunities.

The study emphasised the importance that humanitarians place on humanitarian experience when recruiting. Findings suggest that new candidates were more likely to be hired from within the sector and that humanitarian experience was regarded as the most important factor when recruiting (ahead of "demonstration of professional skills").

Contributors highlighted efforts to address diversity imbalances in recruitment and to nationalise (formerly international) roles. The drivers for this remain unclear, with many contributors feeling that economic factors have greater influence than commitment to localisation or diversification. Humanitarian work continues to be highly reliant on staff with short term contracts. Worryingly, there is ongoing concern about transparency and potential nepotism in recruitment processes.

The number and type of professional development opportunities available to humanitarian staff appear to be

increasing. Face to face training seems to remain the most widely accessed method, with online training close behind. Almost a third of survey respondents had recent access to coaching, mentoring or workplace shadowing. Despite this, there are outstanding concerns with regard to professional development opportunities, namely:

- Many learning programmes are still not getting to the people who need them most and there is considerable inequity in terms of who accesses these opportunities.
- The quality and impact of many of the interventions is questionable.
- Professional development opportunities are not keeping pace with changes in expectations on staff.

Going forwards, contributors felt that greater access to face to face training would be most useful, followed by coaching, mentoring, and workplace shadowing.

When asked how long they expected to work in the humanitarian sector, over 45% of respondents said 10 years or less. This could challenge the notion of humanitarian work as a career choice or reflect a general trend to more transient work patterns, where fewer people dedicate their career to any single sector. Those who intend to spend less time in the sector are also more likely to take periodic (rather than continuous) work in the sector.

Contributors highlighted the main reasons why they saw colleagues move away from the humanitarian sector as; burnout (partly related to longer placement to protracted crises), high workload, lack of sufficient psychosocial support, desire to spend more time with family, lack of career opportunities, limited support to advance within their own organisation, and salary levels.

Humanitarian Competencies

The Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (2011, reviewed 2017) provides a useful reference point as a generic competency framework in the humanitarian sector. The SOHP study did not aim to duplicate the CHCF, but to identify competencies related to humanitarian work that might distinguish it from other sectors. This is potentially useful in several ways:

- Individuals who are new to humanitarian work can focus on the competencies they may need to supplement to be effective.
- Humanitarian recruiters will know the likely gaps in competencies of potential candidates from outside the sector, and how long it might take for them to get up to speed.
- NGOs and CSOs whose primary mandate is not humanitarian work, but who are often key responders, will know additional competencies that their teams require in humanitarian settings.
- The value of humanitarian professions, separate from their private or public sector counterparts, can be determined.

82% of survey respondents felt that their humanitarian profession area was unique (13%), or that it required competencies that distinguished it from equivalent non-humanitarian professions (69%).

Through interviews, survey responses and workshops, contributors identified and broadly agreed on knowledge and skills, and also behaviours, that made up distinguishable humanitarian competencies.

Whilst difficult to prove that such competencies are completely unique to humanitarian work, it seems reasonable to regard them as particularly important in humanitarian work and more likely to differ from those in other areas of work.

Knowledge and Skills	Behaviours
• Knows the Humanitarian system and actors. Understands Humanitarian Law, Principles, and standards • Able to manage stress and operate effectively in an uncertain, rapidly changing, and sometimes insecure environment • Can adapt very quickly and apply technical knowledge to a wide range of different situations • Can work very fast, whilst maintaining quality and professionalism • Can work with limited resources and equipment • Understands protection issues and how crises can affect capacities and vulnerabilities of different people • Can work effectively with crisis affected communities and ensure accountability to them • Excellent communication skills – can build relationships, negotiate and coordinate • Understands and can apply principles of safeguarding • Effective decision making	• Flexible and adaptable • Works well in a multi-cultural environment (both with colleagues and affected communities) • Human empathy and emotional awareness • Takes a needs-based approach – putting others first and seeking to empower them • Agile, rapid and succinct • Good listener – engages well with other people • High level of personal resilience – keeps going • Curious, creative and innovative • Practical and realistic – focused on the solution rather than the problem • Reflective – both self-reflection and stepping back to take a strategic view of the situation • Inclined towards developing the capacity of others • Has respect for the dignity of others • Recognition of power imbalances and a commitment not to abuse their power

The Impact of Covid-19 on Humanitarian Professions

In October 2020, the SOHP study distributed an additional survey related to the effects of Covid-19 on humanitarian work. It was completed by 244 humanitarians in 70 countries.

Four in five respondents reported changes in the focus of their work and 95% highlighted changes in working methods. Two thirds felt that the required skill set for their role had broadened as a result of Covid-19. Localisation was widely cited as the best way for humanitarian professions to adapt to the threat of future virus outbreaks.

The SOHP Conference & Recommendations

In keeping with the methodology of the study, the SOHP Conference provided a space for humanitarians to reflect on the findings, and generate the recommendations, from the study.

On 17th November 2020, 566 participants joined the first part of the SOHP Conference, listening to and commenting on the results of the study. 216 participants engaged in polls, which generated supplementary data – in most cases, affirming the existing findings.

The second part of the conference involved 63 selected humanitarian professionals with interest in human resources, learning and professionalisation. These participants collaborated to generate 19 recommendations in response to four fundamental questions that emerged from the study:

1. How do we drive professionalisation when professions aren't recognised? Do we need professions to drive professionalisation?

2. How do we stop bias making humanitarian recruitment less effective?

3. How do we ensure that humanitarians have the competencies to do their job effectively? And what are the risks of not doing so?

4. How can we drive localisation in humanitarian staffing?

These ideas constitute the recommendations from the study (See Part 4).

Next Steps

100% of poll respondents found the conference useful and 95% said that SOHP work should be continued into the future. More than four in five supported the concept of an ongoing observatory on humanitarian professions. One expert panelist described the study as "A milestone, and timely research".

PART 2

BROAD ANALYSIS

2. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Audience and Objective

This study was undertaken with three primary audiences in mind:

1. Individuals who are involved, or want to be involved in, humanitarian work.

2. Humanitarian organisations who want to recruit, develop, retain, recognise and reward those people.

3. Organisations who support humanitarians and humanitarian organisations to learn and improve.

Put simply, the study will have been a success if these three groups use it in their drive to professionalise and continuously improve humanitarian action.

Individuals could use it to have greater clarity on how they can enter and be effective in the sector. Organisations may use it to better identify, recruit, retain and develop competent staff. Learning providers might be able to better target changing learning needs.

Author

This study was produced by Bioforce. For over 35 years, Bioforce has been engaged in the professionalisation of the humanitarian sector, namely through training, individual certification, and the valorisation of persons engaged in humanitarian action. Bioforce is a leader in the field of structuration and valorisation of humanitarian professions.

Motivation

The context of humanitarian action is constantly changing, with the multiplication and diversification of actors and increasing complexity of interventions. The humanitarian system has also evolved rapidly, with a strong impact on the nature and organisation of response and the profiles of the personnel and organisations involved.

There is significant attention on the effectiveness of this system and the extent to which humanitarian actors adhere to agreed standards, can be trusted to be accountable for their actions, coordinate effectively, and operate professionally.

Recent estimations suggest that nearly 5,000 humanitarian organisations[1], over half a million humanitarian paid personnel[2] and tens of millions of volunteers are involved in humanitarian action[3]. The dedication and commitment of these actors is clear. In contrast, professionalisation, and existence of professions remains remarkably unclear, given the scale of activity.

There are multiple outstanding questions about professions in humanitarian work:

- Actors operate under recognised areas of work and carry job titles accordingly, but to what extent are these work areas considered professions?
- What is the nature of those profession areas, what is changing and why?
- To what extent have the profession areas professionalised?
- Do these humanitarian professions have anything in common, and does that distinguish them from any other sector of work?

This study aimed to answer these, and other questions and to provide clarity around the state of humanitarian professions.

Study Components, Method and Approach

Scope & Definitions

This study focused entirely on humanitarian action and distinguished between humanitarian and development work. This approach was not meant to perpetuate silos, or to ignore the growing recognition of the importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The singular focus on humanitarian action was to provide specific and useful information on a defined group of professions. It is hoped that the findings from this study will provide information that will allow individuals and organisations to collaborate across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The scope of the study was defined by focusing in from the humanitarian system, through humanitarian organisations, to humanitarian professions.

This study adopted the definition of **humanitarian system** from ALNAP's SOHS 2018 research:

"The network of inter-connected institutional and operational entities that receive funds, directly or indirectly from public donors and private sources, to enhance, support or substitute for in-country responses in the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection to a population in crisis.

The system as defined here comprises all organisational entities funded specifically to undertake humanitarian action, which constitutes their primary mandate or mission. They are operationally or financially related to each other and share common overarching goals, norms and principles."

The authors of the study recognise that a wide range of actors are involved in humanitarian action, who are not funded specifically for that purpose, nor consider humanitarian action as their primary mandate or mission. These actors often play a vital role in supporting communities to withstand and recover from crises.

However, the system, as defined by ALNAP provided a recognised and useful parameter for the study.

Continuing with ALNAP's definition, the study included the following **humanitarian organisation** groups:

- local, national and international NGOs conducting humanitarian activities
- UN humanitarian agencies
- the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- host government agencies and authorities and regional/ intergovernmental agencies
- donor agencies: primarily government agencies, but also trusts and other donors

And the organisation groups outside of the scope of this study include :

- national militaries and civil defence groups
- development actors
- the private sector
- diaspora groups
- civil society groups (such as faith groups) that do not have an explicitly humanitarian function
- the media
- academia.

This study recognised that many development actors, particularly local or national NGOs, switch their focus to humanitarian response at times of crisis. For individuals operating in field sites, the distinction between development and humanitarian can be largely irrelevant as they respond to the greatest community needs in any given moment. It is hoped that some of these individuals will have contributed to the study through the survey or local workshops.

In the identification of **humanitarian professions**, the study was limited to functions employed by humanitarian organisations and which require competencies that are specific to humanitarian work. This resulted in two clear omissions:

1. Professionals, working in disasters, whose organisations are not considered humanitarian. e.g. A security guard employed by a private security company to guard a compound.

2. Professionals, working in humanitarian organisations, in roles that do not require competencies that are specific to humanitarian work. e.g. A cleaner working for an international NGO.

The authors of this study recognise that, in each case, specific examples of humanitarian functions can be identified that prove exceptions to these criteria. Despite this, these criteria proved useful as a practical tool to describe and manage the scope of the study.

The study identified 24 **humanitarian professions** through an examination of humanitarian job boards, networks, rosters and information sites, as well as consultation with the study Advisory Group. The 24 profession are listed in Section 4 - Humanitarian Professions.

For the purpose of the study, this list was divided into two groups:

- **Functional professions** are those that provide services relevant to a wide range of humanitarian interventions, enabling projects to be delivered effectively. (e.g. Project Management, Logistics)
- **Thematic professions** are those that provide services related to a specific theme or type of intervention. (e.g. Health, WASH)

When speaking with humanitarians, several terms are used, often interchangeably, to describe work areas and defined sets of responsibilities. For clarity and consistency, the study uses the following terms with these definitions:

Sector – A collection of organisations and professions working around a similar purpose. Where necessary, the study distinguishes between humanitarian, development, public and private sectors.

Profession area – An area of work that is defined by similar knowledge and skills held by those people working in that area. e.g. Donor Relations & Grant Management, Food Security & Livelihoods.

Function – A typical job role that exists within a profession area. e.g. Protection Advisor, Security Manager.

Competencies – The combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours required by an individual to operate within a profession or particular job function.

Components of the Study

The study aimed to provide a snapshot of the experiences and opinions of humanitarians. This information is not presented as correct or definitive, but as a set of interesting findings gathered from conversations and input shared between humanitarians.

Aligned to this aim, information was gathered through five methods:

1. Desktop Research was undertaken to;

   a. Understand the main trends in the current humanitarian environment,

b. Prepare a base level of understanding on individual profession areas, to facilitate effective interviews, and

c. Better understand topics mentioned by interviewees and survey respondents.

2. 98 interviews were arranged with subject matter experts across the individual profession areas. (See Section 9 - Interviewees).

3. A survey addressed to active humanitarian individual practitioners was distributed through humanitarian networks, gathering experiences and views of 753 respondents. (See Section 8 – Survey Report)

4. Local workshops were facilitated in eleven locations. Through these, 121 participants were presented early findings from interviews and survey results and shared their feedback and reflections. (See Section 10 – Local Workshops)

5. A conference presented the overall findings of the study and questioned how best this information could be used.

Methods and Limitations

Desktop research was limited, in favour of maximising direct input from humanitarians through interviews, the survey, workshops and the conference. Given the broad scope of humanitarian work, the research was unable to identify the very many activities being undertaken across the world related to any single profession area. The professionalisation initiatives listed in the report are not exhaustive and it is hoped that this report initiates further conversation and information sharing related to these topics.

Interviewees were identified through web research and through contacts known to project team and Advisory Group members. This created a selection bias towards French and English-speaking professionals from European backgrounds. Interviews took place between July 2019 and March 2020 and were conducted through Skype. As a general rule four interviews were conducted for each profession area, though this varied according to the number of available interviewees and the size of the profession area. Interviews were carried out by nine different researchers. The interviewees were asked the same questions about the characteristics and professionalisation of the relevant profession area. All interviews for one profession area were analysed together along with findings from desktop research.

Bioforce worked with PHAP (The International Association for Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection) to design and distribute the survey through humanitarian networks and implementing organisations, as well as through social media. The survey was shared with over 3,000 Bioforce alumni and more than 50,000 practitioners through PHAP's network. It was also distributed by CHS Alliance, DisasterReady, Humentum and RedR through their networks, reaching over 300,000 humanitarians. The survey was open from 27th of August 2019 to the 29th of November 2019. Whilst 855 people opened the survey, only 753 answered the questions. The number of respondents varied between different questions, as some people did not complete all the questions. For each question, only full responses were included in the analysis of that question. The Survey Report (Section 8) includes all the answers collected, displayed in a series of charts.

There were two main limitations to the survey. First, the respondents to the survey were self-selected, meaning everyone that received the survey could choose whether or not to open it. This non-probability sampling technique means that not all individuals in the population had an equal chance to be represented in the survey results. Second, the population the survey was aimed at was not clearly defined. There is no clear definition of a humanitarian worker, nor are there any precise numbers on the size and demographics of the group of humanitarian workers. This means that it is impossible to check if the respondents to the survey formed an accurate representation of the people working in the humanitarian sector. The implications of these limitations can be summarised as follows: the results are not representative of any group other than the group of respondents. Similarly, any disaggregated group of respondents, including a group of respondents with the same profession, is not representative of that profession in the entire humanitarian sector and therefore also cannot be compared to each other.

Workshops were organised and hosted by Bioforce and partner organisations (See Section 10 – Local Workshops). Participants were invited from amongst these host organisations networks and self-selected by accepting the invitation. In total 121 participants attended workshops, conducted in 11 locations.

- **Annemasse** – France
- **Bogotá** – Colombia
- **Cox's Bazar** – Bangladesh
- **Dakar** – Senegal
- **Freetown** – Sierra Leone
- **Geneva** – Switzerland
- **Kampala** – Uganda
- **London** – UK
- **Lyon** – France
- **Ouagadougou** – Burkina Faso
- **Washington D.C.** – USA

Due to the global outbreak of Coronavirus, several other planned workshops had to be cancelled.

Workshops were designed to gather local reflections on some of the findings from interviews and survey responses. Key findings were gathered and arranged into a series of activities where workshop attendees could respond to the findings.

Information on the SOHP Conference is available in Part 4 of the SOHP study report.

1. ALNAP (2015) The State of the Humanitarian System. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI
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3. HUMANITARIAN ENVIRONMENT

What is changing in the humanitarian environment?

The OECD estimates that 1.8 billion people live in fragile contexts and 80% of the world's poorest could be living in fragile contexts by 2030. In addition, the number of displaced people is the highest it has been since the Second World War[1]. Humanitarian needs are growing fast and outstripping the funding available for response, and 90% of funds are now directed towards protracted crises[2]. Since 2015, appeals for crises lasting five years or longer have spiked and now represent the most funding received and requested (80% compared to around 30% in 2015)[3]. The challenge is growing and changing in nature. Protracted crises mean that humanitarian organisations are involved for longer periods and there is greater demand for effective interoperability between traditional humanitarian and development actors, as well as collaboration with private and state actors.

Humanitarian organisations are noting fundamental changes in their operating environment. Changes in socio-economic patterns, politics, and power dynamics affect the rules and regulations governing operating environments. Security challenges and changing meteorological conditions affect both the needs of affected communities and humanitarian access to them[4]. Despite the increasingly acute humanitarian needs in areas of conflict, studies suggest that humanitarian actors' presence in active conflict zones is reducing[5] [6].

What is changing for organisations?

Given this context, the demands on humanitarian organisations are wide-ranging. This study focuses on 4 areas of change within humanitarian organisations, that are likely to impact humanitarian professions.

- Adaptation
- Localisation
- Technology
- Coordination and Collaboration

Adaption

Humanitarian organisations are being challenged to be more flexible, better adapting to the needs of the situations they are operating in. This means erasing their traditional operational boundaries between humanitarian and development programmes as well as working across sectors.

In responses ranging from Ebola outbreak in West Africa, to the European migration crisis, to the ongoing Syria response, development actors have been criticised for not gearing up to humanitarian response quickly enough, and humanitarian actors for failing to manage transition to long term support programmes. The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, UN Secretary General António Guterres' focus on the Triple Nexus, and the UN's New Way of Working, have placed greater focus on better humanitarian-development collaboration. There is likely to be increasing demand for professionals who can work effectively across the nexus.

It has been argued that humanitarian actors struggle to respond optimally in complex environments, when they define the problem through existing sector-based assessments. This makes it difficult to respond to affected people's priorities if they cross multiple sectors or evolve over time. Traditional project management, that focuses on fixed timeframes, defined needs and set objectives also leaves little room for adaptation. Emphasis is likely to grow on multi-sectoral approaches and adaptive management. This could lead to less focus on professionals with technical knowledge and more on critical thinking, openness to learn, creative problem-solving willingness and ability to make informed decisions quickly and with minimal or no supervision[7].

Localisation

The WHS further increased growing focus on the role of local and national NGOs in humanitarian action. There is widespread agreement on the need to increase the amount of funding going directly to local and national organisations, the importance of working collaboratively rather than contractually, and the role of international organisations being to reinforce not replace local and national systems[8].

Whilst there is a great deal of support for the "Grand Bargain" commitments from the WHS, a significant shift of power has not been realised. By 2017, funding reported to UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS) channelled directly (or through 1 intermediary) to local and national NGOs accounted for 3.6% of total humanitarian assistance. This is an increase from 2.3% in 2016, but significantly short of the Grand Bargain target of "at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible". It is also important to note that most direct funding to local and national actors (84%) was directed to national governments[9].

Despite slow progress, the localisation agenda could have a profound effect on humanitarian professions. The role of international actors is likely to move further towards advice and capacity building activities. As local actors gain more

trust from donors, the relative costs of hiring local, versus international, actors could create a shift in humanitarian funding. Increasing demand for skilled, local actors could also lead to growth in local professional development initiatives.

Localisation might also lead to demand for multi-skilled professionals. In smaller organisations, valuable professionals are often those who can manage multiple roles – e.g. HR, Finance & Logistics[10].

Technology

An estimated US$2.8 billion of humanitarian assistance was delivered through cash and vouchers in 2016, a 40% increase from 2015[11]. Cash programming is increasingly recognised as a faster, more effective and more beneficiary-centred way of delivering assistance. It is one of a range of emerging approaches in humanitarian work that has been facilitated by technological advance. These include the use of participatory mapping, satellite imagery, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, blockchain, as well as social media and mobile technology[12].

"Digital Transformation" is listed as one of 7 key transformations that make up the Red Cross, Red Crescent 2030 strategy. As leading humanitarian organisations adapt to embrace technology in future humanitarian action, they will need professionals who are technologically competent. This may mean recruitment of specialist technical professionals, more frequent professional development initiatives across all staff, and digital competency becoming a baseline requirement across all professions.

Coordination & Collaboration

Some studies that attempt to estimate the future role of humanitarian organisations point towards a consolidation of actors. This could mean fewer, larger organisations; or increased consortia-working. In either case, the outcome would be a strong, multi-sector approach that could shift between humanitarian response and development programming with ease. Successful organisations are likely to have a diverse workforce and a broad geographical spread of staff [13] [14] [15]. Another shift in coordination is being realised through area-based approaches – where a multisector response is focused on a discrete geographical area, led by local authorities and engaging a wide range of public, private and third sector actors[16]. As humanitarian needs grow faster than funding, it is also likely that public-private partnerships will become more commonplace[17].

All of these changes would require organisations to reflect on their role and mandate and enhance their ability to work in collaboration with new actors. Humanitarian professionals will need specific skills in collaboration and relationship management, they will also need to be adaptable to work with a range of actors with whom they may have had limited exposure to date.

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4. HUMANITARIAN PROFESSIONS

Humanitarian Profession Areas

Through an examination of humanitarian job boards, networks, rosters and information sites, the study identified humanitarian professions areas. These were discussed with the project Advisory Group and refined as the study evolved, resulting in a final list of 24 professions.

For the purpose of the study, this list was divided into two groups:

Functional professions

Profession areas that provide services relevant to a wide range of humanitarian interventions, enabling projects to be delivered effectively.

- Advocacy
- Cash and Vouchers
- Communications
- Donor Relations & Grant Management
- Finance Management
- Human Resource Management
- Information & Communication Technology
- Information Management
- Interagency Coordination
- Logistics
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning
- Project Management
- Safety & Security

Thematic professions

Profession areas that provide services related to a specific theme or type of intervention.

- Camp Coordination & Camp Management
- Education
- Food Security & Livelihoods
- Health
- Legal Aid
- Mine Action
- Nutrition
- Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
- Protection, Diversity & Inclusion
- Shelter and Non-Food Items
- WASH

The survey was designed before the final list of professions had fully evolved. This resulted in some differences between the list of professions presented in the survey and those listed above. These differences are:

- "Protection" and "Diversity, Equality & Inclusion" were merged into "Protection, Diversity & Inclusion". Based on the study findings, diversity and inclusion topics related to affected communities relate closely to protection considerations.
- "Advocacy and Communications" were separated into "Advocacy" and "Communications". This allowed the study to consider communications with disaster affected communities as well as public relations, and to separate both from humanitarian advocacy.
- "Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law" has refocused as "Legal Aid". This terminology provided a clearer sense of the nature of the profession.
- "Preparedness, Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction" was removed as it was considered a phase of response rather than a profession area.
- "Recovery and Reconstruction" was removed as it was considered a phase of response rather than a profession area.

Findings specific to each Humanitarian Profession Area

Section 7 of this report contains summaries of the study findings related to each of the 24 profession areas. For each profession area, findings are organised into 4 sub sections:

1. What are the key characteristics of this profession area? The areas of the work involved in this profession area; job functions; and characteristics of the profession area and the workforce.

2. Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work? Competencies of workers in the profession area that distinguish it from equivalent non-humanitarian profession areas.

3. What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area? The extent to which the profession has established infrastructure and agreements related to professionalisation. These could include agreed standards of operation and competencies for workers, training and certifications, recognised associations or professional bodies who administer the infrastructure.

4. What is changing in this profession area? Significant changes in the nature of the work and an estimation of the drivers behind those changes.

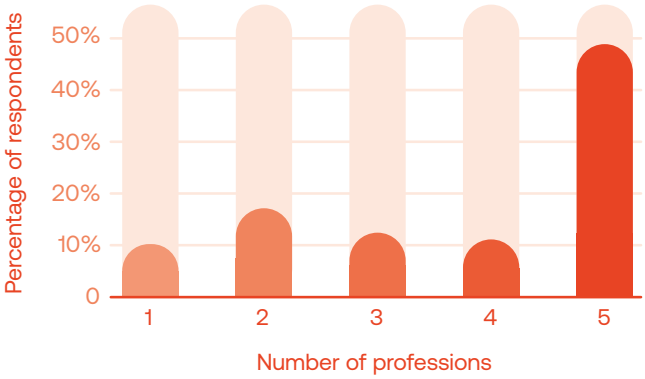
Do humanitarians feel like they belong to a profession?

It was clear from interviews that many people found it unusual to talk about their work area as a "profession". Some interviewees were uncomfortable with the term, suggesting that it encouraged silo thinking when, in practice, many profession areas have significant interdependencies. Others felt the profession names used in the study were too broad, encapsulating several specific profession areas. The majority were happy to conduct the interview using the terms "profession" or "profession area"; the latter avoided making any assumptions about the level of professionalisation or existence of infrastructure that relates to established professions.

Across all the profession areas discussed, there were very few in which interviewees were confident to describe their work area as a profession.

Survey respondents were deliberately given little choice in this matter. They were asked to select which of the 24 identified professions they affiliated with and subsequently, which did they have greatest affiliation with – their primary profession.

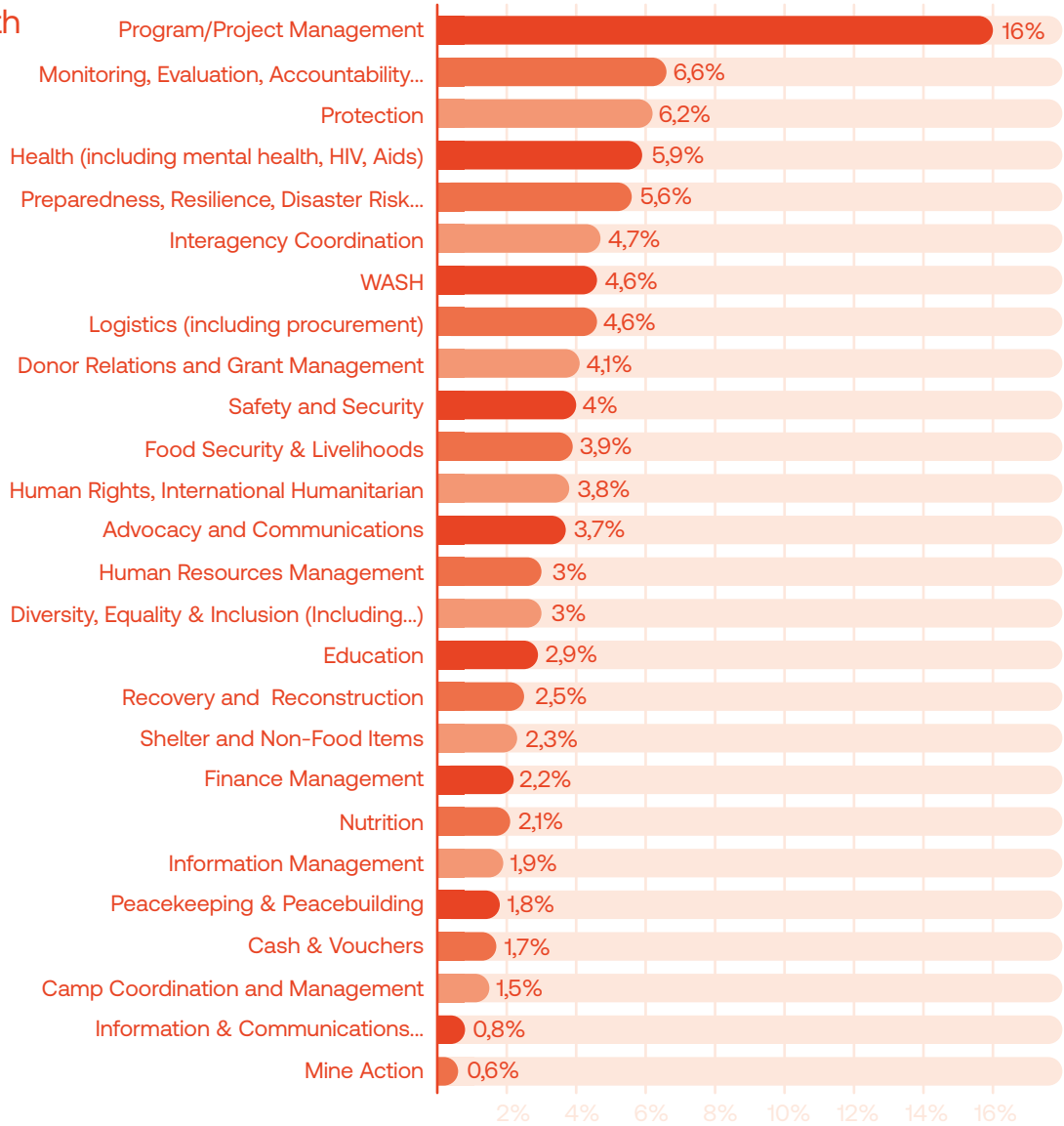
1. Number of professions people affiliated with



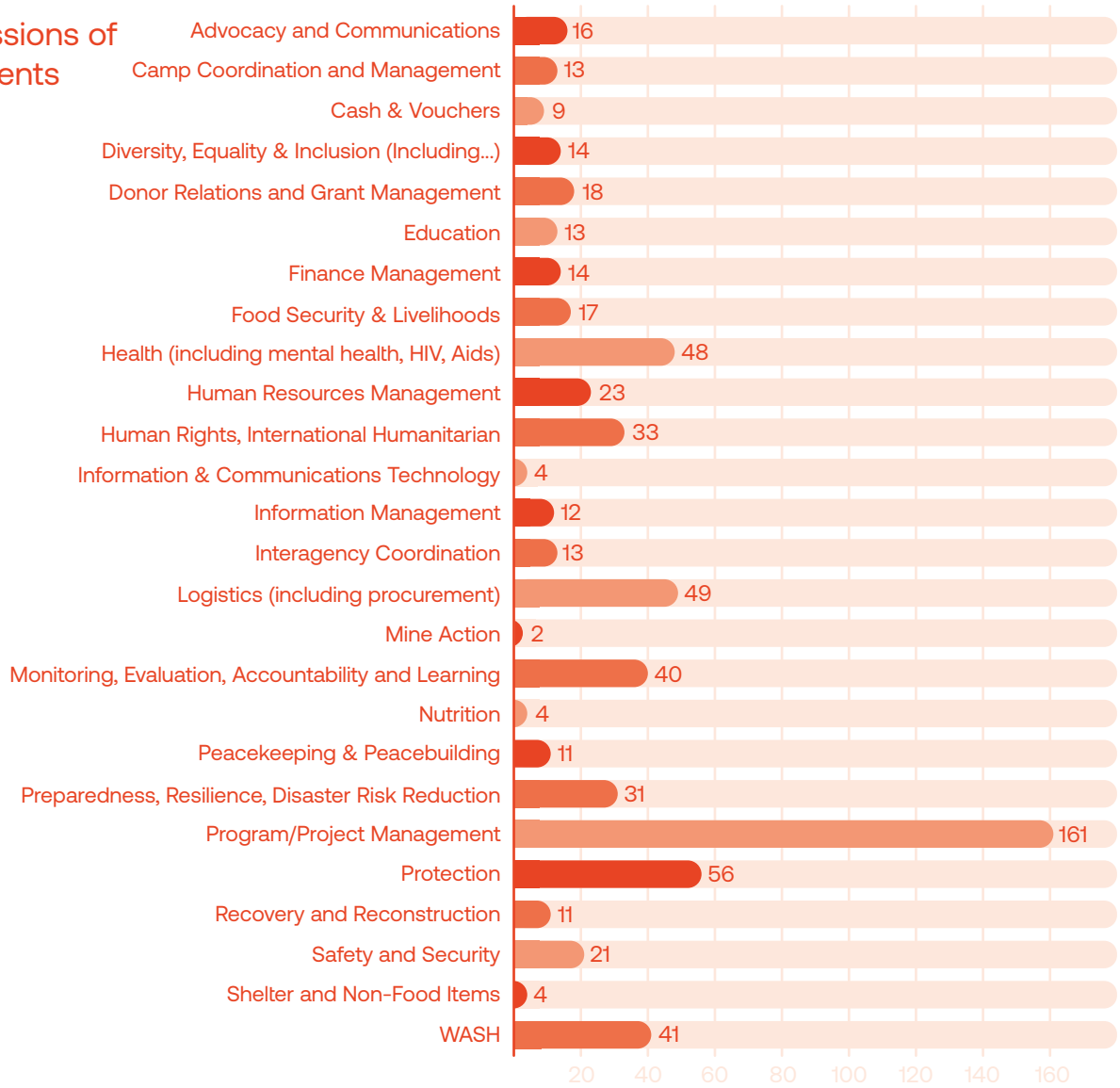
The results of the first question identified a fault in the design of the survey and an insight into the fluidity of work in the humanitarian sector. → Figure 1.

Respondents were able to select up to five professions. Nearly 50% percent of respondents selected 5, suggesting that respondents may have selected 6 or more options had

2. Affiliation with professions



3. Professions of respondents



they been permitted to do so. This infers that humanitarians affiliate with multiple professions, perhaps challenging a notion of a career that is focused on any single profession.

It might be expected that people affiliate with a single thematic profession, and multiple functional professions, because of the nature of their work i.e. - A WASH professional who also affiliates with Logistics, Project Management, MEAL and Grant Management.

If this were the case, functional professions would be selected more than thematic ones. The chart on page 25 (→ Figure **2.**) goes some way to supporting this theory, with only Protection, Health and WASH featuring in the 10 most commonly selected professions. Arguably, protection can be considered the most cross-cutting of thematic professions.

When asked "Which single profession describes your humanitarian career most closely?" and restricted to a choice of just one profession, 161 of 678 (nearly 24%) of all respondents selected Project Management. → Figure **3.**

Protection, Logistics, Health, WASH and MEAL were the next highest, each accounting for between 6% and 8% of respondents.

It is not surprising that many humanitarians work on project management. It is important to note that so many actors regard project management as their primary profession area. This could infer that a large proportion of humanitarian workers regard themselves as generalists, or as specialist project managers.

This predominance of association with project management work could suggest that the attention paid to ensuring quality of thematic interventions through standards and training should also be applied to project management as a stand-alone profession.

Professionalisation

Elements and understanding of professionalisation

The study sought to identify the extent to which humanitarian work areas have professionalised. As a proxy indicator of professionalisation, questions in interviews and the survey asked about three elements of professional infrastructure:

- Competency frameworks – sets of identified knowledge, skills and behaviours that are required for professionals in a particular work area. The study was particularly interested in competency frameworks used across the profession area rather than unique to single organisation. → Figure **4.**
- Certification – learning programmes that result in widely-recognised certificates that indicate that an individual had the requisite knowledge skills and behaviours (identified in an associated competency framework). → Figure **5.**
- Professional bodies – organisations where (certified) professionals come together to share knowledge, develop standards, and assist each other with career development and continuous improvement. → Figure **6.**

The study was interested to see if these elements exist, specific to a humanitarian profession area rather than relating to broader, non-humanitarian related professions. I.e. is there an agreed competency framework for humanitarian logisticians, separate to competency frameworks that exist for logisticians in commercial or public sectors?

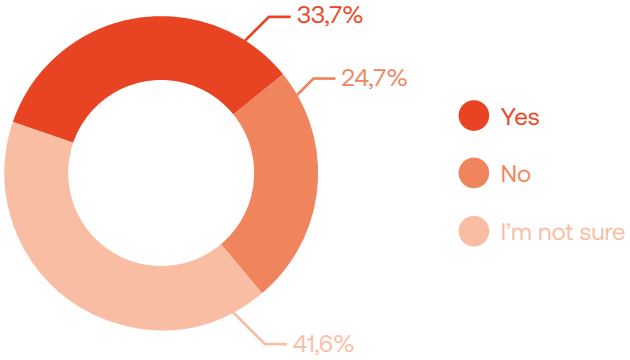
Findings from interviews suggested that very few humanitarian profession areas have established these elements.

There is evidence of individual organisations developing competency frameworks and, to a lesser extent, collaborative efforts by groups of organisations. However, very few seem to be accepted across any humanitarian profession area. There are examples of established competency frameworks in relation to CASH, Child Protection, Humanitarian Education, Nutrition and WASH.

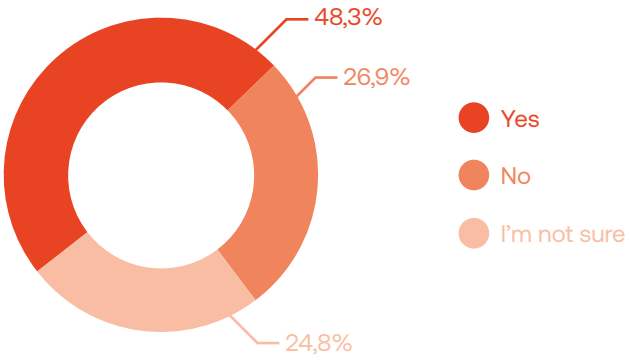
The level of certification is more difficult to measure. There are thousands of learning programmes offering certificates for completion, and the value of these certificates is difficult to determine. Some very specific task-related certification is well recognised – in Mine Action for example. There are also some examples of more widely recognised certificate programmes in Logistics and Health. Yet, overall, very few certificate programmes can claim to be part of a recognised professional development framework for a specific humanitarian profession.

Whilst there are significant numbers of communities of practice, they are rarely formally recognised as professional associations related to individual humanitarian professions. Whilst humanitarian clusters' primary function is coordination, rather than as a professional association, they play an important role with respect to sharing experiences and best practices, developing

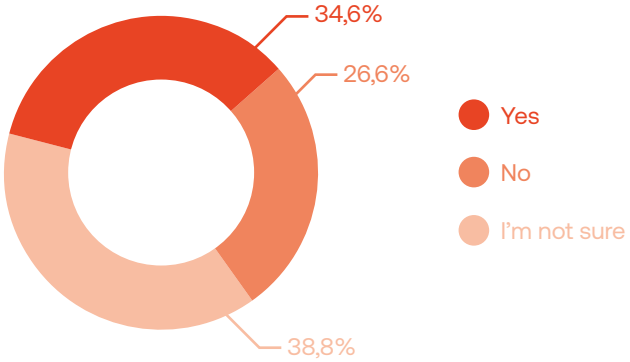
4. Does your profession have competency frameworks?



5. Does your profession have professional certifications?



6. Does your profession have professional associations or professional bodies?



and disseminating standards, training and learning. Other forms of communities of practice also exist in all profession areas. Many have undertaken work that could be within the remit of a professional association – agreeing standards, sharing best practice, and encouraging peer learning. Some are more established as networks or membership organisations and recognise their role in professionalisation. The Cash Learning Partnership, Alliance for Child Protection, Humanitarian Logistics Association and the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies are four examples.

The results of the survey contrasted significantly with those of the interviews. More than a third of respondents stated

that their profession area did have agreed competencies and a professional body. Nearly half of all respondents said that their profession area had professional certification.

In each case, survey respondents were asked to give examples of the competency frameworks, professional bodies or professional certifications.

In the case of competency frameworks, most respondents listed individual competencies rather than names of competency frameworks. A significant number of responses included the names of documents, organisations or training courses that had no connection with competency frameworks.

When listing professional bodies, some respondents referred to professional bodies in private or public sectors, whilst some listed the names of INGOs or UN agencies. There were also a number of responses that did not relate to organisations at all.

A wide range of learning programmes were cited as examples of professional certification. These ranged from short online or face to face courses through to university degree courses. Some were related to the profession area in question, many were on broader topics.

These responses suggest that the survey questions were misunderstood by a large number of respondents. More significantly, this could infer that the terms "competency framework", "professional association" and "professional certification" are not well understood amongst the humanitarians who responded to the survey.

Whilst the specific terms may be less important, a lack of understanding of professionalisation is a significant finding. If this knowledge gap is reflected across humanitarians more broadly, it may inhibit the potential for discussion and action towards professionalisation.

Progress towards professionalisation

Each of the 24 profession areas is unique and presents distinct characteristics in terms of professionalisation. Looking across all 24 professions, it is possible to identify similarities within groups of professions whose level of professionalisation appears to be related.

From the experiences and opinions of interviewees and survey respondents, the study recognised six groups.

1. Some profession areas do not recognise themselves as a profession and have little infrastructure related to professionalisation.

The study found that Humanitarian Advocacy was not viewed as a stand-alone profession. Instead it was considered an element of programme work, or under the banner of communications.

Interagency Coordination is widely recognised as critically important and an ongoing challenge within humanitarian work. It also appears to be under focus through the localisation agenda and collaborative working requirements. Yet, the study found little affiliation with the concept of a profession.

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding are two separate areas of work. Neither appears to have developed infrastructure to support professionalisation within humanitarian work. Military peacekeeping appears to have established agreed standards and associated training. Peacebuilding seems to have more active communities of practice, but no clear competencies or standard training.

2. Some profession areas seem to have significant opportunity to advance professionalisation.

Donor Relations & Grant Management – Fundraising from private donors has significant professionalisation infrastructure across the charity sector generally, but very little that relates to institutional donors (aside from donor-led training courses). As grant management requires distinct knowledge, skills and behaviours, it would seem well suited to professionalisation. Professionals who demonstrate such skills, might be valuable assets to organisations seeking to win the trust of donors.

There are a lot of training opportunities around humanitarian Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL), but few certified courses. A huge volume of guidance and agreed best practice exists around M&E and there are globally accepted standards related to accountability, yet these are mostly assessed at organisational, not individual level. There are also several working groups and communities of practice across MEAL. With such well-established practice, the development of a recognised professional body and certification seems a tangible next step.

There is well developed professional infrastructure for commercial Project Management and some humanitarian practitioners have certification related to this. But, given the size of this group, there seems a clear need for more professionalisation in the humanitarian sector. Recognised commercial PM qualifications are not a currency in the Humanitarian sector. The PMDPro programme has made steps to introduce training and certification into humanitarian work.

Security Risk Management is huge business in the private sector and has a strong professional infrastructure. In the humanitarian sector there are many well established networks and working groups offering guidance, best practice and training. A logical next step could be recognised certification for practitioners in this area.

3. Some newer profession areas seem to be quicker to professionalise.

Emerging areas of work have fewer stakeholders with established practices and differences. This might mean that early and rapid steps to align practices, agree standards and competencies are more achievable.

Although Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) has been used for decades, the recent rapid growth of CVA has created a profession area very quickly. Significant efforts have been undertaken to ensure quality, through coordinated learning and certification practices.

Information and Communications Technology has relatively recently been recognised as its own area (emerging from within Logistics). The rapid establishment of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster is a significant step.

Information Management is perhaps the newest and most rapidly growing area of humanitarian work. Professionals in this area seem reluctant to identify it as a profession, yet some competency frameworks appear to have been established quickly.

4. Some established profession areas already have clear elements related to professionalisation.

Professionals in the area of Humanitarian Communications seem to affiliate to one of two groups – communications with communities; or public relations. The latter is a well-developed profession in the commercial sector and perhaps doesn't need a humanitarian-specific profession. Much of the work around enhancing quality in communication with communities is done through networks, like CDAC, and informal communities of practice.

The Camp Coordination Camp Management Cluster acts as a community of practice and focal point for working groups. Despite being a relatively small community of professionals, there is a range of training on offer and efforts underway to agree operational standards.

Similarly, the Food Security Cluster shares guidance, supports communities of practice and offers training courses. The study found that professionals in this area felt the need for more standardisation around TORs and agreed competencies in this area of work.

Protection is a broad area of work made up of a number of work areas. (e.g. child protection, SGBV, and work focused on inclusion of marginalised groups) For each area there are well recognised standards, some agreed competency frameworks and a range of training courses. The study suggested that protection professionals see little benefit in developing professional associations.

There are several strong communities of practice and associated training courses within the area of Shelter and Settlements. The study found mixed opinions on the value of agreed competencies and certification.

Logistics is an established profession in the military and private sector and individuals move freely between the military, private, humanitarian and health sectors. Perhaps this creates greater openness, opportunity, and blueprint to move towards more formal professionalisation. Professionals working in humanitarian logistics are actively pushing towards standardisation, certification and perhaps a professional association. As well as the Cluster, the Humanitarian Logistics Association provides a useful focal point for such efforts.

Like logistics, Education also has a long-established equivalent profession outside humanitarian work. The study suggests that there are recognised differences that distinguish humanitarian education. This profession area also has a well-established membership organisation (INEE) as well as the Cluster. In addition to established standards and training, there is work underway toward agreed competencies.

Nutrition operates in a similar way, with an active cluster, including several working groups. Standards and an agreed competency framework have been established.

Perhaps because Mine Action is a small area of work, or perhaps because of obvious military links, there are strong steps towards professionalisation. The work area has agreed standards, with associated training and some certification. The size of this area may mean a professional association is surplus to requirements.

WASH is closely associated with private sector engineering associations in different locations, but globally, the cluster is the recognised focal point. WASH has agreed standards, competencies and developed diploma courses. It is not clear whether there is desire to make certification a pre-requisite for professionals in this area, or whether a humanitarian professional association is needed.

5. Some long-established profession areas beyond the humanitarian sector may see less incentive for humanitarian-specific professionalisation.

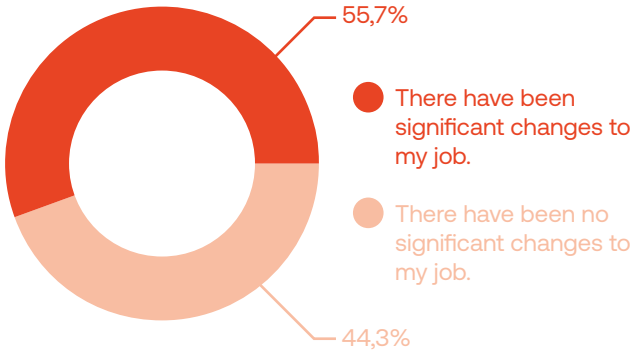
Health is perhaps the strongest example of a profession area that is well established outside the humanitarian sector. Standard medical qualifications are recognised globally, medical professionals need to be affiliated to professional medical associations to be able to practice, and competencies are well established. In addition to this the WHO provides a powerful focal point and the EMT initiative aims to provide a form of humanitarian certification in addition to the medical practitioner certification.

Finance Management is based on accountancy standards and qualifications that are not specific to humanitarian work and applicable in any sector. For this reason, there is little need to develop a humanitarian-specific profession. Elements that are specific to humanitarian work tend to relate to donor regulations and so would sit more closely with grant management.

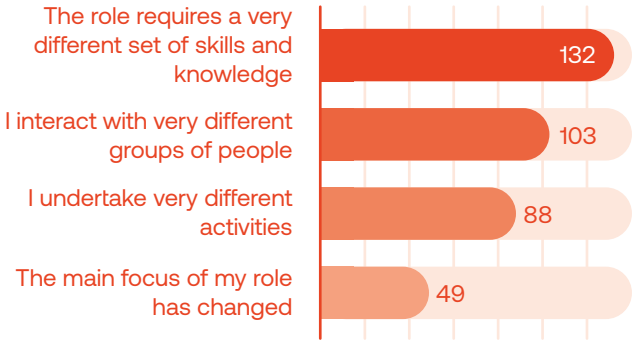
Human Resource Management is also based on a well-established profession that it is not unique to any individual sector. However, the international and rapidly changing nature of the humanitarian workforce might suggest a humanitarian branch of the HR profession could be useful.

Legal Aid is also dependent on a long established, globally recognised professional infrastructure. Humanitarian elements of law require particular focus, but the study found very little desire to create a separate profession area.

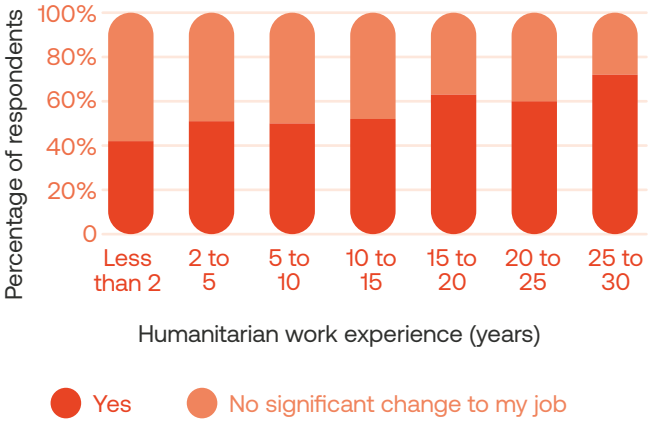
7. Have recent changes in the sector affected your job?



8. How have recent changes in the sector affected your job?



9. Have recent changes in the sector affected your job?



What is changing in people's jobs and what is driving those changes?

How are things changing?

More than half of all survey respondents reported significant changes in their job in relation to current changes in the humanitarian sector. When presented with four types of change, respondents indicated that the skills and knowledge required for their work and the groups of people they needed to interact with, changed more significantly than the main focus and activities of their role.

When disaggregated, the data appears to indicate a relationship between the level of a person's humanitarian work experience and the likelihood that they have experienced recent changes in their job (→ Figure 9.) . This might infer that the sector is experiencing a period of significant change, or that people with more experience are more accustomed to certain practices and therefore more affected by change.

What are the changes and drivers of change?

Through interviews, it was possible to identify changes affecting people's jobs that are specific to individual profession areas. These are included in Section 7.

Interviews and survey responses also highlighted common trends across humanitarian professions. These findings were shared in 11 local workshops. Working in groups, workshop participants were asked to draw on their personal experiences to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the findings and to share their own reflections. The table next page indicates the commonly occurring changes, and associated drivers, that the study identified, as well as workshop responses to these.

In the feedback from the workshops, there appeared to be no strong disagreement with any of the trends identified. Participants seemed largely in agreement with five of the them:

- Humanitarians are required to have greater skills in new technology.
- The work humanitarians do, has changed significantly to adapt to Cash & Voucher programming.
- Humanitarians work more closely with colleagues from other humanitarian profession areas.
- Humanitarians spend more time responding to compliance demands from donors.
- Humanitarians use remote management more and more.

Findings from interviews and survey		Local workshop responses			
Changes	Drivers	Agree	Mixed Opinion	Disagree	No Answer
Humanitarians are required to have greater skills in new technology.	There have been big changes in technology used in the sector	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Dakar Freetown Geneva Kampala Ouagadougou Washington	Lyon		Annemasse* London
The work humanitarians do has changed significantly to adapt to Cash & Voucher programming.	There has been a rapid increase in the use of Cash & Voucher Assistance	Cox's Bazar Dakar Freetown London Lyon Ouagadougou	Geneva Kampala	Bogotá	Annemasse* Washington
Humanitarians work more closely with colleagues from other humanitarian profession areas.	New approaches to humanitarian work have resulted in more cross-profession working groups	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Dakar Geneva Kampala Ouagadougou	Freetown London Lyon		Annemasse* Washington
Humanitarians spend less time working on direct implementation and more time on coordination, capacity building with partner organisations.	The push to localisation has led to an increase in partnership working and sub-contracting arrangements.	Cox's Bazar Lyon	Freetown Geneva London Ouagadougou	Bogotá Kampala	Annemasse* Washington
Humanitarians spend more time responding to compliance demands from donors.	Increased risks around humanitarian work have led donors to set more compliance requirements.	Cox's Bazar Freetown Geneva Kampala London Lyon Ouagadougou	Dakar	Bogotá	Annemasse* Washington
Humanitarians work with private sector organisations more often than they used to.	There is more collaboration between NGOs and private sector at all levels.	Dakar Geneva Kampala	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Freetown London	Lyon	Annemasse* Ouagadougou Washington
Humanitarians are more focused on accountability to affected populations and spend more time communicating with them.	There is a stronger focus on accountability to affected populations.	Cox's Bazar Dakar Geneva Lyon Ouagadougou	Bogotá Freetown Kampala	London	Annemasse* Washington
Humanitarians use remote management more and more.	A focus on localisation, access issues and new technology have all contributed to this.	Cox's Bazar Dakar Geneva London Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá	Freetown Kampala	Annemasse*

*This exercise was not completed in the workshop in Annemasse.

There were more mixed views on three of the topics.

- Humanitarians spend less time working on direct implementation and more time on coordination and capacity building with partner organisations.

In their reflections, participants suggested that the balance between implementation and capacity building was dependent on the mandate of the organisations concerned and varied considerably between HQ and field level. Participants highlighted ineffective consortia and sub-contracting arrangements and a lack of adequate support provided to local implementing partners.

- Humanitarians work with private sector organisations more often than they used to.

Several responses indicated that private sector involvement was rare and usually limited to donations or the supply of technology capability for cash transfers. One group suggested that the local private market was still largely ignored by humanitarian actors.

- Humanitarians are more focused on accountability to affected populations and spend more time communicating with them.

Participants felt that many programmes did not demonstrate good accountability to affected populations. They highlighted that there has been an increase in donor and HQ compliance demands around accountability, but that often becomes a "tick-box" exercise that can restrict rather than enhance humanitarian responses.

Workshop participants also suggested several additions to the list, including:

- More focus on diversity than before, and particularly disability becoming a cross-cutting theme;
- Increased insecurity driven by complex, protracted crises and diminishing respect for International Humanitarian Law;
- Greater scrutiny of humanitarian field work, due to a scarcity of resources and increases in media and social media; and
- Requirement for humanitarians to have improved skills for working in alliances and networks.

5. TRENDS IN RECRUITMENT, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION

The following findings represent the opinions of humanitarians who contributed to interviews, survey responses and local workshops. They should not be considered as objective or calculated measures.

Recruitment

Supply and demand

Across most profession areas, interviewees referenced challenges for organisations looking to recruit candidates with adequate competencies. At the same time, interviewees recognised that many skilled candidates find it hard to enter the humanitarian sector without prior humanitarian experience.

Providing routes for able, but inexperienced, candidates to access the humanitarian sector and develop the competencies necessary to make them effective humanitarians, seems a big challenge.

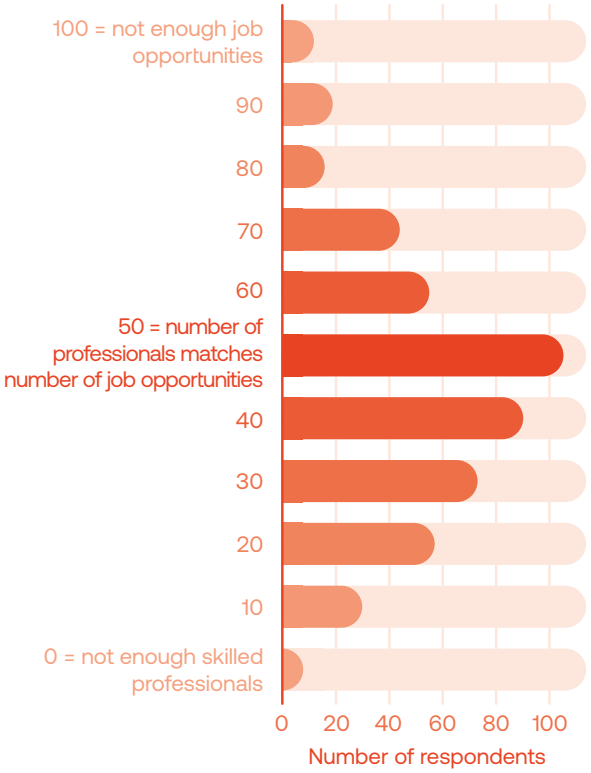
Survey respondents were asked to estimate the relationship between supply and demand along a scale – from high demand (not enough skilled professionals) to high supply (not enough job opportunities). → Figure 1.

The outstanding finding is that the sector seems to be quite balanced. This reinforces the idea that the challenge lies in matching candidates with opportunities.

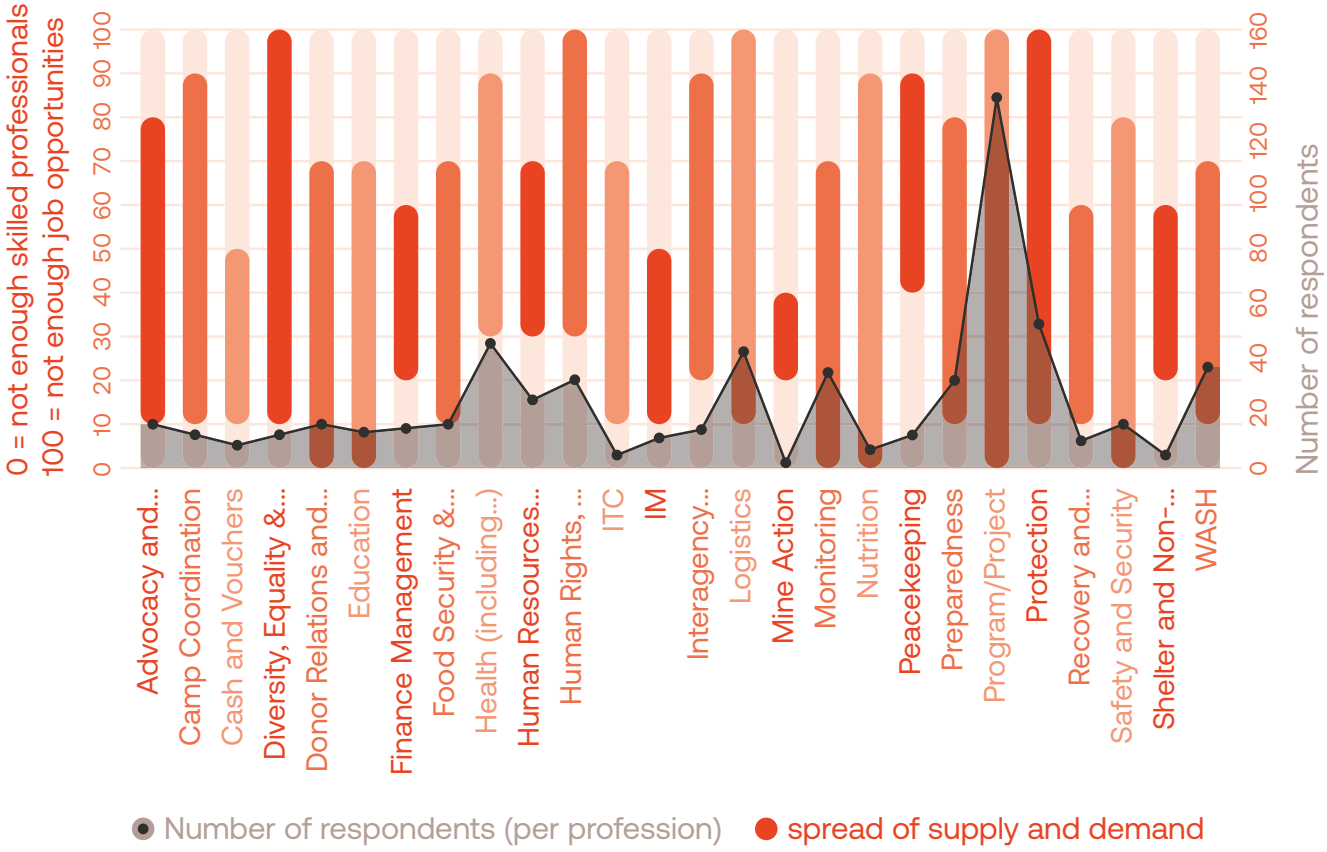
When disaggregated by profession, the results suggest that the issue is highly influenced by the context where an individual is working, rather than the profession area. There is a wide spread of results for most of the individual profession areas, rather than certain professions tending to lean towards either supply or demand.

Cash & Vouchers, Information Management and Mine Action show all results on one side of the centre line. However, it is difficult to draw a conclusion from these areas, as each had a low number of respondents. The chart on the next page (→ Figure 2.) indicates the spread of results for each profession (an orange bar) and the number of respondents who selected that profession as the one they most affiliate with (a grey peak). When viewed together it appears that narrower spreads of results seem to occur in professions for which there were fewer respondents.

1. Supply and demand of skilled professionals



2. Supply and demand per profession with number of respondents per profession



The importance of "Humanitarian"

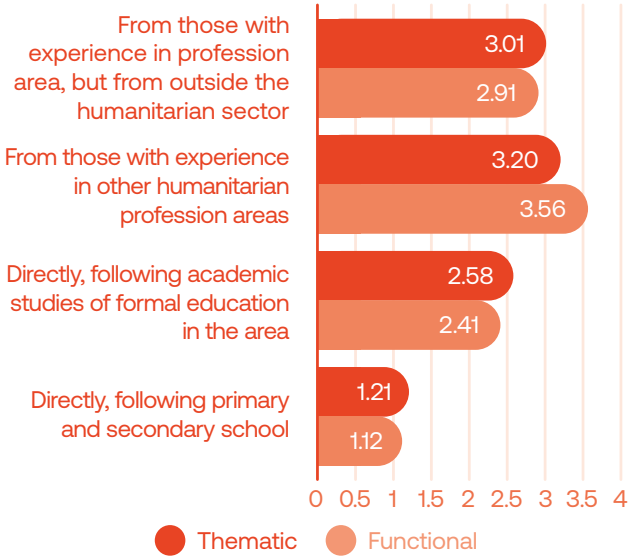
Three measures appeared to indicate the importance that humanitarians assign to experience within the humanitarian sector.

Survey respondents felt that people were more likely to be recruited from other profession areas within the humanitarian sector, than from similar profession areas outside the humanitarian sector. Survey findings suggest that this tendency is felt more by those working in functional profession areas than in those in thematic profession areas. → Figure **3.**

This correlates with the results when respondents were asked what was most important for employers when recruiting individuals. "Number of years of experience in the humanitarian profession area" was deemed more important than "Direct demonstration of professional skills". → Figure **4.**

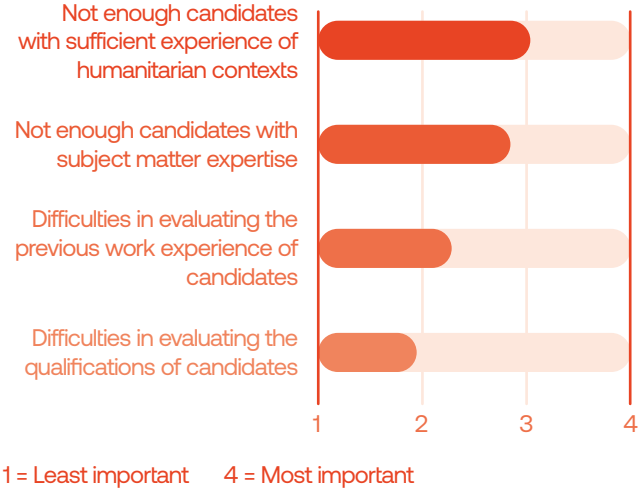
Moreover, respondents felt that it was a greater challenge for organisations to identify candidates with sufficient experience of humanitarian contexts, than to identify candidates with subject matter expertise. → Figure **5.**

3. Where are most people recruited from?



4. What's important for employers?

5. Challenges for organisations



An emphasis on humanitarian experience is not surprising, but it might lead to reflective questions:

- Is the emphasis on humanitarian experience justified? Or, is the humanitarian sector missing out on talented individuals from other sectors?

- How quickly can skilled professionals from other sectors adopt the competencies required to operate effectively in humanitarian work?

In contrast, when asked about trends in recruitment in the sector, a relatively small number of survey respondents highlighted increases in recruitment from outside the humanitarian sector and out-sourcing of work to private sector organisations. Workshop participants presented mixed views on both the prevalence and value of this possible trend. Responses suggested that it often only applied to newer job functions (as opposed to more traditional functions) and only when recruiting from within the sector proved challenging. Some respondents expressed concerns that arrivals from the private sector may lack knowledge of protection principles and accountability.

Contracts

Interviewees highlighted continuously high levels of staff changes in several profession areas. Survey respondents estimated that nearly 60% of all employment contracts for humanitarian work were short-term (less than 6 months) or consultant contracts. Respondents who currently work in UN agencies and those in national NGOs suggested that the number was higher – around 70%.

When asked to estimate the split between staff with national and international contracts in their respective profession areas, respondents gave a wide range of answers, averaging to near a 50-50 balance. When the survey results were disaggregated by the continent in which the respondent is based, or by the type of organisation they work in, there are no significant differences in the results given – still a near 50-50 split. This is somewhat surprising, as the known number of humanitarian staff with national contracts significantly outweighs the number of humanitarian staff with international contracts. In the State of the Humanitarian System (2018), ALNAP estimate that more than 90% of all field staff in UN, NGOs and Red Cross are nationals. It is, perhaps, most likely that the format of the question confused respondents.

The terms "national" and "international" are often used in relation to contract types and staff. This can be misleading, as citizens of certain disaster-prone countries can, and increasingly do, take roles with international responsibility. National legalities may affect where the contract can be issued from, but the role can be regarded as "international". e.g. The Global MEAL adviser for an INGO is a Kenyan citizen, based in Nairobi.

Demographics, diversity and transparency

Interviewees and survey respondents highlighted organisational efforts to address existing bias in recruitment. They referenced organisations purposely recruiting more diverse staff into international roles, as well as reducing the number of international roles and replacing them with regional or national posts.

When presented with these findings, workshop participants generally agreed, but emphasised that many of the changes are being driven by economic factors as much as an incentive to localise. They also suggested that, in some locations, the trend to nationalise roles was only prevalent in certain NGOs and that UN agencies were slower to nationalise roles. Responses suggested that the changes rarely applied to more senior roles, which remained as international posts.

Several interviewees also highlighted initiatives to address gender imbalance. Some also reported that younger staff were being hired, because of a shortage of more experienced candidates.

Survey results also highlighted concerns about the transparency in recruitment. Several responses suggested that roles continue to be given to friends, relatives or internal

candidates who are favoured for personal reasons rather than ability to perform well in the role. Workshop participants shared a more positive view. Many of them reported improvements in recruitment systems and procedures that enable more objective and fair recruitment.

Professional Development

Access to Professional Development Opportunities

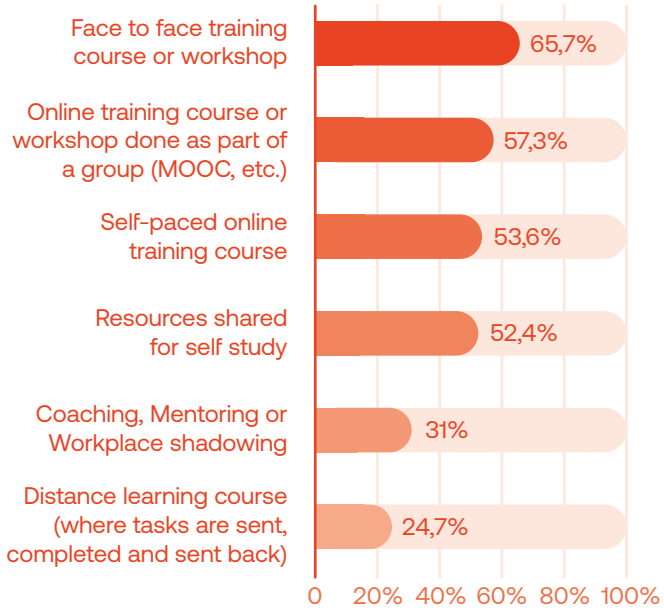
In general, interviewees, survey respondents and workshop participants identified an increasing trend in the number and type of professional development opportunities available to staff.

Questions in the survey asked respondents if they had access to any of the following opportunities in the last 3 years:

- Face to face training course or workshop;
- Coaching, Mentoring, or Workplace shadowing;
- Online training course or workshop done as part of a group (MOOC, etc.);
- Self-paced online training course;
- Distance learning course (where tasks are sent, completed and sent back); or
- Resources shared for self-study.

Face to face training seems to remain the most widely accessed method, with online training close behind. Almost a third of respondents had access to coaching, mentoring or workplace shadowing. → Figure **6.**

6. Percentage of respondents having access to :



Perhaps most significant is the lack of variation, by region or organisation type. When disaggregated, results suggest that staff are just as likely to have access to these opportunities, no matter where they are based. → Figure **7.** (next page)

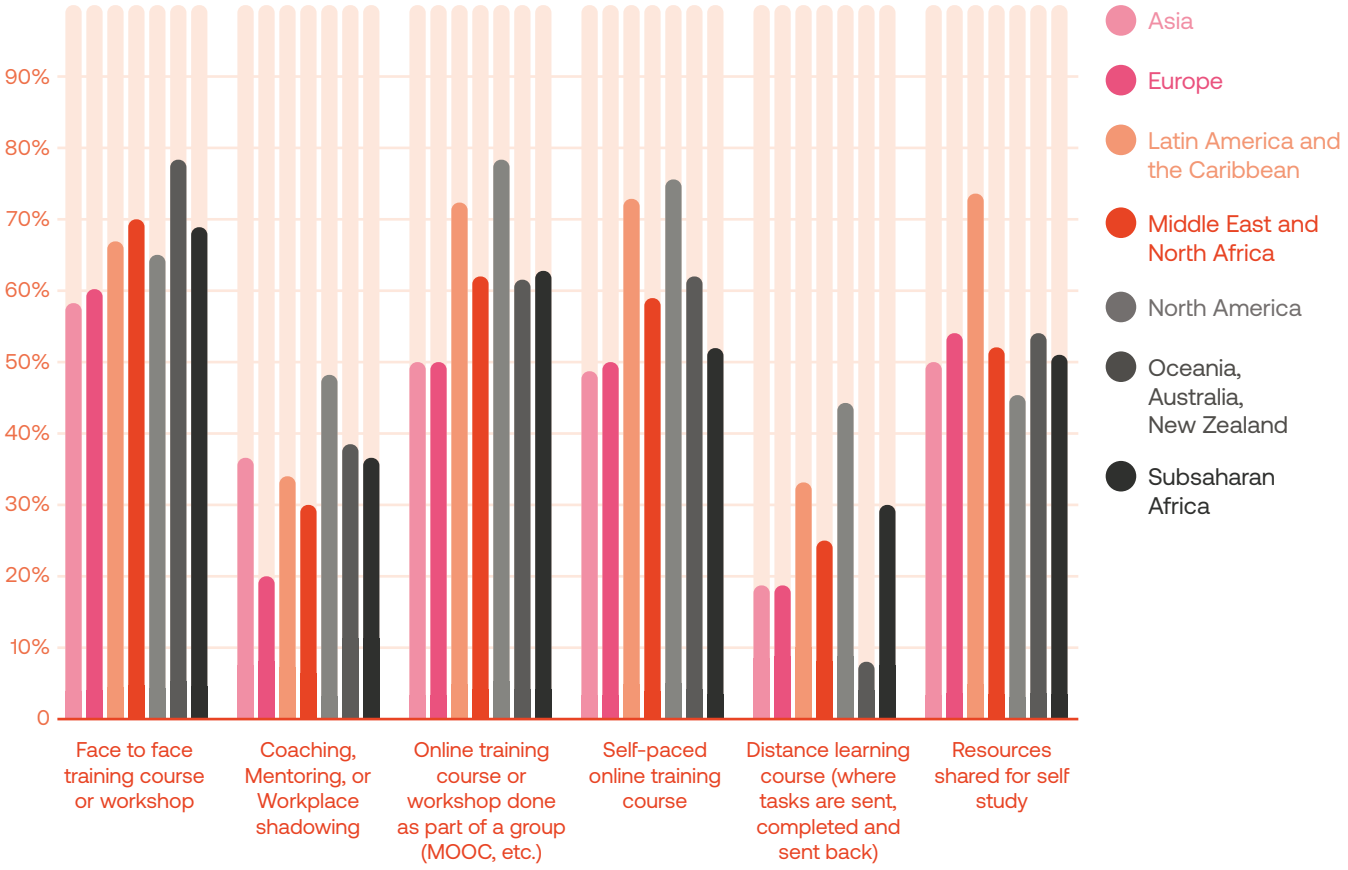
Those working in the Americas seem to have the best opportunities, overall. Interestingly, the survey results also suggest that staff of NNGOs are not significantly disadvantaged compared to their UN, INGO or Red Cross counterparts → Figure **8.** (next page). It is important to note two caveats in relation to this finding.

- Firstly, we cannot accurately determine the seniority or contract type of staff who responded. Two commonly stated problems in relation to access to learning are; (i) that senior staff in NNGOs may have greater access to training than their colleagues, and (ii) the national staff of international organisations may have less access to learning than they international colleagues.

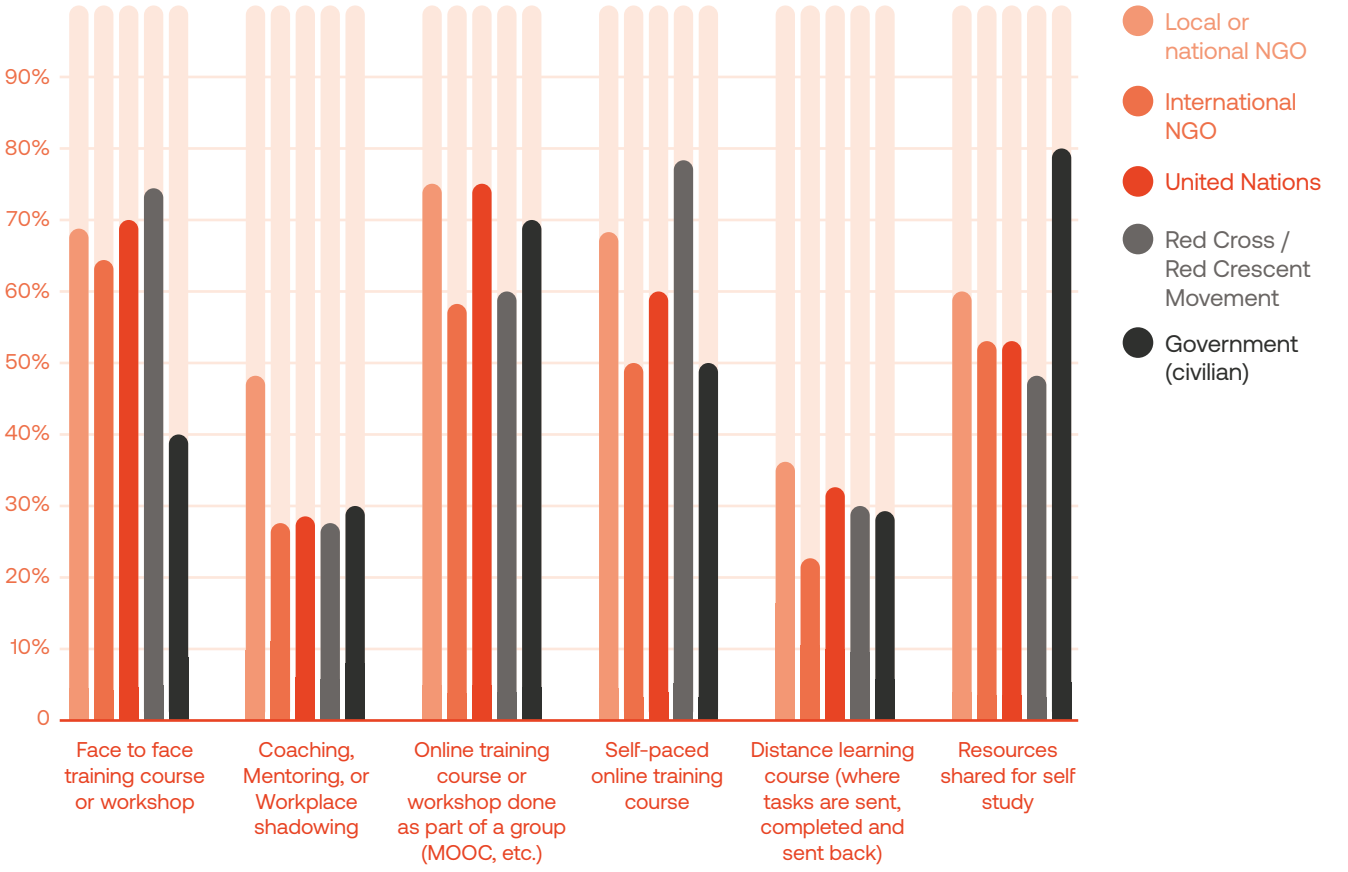
- Secondly, it must be noted that only 10% of survey respondents said they worked for NNGOs versus nearly 50% who worked for INGOs. A smaller sample of respondents is likely to be less representative.

The study also shows that government staff seem less likely to access mentoring or coaching, and more likely to take on self-study.

7. Percentage of respondents indicating they had access to type of training



8. Percentage of respondents indicating they had access to type of training



Gaps and requirements

Despite these seemingly positive results, interviewees, survey respondents and workshop participants highlighted a number of concerns around professional development opportunities:

- Many learning programmes are still not getting to the people who need them most and there is considerable inequity in terms of who accesses these opportunities. This often relates to the geographical location of events and the associated time and cost required to access them. Despite the growth in online learning options, workshop participants highlighted several barriers related to connectivity, access to a laptop or desktop computer, and language barriers.

- The quality and impact of many of the interventions were questionable. Several survey respondents mentioned mixed quality of online training courses, others highlighted poorly structured blended-learning programmes.

- Professional development opportunities are not keeping pace with changes in expectations on staff. Survey respondents and workshop participants pointed to four areas of expectation where they felt that existing learning courses were not sufficiently up-to-date, relevant or useful:

  - Staff are expected to be more familiar with new technology;

  - Staff are expected to keep up to date with changes in programming methods;

  - Staff are required to have a broader understanding of inter-sectoral issues, protection principles, and how different profession areas need to collaborate; and

  - Donor compliance demands are changing quickly. Only the larger INGOs and UN agencies have the capacity to bring their staff up to speed on these, making it harder for smaller organisations to compete for funding opportunities.

These issues are likely to disproportionately affect smaller organisations, as they do not have resources to develop in-house learning programmes. Nor can they access cutting-edge learning programmes through training providers, as the training providers are unlikely to develop such programmes until they are sure that there is sufficient demand to justify the development costs.

When asked what types of future professional development opportunities would be most useful, respondents favoured face to face training, coaching, mentoring and shadowing. → Figure **9.**

9. Type of professional development that would be most useful

Career Progression

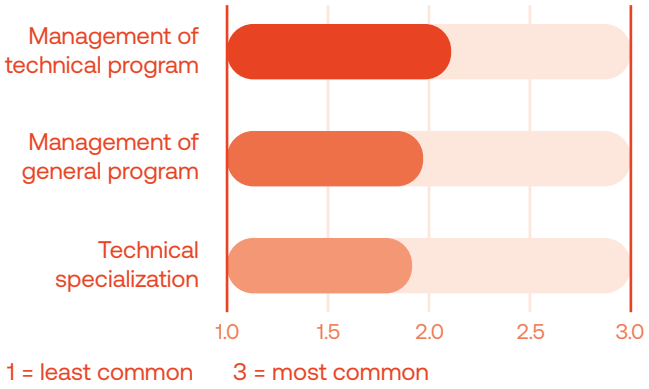
Pathways into, within, and out of the humanitarian sector

As indicated earlier in this section, the findings of this study suggested that entering the humanitarian sector remained a significant challenge and that surge events provide an opportunity for new staff to become involved in humanitarian work.

Trying to identify the most common routes out of humanitarian work has proved difficult. Most interviewees pointed out that such information was highly contextual - depending on the location, the organisation type and individuals' circumstances. Survey respondents felt that, in general, people were more likely to move from one humanitarian profession area to another, rather than leave the humanitarian sector altogether.

Opportunities for career pathways within humanitarian work are also highly contextual. When asked which was the most common opportunity for someone to advance in a humanitarian profession, survey respondents suggested that each of the three options presented was of similar likelihood → Figure **10.**. This could further support the notion that humanitarian careers are likely to incorporate work in several profession areas, rather than focus on a single profession. It would also explain the prevalence of individuals who regard project management as the profession area they affiliate most closely with.

10. What is the most common opportunity for someone to advance?



Some interviewees and survey respondents felt that opportunities for staff to transition from national roles to international roles had increased. They also highlighted the pro-active steps taken by some organisations to increase the diversity of those who can access opportunities to advance to more senior roles. These efforts seem to focus mostly on ethnicity and gender.

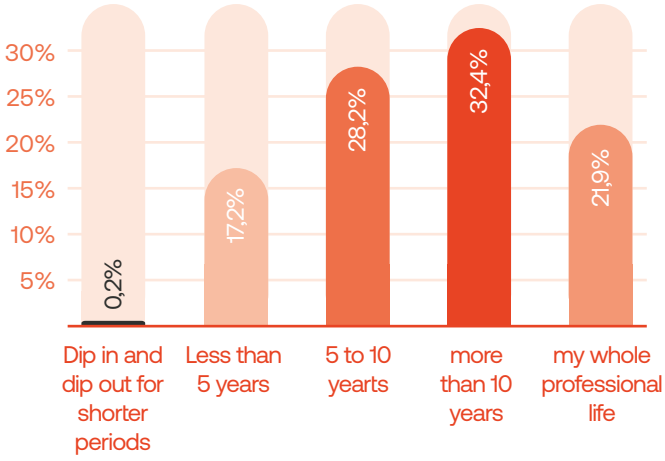
Nationalisation or regionalisation of previously international roles seems to have made career progression more attainable – creating more levels for staff to progress, rather than needing to move from a national to a global, international role in one step.

Duration and constancy of humanitarian work

The nature of humanitarian work creates surge demand for staff. In turn this leads to an influx of people from different geographical locations and different industries. In disaster prone countries, public sector workers and development professionals are experienced in adopting humanitarian roles during periods of crisis, then returning to their substantive career. Some individuals who work in the private sector volunteer or take up paid roles during emergencies. The duration and constancy of their involvement in humanitarian work can affect the extent to which people consider themselves humanitarian professionals, affiliate to any humanitarian profession areas and dedicate time to acquire competencies and certification. For this reason, the study sought to ask separate questions to understand individuals' expectations related to the duration and constancy of their involvement in humanitarian action.

When asked how long they expected to work in the humanitarian sector, over 45% of respondents said 10 years or less → Figure **11.**.

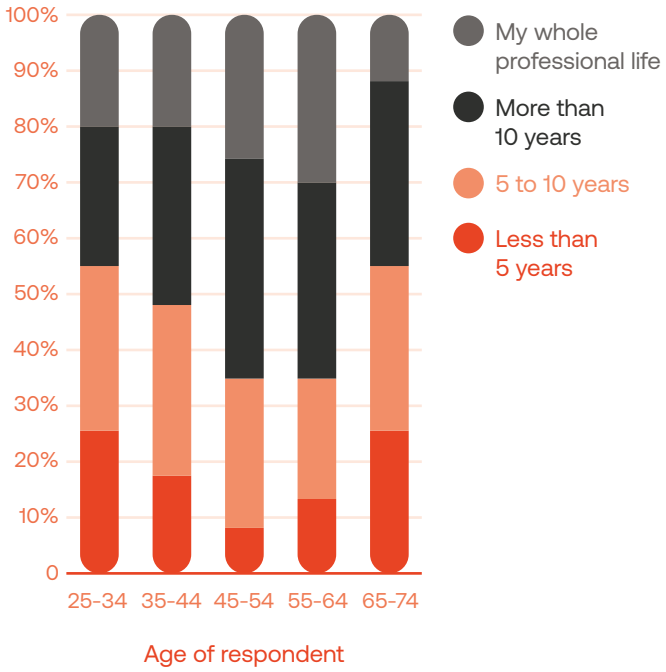
11. How long do you see yourself working within your profession (in your entire career)?



This could suggest that a large proportion of respondents don't consider humanitarian work as a career choice. Alternatively, it might reflect a general trend to more transient work patterns where fewer people dedicate their career to any single sector. This is perhaps supported by the data that shows that nearly 55% of those respondents who are younger than 34 felt they would be in humanitarian work for 10 years of less → Figure **12.**.

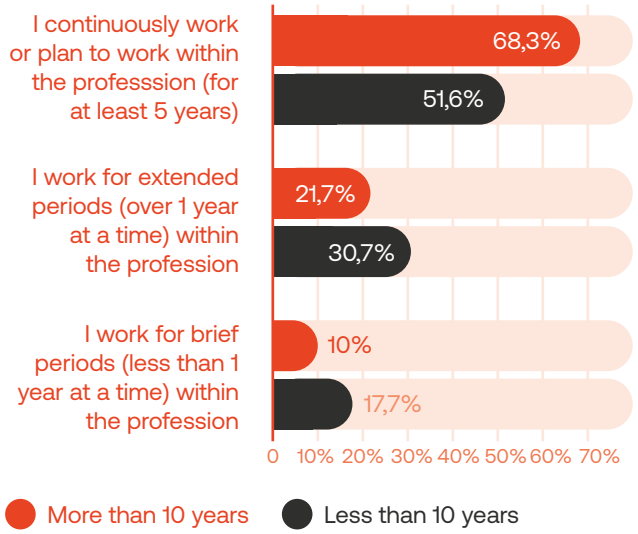
Respondents working in the Red Cross movement appeared to buck this trend – nearly 80% felt that they would spend 10 years or more in the humanitarian sector, compared to 50-54% respondents working in UN agencies, INGOs and NNGOs.

12. How long do you see yourself working in your profession?



The chart below (Figure **13.**) compares how continuously people intend to work in the sector. It shows that people who intend to spend more than 10 years in the sector (orange) are more likely to engage in continuous work. In contrast, those who intend to spend fewer than 10 years in the sector (grey) are more likely to engage in humanitarian work for shorter periods of time.

13. How continuous is your work?



Some participants pointed to the important reality, that many humanitarian responders are employees of development organisations whose mandate shifts as perennial crises affect the locations in which they work. These people may be less likely to describe themselves as humanitarian professionals and unlikely to consider a career in humanitarian work. Yet, they are often highly experienced in humanitarian work and play a crucial role in contextually relevant and appropriate disaster response.

The conclusion of these results is that a significant number of respondents will move between sectors – entering or exiting the humanitarian sector, to work in the private, public or development sectors.

When compared with study findings related to recruitment, this highlights a potential problem. There appears to be strong misalignment between humanitarian sector recruitment trends that appear strongly biased towards those with recent humanitarian experience; and transient career interests of individuals who intend to move frequently between sectors.

Workshop participants highlighted the reasons why they saw colleagues move away from the humanitarian sector. These include burnout (partly related to longer placement to protracted crises), high workload, lack of sufficient psychosocial support, desire to spend more time with family, lack of career opportunities, limited support to advance within their own organisation, and salary levels.

6. HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCIES

Why humanitarian competencies?

Core humanitarian competencies

Competencies can be considered to be the combined knowledge, skills and behaviours that a person needs to perform properly in a job or work role

In 2011, the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) - later named the Start Network, published the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF). The CHCF was built on a number of previous initiatives, with the goal of drawing out the behaviours that are fundamental to all humanitarian positions. It focused on humanitarian delivery and accountability and was underpinned by programming principles and widely recognised organisational standards.[1]

In 2017, the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance completed a review of the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework, taking feedback from a wide range of stakeholders on the relevance and practical use of the CHCF in humanitarian organisations and asking for recommendations for its revision. The review affirmed that the CHCF was fit for purpose, added value and was highly relevant for staff development and humanitarian efforts in general. Stakeholders also acknowledged that the CHCF as a generic competency framework in the humanitarian sector served as a useful reference point. Sadly, the review, also indicated that there was only low to moderate level awareness and hence corresponding lack of 'know how' of the CHCF. This appeared to be a main challenge in the mainstreaming and effective use of the framework. There was also an inadequate linkage with other standards.

According to the review report, another challenge faced in implementing the CHCF is linked to career paths, and the identification and measurement of competencies. Some HR practitioners are not familiar with the CHCF and competency frameworks in general. They are therefore unable to guide staff on how to adopt the framework.[2]

1. ActionAid - Core Humanitarian Competencies Guide - Humanitarian Capacity Building Throughout the Employee Life Cycle, June 2011
2. https://www.chsalliance.org/get-support/resource/core-humanitarian-competency-framework/

Aims of the SOHP study

With the results of the CHCF review in mind, one of the aims of the SOHP study is to raise awareness of humanitarian competencies by continuing the conversation regarding their importance in the changing humanitarian sector.

The SOHP study does not aim to duplicate or recreate the CHCF. Rather than list the core competencies required for humanitarian work, the study seeks to identify competencies related to humanitarian work that might distinguish it from other sectors.

In addition to identifying distinguishable competencies for the humanitarian sector in general, the study aims to highlight distinguishable competencies specific to each of the 24 profession areas. This information was sought through interviews and the survey and is included in Section 7.

Distinguishable humanitarian competencies

There has never been a greater emphasis on cross-sector collaboration in humanitarian work. The World Humanitarian Summit, in 2016, emphasised this. Individuals are increasingly expected to work across humanitarian, development, public and private sector boundaries and, in many cases, move between roles in different sectors. Findings of this study suggest that humanitarian careers are transitory, and that professionals expect to divide their career between sectors.

Yet, this study has also shown that many humanitarians put significant emphasis on specific humanitarian experience when recruiting colleagues. Much value is placed on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that allow individuals to operate effectively in humanitarian crises. Some humanitarians express concern about increasing involvement of organisations and individuals from outside the humanitarian sector, amid discussions around the politicisation of aid and the importance of principled humanitarian action.

In this context, it is important to understand if there are distinguishable humanitarian competencies, for several reasons:

- Individuals who are new to humanitarian work can focus on the competencies they may need to supplement to be effective.
- Humanitarian recruiters will know the likely gaps in competencies of potential candidates from outside the sector, and how long it might take for them to get up to speed.
- NGOs and CSOs whose primary mandate is not humanitarian work, but who are often key responders, will

know additional competencies that their teams require in humanitarian settings.

- The value of humanitarian professions, separate from their private or public sector counterparts, can be determined.

Distinguishable competencies through the eyes of humanitarians

Limitations and bias

The project sought to capture the views of humanitarians. It did not compare these with the opinions of non-humanitarians in equivalent sectors. It did not undertake desk research to compare the competencies suggested by humanitarians with competencies defined as important in an array of non-humanitarian professions.

Information was captured through interviews, a survey and local workshops. In each case participants were asked to suggest or comment on competencies that would distinguish humanitarian work from equivalent non-humanitarian work.

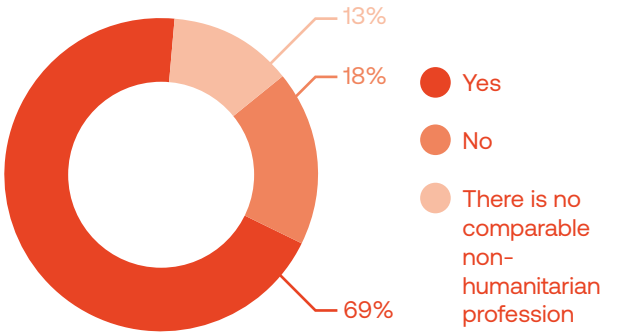
A small number of responses suggested a degree of bias or were based on a misrepresentation of non-humanitarian work areas. For example, respondents suggested that humanitarian interagency coordination required: (1) Extensive knowledge of the other stakeholders involved; and (2) A desire for a "win-win" solution for all parties. Whilst undoubtedly true, it is wrong to suggest that these components are not important in coordination work outside the humanitarian sector.

When all the responses were aggregated, such distinct views had an insignificant effect on the overall findings, but they may provide some insight into the difficultly non-humanitarians can face when trying to access the humanitarian sector.

Do distinguishable humanitarian competencies exist?

When asked if there are any skills, knowledge, and behaviours required for their humanitarian profession that distinguish it from an equivalent non-humanitarian profession, 69% of all survey respondents answered positively. → Figure **1.**

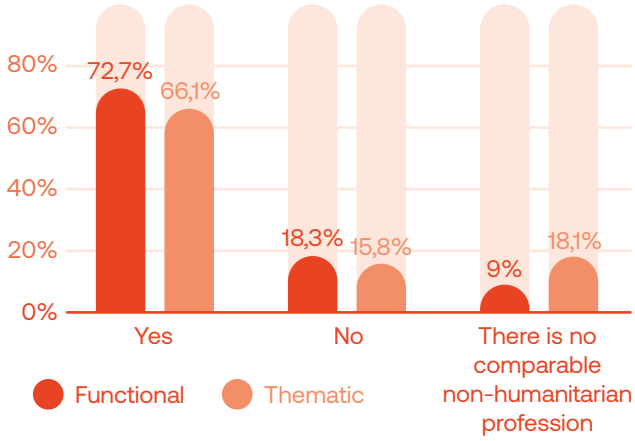
1. Are there distinguishable humanitarian competencies?



13% responded that there was no comparable non-humanitarian profession – inferring that the nature of the work and related competencies were also unique to the humanitarian sector.

When disaggregated, the data suggested that respondents who affiliated with thematic professions were more likely to consider their profession area to be unique. → Figure **2.**

2. Are there distinguishable humanitarian competencies?



Overall, the percentage of respondents who felt that their profession was unique, or that it had distinguishable competencies, was slightly higher for thematic professions.

	% who feel their profession area is unique	% who feel their profession area has distinguishable competencies	% who feel their profession area is unique or has distinguishable competencies
Respondents who affiliate with functional profession areas	**9,0%**	**72,7%**	**81,7%**
Respondents who affiliate with thematic profession areas	**18,1%**	**66,1%**	**84,2%**

These percentages are surprisingly high, given that many of the humanitarian profession areas identified, such as; Education, Finance Management, Health, Human Resources, Information & Communication Technology, Logistics, Project Management, Safety & Security have well-established equivalents in other sectors.

Respondents may have recognised broad similarities between humanitarian and non-humanitarian profession areas, yet responded in relation to a few distinct differences that require unique distinguishable competencies. The question did not ask about **how many** skills, knowledge and behaviours differed.

Another hypothesis is that respondents were considering very specific technical skills or knowledge. When asked to give examples to illustrate their answer, some respondents did cite specifics. Here are a few examples

- "Humanitarian donor rules and regulations"
- "Knowledge of the relationship between education and protection in emergency settings"
- "Market-based programming techniques"
- "Family tracing and re-integration»

However, the majority of answers related to more general skills, knowledge and behaviour. The most common answers are listed in the table on the next page.

Commonly perceived distinguishable humanitarian competencies

The following lists (p.45, 47) indicate knowledge, skills and behaviours that interviewees and survey respondents commonly identified as those that distinguish humanitarian from non-humanitarian work.

These lists were shared in eleven local workshops. Working in groups, workshop participants were asked to draw on their personal experiences to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the suggestions and to share their own reflections.

It is important to note that many of the comments made by workshop participants related, not to whether the competency was necessary for humanitarians, but whether it was commonly present amongst humanitarians, in their experience. This suggests that some participants may have also based the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on the prevalence of the competency rather than its necessity.

Knowledge and Skills

Findings from interviews and survey	Local workshop responses			
Distinguishable Humanitarian Knowledge and Skills	**Agree**	**Mixed Opinion**	**Disagree**	**No Answer**
Knows the Humanitarian system and actors. Understands Humanitarian Law, Principles, and standards.	Dakar Geneva London Lyon Washington	Cox's Bazar Freetown	Bogotá Kampala Ouagadougou	Annemasse*
Able to manage stress and operate effectively in an uncertain, rapidly changing, and sometimes insecure environment.	Cox's Bazar Dakar Kampala London Lyon Washington	Freetown Geneva	Bogotá Ouagadougou	Annemasse*
Can adapt very quickly and apply technical knowledge to a wide range of different situations.	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Dakar Freetown Kampala London Lyon Washington	Geneva	Ouagadougou	Annemasse*
Can work very fast, whilst maintaining quality and professionalism.	Cox's Bazar Dakar London Lyon Washington	Freetown Geneva Kampala	Bogotá Ouagadougou	Annemasse*
Can work with limited resources and equipment.	Bogotá Dakar Freetown Kampala London Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Cox's Bazar Geneva		Annemasse*
Understands protection issues and how crises can affect capacities and vulnerabilities of different people.	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Dakar Kampala London Lyon Washington	Geneva	Freetown Ouagadougou	Annemasse*
Can work effectively with crisis affected communities and ensure accountability to them.	Cox's Bazar Dakar London Ouagadougou Lyon Washington	Freetown Geneva Kampala	Bogotá	Annemasse*
Excellent communication skills – can build relationships, negotiate and coordinate.	Dakar Freetown Kampala Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá Geneva	Cox's Bazar	Annemasse* London

*This exercise was not completed in the workshop in Annemasse.

The workshop responses suggested that, in general, participants broadly agreed with the knowledge and skills identified. However, some participants also challenged a number of the suggestions on the list.

- Knows the Humanitarian system and actors. Understands Humanitarian Law, Principles, and standards.

Most participants argued for the fundamental importance of these.

Where disagreement existed, it mostly related to the prevalence of this competency, rather than its necessity. Participants agreed that the level of awareness and understanding of these elements varied considerably. They highlighted gaps in knowledge, particularly amongst smaller organisations and field-based humanitarians.

In addition, a few comments suggested that detailed knowledge of principles and laws is less important for support staff who do not work directly with affected populations.

- Able to manage stress and operate effectively in an uncertain, rapidly changing, and sometimes insecure environment.

Participants highlighted that this was not unique to humanitarian work, some citing military operations as a comparison. Many responses focused on the risk of "normalising" stress and proposed that organisations should be held accountable for looking after staff, ensuring they have adequate support.

- Can work very fast, whilst maintaining quality and professionalism.

Outputs from the workshops commented that this competency was also not unique to humanitarian work. Others emphasised that to ensure quality some tasks could not be completed quickly.

- Understands protection issues and how crises can affect capacities and vulnerabilities of different people.

In response to this competency, participants also tended to focus on prevalence rather than necessity. Many highlighted an acute need for training and support in this topic.

- Can work effectively with crisis affected communities and ensure accountability to them.

Again, responses seemed to support the importance of this competency, but highlighted a lack of good practice in this regard.

Participants sought to add "decision making" and "the principles of safeguarding" to the list of knowledge and skills. Safeguarding is particularly important in situations with significant power imbalance, but it is less clear that decision making is more important in humanitarian work than in other sectors.

Behaviours

Findings from interviews and survey	Local workshop responses				
Distinguishable Humanitarian Behaviours	**Agree**		**Mixed Opinion**	**Disagree**	**No Answer**
Flexible and adaptable	Annemasse Cox's Bazar Dakar London	Lyon Kampala Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá Freetown Geneva		
Works well in a multi-cultural environment (both with colleagues and affected communities)	Annemasse Cox's Bazar Dakar Freetown Geneva	Kampala London Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá		
Human empathy and emotional awareness	Annemasse Cox's Bazar Dakar Freetown Kampala	London Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá Geneva		
Takes a needs-based approach – putting others first and seeking to empower them	Annemasse Freetown Geneva Kampala	London Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Dakar		
Agile, rapid and succinct	Annemasse Cox's Bazar Dakar	Kampala London Washington	Freetown Geneva Ouagadougou	Bogotá	Lyon
Good listener – engages well with other people	Annemasse Dakar Kampala London	Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá Cox's Bazar Freetown Geneva		
High level of personal resilience – keeps going	Annemasse Cox's Bazar Dakar Freetown Geneva	Kampala London Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Bogotá		
Curious, creative and innovative	Annemasse Bogotá Cox's Bazar	Lyon Ouagadougou Washington	Freetown Geneva Kampala	London	Dakar
Practical and realistic – focused on the solution rather than the problem	Annemasse Cox's Bazar London	Lyon Washington	Bogotá Dakar Freetown Geneva Kampala	Ouagadougou	

Workshop participants expressed more agreement with the list of distinguishable behaviours than they had with the list of distinguishable knowledge and skills. This perhaps infers that it is easier to associate the idea of humanitarianism to beliefs and values that manifest themselves in behaviours, rather than identifiable knowledge and skills. A strong connection to beliefs and values, could explain the importance that the humanitarian sector places on humanitarian experience when recruiting, and the very high number of survey respondents who felt that distinguishable humanitarian competencies exist.

Workshop participants expressed less certainty about some of the behaviours listed.

- Agile, rapid and succinct

Responses to these behaviours tend to relate to the use of specific terms. Some participants felt that the terms "rapid" and "succinct" may not always be applicable, depending on the operating context.

- Good listener – engages well with other people

Some participants stressed that, in certain life-saving circumstances, it was important to take action or give clear instruction or advice ahead of listening. In all locations, participants regcognised the value of listening to ensure quality and accountability.

- Curious, creative and innovative

Responses suggested that these behaviours may not be essential in all circumstances or for all roles.

- Practical and realistic – focused on the solution rather than the problem

Participants felt these were important behaviours. However, they emphasised that they should not be applied as an excuse to focus only on providing immediate solutions without due regard for broader issues. For example, felling local forests for timber may provide a practical, immediate shelter solution, but will have longer term social, economic and environmental impacts.

Participants also suggested several other behaviours that could be added to the list. The most commonly suggested were:

- Reflection – both self-reflection and stepping back to take a strategic view of the situation
- Inclined towards building the capacity of others
- Respect for the dignity of others
- Recognition of power imbalances and a commitment not to abuse their power

Conclusion

The information from interviewees and survey respondents suggest that many who work in the humanitarian sector feel that their work requires a distinguishable set of competencies.

Although there was some disagreement, the reaction of workshop participants appears to confirm that they were generally in agreement on the nature of those distinguishable competencies. The workshop participants generated additional suggested competencies, which have been added into the full list below.

Knowledge and Skills	Behaviours
• Knows the Humanitarian system and actors Understands Humanitarian Law, Principles, and standards • Able to manage stress and operate effectively in an uncertain, rapidly changing, and sometimes insecure environment • Can adapt very quickly and apply technical knowledge to a wide range of different situations • Can work very fast, whilst maintaining quality and professionalism • Can work with limited resources and equipment • Understands protection issues and how crises can affect capacities and vulnerabilities of different people • Can work effectively with crisis affected communities and ensure accountability to them • Excellent communication skills – can build relationships, negotiate and coordinate • Understands and can apply principles of safeguarding • Effective decision making	• Flexible and adaptable • Works well in a multi-cultural environment (both with colleagues and affected communities) • Human empathy and emotional awareness • Takes a needs-based approach – putting others first and seeking to empower them • Agile, rapid and succinct • Good listener – engages well with other people • High level of personal resilience – keeps going • Curious, creative and innovative • Practical and realistic – focused on the solution rather than the problem • Reflective – both self-reflection and stepping back to take a strategic view of the situation • Inclined towards developing the capacity of others • Has respect for the dignity of others • Recognition of power imbalances and a commitment not to abuse their power

It is difficult to prove that all of these competencies are unique to humanitarian work. It is likely that, in almost every case, a similar competency is required in some form of work in another sector.

However, it is possible to describe this set of competencies as particularly important in humanitarian work and more likely to differ from competencies in other areas of work. It is hoped that this finding provides a useful area of focus for:

- Humanitarian organisations looking to develop the competencies of new and existing staff;
- Non-humanitarian organisations considering how they may need to adapt to play an effective role in humanitarian work; and
- Individuals who are looking to become engaged or advance in humanitarian work.

PART 3

DETAILED RESULTS

7. INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONS

FUNCTIONAL PROFESSIONS

- Advocacy
- Cash and Vouchers
- Communications
- Donor Relations and Grant Management
- Finance Management
- Human Resource Management
- Information and Communication Technology
- Information Management
- Interagency Coordination
- Logistics
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning
- Project Management
- Safety and Security

THEMATIC PROFESSIONS

- Camp Coordination and Camp Management
- Education
- Food Security & Livelihoods
- Health
- Legal Aid
- Mine Action
- Nutrition
- Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding
- Protection, Diversity & Inclusion
- Shelter, Settlements and Non-Food Items (NFIs)
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

8. SURVEY REPORT

- Methodology
- About you
- About your career
- Your humanitarian profession
- Trends in the wider profession – Recruitment, Professional development, Career opportunities
- Drivers of change in your profession

9. INTERVIEWEES

10. LOCAL WORKSHOPS

7. INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONS

FUNCTIONAL PROFESSIONS

Advocacy

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian organisations take different approaches to humanitarian advocacy, but typical work areas include strategy development, implementation, research, report writing, influencing, external relations, media work, testimony, and capacity building. It is relatively rare for a humanitarian organisation to have a team dedicated entirely to advocacy. Advocacy staff often form part of other teams within an organisation such as Communication, Programmes or Protection. These alliances influence the nature of the roles. "Policy and Advocacy" roles may be more focused on research than "Advocacy and Communications" roles, for example.

Interviewees suggested that the profession area includes more men than women, and that younger staff tend to occupy field roles, whereas HQ-based staff tend to be older. Grassroots advocacy is increasingly recognised, leading to more staff from countries affected by disaster. Interviewees felt that advocacy was predominantly initiated by HQ rather than by field teams. They also pointed to relatively high turnover, with staff moving to similar roles in different locations or with different organisations.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees compared advocacy to lobbying in the private sector and advocating for societal groups, such as patient organisations. Advocacy in the development sector tends to take place in a more secure environment, allowing advocacy to be more open and address broader issues. Interviewees highlighted that advocacy in the humanitarian sector often takes place in highly insecure environments and must be carefully managed so not to increase security risks.

All survey respondents, working in Advocacy, felt there were competencies that distinguish humanitarian advocacy from similar work in other sectors. They highlighted knowledge of humanitarian principles, humanitarian law and the humanitarian system in general. In particular they felt that experience of advocating with the UN system and clusters was important.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Varying organisational approaches to advocacy leads to quite distinct role descriptions and terms of reference. There are no agreed competency frameworks for humanitarian advocacy and no immediate plans to develop them. Interviewees also suggested that there is a lack of training in advocacy strategies and their implementation. Despite this, they felt that the best way to learn would include on the job coaching.

There is no professional association related to humanitarian advocacy. The INGO, Crisis Action, provides a focal point for coordination and collaboration in advocacy work.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees identified the following trends in the area of advocacy:

- There has been an increase in regional advocacy roles as opposed to expatriate positions in each country.
- Some organisations are shifting their focus from advocating themselves, towards supporting local actors to lead advocacy efforts.
- The area of advocacy is gaining more recognition, especially in relation to its importance to unlocking operational barriers.

Useful links and references

- CrisisAction
  → https://crisisaction.org

Cash and Vouchers

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) has been an area of work in the humanitarian sector since 2005, though it had been used decades earlier. CVA is considered a tool for humanitarian response rather than as a function in itself.

The essential areas of work in CVA are: needs analysis of the affected populations; market analysis (establishing the capacity of the local market for direct purchasing of goods by affected populations); and the organisation of cash and voucher distribution to the populations.

CVA can be implemented in all sectors of humanitarian work through both multipurpose cash transfers and sector-specific interventions. Due to this cross-cutting nature, CVA consolidates a large range of humanitarian profession areas: logistics, finance, coordination, and the majority of thematic areas such as Food, WASH, Shelter, and Health. For this reason, CVA is generally not considered as a profession in itself, but a response modality requiring skills across different humanitarian professions.

That said, there is an increasing number of dedicated CVA functions in humanitarian organisations, which interviewees defined in two distinguishable categories of function and areas of work:

- Coordination, advocacy, and strategic work around CVA.
- Technical functions dedicated to design, implementation, monitoring, and preparedness for cash programming.

It is believed that there are over 50,000 CVA practitioners in the humanitarian sector. Interviewees identified a general tendency for CVA coordination and strategy positions to be held by international staff with national staff occupying functions related to CVA implementation. All interviewees confirmed that the demand for CVA positions is far greater than the supply, mainly due to the rapid growth of CVA activity within the sector.

There is no set qualification used to recruit CVA professionals and the tendency is for organisations to either recruit experienced staff within the humanitarian sector or "grow their own". Very few people are recruited to CVA positions directly from outside of the humanitarian sector but finance programming, market assessment, and public or private sector CVA backgrounds can be a way in. Once in a CVA function, there is a tendency for people to remain and specialise in this area of work.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees and survey respondents suggested that there are various knowledge, skills and attitudes that are particularly relevant for humanitarian CVA professionals in comparison with CVA practitioners in other sectors like the social services or private sector. There was general agreement that it is essential to have a thorough understanding of how the humanitarian system works, response techniques and strategies, and humanitarian principles and law, coupled with a commitment to human rights. In turn, these affect the way that technical activities are undertaken – assessments, plans, implementation, and evaluations are all done with accountability principles in mind and an overall focus on ensuring the best interests of the affected community.

It was also mentioned that an understanding of the specificities of market-based programming in humanitarian setting is important. In addition, humanitarian CVA practitioners need to have human empathy and the capacity to work in crisis contexts. Interviewees also highlighted that being committed to CVA is a commitment to empowerment, by putting the those affected by disaster first.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

CaLP (Cash Learning Partnership) is the most widely recognised humanitarian CVA professional body and holds amongst its members most of the leading organisations in CVA within the sector. CaLP has developed a widely recognised CVA competency framework. The Red Cross/ Red Crescent movement has also developed a technical competency framework for CVA.

CaLP offers a range of training courses directly and through a number of training partner organisations (RedR, Bioforce, Key Aid Consulting). Many large organisations have their own CVA staff development learning platforms, some of which (for example the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) are open to all. PHAP offers a CVA certification (developed with CaLP) although it is relatively new and not yet widely used. One of the challenges for the training offers is to keep up with the sector's rapidly evolving CVA strategies and techniques.

Despite the fact that some basic training is available free on-line, the interviewees considered that, on the whole, there is not enough access to training for local organisations who do not have the resources. More generally, it appears that there are not enough training opportunities in relation to the growing number of CVA activities and practitioners.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviews and survey respondents highlighted a number of areas of change in Humanitarian CVA:

- A rapid increase in the use of CVA in humanitarian action has led to an increase in the number of dedicated CVA implementation positions.

- The growth of cash programming has also changed the way many non-CVA staff undertake their work. It is likely that many support functions and sectoral specialist roles will progressively need to include more and more CVA related competencies.

- There are a number of new CVA operational models being developed currently (e.g. Collaborative Cash Delivery run by INGOs, the UN Common Cash model). As experience of cash grows, greater understanding and input from affected communities will affect the way CVA is implemented.

- Innovations and technological advancements have created new opportunities (faster delivery of cash, personalised programming and feedback) but also risks (data protection, counter terrorism). Work is ongoing to understand and balance these.

- CVA has increased NGO - private sector interaction and organisations are learning to work effectively with each other.

Useful links and references

- The CaLP glossary
  → http://www.cashlearning.org
- CaLP. The State of the World's Cash Report 2018
  → http://www.cashlearning.org
- CaLP. Global Framework for Action
  → http://www.cashlearning.org
- CaLP. CTP Competency Framework
  → http://www.cashlearning.org
- CashHub. Learning Resources
  → https://cash-hub.org
- CaLP. Capacity Building
  → http://www.cashlearning.org
- PHAP. CVA Certification Resources
  → http://phap.org

Communications

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Interviewees agreed that communication in the humanitarian sector is not considered one profession area, but instead relates to a multitude of professions. For the purpose of this report, communication will be split into external communication (or public relations) and communication with disaster-affected communities (or community engagement).

Interviewees suggested that operational communication should also be considered a profession area. This relates to the day to day communications necessary to deliver effective operations. In some cases, this work may be undertaken by an information analyst and can include an access and security component. Interviewees also mentioned the important work of other communications professionals, such as translators, editors, and social media information analysts.

In all types of communication work the availability of qualified staff is highly dependent on the location. In community engagement, it appears that the supply is of suitably skilled professionals is struggling to keep up with growing demand. Interviewees working in the area of public relations observed an increase in local staff as well as a move towards better gender balance. In all areas of communications, a range of interpersonal skills are important. Interviewees felt that these skills can be difficult to assess in interviews or through assessment tools, making effective recruitment a challenge.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees working in community engagement identified several skills that are essential to people working in humanitarian community engagement. Amongst them are psychosocial skills, intercultural communication, understanding individual and group dimensions as well as an understanding of the humanitarian field and its actors. Survey respondents also highlighted the importance of understanding humanitarian principles, and particularly protection measures related to communication. They also stressed the importance of empathy, and an ability to handle sensitive subjects in a humane way. Whilst many of these are applicable in a development context, interviewees stressed that staff who transition from development work to humanitarian work generally have to adapt.

Interviewees working in public relations argued that technical skills are transferable between sectors, but that knowledge of the humanitarian sector and ability to work in a challenging environment are needed to supplement technical skills.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

The Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network (CDAC) best represents a professional body for humanitarian communication work. CDAC operates a roster of professionals, which is managed by NORCAP. They also have multiple trainings available online and face-to-face and have created template TORs for roles in communicating with communities, advising on communication and building capacity.

Whilst public relations is a well-developed profession in the private sector, there is limited professionalisation around humanitarian public relations. Interviewees did not know about a professional body linked to public relations or external communications in the humanitarian sector. Whilst there is a wide variety of public relations trainings available in education institutions, none focuses specifically on humanitarian work. Interviewees were not aware of any training, other than internal training provided by their own organisation. Similarly, interviewees were not aware of any competency frameworks outside of the frameworks used within their own organisations.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees working in public relations identified the following trends:

- There's been an increase in communication using mobile technology. Aid workers and affected communities can share information via social media within seconds. As a result, there is increasing pressure on agencies to provide up to date information on how donations have been spent.

- Organisations are trying to differentiate themselves and define their roles, leading to competition for communication space and a lack of understanding of each other's work.

- In line with specialisation, interviewees observed a trend of hiring people with the right skills from the private sector or other organisations instead of hiring people from more junior positions and training them in-house. The result of this trend is that people have the technical skills but have limited understanding of the organisational culture or the sector.

Interviewees working in community engagement identified the following trends:

- Whilst there is more emphasis on accountability than ever before, much still remains focused on programme efficiency, rather than communicating with disaster affected communities.

• Communication technologies have become more available, which means that individuals can get their information from a variety of sources. For organisations this means that they have less control over their image, but it gives individuals more autonomy.

• There is a tangible shift from communicating TO affected communities, towards communicating WITH affected communities. As a result, communities are increasingly setting the agenda in terms of the services they receive.

Survey respondents also emphasised the growing requirements on staff to keep abreast of technological changes and communication trends. One respondent also highlighted a consequence of localisation - that NNGOs now need to ensure that their communication practices adhere to multiple sets of policy set by their INGO partners.

Useful links and references

• CDAC Network. Training and Tools
→ http://www.cdacnetwork.org

CDAC sample TORs :

• Communication with communities coordinator
→ http://www.cdacnetwork.org

• Humanitarian communication experts and trainers
→ http://www.cdacnetwork.org

• Humanitarian communication team leader
→ http://www.cdacnetwork.org

Donor Relations and Grant Management

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian Donor Relations and Grant Management typically includes four areas of responsibility:

- Donor relations. This involves maintaining close relations with donors in order to be aware of donor strategy and interests, keeping donors aware of relevant organisational initiatives, influencing donor's strategies and advocating for priority funding needs.

- Identifying and securing funding opportunities. Good relations with donors help to identify alignment between donor's and organisation's strategies. Donor relations and grant management professionals will be involved in project design and development of funding proposals.

- Grant Management. Once funds are secured, grant management staff will support their colleagues with contract and procedural compliance, decision-making, problem solving and reporting to donors. They may also be involved in financial oversight of projects.

- Building organisational capacity. Donor relations and grant management staff are typically responsible for knowledge management related to donors and grants as well as providing training for colleagues to ensure they have the skills to deliver projects that are compliant.

In some larger organisations, individuals focus on either grant management or donor relations. In some cases, donor relations professionals are assigned exclusively to a few key donors. This ensures the organisation keeps abreast of changes in donor strategy, policy and requirements as well as maintaining a relationship with donors that helps with communication and advocacy. In smaller organisations responsibility for all these elements sits with a single person, or indeed, with programme staff who also have to deliver the projects they secure. Whilst impossible to predict the overall number of people who work in humanitarian donor relations and grant management, interviewees suggested the number is growing to meet increasing compliance demands from donors whilst dedicating enough time in donor relations. Some organisations are outsourcing responsibilities to consultants with particular expertise related to certain donors.

Organisations differ in their recruiting preferences for these roles with some regarding field experience as essential, others consciously seeking a mix of staff from different backgrounds. Interviewees consistently identified that new staff were often young, and turnover was high, except in team leader positions – whose experience and longevity is valuable in maintaining donor relations and developing funding strategies. Incoming staff in junior positions rarely have up-to-date knowledge of donors and most have to learn very quickly on-the-job and through training. This rapid learning process equips people with skills to move into more specialist roles in HQ or field locations. An increasing level of donor engagement at national and regional level has led to a growing pool of staff with relevant donor experience which could make future recruitment easier for organisations and lead to more geographically diverse, networked teams.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Whilst the principles of proposal development and reporting are consistent in development and humanitarian projects, interviewees agreed that the reduced timescales in humanitarian work demanded specific competencies. The less predictable nature of humanitarian situations means that staff are less specialised in a theme or region but need to be able to adapt and draw knowledge from one context to another. Proposal development timeframes are in hours or days, compared to weeks or months, meaning that detailed problem analysis is not possible. Teams work with rapid assessment information and reasonable assumptions. They need to retain technical rigour, evidence-based arguments and detailed accuracy as well as writing persuasively, when working against the clock and under high levels of stress. Those with legal training are sometimes well suited to this.

Humanitarian grant management teams need to be able to respond rapidly and succinctly to the needs of their colleagues implementing the projects. Contextual changes can mean significant adjustments to projects in short timeframes. Donors' constraints for humanitarian projects are typically more flexible than those for development work, but some feel that this flexibility is reducing.

As well as many of the points raised by interviewees, survey respondents also highlighted the importance of humanitarian grant management staff understanding humanitarian standards and principles, some technical aspects of humanitarian response, and a thorough knowledge of humanitarian donors' rules and regulations.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Whilst experienced individuals and organisations are clear about the competencies required for donor relations and grant management professionals, there are no sector-wide competency frameworks. Professional certifications do not exist that relate to this area of humanitarian work and interviewees were not aware of related higher education courses. Humanitarian training providers and NGO networks offer short courses and large institutional donors provide training on their compliance regulations. Many organisations have developed in-house training for teams.

Professional associations exist for fundraisers but are almost entirely focused on fundraising from private philanthropists. In some regions, NGOs have developed strong communities of practice where donor relations professionals work together to share knowledge and to jointly advocate to donors. Despite ongoing competition for the same funds, individuals in these networks seem to have developed high levels of trust that facilitates effective collaboration.

What is changing in this profession area?

More complex emergencies, increasing politicisation of aid and more partnership working, as part of the localisation agenda, are all leading to higher levels of project risk. These changes mean that future grant managers will require greater skills in risk management, advocacy, coordination and capacity building. The onset of agile project management is also affecting proposal design and grant management. Funding proposals increasingly need to contain a portfolio of project options, and live projects are reviewed and adapted more frequently.

Interviewees all pointed to increasing transfer of risk from donors to the organisations they fund. Measures to mitigate risks such as terrorism, corruption, exploitation and abuse have led to increased compliance demands. Donors are reducing transactional costs by encouraging consortia working - increasing the coordination demands for agencies. At the same time, co-financing requirements mean that grant managers are juggling multiple donor agendas and timescales within a single project.

Interviewees predicted greater separation of donor relations from grant management, with most grant managers being based in field locations. Localisation could lead to INGOs shifting their focus to sub-granting to national partners or building local capacities to apply for funds directly. For now, the number of organisations who can meet international donor compliance demands remains limited.

Useful links and references

- International council of voluntary agencies (ICVA). Financing
  → https://www.icvanetwork.org
- Coordination Sud. Financements
  → https://www.coordinationsud.org
- USAID. Training: how to work with USAID
  → https://www.usaid.gov
- ELSE. DG ECHO Learning Solution Environment
  → https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu

Finance Management

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Financial management takes place at the global, national, and local level. Most organisations consider this profession area to include: Transaction processing (book-keeping); Analytical accountancy; Reporting and review of financial performance (management and financial accounting); Strategic financial management (business planning, financing, optimising performance); Treasury; and cash management. Between organisations, there are discrepancies as to whether Auditing and Grant management are included in Finance Management.

In some smaller NGOs, the Finance Manager may also be responsible for Human Resources or even logistics, which requires a broader portfolio of skills.

Whilst accounting terminology is largely consistent, finance management roles, responsibilities, and even descriptions of work areas vary from organisation to organisation. The organisational structure, policies, ways of working, and funding sources all seem to influence internal naming conventions.

Humanitarian finance management roles can be considered at two levels: The first level (usually relating to roles in field locations) relates to those who are in charge of data entry and monitoring such as Accountant, Cashier, Finance Officer. The second level relates to those who have greater responsibility for management, strategy and coordination. This second level requires a broader range of skills that can be difficult to source through recruitment. These roles exist in both field and HQ locations, and are typically named Finance Manager, Finance Coordinator, Financial Controller, Grant Manager etc.

Interviewees identified a gender disparity, with more women than men working in HQ finance management roles. They also indicated that, even in financial coordination roles, staff often have quite junior profiles with limited experience. Despite this, they are often responsible for management and local capacity building.

Many INGOs are shifting roles from international staff to national staff. This trend is happening in part because national roles are less expensive to fund than international roles, but also because of national obligations that limit business visas for this type of function. Expatriate finance staff tend be hired only by a few larger INGOs, where budgets allow for this and/or there is concern that local staff may be put under pressure due to organised crime or corruption.

All interviewees agreed that there is a shortage of qualified staff willing to work in the humanitarian sector, mainly due to the increasing demands on staff in terms of living conditions, salary, and security, and also due to the precariousness of positions related to humanitarian crises. This leads to high staff turnover and vacancies.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Financial management is necessary in any activity across private, public and non-profit sectors. The principles such as accounting standards, cost management, and analysis are consistent and can be transposed to all sectors of activity. For this reason, there are many similarities between financial management in humanitarian and non-humanitarian sectors in financial management.

Specific competencies required for good financial management in the humanitarian sector include: knowledge of donor rules and regulations; understanding of how to adapt financial controls when working in humanitarian contexts; knowledge of not-for-profit accounting; and the ability to achieve multiple objectives, such as achieving value for money, whilst ensuring accountability to affected communities and donors when managing humanitarian funds.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

There is no specific professional body for Humanitarian Finance Management in general. In accounting, national or international standards such as those developed by IFRS are applied and often a legal requirement of the countries where the organisation is operating. IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards) is a not-for-profit organisation established to develop and promote a single set of globally accepted accounting standards.

In the same way that Humanitarian Health is enabled by a well-established medical profession, with professional bodies and recognised qualifications, Humanitarian Finance Management relies on a strong structure of professional finance bodies and qualifications. Many qualifications are available in general financial management, accountancy, financial control and audit. These are offered by colleges, universities and business schools in most countries. These qualifications are useful to employers in the humanitarian sector and skills can be applied to humanitarian work.

One framework specific to the non for profit sector is FMD Pro, a dedicated initiative focussing on standards and competencies for Financial Management. It offers training, certification, and guidance. However, this framework is not specific to humanitarian work (it covers both humanitarian and international development sectors) and does not target financial management professionals (but rather all project

team members). In addition to FMD Pro there are a handful of short training courses that focus specifically on humanitarian financial management, and Humentum (ex Mango) has a long history in financial management skills development in the humanitarian sector.

Some INGOs are developing their own internal training programmes in finance and donor regulations, which allows for the validation of skills but, which are not certified. Increasingly, "on-the-job» learning is provided through online training courses that are developed internally (by larger INGOs) or offered through open platforms. Interviewees felt that, as standardisation increases, sector-wide training will become more relevant and applicable.

INGOs are often challenged to source people with financial qualifications in the disrupted or rural environments in which they work. Staff with relevant qualifications often move to cities to find work. Even when suitably qualified staff are recruited and trained, they are difficult for NGOs to hold on to, as their valuable skills provide them access to higher paid roles with larger NGOs, UN agencies or the private sector.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees identified trends towards more complex accounting and financial strategies with the introduction of analytical systems for monitoring the funds allocated to activities. This also relates to increased accountability requirements from donors with strict rules for the use of funds, and an increase in financial audits.

There is increasing use of IT systems such as ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), requiring significant financial investment and upskilling of staff. This means that new future humanitarian finance management professionals will require fewer technical "bookkeeping" skills and greater general management and business strategy skills (akin to those covered in an MBA course). Interviewees also noted that Finance Managers will continue to need knowledge and skills in project management, logistics and compliance to be able to work in synergy with different departments.

Useful links and references

- FMD Pro. Financial Management for Humanitarian and Development Professionals
  → https://fmdpro.org
- FMD Pro. A Guide to the FMD Pro
  → https://fmdpro.org
- Bioforce. Référentiel d'emploi pour les ressources humaines et les finances dans l'action humanitaire
  → https://www.bioforce.org
- Bioforce. Training Programme «Responsable Ressources Humaines et Finances de l'action humanitaire»
  → https://www.bioforce.org

Human Resources Management

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

The work areas included in humanitarian human resources (hereafter HR) link to the employee life cycle: recruitment, onboarding, development, retention, exit. Interviewees highlighted the difference between operational and strategic HR, as well as a difference between starting up an HR system during a response and joining a programme that is already running. Starting an HR system and developing HR strategy requires a broader knowledge base that also includes legal knowledge and a wider understanding of a humanitarian response.

The majority of HR staff are national employees, yet the opening and closing of a programme's HR team tends to be led by international staff. Once the programme is established, national staff usually cover national and regional HR positions. The supply of suitably skilled national staff differs between contexts and types of emergency. Generally, interviewees felt that skilled administrative level staff are easier to source than experienced strategic level staff. High turnover, particularly in international positions, seems to be a challenge across the sector. Interviewees felt that the pool of people with the requisite experience and skills to set up a HR system in an initial response is small.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees believed that the HR skills required for humanitarian professionals do not differ from the HR skills needed in any other sector. Humanitarian HR staff in country and field offices are more likely to have a greater focus on staff health, safety and welfare then their private sector counterparts.

In contrast, survey respondents pointed to a number of competencies that, they felt, distinguished HR work in a humanitarian context. They highlighted the knowledge and application of humanitarian principles, and a commitment to humanitarian work. Knowledge of humanitarian donors was also listed as was an ability to operate in different, and sometimes insecure, contexts. One respondent felt that humanitarian HR practitioners need to be able to work with very high turnover and low visibility.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

There are some regional attempts at developing Humanitarian HR competency frameworks, however these tend to be established by individual organisations for internal use. ICRC is currently involved in developing a competency framework, although this is not focused exclusively on humanitarian HR. The private sector has a number of established competency frameworks that can be applied to the humanitarian sector. One example is hosted by the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) in the UK.

Whilst professional bodies, like CIPD exist for general HR professionals, there are no professional bodies focused on HR in the humanitarian sector. Efforts were made to establish an HR cluster during the Haiti response, but this did not lead to a structural change. The CHS Alliance organises a conference on humanitarian HR each year, and their website has several toolkit's for HR management. Humanitarian HR professionals have formed informal communities of practice and working groups in many humanitarian contexts.

HR training focused specifically on the humanitarian sector is limited to short face to face training and online courses, such as that offered by the Capacity Africa training institute on humanitarian HR management. Interviewees indicated that there was no need for further humanitarian certification on HR as general HR qualifications offered by educational institutions are recognised to cover the core skills needed across private, public, development and humanitarian sectors. For humanitarian professionals, this training may need to be supplemented by specific humanitarian knowledge such as the Core Humanitarian Standard. Interviewees identified that training in HR strategy for the humanitarian sector would be a useful addition.

Overall professionalisation across humanitarian work has contributed to professionalisation within Humanitarian HR, as organisations recognise the need to retain HR knowledge in the organisation. In addition, pressure from donors has pushed organisations to consider HR strategies in more detail. Despite this, the professionalisation of the HR profession in the humanitarian sector is significantly behind that of the private sector. Interviewees highlighted a lack of recognition of HR as a technical profession in its own right and suggested that when recruiting HR staff, experience of the organisation is often regarded as more important than technical knowledge of HR strategies.

A lack of career paths for humanitarian HR professionals is seen as an inhibitor to professionalisation. As people gain more experience they tend to move to another sector or another work area in the humanitarian sector, partly because some operational HR roles offer limited opportunity for career progression. Some interviewees felt that this could be addressed by including more strategic HR work in junior roles, and through greater funding for career development opportunities.

What is changing in this profession area?

Humanitarian HR has only relatively recently been considered a profession. Interviewees felt that it is only in the last ten years that organisations have recognised the technical skill set required for HR management, beyond administrative work. In the past, HR was often combined with finance and, in some smaller offices, it still is. Interviewees argued that HR in the humanitarian sector still does not have the same recognition as HR in the private sector.

Duty of care has been taken a lot more seriously in the last two to three years, increasing the recognised importance of HR management. Reported cases of abuses of power by aid workers recently created a global focus on safeguarding of staff and affected communities. Concerns related to safeguarding have significantly accelerated the development and implementation of policies, procedures, training and evaluation. Most of this work has been led by HR teams. With greater donor compliance and attention to risk, this trend is likely to continue.

Localisation or nationalisation of staff, as part of the larger humanitarian trend means that HR functions are also increasingly localised.

Automation of many administrative aspects of HR work means that the skillset required for HR professionals is increasingly technical and increasingly strategic.

There is increasing investment in career development. This is in part because the humanitarian sector is recognising the importance of career pathways, and also because protracted emergencies mean that organisations stay longer in certain areas. When the missions are longer, programme management looks to HR to keep the turnover as low as possible.

Useful links and references

- CIPD. Standards
  → https://www.cipd.co.uk
- CHS Alliance. Humanitarian HR Conference
  → https://www.chsalliance.org
- CHS Alliance
  → https://www.chsalliance.org
- Capacity Africa training institute
  → https://www.capacityafrica.com
- Bioforce. Training Programme «Responsable Ressources Humaines et Finances de l'action humanitaire»
  → https://www.bioforce.org

Information and Communication Technology

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Humanitarian sector is predominantly focused on providing operational support to other humanitarian teams. This can include provision and maintenance of ICT hardware and services, such as internet access, as well as the set-up of secure telecommunication networks. It also involves the selection, installation and management of operating systems and software. ICT professionals are responsible for liaison with hardware and software providers, and software developers. There is also a growing requirement for data security.

Interviewees identified age and gender imbalance amongst humanitarian ICT professionals. They felt there are generally more men than women, and that staff tended to be younger. They also suggested that there is a high proportion of national staff at all levels, including more senior roles.

Interviewees noted that there is a good supply of staff, even though some capacity development is usually required for new starters. They felt that training staff in the organisation can lead to a lower turnover, justifying the investment in professional development. Interviewees did highlight a lack of skilled candidates for ICT management positions, noting that people tend to have either technical skills or management skills, but rarely both.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees noted that the technical skills in ICT are the same across the private sector and the humanitarian sector. Perhaps because of this, they observed that people move relatively freely between the humanitarian and private sector, both for job opportunities and for training courses.

The ICT work area also seems to be a work area with a relatively high level of cooperation between private companies and humanitarian organisations. An example of this is the crisis connectivity charter, through which satellite operators provide equipment and support to humanitarian organisations.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

The central organisation related to ICT in the humanitarian sector is the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), established by the IASC. The ETC is a global network of organisations that work together on ICT in humanitarian responses. They coordinate on operational issues, training provision, and contact with private sector organisations.

The ETC offers several general training courses, like ICT Emergency Management and Coordination, but also courses focused on specific technologies like the installation and activation of Hispasat satellite solutions. They also organise a simulation together with the Logistics Cluster, called the Gear Up with a specific ICT centred component called the OpEx Bravo. In addition to this, most organisations have their own internal trainings and support for ICT personnel.

Interviewees were aware of competency frameworks developed for internal use by organisations but did not know of any shared competency frameworks for ICT in the humanitarian sector.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees in ICT noted the following trends in their profession:

- ICT work has been done for a long time, but formerly by Logistics personnel. In the last 10 years, ICT has become a profession on its own.

- There has been a significant growth in preparedness programmes within the ICT work area, as well as a slight definition change of what is considered to be a preparedness programme. Preparedness in humanitarian ICT used to involve training internal staff and preparing systems for their own organisation. Today, these activities tend to be called 'emergency readiness'. What is currently meant by 'preparedness programming' is enabling governments and communities to be better prepared for an emergency. For example, this could include establishing procedures to reinstall telecommunications networks after a rapid onset disaster. This work is usually done in collaboration with private sector actors in the country affected.

- In addition to their support to programmes, ICT professionals are also increasingly providing direct support to affected communities. This is sometimes related to the preparedness trend and can include working with at risk communities on emergency planning and simulation exercises.

Useful links and references

- ETC. Simulations/Exercises
  → https://www.etcluster.org
- ETC. Training
  → https://www.etcluster.org
- Crisis Connectivity Charter
  → https://www.etcluster.org

Information Management

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Advances in technology and access to data has made information management an increasingly important part of Humanitarian work. Organisations have different interpretations of what is included under the umbrella of information management and often use different nomenclature such as 'information analysis' or 'knowledge management'. Despite these differences, interviewees agreed that operational information management becomes knowledge management when the information is shared with other organisations or used through learning for new programmes.

There is an important distinction between Information Management (IM) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Whilst ICT is concerned with the development of technologies, IM is focussed on how the information is collected, analysed, stored, presented and disseminated in a way to support the organisational strategy or project implementation. Interviewees also drew distinctions between information management and logistics or finance data, highlighting that information management is more closely related to monitoring & evaluation and programme management.

In rapid onset, or rapidly changing humanitarian situations, information flow is very fast. IM professionals are focused on the quickly evolving picture of needs and capacities as well as coordination information. In protracted crises and development projects, there is more time for IM professionals to dedicate to monitoring and evaluation.

Interviewees reflected that the profile of new employees into IM was generally young people and predominantly international staff. As with many other humanitarian work areas, IM also experiences high turnover of staff, which means that organisations have to continually train staff on their systems and approaches.

Interviewees agreed that information management is an area in which it is hard to find suitably skilled staff. They indicated gaps in supply of skilled staff who speak relevant languages and/or are working in NGOs as opposed to UN agencies. They identified insufficient unclear definitions of roles and a lack of training opportunities as the main barriers to recruiting suitably skilled information managers.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees and survey respondents highlighted several differences between humanitarian information management and information management in other sectors.

IM in the private sector tends to be more specialised, whereas humanitarian information managers handle a wide array of different types of information.

Humanitarian IM staff need to understand humanitarian principles and standards, particularly around accountability to affected populations. It is also important that they have direct experience of communicating with disaster affected communities and they know how to apply data protection measures to protect vulnerable people.

There are often fewer tools available in the humanitarian sector and there may be more technical constraints. IM staff may need to be able to work with limited resources, lack of connectivity and very high turnover of personnel.

The changing nature of humanitarian contexts means that Information tends to have a shorter lifespan, meaning it gets outdated quickly.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Interviewees did not know about any programmes offered by educational institutions that focused on information management for the humanitarian sector. However, they felt that economics, statistics or data science would cover some of the technical skills required. In addition, there are several shorter training programmes, sponsored by different clusters on information management, for instance the Food Security Cluster, Logistics Cluster, and Protection Cluster all offer IM training. Interviewees did note that the IM needs for clusters are different than the IM needs for NGOs, so cluster trainings may not be useful to everyone.

There is no professional body linked to humanitarian information management, but there are places where IM professionals share knowledge. These include the Information Management Working Group, managed by OCHA, the IASC task force on IM, the GeONG forum (a biennial event focused on information management and mapping), and the MERL Tech events (a platform to discuss the use of technologies for monitoring, evaluation, research and learning).

The IM working group has developed resources for humanitarian IM professionals and CartONG has developed a professionalisation project aimed at strengthening IM in francophone NGOs' information management strategies and practices. It is difficult to determine the extent to which these resources are known about or used. UN OCHA has developed an IM toolbox which is used by OCHA IM staff.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees identified the following trends in information management:

- It is a relatively new field that has gained prominence in recent years. As a result, it has developed recognition as a profession area separate from monitoring and evaluation work.

- Advances in technology, the use of mobile data applications to capture and handle data, and an ability to handle much larger data sets, have all increased expectations around IM. It has become key for humanitarian organisations to assess and adopt new technologies and for staff to be comfortable to learn and use new systems quickly.

- The Syrian crisis was a pivotal moment in the development of the profession for two reasons. First, in the Middle East area there is a high level of technical skills in information management, meaning organisations could start up information management projects without a lot of international staff. Second, ISIS employed technical experts and therefore humanitarian organisations needed to pay more attention to their data security.

- For data sharing, the Ebola crisis was an important moment, because it showed the need to closely track patients and survivors to reduce the risk of further outbreak.

- Advances in Information Management relate to expectations for enhanced beneficiary targeting and tailored impact measurement.

Useful links and references

- Food Security Cluster. IM Training
  → https://fscluster.org
- Logistics Cluster. IM Training
  → https://logcluster.org
- Protection Cluster. IM Training
  → http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org
- Global Information Management Working Group
  → https://www.humanitarianresponse.info
- IASC. Task Force on IM
  → https://interagencystandingcommittee.org
- GeONG Forum
  → https://cartong.org
- MERL Tech events
  → http://merltech.org
- IM Working Group. Profile package
  → https://www.humanitarianresponse.info
- CartONG. Project on strengthening IM within francophone CSOs
  → https://cartong.org
- OCHA. IM Toolbox
  → https://humanitarian.atlassian.net

Interagency Coordination

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Coordination of humanitarian response is principally based on the cluster system. Clusters are groups of humanitarian organisations, both UN and non-UN in each of the main profession areas of humanitarian action. They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and have clear responsibility for coordination. They include: Health, Logistics, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter, WASH, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Early Recovery, Education, Emergency Telecommunications, Food Security. UNOCHA (the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) sits at the centre of this system.

Whilst of critical importance within the Humanitarian sector, Interagency Coordination roles are not easily defined. Some roles exist within coordination mechanisms such as UN OCHA, Clusters, or NGO forums, whilst others sit within individual agencies. In many instances, interagency coordination represents one part of a broader role. For example, a project manager working on a consortium project may be responsible for interagency coordination alongside their responsibilities for project implementation.

Interagency coordination commonly includes information management, liaison with a range of stakeholders and organisational representation. Other aspects of the role appear to vary between organisations.

Interviewees felt that most coordination positions were occupied by people with significant experience in Humanitarian work, partly because of the importance of having good working relationships with individuals across several organisations. As a result, many interagency coordination professionals are in mid-career and predominantly international staff. Interviewees felt that people tend to leave these roles for lifestyle reasons – seeking more stability or settling in one country with their families. Whilst there are lot of applicants for positions, interviewees commented that it was hard to find candidates with sufficient experience in humanitarian settings.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees felt that humanitarian interagency coordinators need to understand the humanitarian sector and the different roles that organisations and individuals fulfil within the sector. This does not just include the people and organisations that they are coordinating at that time, but also their place and mandate within the sector as a whole. Survey respondents also highlighted knowledge of humanitarian principles and standards as well as humanitarian law, as important competencies. Some respondents pointed to the importance of being able to facilitate agreements between culturally different groups quickly, whilst under significant pressure. They also referenced the importance of being able to facilitate federated decision making rather than command and control decision making.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

The cluster system is well established (since 2005) and UNOCHA plays an important central role in coordination, advocacy, policy, information management and humanitarian financing tools and services. UNOCHA's role does not include being a professional association for individuals working in interagency coordination. Several clusters have coordination training, for example the protection cluster coordination learning programme or the health cluster coordination trainings. Interviewees were not aware of any other training or educational programme specific to interagency coordination. They did not feel that educational certification would be effective as practical skills and experiences were more important than taught knowledge. They did, however, believe that a competency framework for the profession would be useful. Resources such as the UNDAC Field Handbook provide information on interagency coordination, but an agreed competency framework does not seem to exist.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents identified several trends affecting interagency coordination.

- The nature of crises is changing, resulting in greater displacement of affected people across entire regions. This has resulted in a greater coordinating responsibility for the agencies whose mandate is to support refugees and IDP's, specifically IOM and UNHCR.

- Humanitarian organisations are working towards planning, analysing and preparing budgets in the same way. This will make joint assessment easier and targeting populations more coordinated.

- As part of a broader drive for more accountability, transparency and efficiency, this work area has professionalised. Deeper knowledge of technical areas and cross-cutting themes is required and there is greater demand to achieve demonstrable results.

- Organisations understand that the cluster system does not fit every situation in the same way. There is a growing recognition that good coordination involves a system that is relevant to the context.

Useful links and references

- UNOCHA
  → https://www.unocha.org
- Humanitarian Response. What is the Cluster Approach?
  → https://www.humanitarianresponse.info
- EUHAP. Humanitarian Coordination Competencies 2009
  → https://interagencystandingcommittee.org
- UNDAC. Field Handbook
  → https://www.unocha.org
- Protection Cluster Coordination Training
  → https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org
- Health Cluster Coordination Training
  → https://www.who.int

Logistics

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian logistics happens at global, national and local level (sometimes referred to as "last mile"). At each level it is focused around the supply chain; including procurement, transportation, border clearance, storage and distribution of aid items. Asset or inventory management, fleet management and warehousing are recognised as important functions within the supply chain. The entire supply chain is supported by information management. There are significant differences in the challenges faced and resources available from global to local levels. Last mile storage and distribution often takes place in insecure, uncertain environments, across difficult terrain with rudimentary, low-tech equipment.

Logisticians are often also responsible for ensuring their organisations have functional offices, supplies, equipment and security to enable their work. Interviewees also considered needs assessment and programme design to be important elements in which logisticians are sometimes involved.

Job types in logistics reflect the elements of the supply chain and its management at global, national and local level. An in-country cadre of staff often mirrors international structure of staff. Senior staff oversee all elements of logistics in a country, region or organisation. It is difficult to predict the number of people who work in humanitarian logistics.

All interviewees agreed that there is shortage of suitably skilled staff. They associated this with a general reduction in humanitarian funding and the irregular nature of disasters. Organisations often outsource elements of their logistics and respond to disasters by engaging short-term surge staff (rather than retain permanent employees). As a result, many individuals work in logistics for a short period before settling in other areas of work. Interviewees also recognised a fluid movement of skilled logistics personnel between humanitarian, development (particularly health) and private sectors. Interviewees highlighted the skill sharing and innovation benefits of this movement.

Most people working in humanitarian logistics are currently men, although there is a growing number of initiatives designed to increase the number of female logisticians. Logistics Cluster training data shows an ongoing gender imbalance that is worse at field level. Interviewees emphasised the importance of enhancing capacities of organisations and individuals in disaster prone countries. Several INGOs are actively shifting responsibility for logistics from international to national staff.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Most commercial supply chains respond to known demand (pull), whereas humanitarian supply chains provide (push) supplies based on estimates of need. Humanitarian logisticians may also be expected to be less specialised than their private sector counterparts but have a good level knowledge across all aspects of the supply chain. The contextual operating environment means that humanitarian logisticians need to be flexible, adapt, and operate with high levels of uncertainty and often insecurity. Humanitarian logisticians need to understand security management, and particularly NGO strategies for security management. Rather than manage existing supply chains, humanitarian logistics managers need to establish or re-configure supply chains for almost every new project. Whilst military logisticians face similar challenges, responding to unusual events in unpredictable circumstances, they are not required to know or act in accordance with humanitarian standards. The "last mile" also places unique demands on humanitarian logisticians. Low resources, low-paid or volunteer staff, poor infrastructure and rudimentary equipment mean that innovation and community involvement can be essential. As cash and voucher programs expand, humanitarian logisticians are increasingly required to have skills in delivering assistance through markets.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Interviewees highlighted a high level of movement of logisticians between humanitarian, development and commercial sectors. It is likely that many humanitarian logisticians are members of professional bodies or have professional qualifications offered by non-humanitarian, professional bodies for logistics, which are numerous.

A number of humanitarian organisations have developed their own logistics competency frameworks and a group of 14 French NGOs developed an agreed set of responsibilities and competencies common to main humanitarian logistics functions. Work has also been done to develop a Logistics-specific annex to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework.

The Global Logistics Cluster offers a suite of training courses managed around "Basic Competency", "Operational Capacity" and "Strategic capacity". Completion of mandatory training allows learners to apply to the Logistic Cluster Rapid Response Roster. The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), based in the UK, & Fritz Institute developed a Certificate in Humanitarian Logistics based on a competency framework. This is perhaps the best-known certification that is internationally recognised.

The Humanitarian Logistics Association (HLA) is the most widely recognised of several communities of practice and working groups. Its structure most closely resembles a

professional body, with around 3000 individual members and 30 organisational members, across approximately 100 countries. The HLA collaborates with CILT and individual humanitarian organisations.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents highlighted several areas of change in humanitarian logistics:

- Advances in technology mean tracking millions of transactions and better measurement of impact at beneficiary level. Effective logisticians will be those who make best use of this to provide agile and responsive services.

- Increasing use of cash and voucher programming is changing the emphasis of humanitarian logistics. Distribution of physical items is being replaced by facilitation of transfers and supporting markets.

- Management of supply chains is shifting from the international humanitarian community to national governments and private sector. Responses in Indonesia and the Philippines are examples of this. Commercial supply chains are strengthening as purchasing power increases in developing economies, and governments can harness this to retain greater national control. This means that the role of INGOs will likely shift towards advocacy, quality control, knowledge and skills transfer.

- Financial challenges have led many humanitarian organisations to outsource more elements of their logistics. Combined with increasing national capacities, this is changing the role of humanitarian logisticians towards coordination and management.

- There is growing recognition of the need for better international coordination in humanitarian logistics. Agreeing and sharing common standards, glossaries, professional development infrastructure, and data systems are recognised challenges facing tomorrow's logisticians.

- Humanitarian logisticians are expected to manage a wider range of risks. They need to design and operate supply chains to minimise increasing threats of terrorism, corruption, exploitation and abuse, whilst increasing the level of community involvement and consultation.

Useful links and references

- FIP. Pharmacists in the supply chain: the role of medical experts in ensuring quality and availability
  → https://www.fip.org
- World Bank Group. Logistics Competencies, Skills, and Training : A Global Overview
  → https://openknowledge.worldbank.org
- People that Deliver. Building Human Resources for Supply Chain Management Theory of Change
  → https://peoplethatdeliver.org
- Tatham, P., Wu, Y., Kovács, G., & Butcher, T. (2017). Supply chain management skills to sense and seize opportunities. The International Journal of Logistics Management.
  → https://www.emerald.com
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- Logistics Cluster
  → https://logcluster.org
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
  → https://ciltuk.org.uk
- Humanitarian Logistics Association
  → https://www.humanitarianlogistics.org
- Fleet Forum
  → https://www.fleetforum.org
- International Association of Public Health Logisticians
  → https://iaphl.org
- Bioforce. Training Programmes «Logisticien de l'action humanitaire» and «Responsable Logistique de l'action humanitaire»
  → https://www.bioforce.org

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) is the most common term used to describe the intersection of the four components that frame quality within the humanitarian action.

Monitoring was described in a recent scoping paper as the continuous and systematic process of collecting data to analyse progress against plans. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of a project to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Accountability is focused on meeting the organisation's duty towards people affected by disaster, public and private donors and the stakeholders in general. It involves three key components: participation, information, feedback. According to the MEAL D Pro guide, learning means having a culture and processes in place that enable teams and organisations to reflect on what has happened and make better decisions in the future.

While there is not a single agreed approach and definition for MEAL, interviewees agreed that the final aim of MEAL is to gather all these components into practices to improve project and programme level decision-making and learning towards improved humanitarian action. Whilst some organisations use the terms M&E or MEL, most adhere to the importance of learning and accountability. In some instances, work on accountability is coupled with Protection teams.

Besides the four elements indicated in the letters of the title, the main working areas include project management (to ensure effective support to operational teams); strategic thinking (to ensure contextualisation and the relevance of the data to be collected); data management (to accurately collect and process data available for decision making); statistical analysis and reporting (including sampling and the proper presentation of the information collected). In this sense, MEAL professionals work closely with their Information Management colleagues.

Depending on the size of the organisation, it is possible to find MEAL positions at Head Quarters and Field Level. There is little harmonisation in the way organisations name these roles and assign responsibilities to MEAL functions. MEAL roles in field locations typically include M&E officers, data base managers, data collectors/monitors and often an accountability and protection officer.

It is impossible to determine how many staff work in humanitarian MEAL, globally. However, interviewees agreed that the work force is not sufficiently large to deal with the MEAL workload that is increasing significantly.

Interviewees suggested that international staff working in MEAL tended to be younger than their national counterparts. They suggested that MEAL can be an entry point into the humanitarian sector or for those already in the sector and seeking to move into programming. There are several profiles within the private sector whose competencies match those needed for humanitarian MEAL.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees identified that there are some competencies required for MEAL work that exist in both the humanitarian and private sectors. These include, data management and analysis, process design and set up, managing feedback, and quality control against indicators. Interviewees felt that humanitarian MEAL can be distinguished from MEAL in the private sector, because of its focus on the quality of the humanitarian action in line with humanitarian principles. The requirement to work with limited resources and less powerful data management systems also means that humanitarian MEAL professionals require different competencies. The need to operate in insecure and unpredictable environments was also highlighted.

Survey respondents also noted the difference between working with feedback from aid recipients versus customers, where the latter often has greater agency and power. Several respondents felt that commitment to accountability and compassion towards the affected population manifested itself in knowledge, skills and behaviours that distinguish humanitarian work. They highlighted the difficulty of gathering data and undertaking analysis in rapidly changing and highly unstable environments and noted that high turnover in the humanitarian sector and fewer resources makes organisational knowledge management more challenging.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

There is no professional association for humanitarian MEAL professionals, but there are a number of organisations that provide collaboration and learning opportunities related to each of the different elements – Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning. Interviewees mentioned ALNAP, Group URD and the F3E network, among others. There are two levels of MEAL certification available, based on a competency framework developed by MEAL professionals from across the sector and published by Humentum, Catholic Relief Services, and PHAP. MEAL Core

certification (MEAL D Pro) was conceived as a common core for MEAL professionals across both the development and humanitarian sectors. The MEAL Advanced certification covers competencies specific to MEAL in emergency/ humanitarian settings. University courses include modules related to MEAL and there are a large number of short training courses available to MEAL professionals.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees stressed that current humanitarian discussions are highlighting the importance of MEAL. Both donors and implementing organisations are focused on increasing quality and reducing risk. There is considerable focus on innovation and sharing practices to improve the impact of monitoring and evaluation and project level decision making. There is greater focus on accountability, organisational learning and the operationalisation of MEAL objectives. Innovative data collection activities have reduced data collection and processing times and placed more emphasis on analysis. Data protection is of increasing concern and beginning to affect MEAL processes. Interviewees felt that the future development of this profession area will depend on the ability to prove that MEAL processes provided added value in terms of project quality.

In addition, survey respondents pointed to some practical changes and their effects:

- There is more indirect or third-party monitoring because of access issues.

- Whilst MEAL staff have to master new technology their managers are often slower to understand the opportunities and implications of the technology.

- Commercial consultancies have increased their role in humanitarian MEAL, often becoming leading procurement bidders for large scale M&E work.

Useful links and references

- Dillon, N (2019) breaking the Mould: Alternative approaches to monitoring and evaluation. ALNAP paper

→ https://www.alnap.org

- OECD/DAC (2010). Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

→ https://www.oecd.org

- Warner, A, T. (2017). What is monitoring in humanitarian action? Describing practice and identifying challenges. ALNAP Scoping paper

→ https://www.alnap.org

- Culligan, M; Sherriff, L (2019). A Guide to MEAL DPro. Humentum

→ http://mealdpro.org

- PHAP background to MEAL certification

→ https://phap.org

- ALNAP

→ https://www.alnap.org

- URD group

→ https://www.urd.org

- F3E network

→ https://f3e.asso.fr

Project Management

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian project management involves planning, organising and managing resources to deliver humanitarian project goals, within project constraints related to scope, budget, schedule and quality. Defined by the stages of the project cycle, this work typically involves: Conceptualising and developing the project; planning, implementing and monitoring the project; and closing or transitioning the project. Programme Management involves managing a set of related projects and Portfolio Management usually refers to overseeing an organisation's set of programmes and projects.

Some humanitarian project manager roles are focused on a theme or technical area, such as WASH, Nutrition or Logistics. Job adverts for such roles tend to emphasise thematic expertise over technical project management skills. Some interviewees expressed concern that this approach detracts from recognition that "pure" project management is a profession in its own right.

Globally, the number of humanitarian projects of different nature and scale, being delivered in very different contexts, means that a wide range of people are involved. It is likely that a gender imbalance still exists, with men holding greater responsibility for project delivery, particularly in field locations. This balance varies significantly across geographical locations where men and women have different opportunities. Interviewees also pointed to an over-reliance on international PMs for large-scale projects, but highlighted organisations taking active steps towards localisation.

Perhaps because of the perceived generalist nature of project management, the profession provides an opportunity for younger people and those who are new to humanitarian work to gain field experience. This is particularly true in large scale, rapid-onset emergencies where demand escalates quickly. Younger, international candidates, with greater disposable income and fewer fixed responsibilities, may be better able to make themselves available for short term surge events. Whilst positive for those individuals, relying on unqualified and inexperienced staff to deliver, sometimes large-scale projects, is questionable.

Skills and knowledge gained in rapid on-the-job learning may also provide a pathway for humanitarian project managers to move into thematic specialties, more senior management roles or to private sector jobs where pay is higher. Conversely, humanitarian work provides short-term opportunities for private sector project managers looking for a different experience. In both cases, this can lead to high turnover of humanitarian staff.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees explained that fundamental project management responsibilities are consistent across projects in the humanitarian, development, private and public sectors. However, the rapidly changing and uncertain context in rapid onset humanitarian situations, demands a particular set of competencies. Humanitarian project managers need to be resistant to stress, able to operate with uncertainty and in insecure locations, know when "good" is "good enough", be flexible and able to adapt as the needs of affected people change. Flexible communication styles, highly tuned soft skills and empathy are viewed as important, as is knowledge and experience of supply chains. One interviewee said that an effective humanitarian project manager needed to be able to hear things that have not been said and see things that are not visible.

Project Management had the largest number of survey respondents and 76% (96) of them felt there were competencies that distinguished humanitarian project management professionals from their counterparts in other sectors. Here are some of the competencies they identified in addition to those listed by interviewees:

- Prioritising the needs of the affected population whenever making decisions.
- Being accountable to the affected community and applying cross cutting protection principles.
- Knowledge and skills in operationalising humanitarian principles, standards and law.
- Knowledge of the humanitarian system and architecture and an ability to operate effectively with partners within that structure.
- Diplomacy and negotiation skills, especially around access issues.
- An ability to maintain project management rigour despite the time and resource restrictions, and rapidly changing environment.
- An ability to deliver results despite very limited resources.
- Adapting to a very delicate work-life balance, especially when living with colleagues in compound situations.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Most of the $27billion, spent on humanitarian aid annually, is delivered through projects. It is therefore surprising, and perhaps concerning, that very few humanitarian project managers have completed certification or in-depth training.

The project management profession at large is well established. Global professional associations such as the Project Management Institute (PMI) and the International Project Managers Association (IPMA) have hundreds of thousands of members and offer competency-based learning programmes that lead to internationally recognised certification. These associations include working groups focused on specialist subjects and host a number of initiatives to provide project management support to non-profit organisations. However, it seems uncommon for humanitarian project managers to hold these memberships or certifications. Requirements for such qualifications do not routinely appear on job descriptions.

Several NGOs are focused on enhancing project management within development and humanitarian sectors. PM4NGOs, Project Managers Against Poverty, and Bond have worked on a shared competency framework. PM4NGOs developed the PMDPro guide, training, exams and certification. 28,000 people in 165 countries have taken PMDPro and some INGOs have incorporated it in professional development programmes for their own staff.

In addition, many INGOs offer in-house online and face to face training courses on project management for their staff, and most national and international training providers offer courses on project management. The majority of these courses are short and few lead to any form of recognised certification.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents highlighted several areas of change in Humanitarian project management:

- There is greater expectation that project managers have high emotional intelligence and enhanced soft skills to be able to operate in unfamiliar and changing environments. Project managers are also required to work effectively with media and particularly social media, as this becomes increasingly important in coordination, advocacy and fundraising.

- Project managers are required to keep abreast of new technology and programming approaches. As one respondent put it, "being organised is no longer enough, you have to have the tech".

- Growing recognition that project management is a non-linear process, the growth of agile project management and techniques such as micro-planning are changing the way humanitarian projects are managed. Future projects may be divided into much smaller components, with project scope and focus changing more frequently, based on live feedback.

- Localisation means that local organisations will be expected to have enhanced project management skills and international project managers will increasingly work with national and local government, military, local private and civil society actors. Project managers are also required to have a greater role in capacity building.

- Remote working is increasingly common and project teams are more geographically dispersed.

- Greater focus on quality, accountability, standards and compliance is increasing demands on project managers in terms of evidence-based reporting. Increased focus on impact investment and return on investment are also likely to increase scrutiny for project managers.

- Reduced funding has put pressure on project managers to take responsibility for multiple functions within projects and increasingly work on new fundraising proposals.

- Not for profit and private sector organisations will be expected to work closer, sharing skills and expertise. Project management will be a touchpoint for this interaction.

Useful links and references

- **Development Initiatives. Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018**
  → https://devinit.org
- **Project Management for NGOs (PM4NGOs)**
  → https://www.pm4ngos.org
- **Project Management Institute (PMI)**
  → https://www.pmi.org
- **Association for Project Management (APM)**
  → https://www.apm.org.uk
- **Bond. Project Management Group**
  → https://www.bond.org.uk
- **Bioforce. Training Programmes «Humanitarian Programme Manager» and «Coordinateur de Projet de l'action humanitaire»**
  → https://www.bioforce.org

Safety and Security

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian safety and security is focused on ensuring the physical, mental and related reputational state of organisations personnel, assets and status when conducting humanitarian operations. Whilst relatively new professions in the humanitarian sector, there has been a significant increase in safety and security personnel in the last 20 years, as humanitarian operations expand in medium and high-risk environments. There is large variety in the type and nature of safety and security roles, dependent on organisations' mandates, risk appetites and the humanitarian and geopolitical contexts in which they operate.

Since 2010, many organisations have included safety and security within the broader scope of risk management in order to centralise the management of other types of risk including: operational, reputational, and financial; and to better address staff safeguarding and organisational liability. Whether managed by a single department or not, the term "security risk management" is widely accepted as it better reflects a more integrated approach to security. In many organisations, security personnel are increasingly responsible for opening, and ensuring continuity of access for humanitarian operations through analysis, liaison and negotiations with official and non-official bodies. This is particularly prevalent in high risk and the most complex environments.

"Security", as the term for protection from intentional (human) threats, is widely used in the humanitarian sector. In some field locations this is amended to "safety", "access" or "liaison" to avoid raising suspicion from authorities. This can cause confusion with regard to responsibilities as "safety", normally being the term for protection from unintentional threats, would usually fall within the responsibility of logistics teams.

Interviewees identified humanitarian safety and security across four levels of responsibility, although this distinction would depend on the size of the organisation.

Field work, mostly done by national staff, involves daily supervision, organisation and monitoring of the security plans and policies relating to activities and staff deployed in the field. It includes constant contacts with local stakeholders, staff tracking, minor problem solving, access negotiation and local risk analysis, working closely with programs. The majority of humanitarian security professionals are engaged in this work, yet they tend to be the group with least professional training.

Country or regional level work, mostly done by international staff, involves monitoring the actual implementation of security policies among different regions or field bases. It also includes overview, coordination with national or regional bodies and networks, budgeting of security, writing of guidelines, conflict and risk analysis and sometimes crisis management response and integration into policy discussions.

Global level work is generally driven from headquarters, where staff are engaged in policy design, staff briefings and recruitment, travel-system checking, contingency planning, and crisis response.

Strategic level work involves providing advice to management teams or trustees; being actively engaged in crisis response and cross-cutting issues such as duty of care, diversity & inclusion, safeguarding, fraud investigation, and counter-terrorism measures.

There remains a significant gender imbalance in safety and security work, with the majority of roles occupied by men, especially at field, country and regional level. There also seems to be a lack of suitably qualified personnel. Experience in medium or high-risk contexts is a key competency that recruiting agencies look for, and many candidates lack. Most new recruits to humanitarian safety and security roles are: experienced humanitarians who previously worked in humanitarian logistics; former police or military staff; younger staff with high potential for analysis and capacity building but with very limited experience. Each of these presents challenges to organisations looking to ensure their staff have adequate security and humanitarian competencies.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees and survey respondents identified a number of competencies that distinguished humanitarian safety and security from similar work in other sectors:

- Knowledge of humanitarian principles, standards and laws as well as an understanding of the humanitarian system, actors and their mandates.

- An understanding of, and ability to implement, NGO security strategies such as acceptance and soft protection through dialogue and inclusion. Recognising and respecting stakeholder wishes around issues such as access.

- An ability to work effectively in a multi-cultural environment, in terms of cultural differences within teams, between partners and between humanitarian actors and the affected community.

- An ability to balance the humanitarian imperative with duty of care. To take account of the context and be flexible and pragmatic when applying security practice, whilst ensuring that safety and security are not compromised.

- An ability to work with limited resources.

- Soft skills such as empathy, listening, networking, being able to engage with people, being inclusive, understanding and adjusting to changing environments, training capacities.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

There is no professional association that provides certification for humanitarian safety and security and no agreed, cross-organisation competency frameworks. This is in contrast to the private sector, where certification for security professionals is well established. Membership organisations and communities of practice, such as European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) and the International Safety and Security Association (INSSA) provide important infrastructure for professional development. These organisations provide a range of training, and recently mentoring, services and lead cross-organisation initiatives. A wide range of security training is also offered by non-profit and for-profit training providers. Internal training is provided by most INGOs.

What is changing in this profession area?

Humanitarian Safety and Security professionals have increasing focus on duty of care, organisational liability and transparency, as well as a number of other global trends:

- The Localisation agenda, and related efforts in capacity building, will mean that security risk managers need to be more flexible and culturally aware, have better communication skills and ensure the embodiment of humanitarian values when working with local partners. Organisational and individual certification may play an important role in the localisation of security standards and procedures.

- Terrorism and counter-terrorism legislation has affected perceptions of NGOs and challenged the effectiveness of acceptance as a strategy.

- Focus on accountability, safeguarding, diversity and inclusion is changing attitudes and leading to a more nuanced understanding of security risk management.

- Security risk managers will be part of the efforts to retain humanitarian space, resisting pressure from state and non-state actors and operating with fading distinctions between political, military, UN and NGOs spaces.

- Organisations will need to translate strategic visions of security risk management into practical day to day operations. Membership and network organisations will provide space for learning and improvement, but organisations will need to work together to maximise these opportunities and work together on strategic themes.

- Technology innovation creates great opportunities for safety and security, but organisations will need to investment in data management and enhanced IT systems, as well as training for their staff. The humanitarian sector remains some way behind in terms of harnessing this technology.

Useful links and references

- European Interagency Security Forum (EISF)
  → https://www.eisf.eu
- International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)
  → https://www.ngosafety.org
- International Safety and Security Association (INSSA)
  → https://inssa.org
- Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiations
  → https://frontline-negotiations.org

7. INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONS

THEMATIC PROFESSIONS

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Interviewees felt that CCCM represented a collection of different work areas rather than a single profession. They highlighted an important debate regarding the name 'Camp Coordination and Camp Management' (CCCM). The term 'Camp' can be sensitive and create political obstacles. Moreover, the work of the CCCM cluster is increasingly undertaken outside of camps. Some people also believe that the terms 'Coordination' and 'Management' do not accurately represent the important role of community engagement. An alternative name that has been suggested in 'Site Management'.

Work areas within CCCM include camp management tasks, site planning, information management, community engagement, coordination of services in the site, and advocacy. The CCCM cluster has summarised these areas into the following list.

- Ensuring that all people (and particularly those who have been displaced) are represented in decision making processes.
- Coordination and monitoring of services in the camp.
- Ensuring a safe and secure living environment: taking care of the communal infrastructure
- Advocating for durable solutions. Providing an interface between IDPs and host communities for integration or assisting with return.
- Ensuring the capacity and capability of the teams working in a camp

It is impossible to know how many people work in CCCM globally, but the profession area is relatively small compared to other human profession areas. Interviewees estimated that international staff number between 100-200, working alongside several thousand national staff. Interviewees felt that a significant number of national staff gained experience and switched to international roles. They highlighted that the CCCM sector is an entry point in the humanitarian sector, particularly for people with a generalist profile. This contributes to a sensation of young staff and a high turnover. For the more experienced positions, there is a limited supply of suitably skilled staff, which leads to a rotation of the same people through various roles in different organisations.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

There are few professions, in other sectors, that are comparable to camp management and coordination. Perhaps the profession itself is unique to the humanitarian sector. Interviewees compared it to roles, such as running a reception centre for refugees in one's home country, being a hotel manager, or the coordinator of an emergency room in a hospital. They identified core skills as coordination, management and leadership capabilities – all of which are transferable from other areas of work. People who work in CCCM also need an understanding of the humanitarian sector and an ability to work in humanitarian settings. Information and training are available on the architecture of the humanitarian system, however interviewees agreed that experience in the humanitarian sector was more valuable. Survey respondents added that knowledge of technical humanitarian standards was important alongside a clear understanding of the synergies between protection, recovery and relief assistance.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Interviewees did not know about any sector-wide competency frameworks. The cluster is working on standards from which some competencies can be deducted. They will at least give the CCCM sector itself and the humanitarian system as a whole a clearer definition of the role of camp management. The CCCM cluster manages a range of training opportunities through collaboration with INGOs, including online, face to face and training of trainers.

There are several communities of practice for CCCM professionals, but there is no professional association. The cluster is trying to consolidate knowledge and develop practice standards but does not act as a professional organisation for camp management professionals.

What is changing in this profession area?

The following trends were noted by interviewees and survey respondents:

- Humanitarian work is increasingly undertaken in contexts where there are no traditional camps, but more informal sites or urban settings. This is driving a requirement for greater individual and organisational expertise in such contexts.

- The work is increasingly digitalised, so skills in that domain have become more relevant for people working in CCCM, especially for information management elements of the work. Communication and reporting activities have changed significantly.

- Some organisations are shifting their focus towards more community engagement and capacity building work. There has also been increasing interaction between Protection and CCCM work areas in recent years.

- There has been an increasing focus on durable solutions in the past years, partly because the sites have become more diverse and are more commonly situated in urban areas.

- There is greater awareness of the relationship between CCCM and cross cutting issues such as gender, racism, substance use, crime and environmental issues.

Useful links and references

- NRC. The Camp Management Toolkit
  → https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org
- CCCM Cluster
  → https://cccmcluster.org

Education

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Some humanitarians continue to debate whether education programming forms part of immediate emergency response activity. Those involved believe that education provision is an important component of humanitarian work and should be programmed as soon as possible, even if informal or limited in scope. Education contributes to protection and can transmit life-saving messages that help avoid risks such as sickness, or landmines.

Education provision in emergency contexts involves community participation and resource management; coordination; and analysis throughout the design, provision and monitoring of education programmes. Specifically, work can range from developing accessible working environments, through design and delivery of curricula, to working on education policy and building the capacity of teachers and other learning personnel. The work can operate closely with other programme areas such as protection, psychosocial support, and nutrition. Education programmes also provide an important link between immediate response and longer-term recovery.

Roles in education programming range from technical advisors and coordinators, through programme managers, to school directors, teachers and teaching assistants. As with other humanitarian work areas, many field roles are occupied by younger staff with more experienced individuals taking policy or strategy roles in HQ locations. People with fewer family ties or dependents are better able to take jobs in remote or insecure locations. Interviewees also suggested that there is a gender imbalance towards women in this area of work.

Interviewees felt that there is a good supply of skilled candidates for new roles, but some struggle to demonstrate sufficient field experience to gain their first role. More senior roles are harder to recruit for, with a smaller number of candidates who would be trusted with establishing an education programme from scratch. It seems turnover is high at both levels – junior staff moving to different roles to advance their careers, and senior staff moving between organisations to take on new projects. Large-scale funding such as the "Education Cannot Wait" fund is helping to create more opportunities for candidates seeking to engage in the profession. Interviewees also suggested that greater investment in career development, and closer collaboration with universities and training providers could help to align candidates' skills with the changing needs of the sector.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees agreed that there were many overlapping competencies across education work in different sectors. In addition to technical skills, relationship building and coordination with key actors, such as the Ministry of Education and local education authorities, are common in humanitarian and development work. Organisational procedures and the operating environment are likely to be different from public or private sector education work. Interviewees and survey respondents felt the main difference was the speed of response – requiring a level of intensity and an ability to be creative and flexible. Humanitarian education work also has a close connection with protection programming and would require professionals to recognise protection issues and have a good knowledge of humanitarian principles and standards.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Two organisations are central to professionalisation in this work area: The Education Cluster, whose mandate is primarily coordination; and the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), who provide, networking and collaboration opportunities, resources and define standards for operational practice.

INEE's network numbers 130 organisations and over 15,000 individuals. Members come from over 190 countries, with the largest group from the USA (3,000+). INEE enables a wide range of collaboration opportunities through working groups and meet ups. By many, it is considered a professional body, has developed globally recognised operational standards and is currently finalising a competency framework, in collaboration with the Alliance for Child Protection. Interviewees believed that this framework will make both recruitment and career development easier.

In most countries, there is a well-established teaching profession with verifiable qualifications for educators. Many people who work in Humanitarian education, come to the sector with teaching qualifications. However, interviewees were keen to point out that good educators don't always cope well with humanitarian work, and excellent humanitarian education professionals sometimes don't have formal teaching qualifications. A number of academic institutions offer courses that include a focus on humanitarian education, and some have developed courses in collaboration with NGOs, such as the University of Geneva and Save the Children. UNICEF, UNESCO and INEE have all developed training programmes. Interviewees felt that coordination and leadership were elements that were often lacking from existing learning programmes related to humanitarian education.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents identified the following trends:

- There is increasing interest in psycho-social support and social-emotional learning. This creates an opportunity for different humanitarian profession areas to work together.

- The World Humanitarian Summit renewed focus on the humanitarian-development nexus and generated significant interest from donors. This is likely to influence the design and implementation of humanitarian education programmes.

- Gender remains a huge focus for education professionals, and early child education is a developing priority in humanitarian responses. Inclusive education is a significant area of work for humanitarian professionals.

- Humanitarian staff are required to enhance their knowledge and skill to keep up to date with the increasing use of technology in programmes.

Useful links and references

- Education cluster
  → https://educationcluster.net
- INEE
  → https://inee.org
- Education Cluster and INEE. Tools and Resources for Education in Emergencies
  → https://educationcluster.net
- Université de Genève. CAS Education in Emergencies
  → https://www.unige.ch
- IIEP-Unesco. Training
  → http://www.iiep.unesco.org
- INEE. Membership Snapshot
  → https://s3.amazonaws.com

Food Security & Livelihoods

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Whilst Food Security and Livelihoods (FS&L) is a well-known name for this profession area, other terms such as 'economic security' or 'food sovereignty' are also used in connection with the work. The work is also closely connected to Nutrition, sharing a technical chapter in the Sphere Handbook. For the purposes of this study, Nutrition is included as a separate profession area.

The nature of the work undertaken in FS&L is highly dependent on context and varies significantly between rural and urban settings, and between rapid onset and protracted crises. Areas of work could include food security assessment, vulnerability analysis, market analysis, government coordination, logistics coordination, policy/advocacy, and preparedness. In terms of typical roles, interviewees identified: vulnerability assessment and mapping (VAM) officer, programme manager, nutritionist, policy officer, information managers (IM) and performance reports officer, field monitors and distribution staff. They also identified job types in other professions that are linked to food security and livelihoods, such as a food technologist and commodity specialist within logistics.

Interviewees said that the majority of staff working in FS&L are national staff and described a mix of younger and older staff working in field locations, although they felt that staff in the more difficult environments tended to be younger. Organisations are aiming to move towards gender balance but are finding it difficult in some locations because of cultural gender roles. Interviewees identified a dichotomy between many staff leaving the profession area around 30 years old, and those that stay, remaining involved for decades more. They attributed the high level of turnover to limited career opportunities, high stress levels, and the ability to earn more in other areas of work.

Interviewees felt that, as with other humanitarian professions, the ability to recruit suitably skilled, new staff is heavily dependent on the operating context. They also identified a current lack of French and Spanish speaking staff.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees and survey respondents felt that there were skills, knowledge and behaviours that distinguished this profession area from a non-humanitarian equivalent. They identified an understanding of humanitarian principles, laws and standards, and technical knowledge specifically related to humanitarian programme implementation - skills mapping, needs assessment, business planning and proposal preparation in a humanitarian context. In addition, survey respondents mentioned the ability to work effectively in an emergency situation, focusing on impact, whilst being flexible to adapt to a constantly changing environment.

Interviewees noted that skills from educational institutions are largely transferable, but that people in the humanitarian field need the right mind-set in order to be able to work according to humanitarian standards and values.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Interviewees did not know about any competency frameworks used in the sector and indicated a need for standard TORs and competencies across organisations for higher positions. However, interviewees also indicated that for operational staff, the required competencies vary greatly for different circumstances, so standard competency frameworks would be less useful for those roles.

There is no recognised professional body related to humanitarian food security and livelihoods. However, there are organisations working on coordination and knowledge sharing in the work area. The food security cluster manages working groups on cash and markets, nutrition, FS&L in urban settings, preparedness and resilience and programme quality. Each of these shares guidance and promotes learning from practice and research.

The cluster also organises face to face and online training. This is complemented by a range of courses from training providers serving the humanitarian sector. Interviewees again emphasised the need for more capacity building opportunities in French and Spanish, referring to the training offered by Bioforce in Dakar, Senegal as a good example.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents identified the following trends in the area of food security and livelihoods:

- Cash and voucher programming has substantially affected the nature of FS&L work.

- Changes in technologies have modified programme activities – such as the use of mobile phone apps for data collection.

- FS&L has long been focused on the nexus between humanitarian and development work. This has come under the spotlight since the World Humanitarian Summit.

- One of the new developments is the use of forecast based financing, where funding is allocated to humanitarian programmes for early action based on forecast information and risk analysis.

- Another trend is a bigger involvement in the food system of countries. Improving food systems goes beyond emergency work, but it can be qualified as prevention. It includes introducing fortified foods and promoting certain food habits in the interest of public health.

Useful links and references

- Food Security Cluster Working Groups
  → https://fscluster.org
- Food Security Cluster. Training
  → https://fscluster.org
- Forecast-based Financing
  → https://www.forecast-based-financing.org

Health

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian Health is a huge subject, encompassing a wide range of activities and involving many humanitarian health professionals. Essential healthcare in emergencies is considered to include: Communicable diseases; Child health; Sexual and reproductive health; Injury and trauma care; Mental health; Non-communicable diseases; and Palliative care. Palliative care is a relatively recent addition to the list of essential healthcare activities in the Sphere Handbook. There is considerable overlap with other humanitarian sectors such as WASH, Nutrition, Protection, Food Security & Livelihoods and Logistics - all of which influence the health of the affected community.

Interviewees also described the profession area in terms of: Primary care (provided in situ, in homes or communities); Secondary care (in facilities with 24hour care provision, such as hospitals); and Tertiary care (through specialist facilities). They emphasised the importance of humanitarian health professionals in operational activities, in addition to clinical and technical activities. Administrators, analysts, cleaners, coordinators, drivers and many others, all play important roles in Humanitarian Health work, in addition to nurses, paramedics, technicians, doctors and surgeons.

The breadth of the Humanitarian Health profession area makes it difficult to draw demographic trends from the workforce. Interviewees had experience of working in diverse teams that differed according to context, but often involved a mix of men, women, older and younger staff, often from different ethnic backgrounds. Medical roles in humanitarian teams almost always require applicants to have medical certification from their own country as well as experience, which means applicants may have practiced medicine for several years before working in the humanitarian field. Interviewees highlighted the challenges of finding applicants with relevant humanitarian experience in remote settings. They also emphasised the importance of soft skills, coordination and working flexibly, as important competencies that were difficult to source.

Many roles in Humanitarian Health are relatively low paid or volunteering roles. This can favour applicants from wealthier countries with jobs and incomes that enable them to take unpaid time away to assist in emergencies. Volunteering also can encourage older people who have retired from medical careers and want to assist.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Health professionals working in humanitarian settings need to be highly flexible, able to adapt to their operating context and apply their medical training in a relevant and appropriate manner. Examples include: Operating with limited and, often insufficient or low quality, resources; Making rapid patient assessments and decisions regarding the best course of action without information such as x-ray results; and being proactive in providing treatment that is culturally and contextually suitable. Whilst these examples can also apply to non-humanitarian work, especially in low income environments, the urgent life-saving role of humanitarian healthcare increases pressure on humanitarian workers. Interviewees emphasised competencies such as stress management, resilience and a drive to keep going in emotionally and physically demanding circumstances, whilst remaining practical and realistic.

Awareness of the context and culture they are working within is very important for humanitarian health professionals. They cannot always adopt the same practices they would in their home operating context. This means designing programmes that are culturally appropriate and as well as operating in rapidly formed, highly-diverse teams. The most effective humanitarian health professionals recognise the diverse experience and skills of their team members – community health workers in some rural locations may be authorised to perform amputations, whilst surgeons working in emergencies will almost certainly need to do their share of basic, administrative tasks.

Knowledge of the humanitarian systems, actors and their mandates is also important. Knowledge of how humanitarian work is funded, the limitations, rules and regulations allow medical staff to make informed decisions. Humanitarian medics may also be called upon to be involved in broader elements of the work such as project management, negotiation, donor liaison, and MEAL work.

Understanding of medical ethics can be particularly important in complex humanitarian environments. Because of the frontline nature of health work, good understanding of Humanitarian Law and Humanitarian Principles is essential for all staff. Drivers may be asked to transport military personal whilst doctors can receive requests to treat the children of leaders of warring factions.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

The medical profession is well established and highly regulated. Almost all countries have a professional body that recognises certified medical professionals. Medical competencies, standards and terminology are also largely consistent. Most humanitarian medical professionals

operate within this framework, potentially reducing the need for separate Humanitarian Health professionalisation architecture. Despite this, some humanitarian actors feel strongly that professionalisation is needed. Humanitarian U have undertaken significant work to develop an agreed competency framework, related training and certification for individual humanitarian healthcare workers.

The most widely recognised initiative to certify organisations and their health teams against a set of competencies, is the Emergency Medical Team initiative led by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Through this scheme, NGOs who seek to deploy medical teams can have their competencies recognised. At the onset of an emergency, WHO can then pass a list of recognised organisations to the national Ministry of Health who determine which organisations can operate in a response. The Global Health Cluster (led by WHO) aims to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health for any disaster-affected country.

What is changing in this profession area?

Conflict and instability, as well as climate change are bringing about increasing challenges for humanitarian health professionals. Health interventions are often delivered in collaboration with regional and national authorities, yet large movements of people create health needs across recognised borders. Urbanisation, and increases in relative poverty, have also put pressure on non-emergency health systems, making communities more vulnerable to disaster. Humanitarian health professionals are particularly worried about increasing potential for outbreaks of infectious diseases, access to medicines and anti-microbial resistance. There is an increase in the number of vaccine-preventable diseases such as Diptheria and Measles.

Much of the focus of humanitarian health used to be on direct interventions for individuals. There is increasing attention on outbreaks and the factors that can cause health problems. This has contributed to efforts to develop health information systems to ensure that decision making is evidence based. Mental health has also become recognised as an important element to humanitarian healthcare.

Survey respondents also identified that the role of many humanitarian health professionals has changed from field level intervention, to remote technical supervision, training and strategic support. They also highlighted the differences that technological advancements had made to humanitarian medicine, such as affordable technology for prothesis and field level texts and x-rays.

Useful links and references

- Health cluster
  → https://www.who.int
- Humanitarian U
  → https://humanitarianu.com
- MSF
  → https://www.msf.org.uk
- ICRC
  → https://www.icrc.org/en
- Sphere. Sphere Standards, chapter 5: Minimum Standards in Health Services
  → http://www.disaster-info.net

Legal Aid

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Legal professionals play an important role in humanitarian work. Interviewees identified examples at three levels at which they operate:

- Legal aid or assistance provided directly to affected populations (refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP), victims of conflict or human rights abuses etc). This is sometimes also called 'access to justice'. Legal aid includes providing information, legal counselling and legal assistance (ICLA). This is often done in combination with other humanitarian programme areas, like health, shelter or education.

- Legal support to another programme within the organisation. For example, advice on land rights to the shelter team. Although the support is not offered directly to IDP or refugees, it does benefit them indirectly. For example, there are lower chances of eviction if shelter is established with the correct permissions of the owners of the land or building.

- Legal support to the organisation itself. For example, preventing conflict of interest, making sure contracts are established according to the labour law of a country and looking at insurance of staff.

For the purpose of this study:

- Legal aid is defined as legal advice and assistance offered direct to people affected by disaster (This may include assistance on issues such as human rights, displacement, land tenure etc.)

- Legal support is advice offered internally to colleagues and the organisation as a whole. (This may include advice to staff on programming issues, as well as general legal counsel on issues such as employment disputes, building and equipment rental contracts, and other legal matters.)

There is an important distinction between different roles in humanitarian legal work and their corresponding degree of authority.

- Legal officers often do not need to be a certified lawyer if they only provide information, rather than legal counsel. (Although this depends on national legislation).

- Lawyers/legal specialists provide legal counsel and assistance to beneficiaries or the organisation.

- Managers of legal programmes need management skills but also needs to have a legal background. One interviewee noted that, if the manager of a legal project is not sufficiently trained, there can be increased risk of fraud, abuse of power, or corruption.

- Regional or global advisors oversee the strategy for legal aid programmes.

The balance between national and international staff working in humanitarian legal work is largely dependent on the supply of suitably skilled legal staff in the country of operation, but interviewees indicated a general trend towards an increased number of national staff in legal expert and managerial positions. For legal support positions, recruitment is made easier because requisite skills from the private sector are largely transferable, although NGOs may not be able to compete with salaries that private sector law firms can pay. A significant number of private sector lawyers offer pro-bono support to humanitarian organisations to address this shortfall. For legal aid positions, recruitment may be more challenging where specific legal expertise are required on a short or medium term basis, and also because it is hard to find funding for legal professionals who are used to a higher salary than most national aid workers.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees suggested that lawyers working on legal aid programmes do not need a lot of extra, legal knowledge compared to those in other sectors. Specific knowledge of humanitarian law and principles, as well as protection mechanisms and related human rights law are important.

Interviewees highlighted a clear distinction in terms of behavioural competencies and the ability to look at a case with a wider lens than just the legal perspective. Sensitivity, confidentiality and communication styles were all cited as important differences. Survey respondents also referred to an emphasis on diplomacy and engagement rather than adversarial skills.

Interviewees pointed out that lawyers advising humanitarian programmes may be the only legal professional, working with colleagues who are not legal specialists, but specialists in technical areas. This may differ from the private sector where lawyers often work in a firm of lawyers or with larger teams of legal professionals. Interviewees also suggested that legal professionals in humanitarian organisations need to be more generalist than in the private sector. They may have a more autonomous role than their private sector counterparts, and often need to be able to work across a wide range of legal areas.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

As with the medical profession, the legal professional is well established and highly regulated. Almost all countries have professional bodies that recognise and certify legal professionals. Internationally there is good alignment in terms of standards, ethics, terminology and qualifications,

although the law varies significantly between countries and departments. This reduces the need for additional professional infrastructure for humanitarian legal professionals.

In terms of training, people get their law degree from universities and every country has its own rules about who can practice law and give legal advice. Recruits might take additional training on the humanitarian sector, protection, human rights and humanitarian law or training in behavioural skills needed to work with GBV survivors or children. However, organisational funding for training is often limited.

Interviewees were concerned that legal aid programmes are not always well understood by other humanitarian professionals, and the importance of legal aid programmes is not always recognised. In contexts where an extensive legal system is damaged by a disaster, it has a profound effect on people's lives. Legal aid can lead to a person gaining access to health care and education systems, decreasing their dependence on external humanitarian assistance.

What is changing in this profession area?

Trends in legal support tend to follow the trends in the technical areas that they are supporting. For instance, legal support to a livelihoods programme will have to adjust to a shift to cash-based programming as well. Specific trends that interviewees and survey respondents identified include:

- Advances in technology and changes in programming styles mean that legal experts need to keep up to date with these changes and how they impact on legal rights.

- Greater focus on data protection

- Growing need for legal aid programming because of crises in countries with a developed justice system.

- A growing need for humanitarian organisations and donors to recognise the value of services such as legal aid – a shift in thinking from supply of goods to the supply of expertise and time. Legal aid professionals recognise a need to improve the communication around legal aid in order to make the concept more tangible.

Useful links and references

- IRC. Access to Justice in Crisis
  → https://www.rescue-uk.org

Mine Action

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian mine action includes demining, surveying, arms management and destruction (AMD), mine risk education, victim assistance and information management (including Geographic Information Systems - GIS). Some technical roles are highly defined, such as deminers and surveyors, whereas others vary between organisations and operational contexts, like victim assistance.

Interviewees agreed that the large majority of people who work in demining are national staff. Training for deminers takes several weeks, meaning that new recruits can develop the necessary skills relatively easily and quickly. Among the technical roles, there is a strong gender imbalance towards men, and many are ex-military staff. There is greater gender parity for other roles in the profession area. For risk education roles, people's background tends to be more generalist. Candidates often come to this work with experience in project management, communication with communities, and data gathering.

The availability of suitably skilled staff varies by region. In newly contaminated areas the availability is lower than in areas where mine action organisations have been working for a longer time. Interviewees identified a gap in people who have knowledge in Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and French speaking AMD professionals.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

The technical competencies required in humanitarian demining are considered to be the same as both military and commercial demining. However, the mandates in each sector are different. Humanitarian demining organisations are aiming to demine the land with the biggest impact for the population, whereas commercial demining organisations are driven by commercial value of the land. An understanding of humanitarian principles is therefore important. Humanitarian demining organisations also place greater emphasis on victim assistance, so knowledge of protection principles is useful.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Interviewees noted that the mine action sector has a strong community of practice, with two main coordinating agencies: the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). They have developed the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS), which serves as the guiding principles for all humanitarian mine action organisations. In addition to the IMAS standards, the GICHD has developed competency frameworks, for example the Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) competency standards and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) competency standards. These competency frameworks and standards are linked to training courses. Interviewees noted that completion of the IMAS trainings act as valuable certifications for deminers and surveyors. For AMD work, there is less alignment of standards, because it is a newer work area.

One of the biggest training facilities is managed by MAT Kosovo, where a range of courses are offered. These include training in explosive ordnance disposal, IED disposal and other types of weapons. The high cost of these courses means that they are predominantly accessible to staff already working within demining organisations that are willing to pay to train their staff. Fewer training opportunities are available for AMD personnel and other roles within demining. For these job types, recruitment is based much more on experience.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents identified the following trends in the field of mine action:

- The use of IEDs has increased and because of that the need for people trained for IED demining has also increased.

- Some contexts are nearing the goal of being completely mine free or have already reached that goal. However, there also has been a lot of new contamination in the last years.

- There's an increasing demand and interest in arms management and destruction (AMD)

- Remote management is on the increase as access to certain locations is reducing.

Useful links and references

- International Mine Action Standards

→ https://www.mineactionstandards.org

- GICHD. Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) Competency Standards

→ https://www.mineactionstandards.org

- GICHD. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Competency Standards

→ https://www.mineactionstandards.org

- MAT Kosovo. Training

→ https://www.pcm-erw.com

Nutrition

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

The Nutrition profession area relates closely to both Health and Food Security areas. Depending on the organisation, staff responsibilities between the three areas may differ. As a result, humanitarian job functions related to nutrition can have quite different names, depending on the organisation, range of responsibilities and specialisations within the role. These could include terms such as health, food security, HIV, policy, advocacy, surveillance, etc. The name "dietician" is very rarely used, only in specific circumstances. Titles such as "Nutrition Programme Manager", "Nutrition Advisor" or "Nutrition Expert" are usually favoured over the general term, "Nutritionist". Often role titles relate to specific areas of Nutrition such as IYCF (Infant and Young Child Feeding), MAMI (Management of At-risk Mothers and Infants) or CMAM (Community based Management of Acute Malnutrition).

As with other humanitarian profession areas, it is very hard to estimate how many people work in humanitarian nutrition. Interviewees were not aware of any demographic information on the humanitarian nutrition workforce. Based on experience, they suggested that international staff, closer to the field, tend to be younger than their national staff colleagues, and international colleagues at regional or HQ offices. Gaining field level experience may be a pre-requisite for securing jobs in coordination at regional or international level. Interviewees also felt that the percentage of female staff was likely to be higher amongst international staff than national staff.

Interviewees suggested that recruitment of experienced and highly skilled nutritionists was more challenging than recruitment to junior posts. As with most humanitarian work, the greatest challenge for new staff is securing their first field-based posting to gain relevant experience.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees felt that humanitarian nutrition work, especially under-nutrition, differed significantly from equivalent non-humanitarian work. This might explain why the profile of roles in humanitarian nutrition varies significantly from the profile of roles in non-humanitarian nutrition. The majority of workers in a humanitarian context tend to be nurses or doctors, with few dieticians or nutrition specialists. Most come to the humanitarian sector with limited specialist experience in nutrition, then gain skills on the job and through internal training courses and reference material.

Whilst basic knowledge relating to nutrition (nutrients, physiology etc) is consistent, protocols, products, and strategies differ significantly between humanitarian and non-humanitarian nutrition work. There may be greater similarity in response to over nutrition, but this is not a target area of work for most humanitarian responses.

Interviewees also felt that humanitarian nutrition staff required skills on HR management, project management, capacity building, data analysis, that would be less important for nutrition specialists outside the humanitarian sector. They also highlighted the importance of understanding and being able to operate within the humanitarian operating environment. Humanitarian nutrition workers need to be able to diagnose, analyse, treat, and implement prevention measures with very limited resources. They may also be operating in insecure and unstable environments. Interviewees highlighted that cultural and contextual information are essential to understand and adapt to different humanitarian operations.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

The dietician profession is well established in most countries, with recognised certification and professional bodies. However, this is not the case for humanitarian nutrition work. The nurses or doctors who work in any sector can access long established professional infrastructure for medical professionals. This means there is little demand for additional professional bodies, or certification within humanitarian nutrition. The level of professional infrastructure for medical staff who focus on nutrition varies from country to country. Perhaps for this reason, certification is not usually a pre-requisite for humanitarian work.

Several universities offer modules in nutrition as part of degree courses. There are also some online courses offered by universities and UN agencies. This may not be specific to humanitarian work but is considered to be relevant technical knowledge for humanitarian interventions. However, most

university nutrition courses are in high-income countries and, on the one hand are not relevant to low-income country contexts, and on the other hand are not emergency focussed. One example of a widely recognised certificate is SMART (Standardised Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) which some humanitarian nutrition professionals have. The majority of humanitarian organisations working in nutrition in emergencies have developed their own in-house training programmes – and these are essentially based on the contents of the Harmonised Training Package developed by the Nutrition Cluster. Most specific humanitarian knowledge and skills are learned on the job or through internal training programmes.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees identified the following trends in humanitarian nutrition:

- There are several new nutrition operational models being developed currently (with increasing focus on community engagement and emphasis on infants & mothers)

- Mobile technologies are more frequently used, specially to collect data in surveys. Research is also ongoing to use new technology for diagnosis.

- There has been a growth of specialisms within nutrition and increasingly, humanitarian nutrition staff are specialised in one of these areas

- There is greater focus on research, innovation and sharing practice

- Climate change will impact nutrition, through its relationship with food security

- Increasingly complex emergencies in insecure locations create access problems and have encouraged many organisations to nationalise recruitment.

Interviewees felt that, in the future, the profession area will continue to improve intervention strategies with more consideration given to climate change and engagement with Ministries of Health and community empowerment. They also suggested that new technologies may also change operational models and some nutrition food products may also be improved. A big challenge for the future is the consideration of over-nutrition and its impact on obesity and diabetes.

Useful links and references

- Nutrition Cluster
  → http://nutritioncluster.net
- WHO. Infant and young child feeding
  → https://www.who.int
- Emergency Nutrition Network. MAMI Special Interest Group
  → https://www.ennonline.net
- UNICEF
  → https://www.unicef.org
- Bioforce. Training Programme «Responsable de projets Nutrition»
  → https://www.bioforce.org

Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Interviewees agreed that peacebuilding and peacekeeping could not be classified as one profession area. They also differentiated between peacebuilding and peace-making, qualifying the latter as mediation and dialogue to work towards a peace agreement. For the purpose of this report they will therefore be discussed as separate profession areas.

There is an ongoing debate among peacekeeping professionals about the relation between peacekeeping and the humanitarian sector. Some people feel that peacekeeping and humanitarian action are based on fundamentally different principles. The mandate of a peacekeeping mission is given by the security council, so both the mandate and the goal are political. This is in contrast with humanitarian action, which aims to be politically neutral and needs based. Others argue that even though the mandates are different, peacekeeping and humanitarian action are at least complementary. They reason that both fields are aiming to assist the same population and that peacekeepers and humanitarian organisations should work together, especially on protection concerns.

The relationship between peacebuilding and humanitarian action is less debated. Peacebuilding and humanitarian action often have a shared goal: to prevent the risk of lapse or relapse into conflict. Even though peacebuilding often has an explicit political alignment, they are undeniably interlinked on issues like resilience and protection.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeepers provide security and the political and peacebuilding support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace. They protect civilians, actively prevent conflict, reduce violence, strengthen security and empower national authorities to assume these responsibilities. (from peacekeeping.un.org)

Interviewees categorised peacekeeping staff into military staff and civilian personnel. Within civilian personnel they identified those involved directly in peacekeeping programmes, such as human rights officers or civil affairs officers and those in support roles involved with logistics or finance, for example. Interviewees believed that the profession has a low proportion of women and national staff, especially in senior roles. Interviewees noted that the demand for peacekeeping personnel peaks and drops as missions are established or closed. 10 years ago, demand outstripped supply as missions grew in DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, and Mali. Recent closure of missions in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti have left many peacekeeping professionals without work.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding can be seen to include; mediation, building social cohesion, post-conflict institution building, and conflict prevention through addressing root causes such as land conflicts or inequality.

Interviewees felt there is a good supply of skilled candidates in this profession area but highlighted the difficulty in junior staff gaining experience to specialise. This is contributing to a shortfall in the number of specialists who are needed. Interviewees pointed to a high dropout rate of younger people, then an age gap to experienced staff in their 40's and 50's. Interviewees highlighted a gap in specialist technical skills such as; security sector reform, cease fire mediation, sharia law and federalism. Part of the reason for this gap in supply is the lack of jobs where people can specialise in these areas.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

When asked about the different competencies that are needed in the peacekeeping and peacebuilding sector in comparison to similar work in the public or private sector, interviewees all answered that the environment in which they worked, required a different set of competencies. They noted that humanitarian professionals need to be able to adapt their technical skills to new environments, work in an insecure and multicultural environment, and deal with ambiguity. Interviewees in peacekeeping added that belief in the impact of the mission was important. Those focused on peacebuilding emphasised the need to be able to deal with multiple groups and their internal dynamics.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Peacekeeping

For civilians in peacekeeping operations there seems to be no agreed competency framework. Guidance documents and handbooks are available through the UN library - DAG repository. For civilian personnel, training programmes are available but do not provide a clear, career pathway. For military personnel, training is determined by national military organisations, and may or may not be in accordance with UN standards. There appears to be no professional body or association that is specific to peacekeeping. Interviewees indicated that attempts to establish communities of practice were not successful.

Peacebuilding

Interviewees did not know of any shared competency frameworks on peacebuilding or mediation. There are also no professional associations, however there are several networks of organisations for peacebuilding. Examples of these include the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, and the Alliance for Peacebuilding. Several universities offer programmes in peacebuilding and training providers offer a range of short and extended courses. The UN also has a mediation support unit that trains UN staff on mediation. Lastly, there are several governments that offer mediation training, like the Governments of Switzerland (SwissPeace), Germany (peace mediation Germany) and Norway.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees noted the following trends in peacekeeping and peacebuilding:

Peacekeeping

- Methods of recruitment have diversified, including the use of talent pools.

- The development of social media has significant changed the work of public information officers.

Peacebuilding

- The nature of conflict has changed, with more prolonged conflicts and more fragmented conflicts with a multitude of stakeholders. This affects the way conflict mediation is set up.

- Multi-mandated organisations also include peacebuilding elements into their programmes; however, they are not leading in the discussion on policy.

Useful links and references

- Minear, L. (1997). Humanitarian action and peacekeeping operations. Journal of International Peacekeeping, 4(1-2), 7-18

→ https://brill.com

- OCHA. Humanitarian Issues: Integrating peacekeeping and humanitarian work – how to make it work?

→ https://www.unocha.org

- OCHA, Policy Development and Studies Branch. Peacebuilding and Linkages with Humanitarian Aid: Key emerging trends and challenges. 2011, August. OCHA Occasional Policy Briefing Series – No. 7

→ https://www.unocha.org

- DAG Repository. United Nations

→ http://dag.un.org

Protection, Diversity & Inclusion

Protection is a broad area that affects all other areas of humanitarian work. Two well-established areas of protection work are:

- Child Protection
- Protection from Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), of which Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is an important part.

Protection also includes an important focus on diversity and inclusion, considering characteristics that can influence capacities and vulnerabilities for persons affected by disaster. These include; race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability, health, sexual orientation, gender identity or other status.

It was not possible to include all these areas in the study. Based on the established nature of the work, the study focused on:

- Child Protection
- SGBV and PSEA
- Age & Disability inclusion

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Protection work broadly breaks down into two types. Firstly, a significant element of work is related to mainstreaming the subject across all aspects of humanitarian work. Secondly, the design and implementation of technical programmes focused on the subject itself. (e.g. mainstreaming age inclusion in all aspects of an organisation's programmes, as well as establishing programmes that focus on work with older people).

In all cases, work typically involves providing advice to colleagues and partners, the development of guidance and tools, as well as design and delivery of capacity building initiatives. It might also involve directly technical work, feeding into programme design, decision making or evaluation.

Protection, Diversity and Inclusion professionals are often involved in internal and external coordination and advocacy – encouraging protection elements to be a core consideration in all aspects of humanitarian work. Therefore, relationship management and liaison activities with colleagues, partner organisations and local or national governments are common aspects of the work.

Interviewees agreed that many of the humanitarian professionals that work in these areas are often around the midpoint of their career. This may be because people enter the sector in more general roles and develop specialism in these areas as they progress. More senior staff tend to have moved onto people or programme management, or specialist capacity building roles.

For Child Protection and SGBV roles, interviewees suggested that there were generally more women than men, with a mix of international and national staff. The gender imbalance seems likely to be pronounced for roles that include both aspects of the work – e.g. Child Protection projects that are focused on SGBV. Interviewees also noted a generational difference, with older staff focused on women's equality, and younger staff demonstrating more interest in LGBTI+ issues. Work on Age and Disability often attracts staff from the development sector where these topics have been an area of focus for longer than they have been in humanitarian work.

In all cases, interviewees expressed the difficultly in recruiting adequately skilled staff for these roles. This is may be because roles are offered as part time, or as elements of broader roles. Interviewees highlight that this could lead to unclear job titles that may also deter possible candidates. In smaller organisations, Protection, Diversity and Inclusion roles may not exist at all due to funding restrictions. The competencies required for advisors are quite different from programme implementation staff. Finding candidates with technical subject knowledge and advanced advisory skills can also be a challenge.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

As with other profession areas, interviewees and survey respondents identified distinguishable competencies that related to the challenging working conditions and stress of humanitarian work. This included a high level of empathy, alongside an ability not to become personally affected. They highlighted the ability to work in insecure locations and under high pressure, and to be adaptable and flexible. Interviewees also stressed the importance of understanding humanitarian principles, standards and architecture (including the cluster system) and having a personal affiliation with the humanitarian mandate of the organisation.

Survey respondents emphasised the importance of strong communication, diplomacy and negotiation skills. They also pointed to specific knowledge areas that are unlikely to be transferable, around detention or conflict, for example. Child protection professionals working in the humanitarian sector may need to have greater knowledge and experience in family tracing or re-integration than their development or public sector counterparts.

All humanitarian protection professionals should have knowledge of the increased risks created in disrupted and often unstable contexts, as well as the impacts of crisis on individual and community vulnerabilities.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

There are no formal professional associations for these areas of humanitarian work. Within the Global Protection Cluster there are working groups focused specifically on Child Protection and on SGBV, both of which manage a range of tools and guidelines on their respective topic. The Child Protection working group developed a competency framework in 2010 which is under revision, with the revised version scheduled for 2020.

The ICRC, in collaboration with UN agencies and INGOs, developed Professional Standards for Protection work. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is an inter-agency group which hosts several working groups on the topic and produced the Child Protection Minimum Standards (most recently in October 2019). There are also a number of toolkits related to protection, SGBV and PSEA in humanitarian action. These include those developed by the Global Protection Cluster, IASC, IFRC and WFP.

The Age and Disability Consortium is an inter-agency group who have developed a good practice guide, including a competency framework for humanitarians working in the inclusion of older people and people with disabilities. The consortium also developed inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities. There are several groups who work on inclusion of people with disabilities across the development and humanitarian sectors.

There are many training programmes available across all these topics. These predominantly take the form of short, online and face to face courses, offered through the working groups mentioned and a range of NGO training providers. As with most short courses, these do not seem to provide recognised certification. Degree courses in humanitarian action, may include these subjects through specific modules, but they very rarely focus entirely on humanitarian protection.

What is changing in this profession area?

Survey respondents highlighted the huge number of displaced people today, growing number of complex emergencies and the vast protection issues that arise from that. They also pointed to the increased interest in protection and accountability from funders, and how this has led to a significant increase in compliance demands. Finally, they noted requirements on staff to have greater understanding of new innovations being used in the humanitarian sector, such as cash programming, new technologies, social media, and data protection.

Interviewees identified the following specific trends across the specific work areas:

Child Protection

- There is increasing focus on community-led feedback mechanisms to prevent and respond to child protection risks.
- Organisations are increasingly seeking to recruit national staff into roles previously occupied by international staff.
- Protracted crises are causing humanitarian and development practitioners to develop integrated approaches. Such crises also lead to larger pools of skilled national staff.

SGBV and PSEA

- Recruiters are increasingly using talent pools to identify new staff.
- Increasing numbers of skilled local staff means that demand for international staff is reducing.
- As the number of gender specialists grows, there is a risk that organisations prioritise specialist programming at the expense of mainstreaming gender topics across all programmes.

Age & Disability Inclusion

- Accessibility for older people has become more important in humanitarian work.
- Localisation, and a focus on community-led responses, has led to a decrease in silo thinking.
- There has been a significant increase in the attention given to Inclusion and inclusive education. This is due to advocacy efforts and focused funding, such as Education Cannot Wait, alongside the attention given to Sustainable Development Goal 4.
- Donors, such as ECHO are including disaggregation of data related to disability within their targets. This is also increasing awareness and focus.

Useful links and references

- **UNICEF. Child Protection in Emergencies e-Course**
  → https://agora.unicef.org
- **Child Safe Horizons. Child Protection in Emergencies Certificate**
  → https://www.childsafehorizons.com
- **Child Protection Working Group. Inter Agency Guidelines for Case management and Child Protection**
  → http://www.cpcnetwork.org

- Child Protection Working Group. Competency Framework 2010

→ http://www.cpcnetwork.org

- Child Protection Working Group. Competency Framework Draft 2020

→ https://alliancecpha.org

- Child Protection Working Group. Resource centre

→ https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net

- Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action

→ https://alliancecpha.org

- Alliance. Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action

→ https://alliancecpha.org

- Global Protection Cluster. Core Competencies for GBV Program Managers and Coordinators in Humanitarian Settings

→ https://www.refworld.org

- UN Women training centre

→ https://www.unwomen.org

- WFP Gender toolkit

→ https://gender.manuals.wfp.org

- Global Protection Cluster. Age, Gender, Diversity Essential Guidance and Tools

→ http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org

- IFRC. Minimum standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies

→ https://media.ifrc.org

- IASC. Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action

→ https://gbvguidelines.org/en

- HelpAge. ADCAP Good Practice Guide

→ https://reliefweb.int

- Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities

→ https://disabilityinclusion.msf.org

- HelpAge. Understanding Older People and Their Needs in a Humanitarian Context Course

→ https://www.helpage.org

- HelpAge. Basic Principles of Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response Course

→ https://www.helpage.org

- HI. Collecting Data for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action Course

→ https://www.helpage.org

- International Disability and Development Consortium

→ https://www.iddcconsortium.net

- Unesco. Global Education Monitoring Report (2020)

→ https://en.unesco.org

- ICRC. Professional Standards for Protection Work

→ https://www.icrc.org

- Bioforce. Training Programme «Responsable de projets Protection de l'enfance en situation d'urgence»

→ https://www.bioforce.org

Shelter, Settlements and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Humanitarian Shelter is often connected with distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs). Shelter materials, kits, and tools can be considered as NFIs, as can essential household related items such as cooking equipment. The term "Shelter and Settlements" often replaces "Shelter", in order to recognise the broader implications of offering shelter assistance to affected communities. Some consider shelter assistance as a process – housing and shelter is a foundation that influences the way people live, how they access to other services, as well as contributing to their protection and security. For this reason, the shelter sector has perhaps the broadest overlap with other humanitarian aid sectors.

Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements work spans all parts of the disaster cycle from preparing for pending hazards, through provision of immediate life-saving emergency shelter and NFIs, to assistance with repairs and reconstruction to assist communities return to their way of life. The Sphere Handbook identifies 7 areas of focus for shelter and settlement professionals: Intervention planning; location and settlement planning; assistance to ensure safe and adequate living space, ensuring access to household items; technical assistance to support self-recovery; ensuring security of tenure; and environmental sustainability.

Interviewees felt that the Humanitarian shelter sector had a better gender balance than the commercial construction industry, which is often regarded as male dominated. They pointed to middle income countries particularly, where there has been significant growth in the number of women architects and engineers working in humanitarian response. Whilst many humanitarian shelter jobs are national roles, global advisor roles still tend to be taken by people from the global north.

Only a few INGOs retain permanent shelter teams, and these are often small. Most agencies respond to surge demand through roster systems. This means that, at certain times, it can be difficult to recruit adequately competent professionals. It also creates a potential barrier for people looking to join this work area – particularly for nationals of low-income countries, where it may be harder to find a job and a salary that will allow for periods of deployment. As with most areas of humanitarian work, even highly skilled individuals find it hard to get their first opportunity of field work. Interviewees suggested that an inability to engage new talent could damage the profession in the medium and long term.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees agreed that humanitarian shelter and settlement work was defined by a high requirement for contextual adaptation – beach houses in the Philippines, concrete apartments in Syrian cities and stone houses in Nepal require entirely different solutions. In addition, building techniques and materials may vary considerably across small geographical distances. In an urgent, emergency context, these contextual differences mean that shelter professionals need to be flexible, solution-focused, and dynamic, adapting their technical knowledge to creative solutions.

In addition to problem solving skills, interviewees identified an ability to operate within humanitarian principles – rapidly prioritising and targeting on the basis of need. They also highlighted good understanding of cultural and anthropological issues, excellent communication and coordination skills, and an ability to listen effectively. Predicting the social and environmental effects of material use and settlement planning are also important to prevent unintended harm.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

Apart from some internal, organisational initiatives there are no agreed competency frameworks for humanitarian shelter professionals. There is no professional association, but several communities of practice and working groups exist to share information and best practice. These are coordinated by organisations including InterAction, IFRC Shelter Research Unit, Shelter Centre, the UK Shelter Forum and the Global Shelter Cluster. The cluster is regarded as strong and active, and hosts webpages relating to 12 working groups and 6 communities of practice.

Interviewees highlighted around 5-10 universities, mostly in Europe, that offer specialist courses that focus on humanitarian shelter. There is no sector-wide certification programme, but a number of short face-to-face and online training courses exist. One of the most popular of these is offered jointly by InterAction and USAID/OFDA, which has had around 4000 participants from over 120 countries. Efforts are ongoing to gather support for a modular and incremental programme of training that could support professional development for humanitarian shelter professionals.

What is changing in this profession area?

For over a decade, transitional shelter (or T-shelter) approaches have aimed to link emergency shelter to longer term reconstruction through the provision of materials that will be reused in future construction. This relates to a growing acceptance of the need to look beyond "shelter" to "settlements" and perhaps ultimately towards "home and community". These longer-term views involve numerous environmental, social, and legal considerations, which further expands the required skills set for shelter professionals, beyond technical construction skills.

There is also growing consideration of the broader impacts of shelter. The risks related to health and protection from poorly designed housing, may significantly exceed the risks from poor construction.

"Self-recovery" is an approach that accepts people's right to choose their own housing - recognising that disaster affected communities will find their own solutions and personalise them to their needs. This means a shift from shelter provision to capacity building, support and direct funding for communities. This coincides with the growth in cash and voucher programming.

"Area" or "Neighbourhood" approaches take a geographically bounded area and look at a range of needs and solutions within that area. This means considering the broader picture of humanitarian impact beyond sectors and working with multiple local actors. This is particularly pertinent in urban emergencies where solutions are increasingly focused on in-situ support rather than setting up camps in alternative locations.

Complex emergencies and climate change are also setting challenges for shelter and settlement professionals, with little or no guidance available for increasingly complex situations with multiple actors involved.

Useful links and references

- CORE Workshop Reference Manual
  → https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org
- UN, DFID, Shelter Centre. Shelter after disaster
  → https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org
- Emergency Shelter Cluster. Selecting NFIs for Shelter
  → https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org
- InterAction. USAID & OFDA Shelter and Settlements Training
  → https://www.interaction.org
- The Sphere Handbook
  → https://handbook.spherestandards.org
- Shelter Cluster
  → https://www.sheltercluster.org
- Shelter Centre
  → http://sheltercentre.org
- USAID. What we do: shelter and settlements
  → https://www.usaid.gov
- InterAction
  → https://www.interaction.org
- Global Shelter Cluster. The State of Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements 2018
  → https://www.sheltercluster.org
- Care International & World Habitat. Soaring high: self-recovery through the eyes of local actors (2019)
  → https://www.world-habitat.org
- Global Shelter Cluster's (GSC) Urban Settlements Working Group. Area-based Approaches in Urban Settings. Compendium of Case Studies (May 2019)
  → https://reliefweb.int

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

What are the key characteristics of this profession area?

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is the most commonly used term for this humanitarian profession area, although related areas of work include Water and Sanitation (WATSAN); Water and Habitat (WATHAB); and Water, Sanitation and Public/Environmental Health. The different elements of this work lead some to question whether it can be considered as a single profession area.

WASH can be further divided into 'hard' (e.g. building infrastructure) and 'soft' (e.g. hygiene promotion, community engagement, public health etc.) components. Ultimately these components are often mutually supporting, and most WASH interventions involve a combination of factors. WASH programmes are present in rapid-onset and complex emergencies; rural and urban locations; in collaboration with local authorities; and working closely with Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Food Security interventions.

There is no agreed set of job profiles within WASH work. Interviewees highlighted significant divergence in the structure, role titles, responsibilities and working terminology between different organisations. Senior staff tend to be located in HQ or regional offices, determining strategy and providing support to their more junior colleagues in field locations. Both can be involved in needs assessment and programme design.

Interviewees identified a gender and age imbalance in the profession area, estimating that, typically, around 25% of all staff were women and more than 50% of staff were less than 30 years old. Several INGOs are actively implementing localisation policy; shifting roles from international to national staff.

Interviewees agreed that supply of suitably skilled WASH staff was insufficient to meet the ongoing demand, and particularly that there are not enough "good quality" people who want to work in the field for a long period of time. These problems are associated with the common practice of offering short term contracts, leading to high turnover, and the peaks and troughs of demand created by surge systems during large scale emergencies. Interviewees also felt that organisations lacked capacity to effectively recruit and retain staff given growing needs in relation to living, salary and security conditions.

Which competencies in this profession area are specific to humanitarian work?

Interviewees and survey respondents felt that WASH work in the humanitarian sector was distinctly different to that in commercial and public sectors. Professionals working in private and public sectors are more likely to specialise in one or two work areas, whereas humanitarian professionals often work across several of the elements included in WASH. Engineering elements of the profession are consistent across sectors, but there are significant differences in terms of knowledge and skills in 'softer' elements of the work, such as community engagement. Survey respondents also emphasised the need to be adaptable yet professional when working within the urgency of a rapid reponse, and to work in high-risk locations with limited resources.

Other distinguishable competencies identified by interviewees and survey respondents include: knowledge and behaviour relating to humanitarian laws and principles; an approach that prioritises accountability and protection; empathy or emotional awareness; the ability to operate effectively in a humanitarian environment and particularly conflict settings; stress and security management, agility and the capacity to deal with rapid changes; working in multicultural environments; and negotiation, representation and communication skills.

What infrastructure exists to support professionalisation in this area?

The Global WASH Cluster (GWC) is certainly the best known reference organisation for this profession. There is no established global professional body for this area but some regional and national WASH associations and technical working groups. In many countries, humanitarian WASH practitioners have strong links with engineering institutions.

Although the WASH profession has no professional certification, 13 diploma courses in WASH have been identified by the GWC around the world and some of them have developed related competency frameworks. The GWC itself, and some humanitarian organisations have also developed their own competency frameworks for internal use.

As with other humanitarian professions, it can be hard for entrants to the sector to secure their first job. Organisations look for a mix of relevant experience, educational background, and project management. Interviewees agree that, once candidates secure their first experience, there are many possibilities for individuals to develop in the profession with a range of career development paths open to candidates.

Many professional development opportunities exist through various physical and online courses, although there is limited offer of mentoring or coaching. These may be related specifically to WASH, or through connected work areas such as Health, Nutrition or Shelter. Interviewees expressed concern that many training courses covered traditional curricula, failing to address the most current WASH issues as the profession evolves quickly. They also identified the dilemma that organisations face, deciding whether to invest in training for staff on short term contracts.

What is changing in this profession area?

Interviewees and survey respondents highlighted the following areas of change in WASH:

- There are a decreasing number of interventions in 'survival' WASH. Instead WASH has refocused and is likely to operate with an increasing focus on public health in the future.

- Due to the Grand Bargain, there are more WASH interventions in collaboration with Market Based Programmes. This trend to design and implement WASH programs alongside market strengthening and cash and voucher programmes is likely to increase in coming years.

- Interventions are increasingly complex (in conflict situations and urban contexts, for example) and aim for longer-term impact. This is creating a significant need for specialisation, partly met through more partnership and sub-contracting.

- A wider range of assessment approaches is being used, enabled by advances in technology. This is coupled with greater emphasis on data management and MEAL. Together this is creating greater emphasis on reporting.

- Future WASH interventions will include more urban response and more adaptation to climate change.

Useful links and references

- Global WASH Cluster

→ https://washcluster.net

- Global WASH Cluster & Groupe URD. The Capacity of the WASH Sector to Respond to Difficult Humanitarian Situations: an Analysis

→ https://www.urd.org

- Bioforce. Training Programme «Responsable de projets Eau, Hygiène et Assainissement»

→ https://www.bioforce.org

- German-Jordanian University, in partnership with Action contre la Faim and Bioforce. Humanitarian Water, Hygiene & Sanitation Master's Degree

→ https://washmsc.com

8. SURVEY REPORT

Methodology

The aim of this survey was to gain broader input from humanitarians around the world. It was hoped that respondents would share their experiences and views, contributing to a snapshot of humanitarian professions today.

The survey was active from the 27th of August 2019 to the 29th of November 2019. The survey was designed with the support of PHAP and shared with humanitarians through the networks of the following organisations:

- PHAP
- Bioforce
- RedR
- Humentum
- DisasterReady
- CHS Alliance

It was also sent to the staff of other networks and implementing humanitarian organisations and advertised through social media channels.

855 people opened the survey, although only 753 respondents responded by answering questions. The number of people who answered each question varied, as some respondents failed to complete all the questions. For that reason, results in this report are indicated as percentages of the total number of people who answered that specific question.

When analysing the responses to questions, only complete responses were included. For the closed questions, this means that when asked to rank several options, only those who ranked all the options were analysed. For the open questions, this means that the written answers were only included if they could be understood without having to be interpreted. Open questions were analysed by looking for themes across all answers and then counting how many answers related to each theme.

Limitations

There are two main limitations to this survey:

First, the respondents to the survey self-selected, meaning everyone that received the survey could choose whether or not to open it. This non-probability sampling technique means that not all individuals in the population have an equal chance to be represented in the survey results.

Second, the population the survey is aimed at is not clearly defined. There is no clear definition of a humanitarian worker, nor are there any precise numbers on the size and demographics of the group of humanitarian workers. This means that it is impossible to check if the respondents to the survey form an accurate representation of the people working in the humanitarian sector.

In short, this means that the results are not representative of any group other than the group of respondents. Similarly, any disaggregated group of respondents, including a group of respondents with the same profession area, is not representative of that profession area in the entire humanitarian sector and therefore also cannot be compared to each other.

Despite these limitations, the survey provided a wealth of interesting reflections from those directly involved in humanitarian work. In the following report you can see the questions and a graphical representation of the answers to each of the questions in this survey.

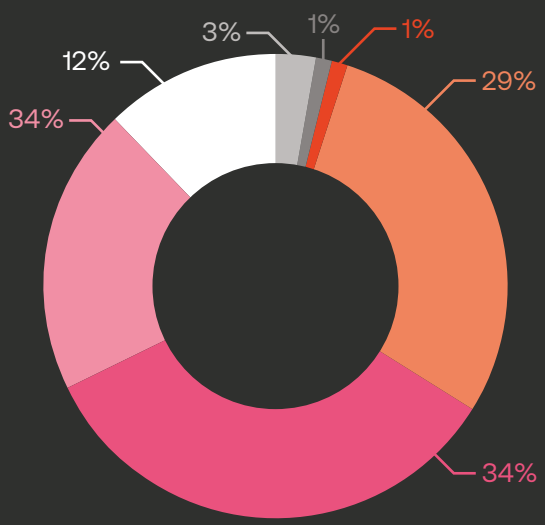
About you

1. What is your citizenship?

For the complete list of respondents per country, please see the table at the end of this survey report called 'table to chart 1'.

2. What is your age?

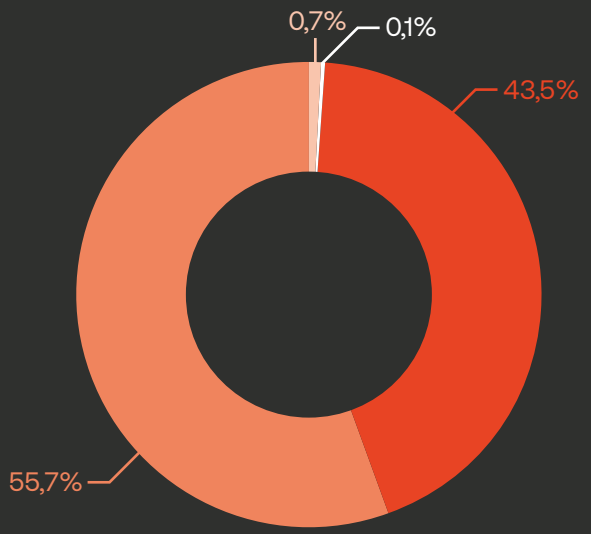
Age of respondents



0-17 : 0%
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75 +

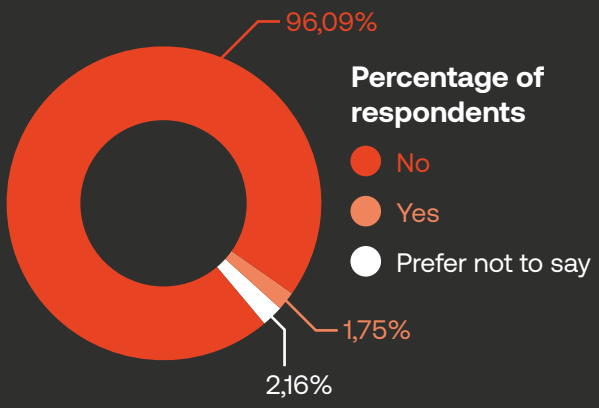
3. What is your gender?

Gender of participants

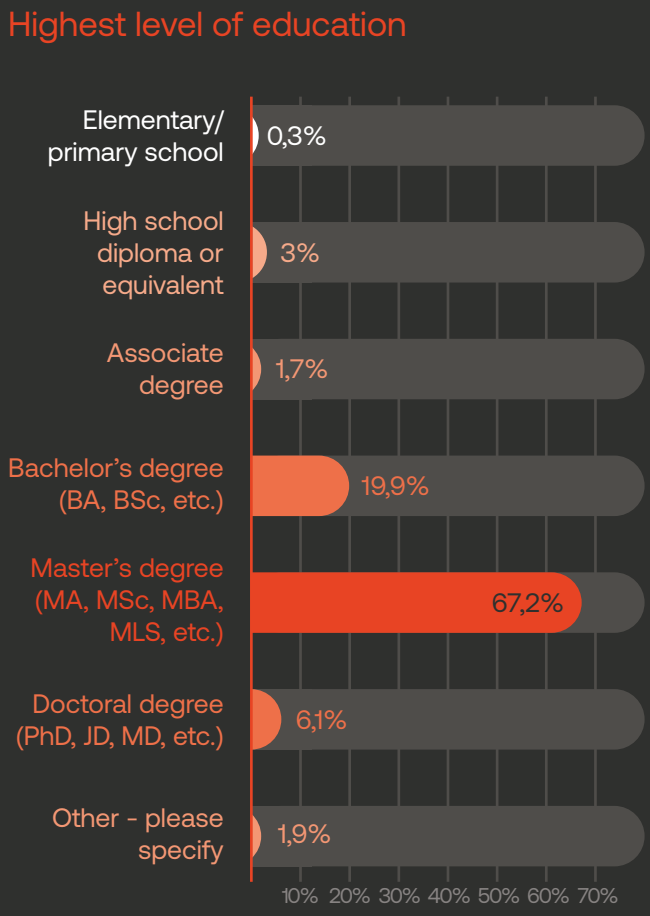


Female
Male
Prefer not to say
Prefer to self-define

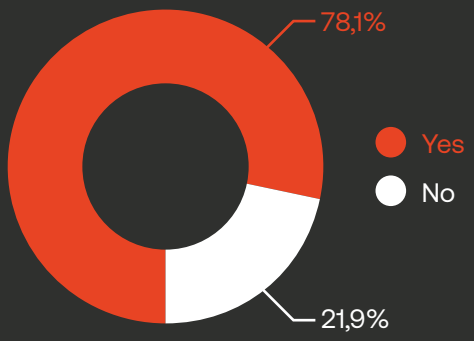
4. Do you have a disability?



5. Which of the following is the highest-level degree you have earned from an academic institution up up to now?

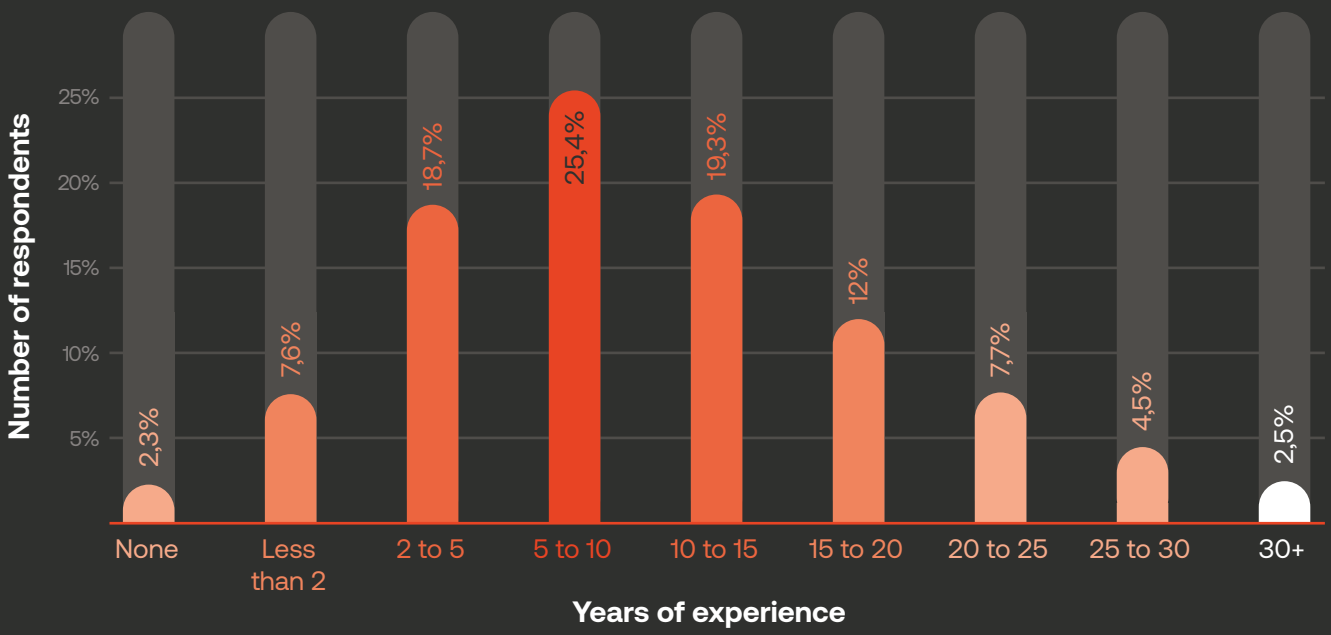


6. Are you currently employed in humanitarian work?



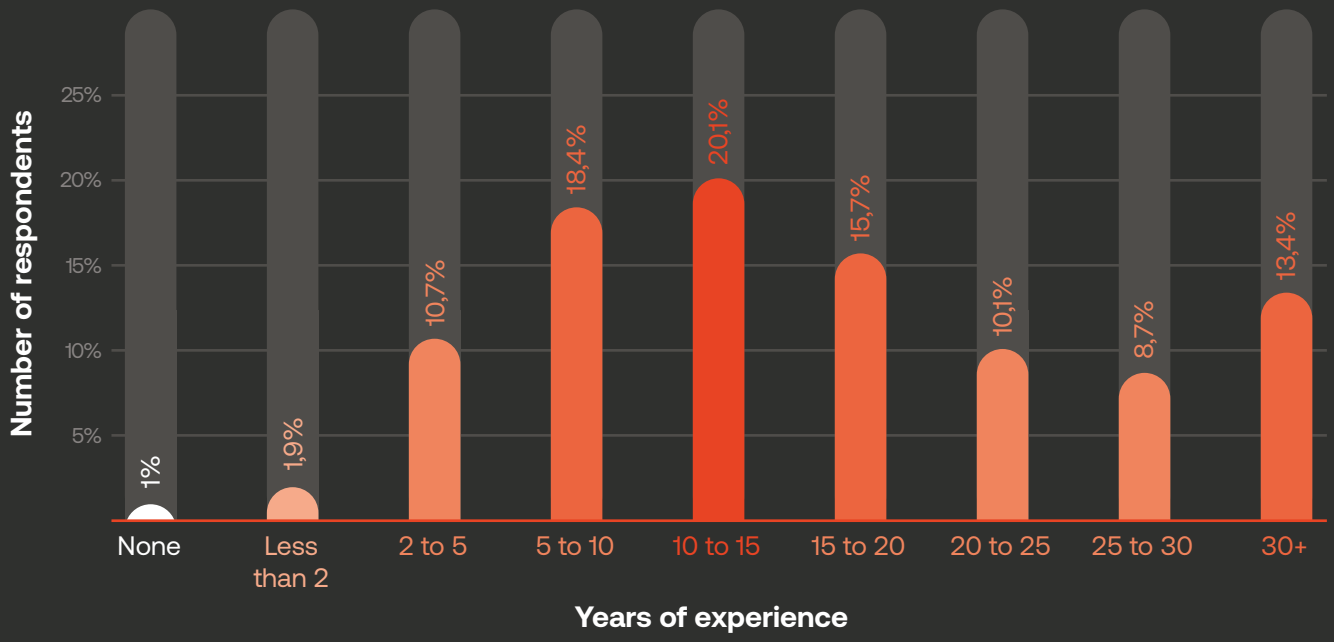
About your career

7. How many years' experience do you have in humanitarian work?



8. How many years' working experience do you have in total?

Years of working experience in total



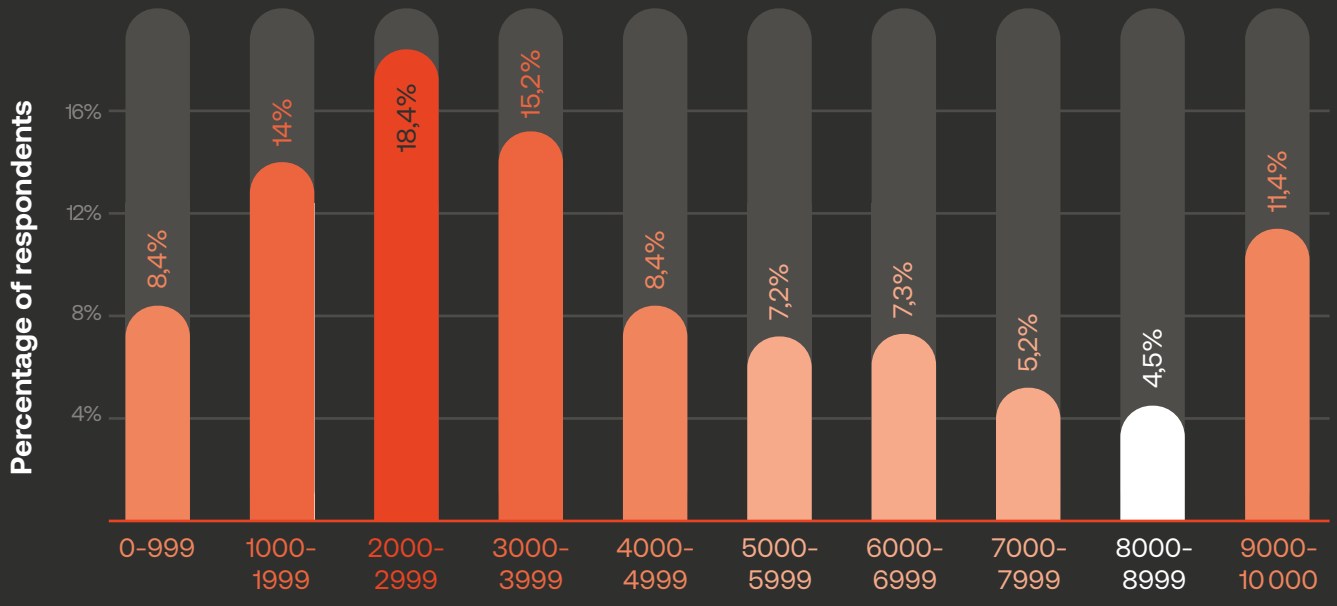
9. What was your most recent job title in the humanitarian sector?

Number of times it was mentioned

105	86	82	60	53
Manager	Coordinator	Officer	Adviser	Director
39	33	31	18	16
Head	Specialist	Consultant	Assistant	Leader

10. What was your approximate monthly wage in your most recent humanitarian role (before tax, in USD)?

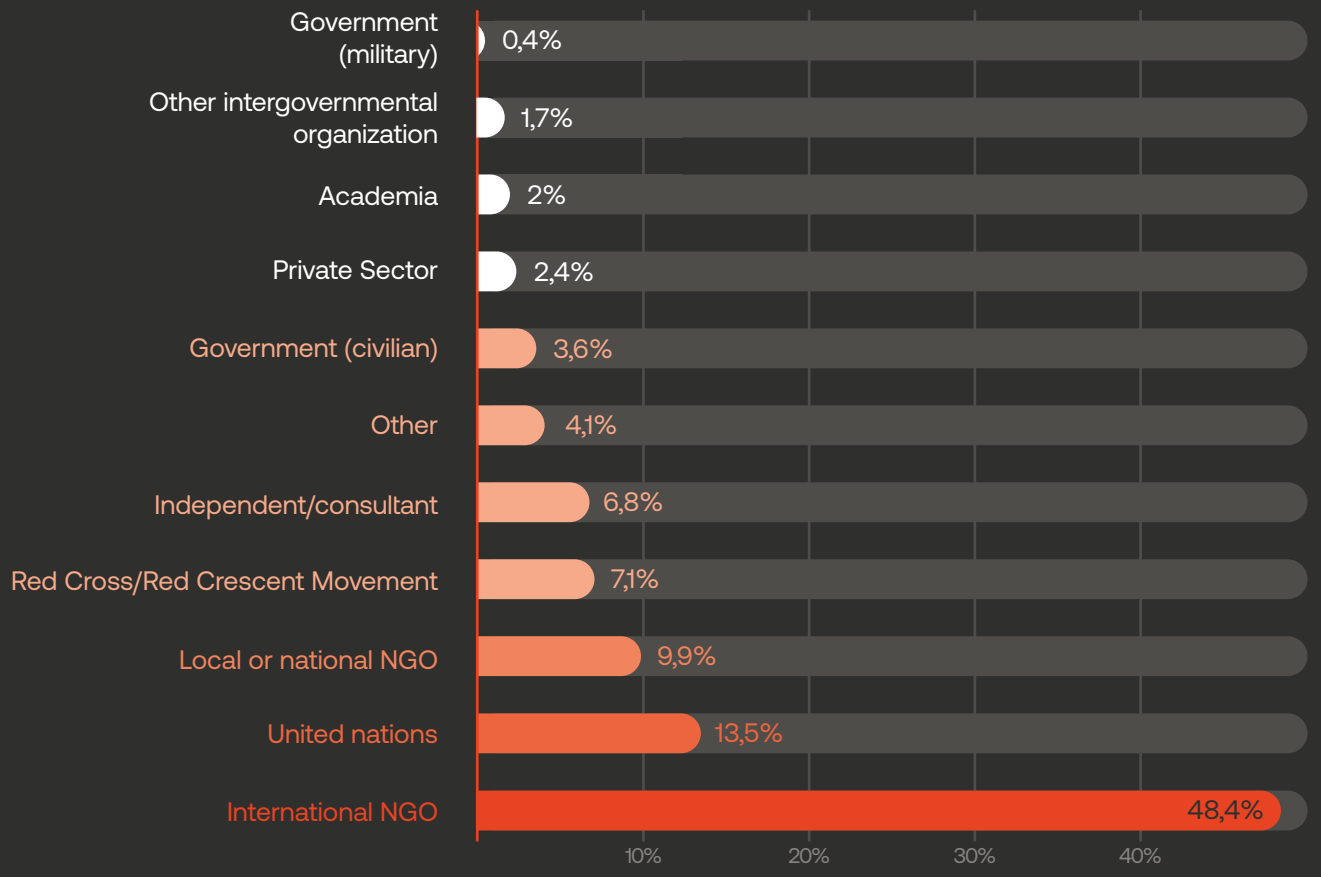
Monthly wage



129 people chose not to provide a figure. The median was 3500.

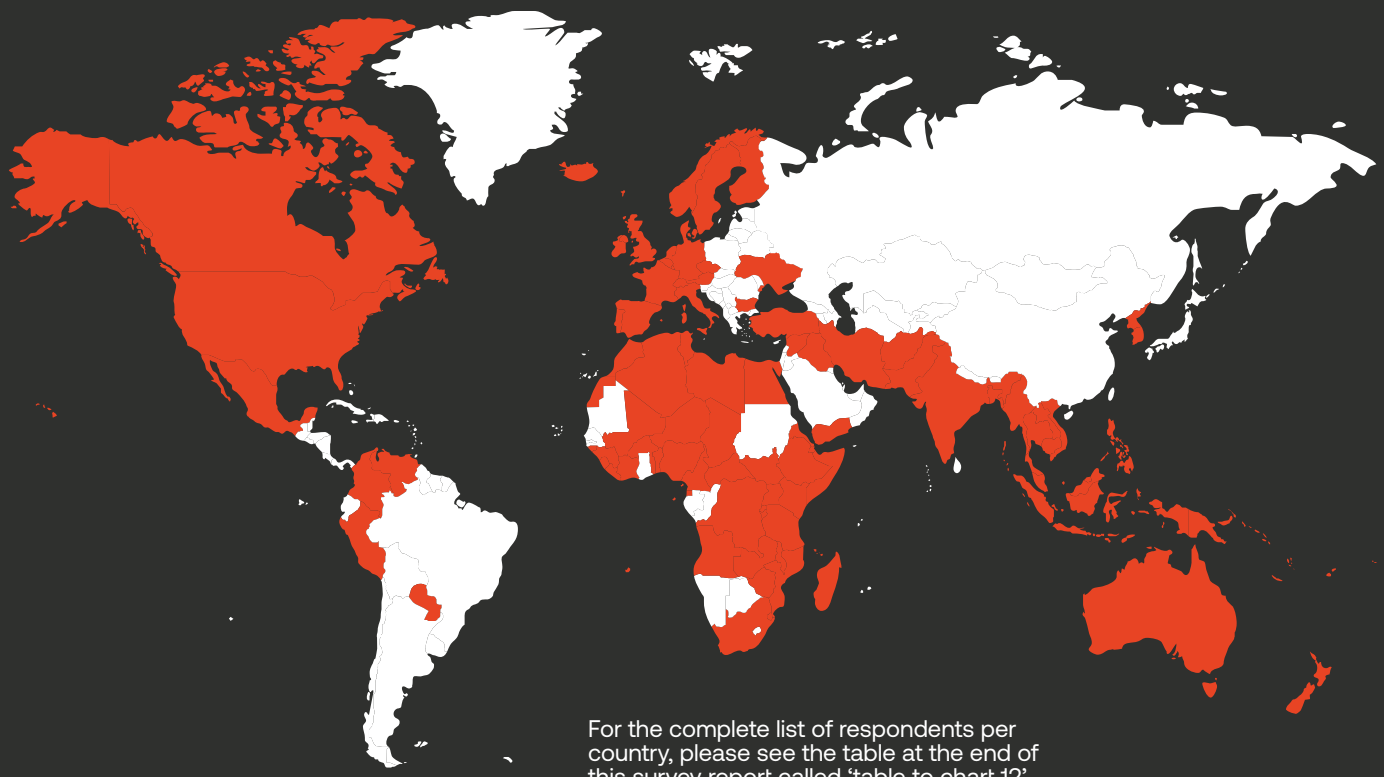
11. What type of organisation do you currently work within?

Type of organisations



12. In which country are you currently primarily based?

Country in wich respondents are based

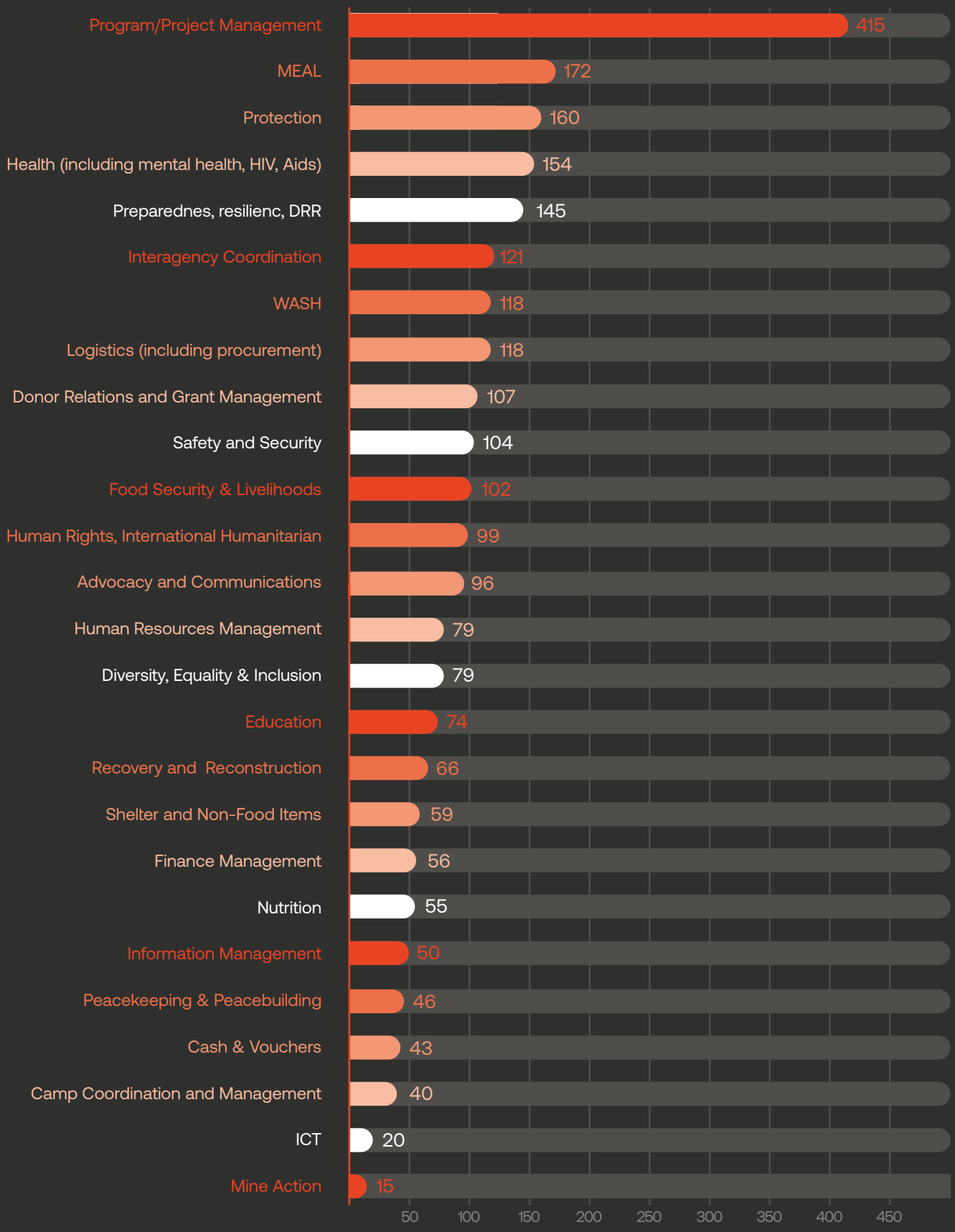


For the complete list of respondents per country, please see the table at the end of this survey report called 'table to chart 12'.

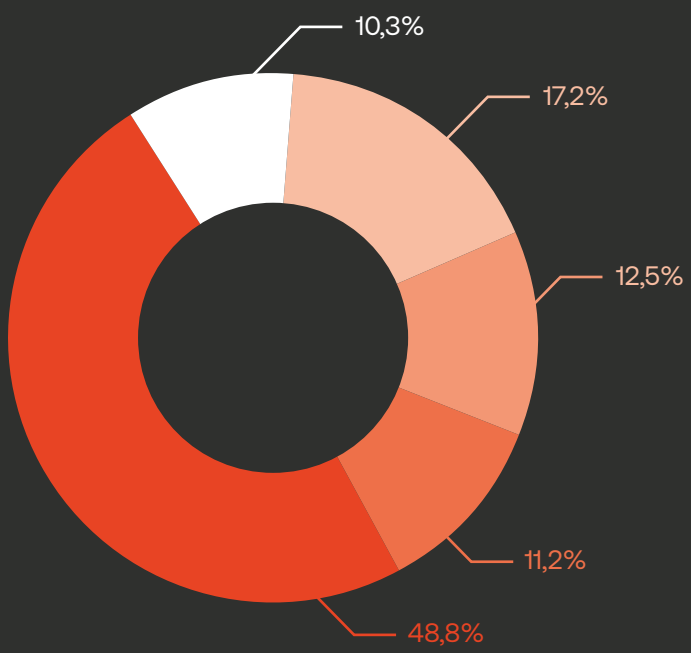
Your humanitarian "profession"

13. Which of these professions do you affiliate with and best describe your humanitarian career? (select up to five)

Affiliation with professions



Number of professions people affiliated to



How many professions did people affiliate with?

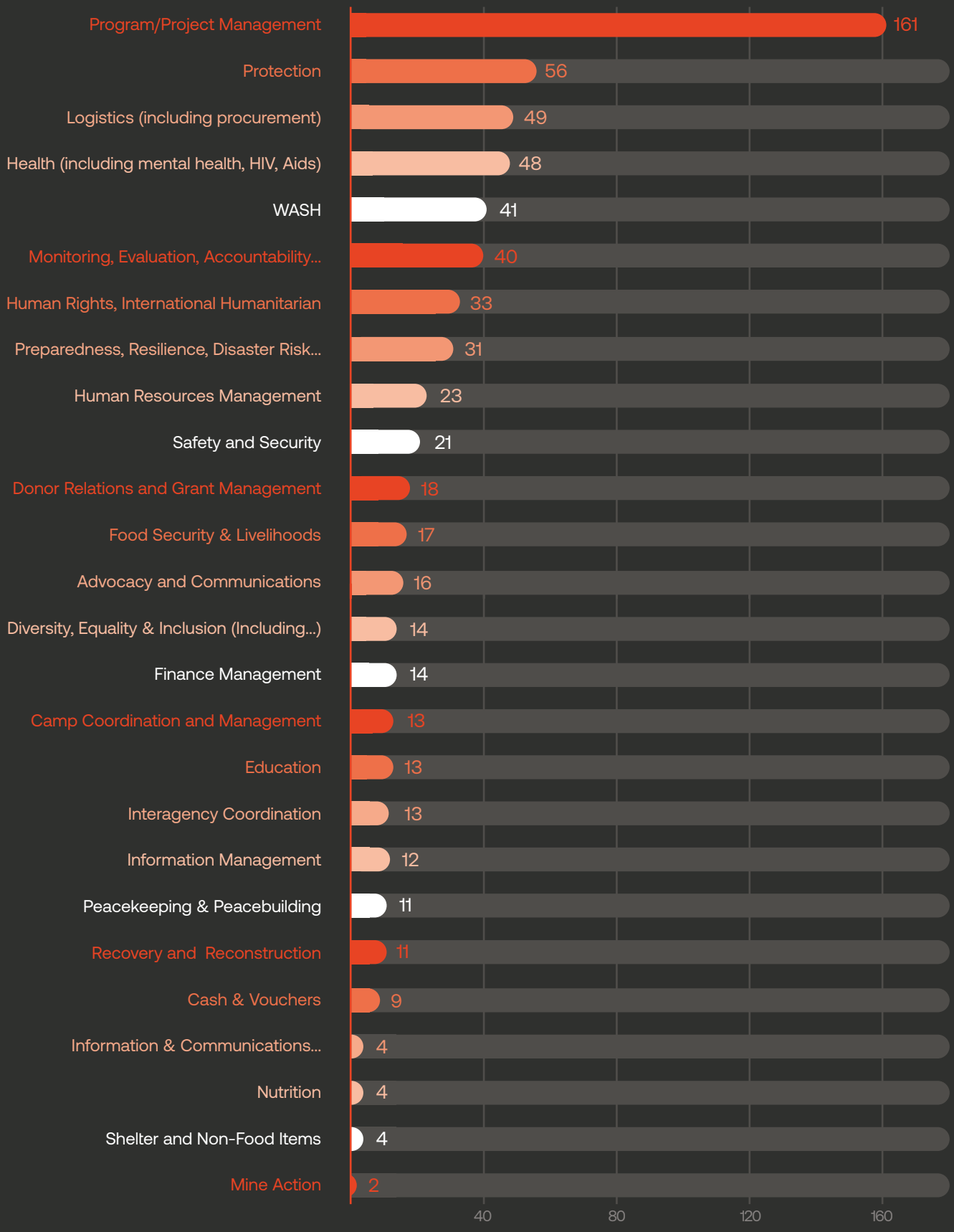
The survey offered respondents a maximum of 5 profession to select. The fact that half of the respondents chose the maximum number of professions to select, suggests that the maximum should have been set higher.

Number of professions

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

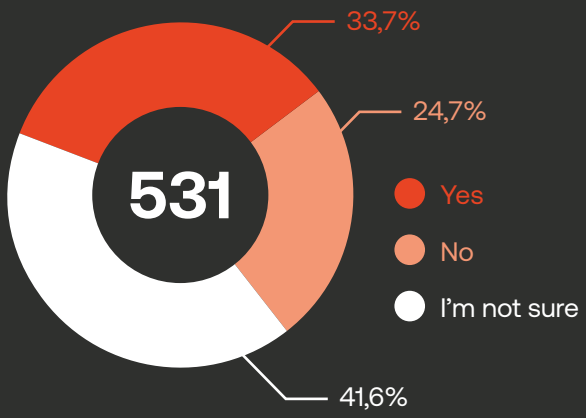
14. Which single profession describes your humanitarian career most closely?

Professions of respondents
678 people answered this question



15. Does your profession have agreed competency frameworks?

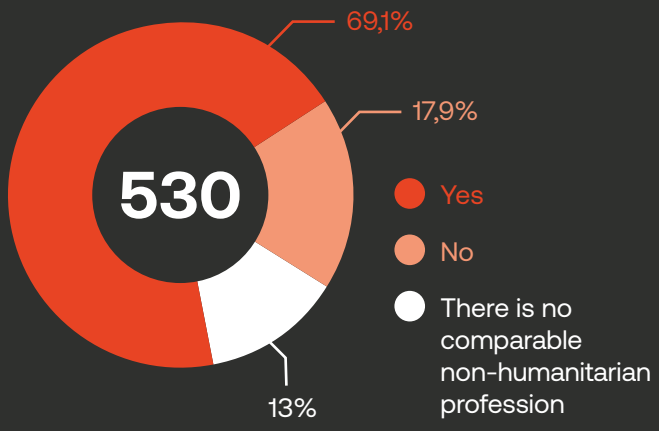
Competency frameforks



Number of respondents : **531**

17. Do you feel there are any skills, knowledge, and behaviours required for your profession that distinguish it from an equivalent non-humanitarian profession?

Are there distinguishable humanitarian competencies?



Number of respondents : **530**

16. Please specify which competency frameworks

Respondents were asked to list competency frameworks. Many of the answers given did not reference competency frameworks. Some responses were individual competencies, some were names of organisations, training courses or qualifications. This suggested that some respondents were not sure what is meant by "competency framework".

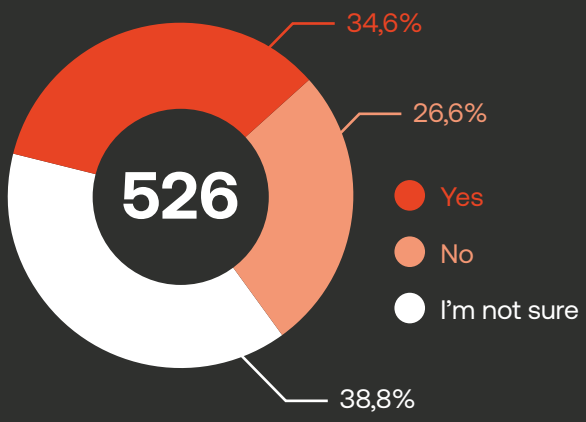
18. Which skills, knowledge, and behaviours required for your profession distinguish it from an equivalent non-humanitarian profession?

The following list represents the commonly cited examples of knowledge skills and behaviours, in response to this question.

Skills, knowledge and behaviours
Being able to adapt to a context, handling large amounts of information and applying technical knowledge to a wide range of situations.
Knowledge of humanitarian principles and other standards.
Cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication.
Able to manage stress and operate effectively in an uncertain, rapidly changing, and sometimes insecure environment.
Takes a needs-based approach and is not driven by profit.
Understanding of the humanitarian system.
Ability to negotiate.
Knowledge of security strategies and risk mitigation.
Being able to navigate the double accountability, to donors and communities.
Understanding vulnerability and protection concerns.
Ability to communicate well with disaster affected communities.
Understanding local government structures and laws.
Knowledge of International Humanitarian Law.
Having capacity building skills.
Ability to take decisions based on needs.

19. Does your profession have professional associations or professional bodies?

Does your profession have professional associations or professional bodies?



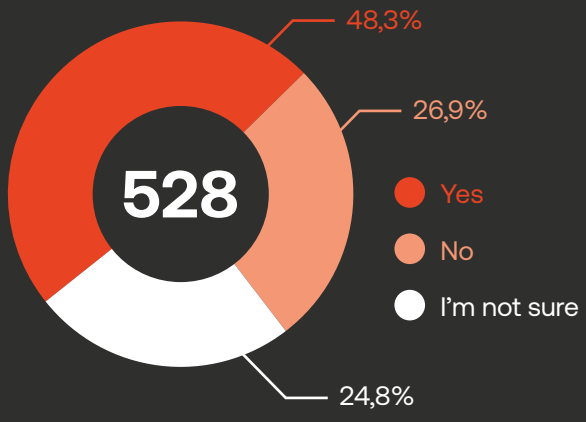
Number of respondents : **526**

20. What professional associations does your profession have?

Respondents were asked to list examples of the professional associations. As with question 16, many of the answers given did not reference professional associations. This suggested that some respondents were not sure what is meant by "professional association".

21. Does your profession have professional certifications?

Does your profession have professional certifications?



Number of respondents : **528**

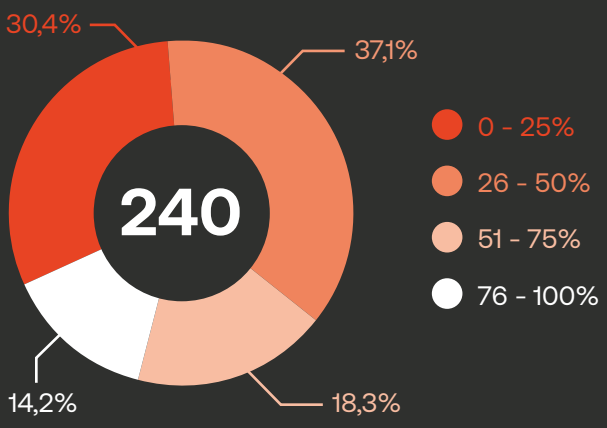
22. Which certifications does your profession have?

Respondents were asked to list examples of the professional certifications. As with questions 16 and 20, many of the answers given did not reference certifications. This suggested that some respondents were not sure what is meant by "professional certification".

23. Please estimate, what percentage of workers in your profession have attained professional certification specific to your profession?

Based on the apparent misunderstanding of the term "professional certification" in question 22, it is likely that the responses to question 23 are based on that misunderstanding and therefore less useful for analysis.

The percentage of workers with professional certification



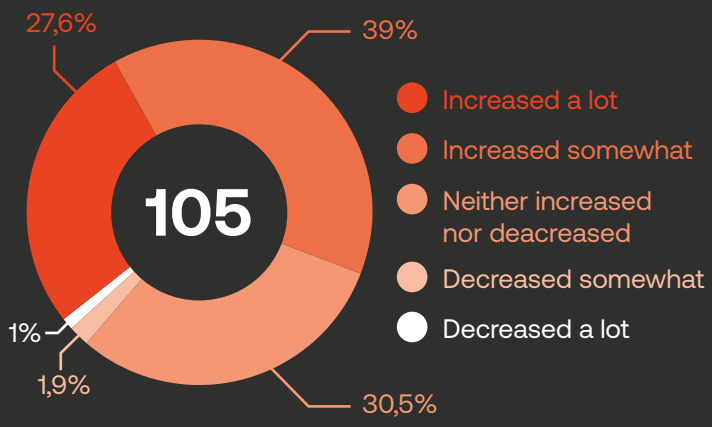
Number of respondents : **240**

24. Compared to five years ago, has the proportion of professionals holding professional certification changed?

This question was only answered by respondents who gave a positive answer to previous questions, therefore only 105 people answered this question.

Based on the apparent misunderstanding of the term “professional certification” in question 22, it is likely that the responses to question 23 are based on that misunderstanding and therefore less useful for analysis.

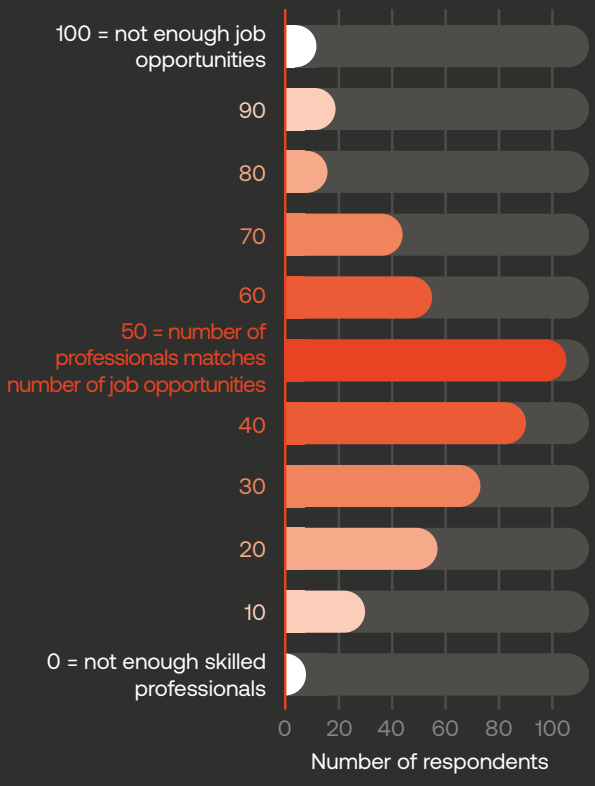
Compared to 5 years ago, has the proportion of certified workers changed?



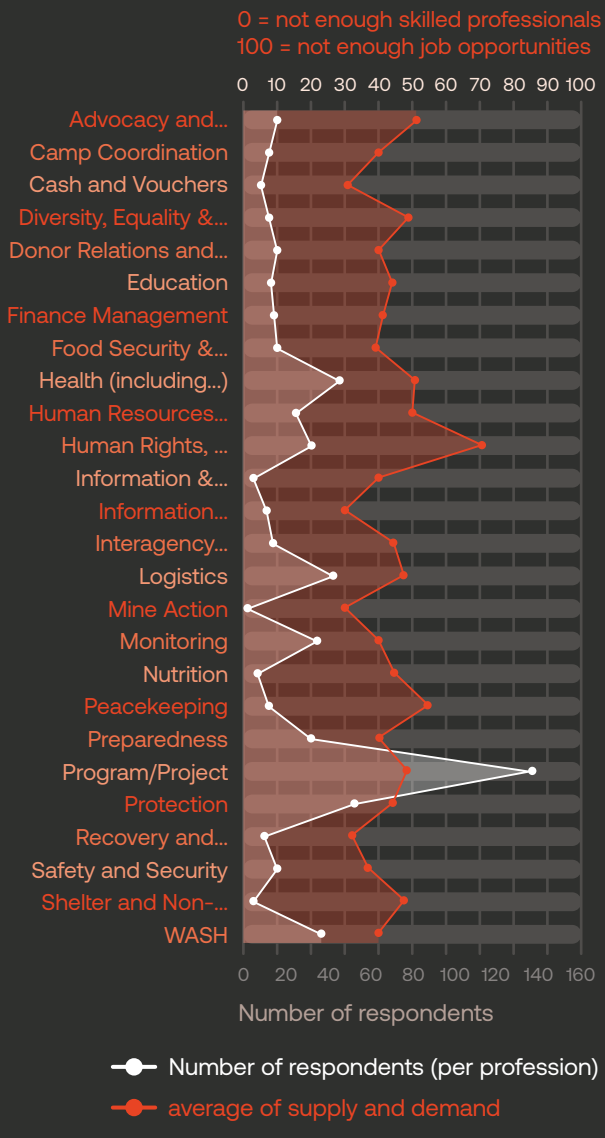
Number of respondents : **105**

25. In your experience, what is the relationship between supply and demand of skilled professionals in your profession?

Supply and demand of skilled professionals



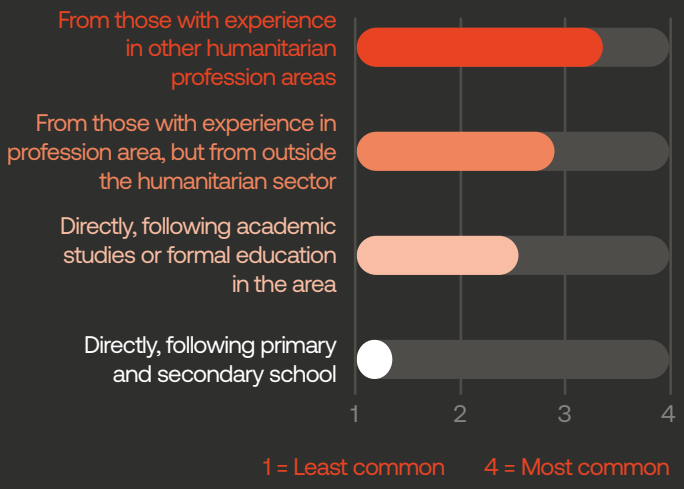
Average of supply and demand per profession with the number of respondents per profession



Trends in the wider profession: Recruitment

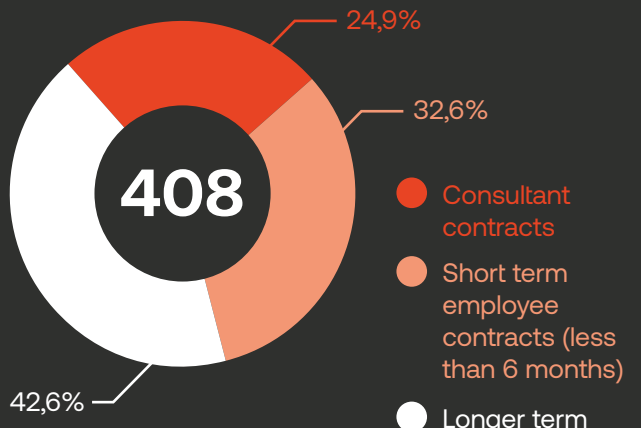
26. Where are most people who are new to your profession recruited from?

Where are most new people recruited from?



27. How would you estimate the distribution of contracts offered in your profession?

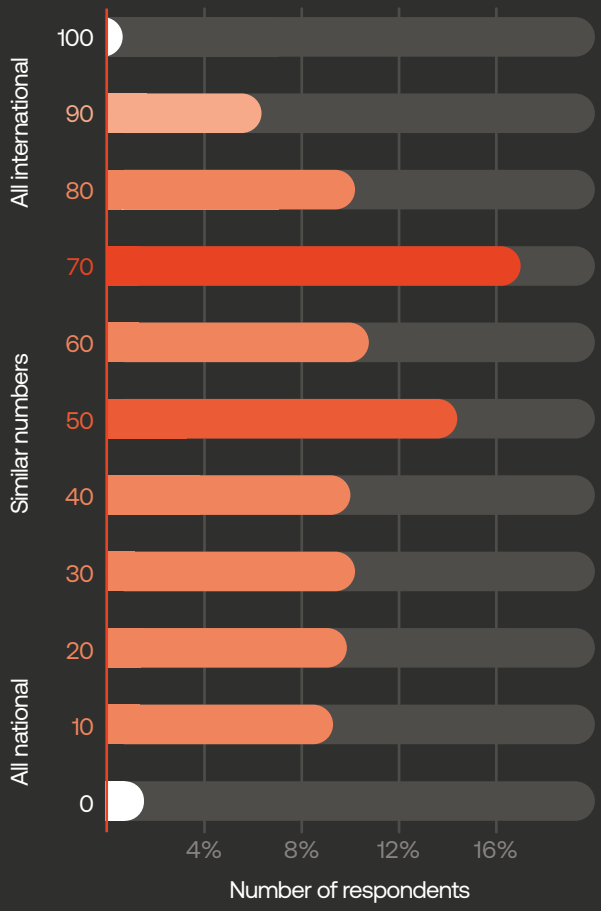
Distribution of contracts



Number of respondents : **408**

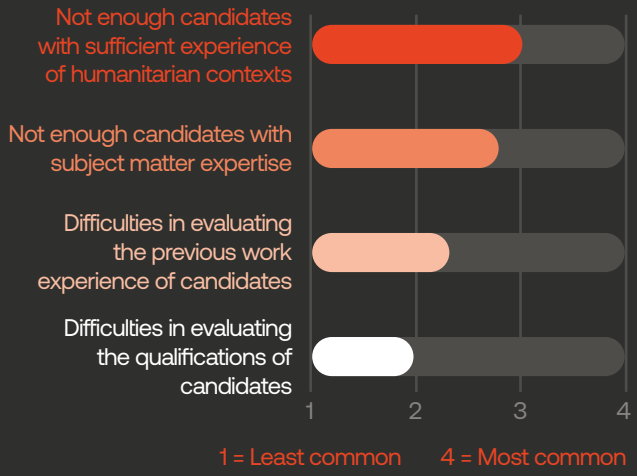
28. What is the balance between national and international staff recruited in your profession?

Distribution of national and international staff



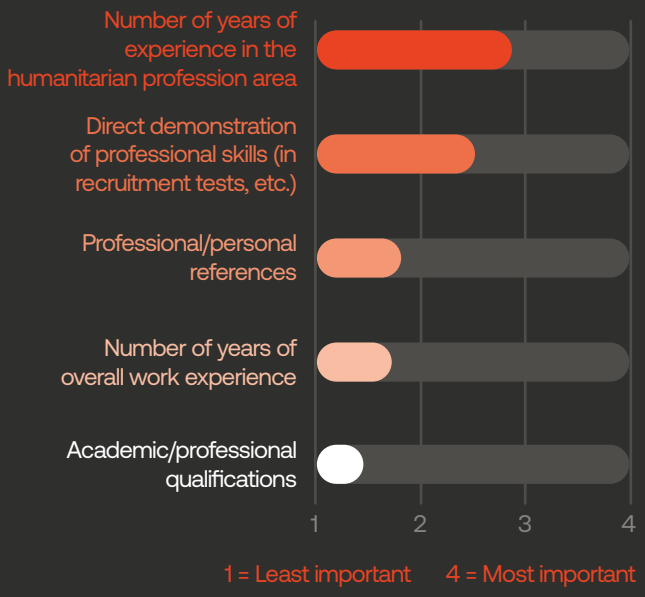
29. What are the most common challenges for organisations looking to recruit staff in your profession?

Challenges for organisations



30. When recruiting individuals in your profession, which is most important for employers?

What's important for employers?



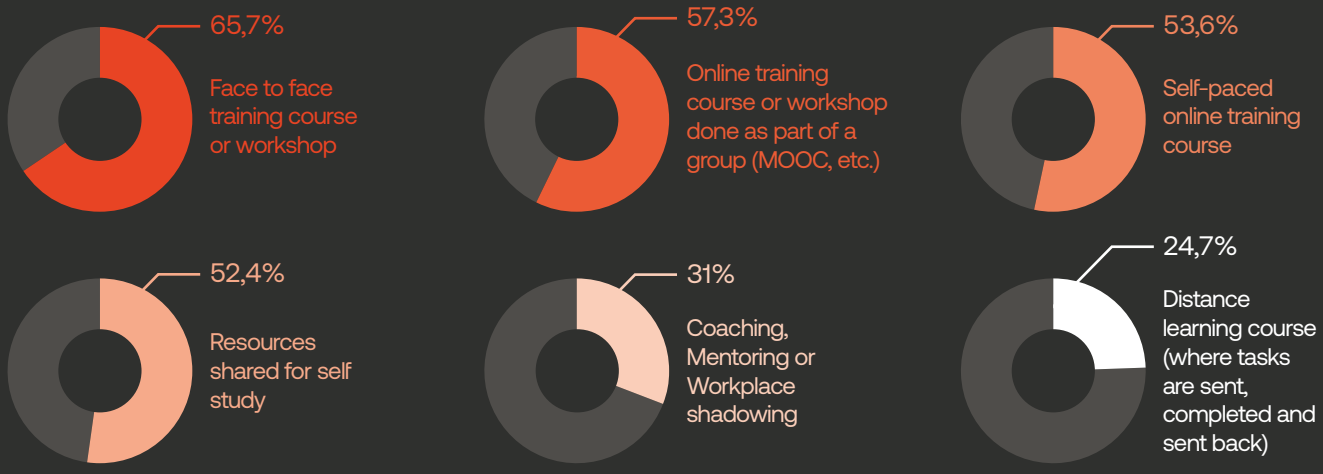
31. Have you seen any new trends in relation to recruitment in your profession?

Trends in recruitment
There have been attempts to have more gender-balanced teams.
Efforts have also been made to hire more national staff. Some are seeing results of these efforts; however, people still experience discrimination based on nationality and feel that a continued preference for international staff.
An increase in recruitment of people without experience in the sector (from the private sector or education).
More transparency is needed to give equal opportunity. Roles are given to friends or people within the organisation.
Specialisation, including an increase in academic degrees and certifications in quite specific subjects.
Organisations try to ease the recruitment process by: • Creating talent pools. • Headhunting. • Using electronic screening to do the first screening.
Experience in the humanitarian sector is seen as the most important factor in recruitment.
More short term and consultancy contracts.
Digital skills and language skills are becoming more important.

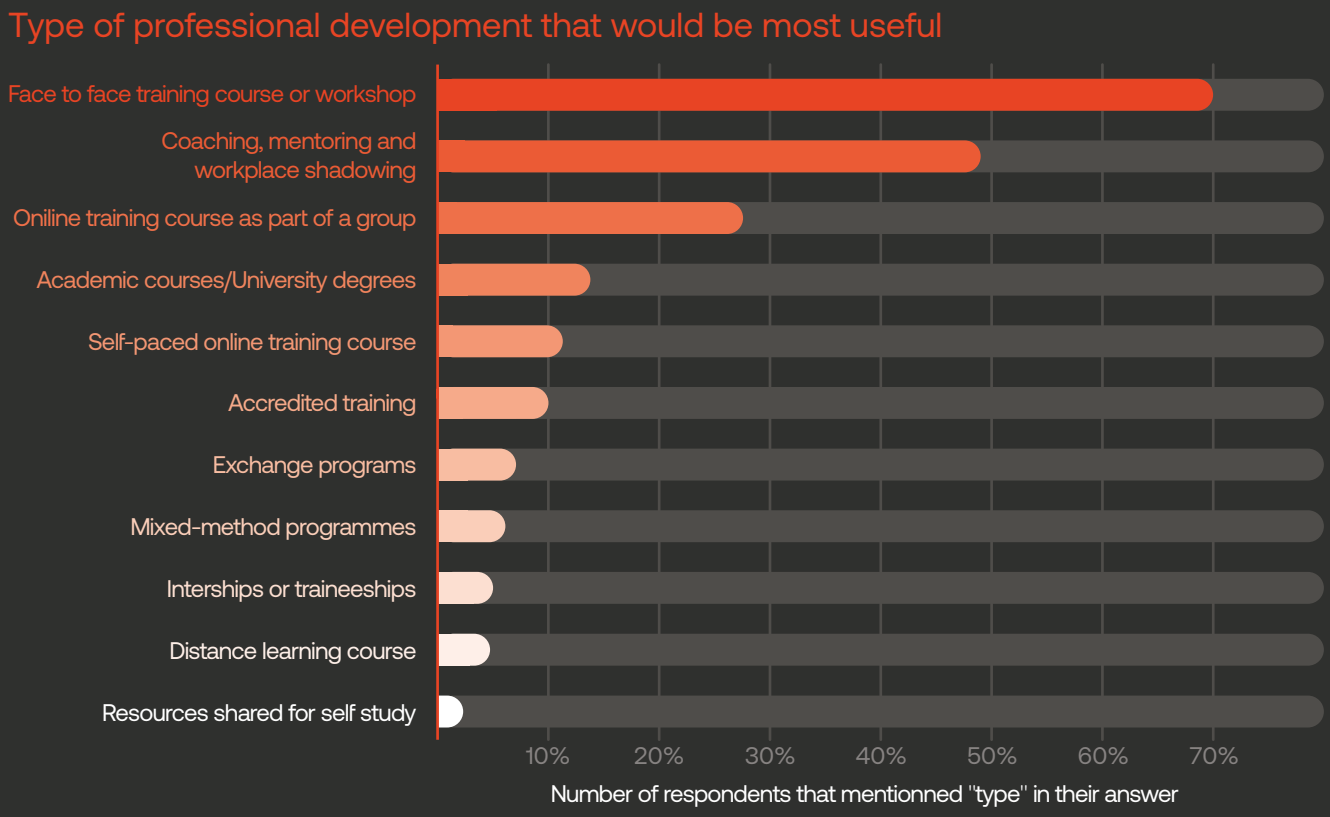
Trends in the wider profession: Professional development opportunities

32. Which of the following professional development opportunities have been available to you in the last three years?

Percentage of respondents having access to :



33. What type of professional development opportunity would be most useful to you now for further developing in your profession?



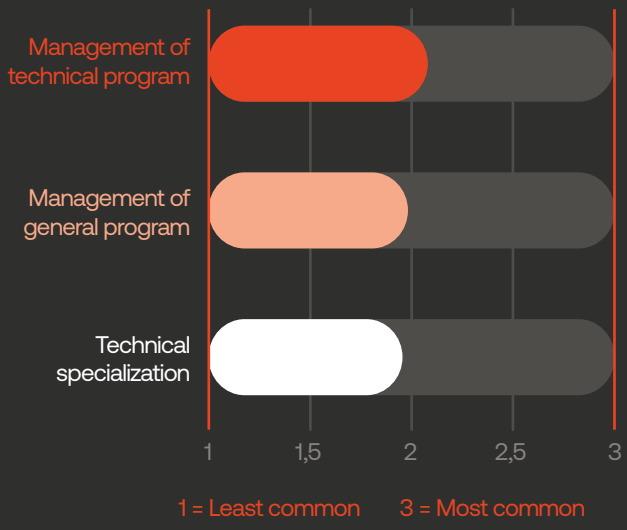
This question was an open question. Therefore, some people responded with the categories listed in the previous question and others named different types of professional development oppotunities.

34. Have you seen any other changes in relation to professional development opportunities in your profession?

Trends in professional development
An increase in professional development opportunities. However not all staff are getting equal access to these trainings, for example: • National staff. • Staff in difficult to reach locations.
An increase in online courses and webinars of which the quality is variable.
An increase in academic courses (sometimes as a cooperation between universities and organisations).
A need for more specific and practical training.
An increase in mixed-method professional development, mainly through mentoring and coaching. However, it is often not well-structured, and the impact is unclear.

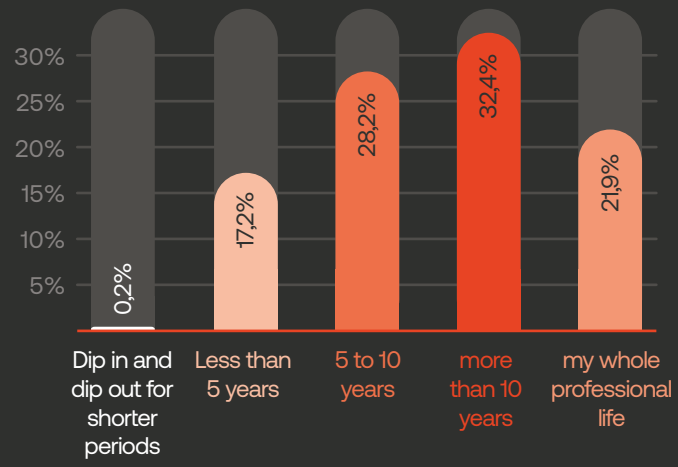
Trends in the wider profession: Career opportunities

35. What are the most common opportunities for someone to advance in the area of your profession?

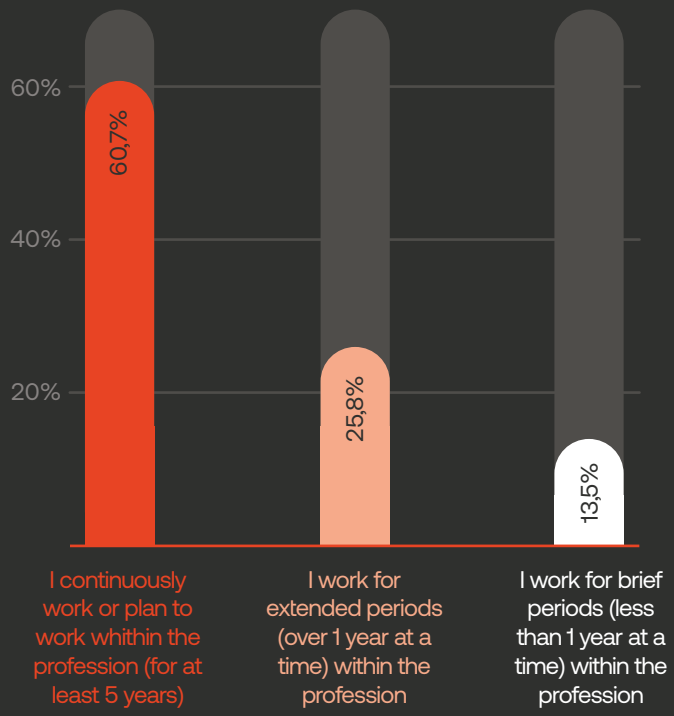


Respondents were asked to rank the options from most common to least common.

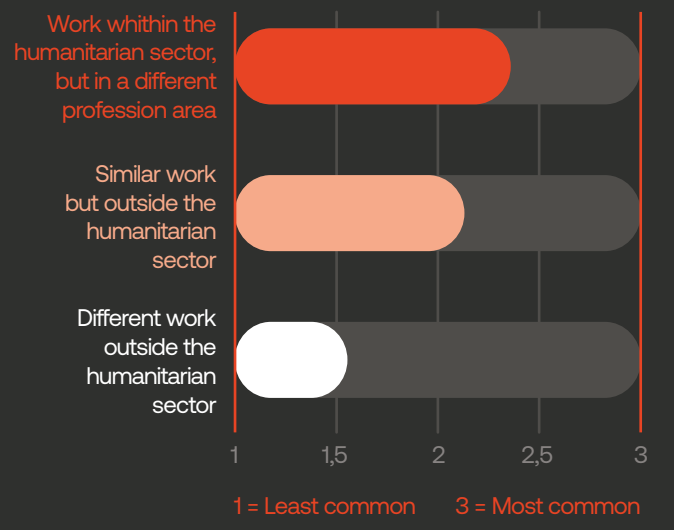
36. How long do you see yourself working within your profession (in your entire career)?



37. How continuous is your work within your profession?



38. Where do people mostly go, when they leave your profession (except for retirement)?



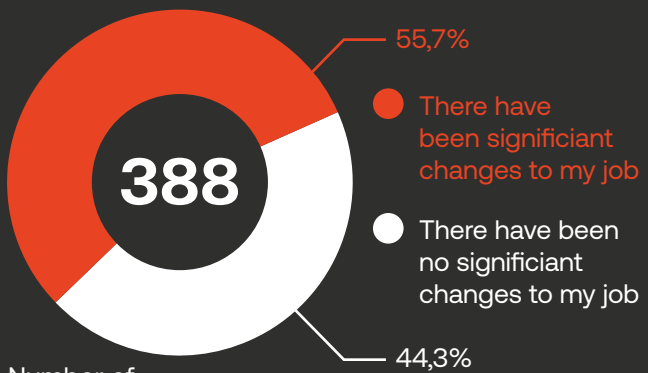
39. Have you seen any other changes in relation to career opportunities in your profession?

Trends in career opportunities
There are few employment options outside the humanitarian sector, so re-entering the private sector is hard.
There has been a diversification of career path options, because of more options in consulting and work with think tanks.
Career opportunities for southern professionals are improving.
Regionalisation has created new regional roles, that provide a step between national contracts and international contracts, making it easier for staff to progress in their careers.

Drivers of change in your profession

40. How have recent changes in the sector (such as cash programming, new technology, localisation, etc.) affected your job?

Have recent changes in the sector affected your job



Number of respondents : **388**

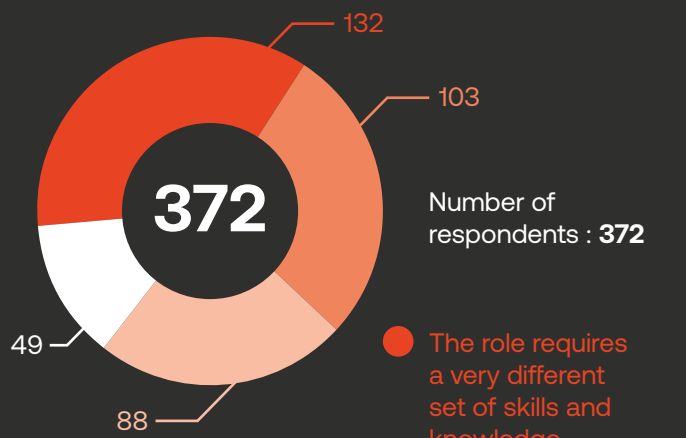
Respondents could select any number of the following options:

- No significant change to my job
- The main focus of my role has changed
- I undertake very different activities
- I interact with very different groups of people
- The role requires a very different set of skills and knowledge

The graph above indicates how many people selected the top option (no change) and how many people selected any of the other options (some change).

Have recent changes in the sector affected your job

The respondents who indicated that their job had changed, reported the following changes:



Number of respondents : **372**

41. Could you share examples of how your job has been affected?

Trend
Adapting to new technologies.
Cash has become a bigger part of my profession field.
People need a higher level of data literacy.
Donor requirements have become stricter.
Donors are getting more involved in recruitment and MEAL.
There's a need to have a higher understanding of work areas other than your own.
Issues related to climate change, for example an increase in disaster-based displacement.
Accountability towards communities has become more time consuming.
Protection requirements have increased.

42. What was the recent change in the sector that caused this?

These are the most common responses to the question and do not necessarily align with the rows in the previous table.

Trend
Cash based programming.
Adapting to new technologies.
Digitalisation.
Climate change.
The humanitarian development nexus.
Localisation and the grand bargain.
An increase in data-driven decision making.

Table to chart 1: What is your citizenship?

Country	N
France	170
United Kingdom	61
United States	49
Italy	26
Australia	26
Kenya	23
Nigeria	20
Canada	20
Spain	16
Germany	15
Ethiopia	14
Switzerland	14
Netherlands	13
Belgium	13
Afghanistan	12
Somalia	12
Yemen	11
Pakistan	11
Trinidad and Tobago	10
Ireland	10
Uganda	9
South Sudan	8
Jordan	8
Cameroon	8
Bangladesh	8
Palestine	7
Philippines	7
India	6
Greece	6
Burkina Faso	6
Turkey	5
Sweden	4
Madagascar	4
Rwanda	4
Bulgaria	4
Benin	4
Malawi	3
Togo	3
Colombia	3
Niger	3
Cote d'Ivoire	3
Brazil	3
DRC (Congo)	3
New Zealand	3
Norway	3
Algeria	3
Indonesia	3
Zambia	3
Lebanon	3
Chad	3
Tanzania	2
Iran	2
Finland	2
Malaysia	2
Egypt	2
Mali	2
Austria	2
Burundi	2
Japan	2
Syria	2
Libya	2
Haiti	2
Zimbabwe	2
South Africa	2
Mozambique	2
Sierra Leone	2
Hungary	1
Paraguay	1
Portugal	1
Peru	1
Thailand	1
Russia	1
Iraq	1
Liberia	1
Poland	1
Slovenia	1
Serbia	1
Denmark	1
Czech Republic	1
Mexico	1
Costa Rica	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Slovakia	1
South Korea	1
Tunisia	1
Antigua and Barbuda	1
Ukraine	1

Table to chart 12: In which country are you primarily based?

Country	N
France	79
United States	39
Switzerland	38
United Kingdom	30
Jordan	28
Afghanistan	24
Nigeria	22
South Sudan	20
Kenya	20
Somalia	17
Iraq	16
Yemen	16
DRC (Congo)	15
Australia	13
Ethiopia	11
Pakistan	11
Palestine	10
Cameroon	10
Canada	10
Trinidad and Tobago	9
Belgium	9
Turkey	9
Bangladesh	9
Spain	9
Uganda	9
Syria	8
Italy	7
Mozambique	7
Philippines	7
Germany	7
Mali	7
Netherlands	7
Norway	6
Haiti	6
Burundi	5
India	5
Senegal	5
Chad	5
Central African Republic	5
Lebanon	5
Indonesia	5
Myanmar	4
Denmark	4
Madagascar	4
Burkina Faso	4
Colombia	4
Rwanda	4
Benin	4
Ireland	4
Zimbabwe	3
Zambia	3
Malawi	3
Togo	3
Niger	3
Ukraine	3
Cambodia	3
Thailand	3
South Africa	3
Bulgaria	3
Sweden	3
Iran	3
Greece	2
Tanzania	2
Egypt	2
Vietnam	2
Sierra Leone	2
Cote d'Ivoire	2
New Zealand	2
Guinea	2
Libya	2
Guatemala	2
Finland	2
Morocco	2
Bahamas, The	1
Paraguay	1
Malta	1
Qatar	1
North Korea	1
El Salvador	1
United Arab Emirates	1
Malaysia	1
Angola	1
Comoros	1
Luxembourg	1
Liberia	1
Algeria	1
Fiji	1
Slovenia	1
Armenia	1
Kosovo	1
Singapore	1
Peru	1
Belize	1
Venezuela	1
Iceland	1
South Korea	1
Mexico	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Aland Islands	1

9. KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Bioforce would like to thank the following interviewees for sharing their time and knowledge to contribute to this study.

Name	Title	Organisation
Advocacy		
Pauline Chetcuti	Head of Humanitarian Advocacy and Policy	**Oxfam**
Susan Camara	Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (West Africa & Latin America)	**Marie Stopes International**
Bérénice van den Driessche	Senior EU Advocacy and Policy Adviser	**NRC**
Camp Coordination and Camp Management		
David Preux	Emergency Preparedness and Response Officer	**IOM**
Wan Sophonpanich	Cluster lead for CCCM	**IOM**
Giovanna Federici	Global Advisor Camp Management	**NRC**
Mate Bagossy	Camp Management Programme Manager	**NRC**
Szilvia Heszler	Programme Manager	**NRC**
CASH and Vouchers		
Martin Pittman	Global Capacity Building Manager	**CaLP**
Mamta Khanal Basnet	Project Manager	**NRC**
Jennifer Harper	Cash School Manager	**British Red Cross**
Communications		
Marian Casey-Maslen	Director of CDAC	**CDAC**
Pascal Jequier	Communications Training/L&D Coordinator	**ICRC**
Marçal Izard	Communication Talent Manager	**ICRC**
Stijn Aelbers	Senior Humanitarian Advisor	**Internews**
Donor Relations and Grant Management		
Adam Riddell	Director of Emergency Funding	**World Vision US**
Laurent Bacos	Head of Public and Institutional Funding Unit	**Medecins du Monde**
Elvira Rodriguez	Institutional Funding Manager	**Chaine de l'Espoir**
Sophie Parra d'Andert	Head of Institutional Partnerships	**French Red Cross**
Education		
Prefers not to be named	Prefers not to be named	**UNICEF**
Yasmine Sherif	Director of Education Cannot Wait	**UNICEF**
Dean Brooks	Director	**INEE**
Maria Agnese Giordano	Education Cluster Lead for UNICEF	**UNICEF**
Luca Fraschini	Education Coordinator and Capacity Development Specialist - Rapid Response Team	**UNICEF**

Name	Title	Organisation
Finance Management		
Tim Boyes-Watson	Global Director, Advocacy and Alliances	**Humentum**
Véronique Saugues	Responsable Contrôle Gestion Middle East	**Première Urgence Internationale**
Dominique Deconinck	Finance and Administration Director	**CARE France**
Food Security and Livelihoods		
Christa Utiger	Reporting officer	**ICRC**
Geneviève Wills	Director of France and Monaco	**WFP**
Ana Ayala	Independent consultant and in CALP roster	**Consultant**
Eric Branckaert	Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Advisor	**WFP**
Health		
Unni Krishnan	Humanitarian Director	**WarChild Holland**
Louisa Baxter	Lead for Humanitarian Health	**Save the Children**
Eba Pasha	Consultant for the Global Health Cluster	**Independent**
Masniza Mustaffa	Health Coordinator	**Mercy Malaysia**
Human Resources Management		
Magali Daurelles	Learning and Development Coordinator	**Bioforce**
Corinne Falconnet	Human Resource Manager	**ICRC**
Emilie Croci	HR Partner for Asia and Pacific Region	**ICRC**
Christine Williamson	CEO	**Duty of Care International**
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)		
Jean-Baptiste Lamarche	Logistics and Information Systems Director	**Action Contre la Faim**
Caroline Teyssier	Deputy Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) Coordinator	**WFP**
Information Management		
Filippo Minozzi	Analysis and evidence Lead	**ICRC**
Geneviève Wills	Director - France and Monaco	**WFP**
Maeve de France	Programme Manager	**CartONG**
Edmond Wach	Programme Manager	**CartONG**
Interagency Coordination		
Martin Fisher	Member of the FACT (Field Assessment Coordination Team) Syria	**IFRC**
Brian Lander	Deputy Director - Geneva Office	**WFP**
Monica Palmeri	Information Management/Humanitarian Affairs Officer	**OCHA**
Legal Aid		
Vincent Combes	Senior Insurance and Legal Officer	**WFP**
Laura Cunial	Specialist in ICLA	**NRC**

Name	Title	Organisation
Legal Aid		
Fernando de Medina Rosales	Senior Adviser - Information and Legal Aid	**NRC**
Rebecca Gang	Senior Technical Advisor	**IRC**
Safiatu Alabi	Programme Director	**NRC**
Logistics		
Guillaume Noailly	Learning and Development Coordinator - Logistics, Supply and Security	**Bioforce**
George Fenton	CEO	**Humanitarian Logistics Association**
Peter Tatham	Adjunct Professor of Humanitarian Logistics	**Griffith University**
Andrew Brown	Workforce Development Specialist (Supply Chain)	**Contractor to USAID**
Martijn Blansjaar	Head of Logistics and Supply (International Division)	**Oxfam GB**
Bruno Vandemeulebroecke	Deputy Global Logistics Cluster Coordinator	**Global Logistics Cluster**
Mine Action		
Emmanuel Sauvage	Armed Violence Reduction Officer	**HI**
Jevon Clayton	Head of HR	**MAG**
Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)		
Jérôme Daumas	Project Manager for Community Online Initiative	**ICRC**
Fabien Cassan	MEAL Manager	**HI**
Laurène Barlet	MEAL Advisor	**Solidarités International**
Laura De Franchis	Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	**International Labour Organization**
Nutrition		
Valérie Belchior-Bellino	Nutritionist	**ICRC**
Nuria Salse	Nutritionist	**Independent**
Nathalie Avril	Nutrition Adviser	**MSF**
Anna Ziolkovska	Deputy Global Nutrition Cluster Coordinator	**Nutrition Cluster**
Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding		
Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos	Programme Coordinator and Policy Specialist	**Global Network of Women Peacebuilders**
Sébastien Lapierre	Team Leader Central Africa	**UN DPPA/DPO**
Rania Dagash	Chief Policy and Best Practices Service	**DPET, DPO**
Project Management		
John Cropper	Lead - Project Management and Humanitarian	**Humentum**
Chris Cattaway	Project Management Advisor	**Independent**
Hélène Meese	Project Manager (Medical Coverage Globally)	**ICRC**
Clement Chipokolo	Senior Operations Manager	**World Vision Papua New Guinea**
Protection, Diversity and Inclusion		
Diana Hiscock	Disability and Age Advisor	**HelpAge**

Name	Title	Organisation
Protection, Diversity and Inclusion		
Kovo Esul	Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection Technical Advisor	**Save the Children**
Sandrine Bohan-Jaquot	Inclusive Education Policy Officer	**HI**
Vanessa Coeffe	Child Protection Manager	**IRC**
Julia McGeown	Inclusive Education Technical Advisor	**HI**
Véronique Saint-Luce	Senior Programme Officer in the Gender Office	**WFP**
Safety and Security		
Lisa Reilly	Executive Director	**EISF**
Gonzalo de Palacios	Global Security Advisor	**Oxfam International**
Monica Schager	Security Unit Manager	**HI**
Henrieke Hommes	Security Advisor	**ZOA**
Félicie Chevallier	Section Officer – Training	**INSO**
Shelter and Non-Food Items		
Tom Corsellis	Executive Director	**Shelter Centre**
Hilmi Mohamed	Senior Coordinator and Technical Specialist, Shelter, Settlements and DRR	**Interaction**
Bill Flinn	Senior Shelter Advisor	**Care International**
Jérôme Michon	Shelter Advisor	**Independent**
WASH		
Marco Albertini	Water and Habitat Unit -Knowledge Manager	**ICRC**
Vincent Gengler	WASH Master Coordinator	**Action Contre la Faim**
Andy Bastable	Head of Water and Sanitation	**Oxfam GB**
Franck Bouvet	GWC Deputy Coordinator	**Global Wash Cluster/ UNICEF**
Karine Deniel	Consultant	**Global Wash Cluster/ UNICEF + INGO + Bioforce**
Other key informants		
Tina Bolding	Director	**Disaster Ready**
Kirsten Johnson	CEO	**Humanitarian U**

10. LOCAL WORKSHOPS

Rationale

As part of the methodology of the study, Bioforce sought to corroborate elements of the information gathered in interviews and through the survey with groups of humanitarians from a range of organisations and across a range of different locations. As well as providing a useful opportunity to spot-check the validity of the information, this also created platforms for deeper discussion of the topics based on humanitarians' own experiences.

These workshops were not designed to be representative of profession areas or geographic regions. For that reason, they are purposely named "local" and not "regional" workshops.

Workshops were advertised openly, and participants self-selected.

Rather than facilitate all the workshops themselves, Bioforce asked partner organisations to host and facilitate workshops. This allowed for greater geographical spread and promoted contextually relevant discussions. Participants were presented with key findings from the study, asked if they agreed or disagreed and encouraged to explain their decision. The methodology used by the facilitators is included below.

Workshops

Bioforce is extremely grateful for the support it received in hosting and facilitating the local workshops. They would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who volunteered time and resources to contribute to this study.

Workshops were undertaken in February and March 2020, in the following locations.

Workshop Location	Facilitator / Host	Date	Participants
Annemasse France	Cité de la Solidarité (facilitated by Brigitte Louison - Bioforce)	13 March	7
Bogotá Colombia	Michel Dikkes - IMMAP	5 March	15
Cox's Bazar Bangladesh	Iqbal Uddin - COAST Trust	26 February	20
Dakar Senegal	Stéphanie Legoff - Bioforce	12 March	14
Freetown Sierra Leone	Leah Campbell - ALNAP	9 March	12
Geneva Switzerland	Gozel Baltaeva - CHS Alliance	25 & 27 February	11
Kampala Uganda	Patrick Onyango Mangen – TPO Uganda	3 March	7
London UK	RedR UK (facilitated by Charlie Dalrymple - Independent)	5 March	6
Lyon France	Brigitte Louison – Bioforce	12 March	10
Ouagadougou Burkina Faso	Philippe Allard – HI	10 March	15
Washington D.C. USA (conducted virtually)	Chris Proulx, Josephina Blumberg - Humentum	20 March	4

The following workshops were cancelled due to the outbreak of Coronavirus :

Workshop Location	Facilitator / Host
Amman Jordan	Frank Lavigne - Bioforce
Kuala Lumpur Malaysia	Masniza Mustaffa – Mercy Malaysia
Nairobi Kenya	Stephen Onyait - Oxfam

Workshop Methodology

Facilitators were issued a session plan and provided with all the materials necessary for their workshop including an introductory video. The content of the session plan was as follows:

Time	Instructions	Resources
Before workshop	**Preparation** • Ensure you have prepared 2 sets of 4 flipcharts (see Annex 1) • Ensure one complete set (of all 4 flipcharts) is fixed to the wall (or on a table) in one part of the room and another complete set (of the 4 flipcharts) is located) in another part of the room • Prepare an attendance sheet with name, organisation, position, e-mail address, signature	
20 min	**Introductions** • Welcome participants to the workshop. Thank them for their time • Share relevant logistical information such as toilets, fire exits, etc • Introduce yourself and use the video to describe the SOHP project and the objectives of the workshop • Answer any questions from the participants • Ask participants to sign the attendance sheet and include their e-mail address if they would like to be kept informed on the project	Video Attendance sheet
90 min	**Group Work – 2 groups** • Divide participants into 2 groups and send them to their flipcharts • Explain that each group should complete their 4 flipcharts • Each group will have 20 mins to complete each flipchart, which will be plenty of time to discuss and agree on what to write • Explain that you will ask participants to feedback on their answers once the task is completed. Encourage participants to write neatly! • Ensure that participants understand the task, then start the work • At 20min intervals, encourage participants to move to the next flipchart • Make yourself available during the exercise to answer any questions	2 sets of prepared flipcharts (8 in total) Tack or tape 6 to 8 flipchart pens (3-4 for each group)
15 min	**Break**	
50 min	**Feedback – both groups feedback to plenary** • Take feedback on each flipchart in turn – ask one group to begin and then ask the second group to add any new information. • Allow for 10mins per flip chart (including feedback from both groups) • Highlight any interesting findings, agreements or disagreements as part of this discussion (See possible questions in Annex 2)	Flipcharts completed by participants
5 min	• Thank participants for their contribution and close the workshop	
After workshop	**Gathering the information** • Take a clear photo of both sets of completed flipcharts • Send the photos and the list of participants by email to sohp_project@institutbioforce.fr	Camera

PART 4

WHAT NEXT?

11. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUMANITARIAN PROFESSIONS

Methodology

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted working practices across all sectors. In order to better understand its impact on humanitarian work, the SOHP study distributed a survey to humanitarian practitioners in October 2020.

The survey was completed by 244 humanitarians in 70 countries, representing a wide spread of the profession areas listed in the study. Almost all respondents completed the entire survey. The lowest number of responses to any single question was 229.

The survey sought to identify if and how the Covid-19 pandemic had changed the focus of individuals' work or the way they went about it. It also asked about how Covid-19 had changed the skills required for the work; whether it had affected the need for professionalisation; and whether it affected the need for that profession area to exist. In each case participants were asked to select an answer from a Likert scale, and were given an option to provide examples to illustrate their answer.

Findings

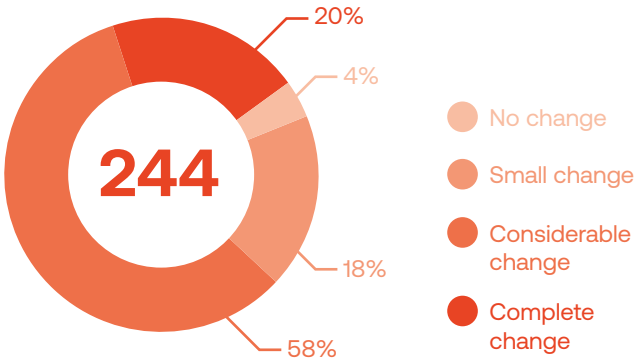
Has Covid-19 affected the focus of humanitarian work or the methods used?

The results of the survey suggest that Covid-19 has had a significant effect on both the themes/focus of work as well as the methods/way people work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the greatest impact appears to relate to working methods.

95% of respondents reported changes in the way they work. Nearly four in every five respondents felt that their working methods had undergone a significant or complete change. Most gave examples related to working remotely and adapting their programmes to be implemented from a distance. For programmes that continued in person, respondents noted having to adapt the programme in accordance with infection prevention measures. Several also talked about greater use of cash, replacing distributions of physical items.

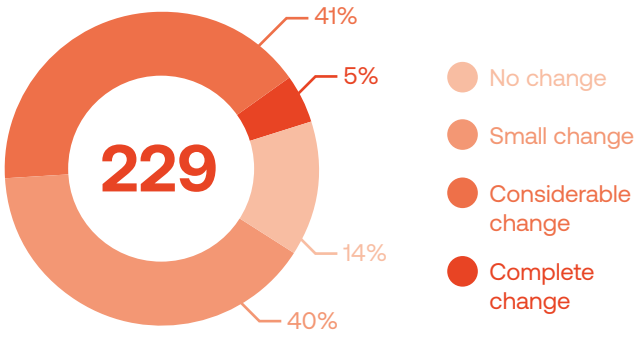
Around 40% of respondents reported a significant change in the focus or theme of their work, with a similar number reporting a small change. Examples highlighted an increased focus on hygiene promotion and palliative care. Some cited a need to respond to increasing and changing forms of GBV. More positively, others highlighted a growing area of innovation, forced by the pandemic.

1. Did Covid-19 change the way you work?



Number of respondents : **244**

2. Did Covid-19 change the focus of your work?



Number of respondents : **229**

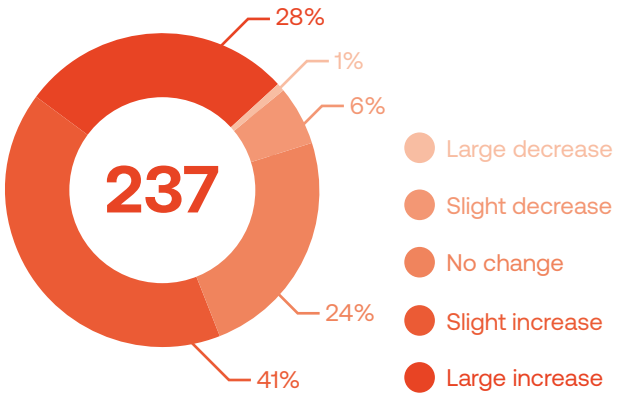
Has Covid-19 affected the skill set required or the need for professionalisation?

As the methods of humanitarian work have been rapidly adapting to the pandemic, it makes sense that the skill sets required of humanitarian workers also needed to change rapidly.

More than two in three respondents felt that new skills were required to do their job. Interestingly, 7% reported a decrease in skill set – some highlighting reduced need for community liaison skills as work was being done remotely. A negative inference, related to this, is that important communication and participation activities may have been cancelled, potentially reducing the quality and accountability of the work.

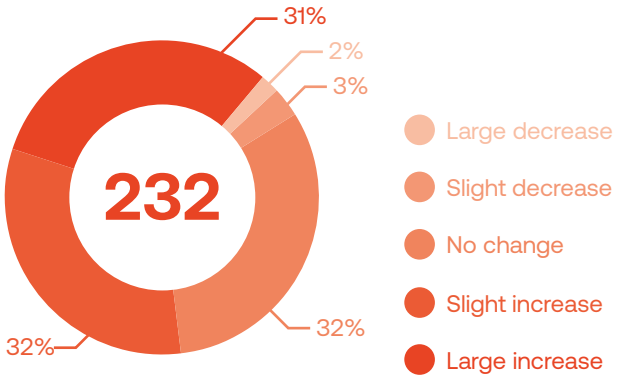
When asked if the pandemic had affected the need for professionalisation, 145 of 232 (63%) respondents indicated that there had been a slight or large increase in the need

3. Did Covid-19 change the skill set required by humanitarians in your profession?



Number of respondents : **237**

4. Did Covid-19 change the need for professionalisation?



Number of respondents : **232**

for their profession area to professionalise. Only 66 respondents gave examples, many of which did not relate to professionalization initiatives. It is important to note that the first SOHP survey highlighted a lack of understanding of terms relating to professionalization. It is therefore, likely that individuals responding to this question have varying degrees of understanding of what is meant by professionalization.

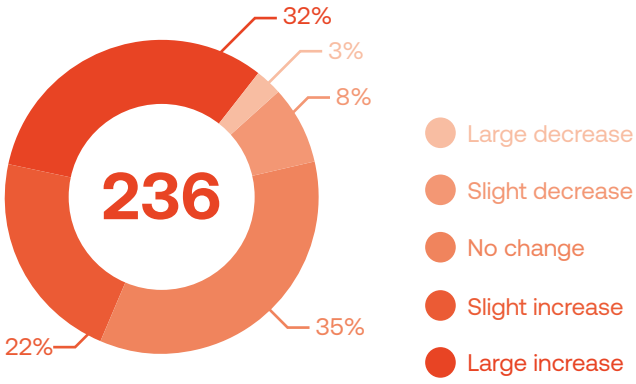
Of the responses that did relate to professionalization, several highlighted the need for more professional development opportunities for local staff and a requirement for international staff to focus on enhancing their own skills in capacity development or knowledge exchange.

Has Covid-19 affected the need for individual profession areas to exist?

Rapidly changing contexts can result in significant shifts in needs and demands. The study sought to understand if services offered by humanitarian organisations had become more or less relevant as a result of the pandemic.

Just over half of all respondents identified that the pandemic had increased the need for their profession, with only 11% feeling that the need for their work had declined.

5. Did Covid-19 change the need for professions area to exist?



Number of respondents : **236**

Many of the examples given by respondents related to changes in working practices rather than increased or decreased need for the work, suggesting a degree of confusion about the question. However, several respondents identified increasing demands, particularly around health, protection and MEAL work.

Rather than an increasing level of need, a significant number of respondents pointed to the challenges of meeting the same, ongoing needs, with fewer or increasingly overworked staff due to funding shortages or movement restrictions. This, in turn, increases the importance of HR work. As one respondent said, "HR has never been more crucial than now in order to continuously monitor and respond to employees needs of safety, security and well-being."

How will professions need to adapt to the threat of future virus outbreaks?

137 respondents answered this question, providing practical suggestions on adaptations that their own profession areas could implement.

The most common response, by far, related to the importance of localisation. Other popular suggestions across professions related to strengthening remote management; developing capacity for remote learning; and re-considering the national/international structure of INGOs. Many of the other responses related to profession-specific programming responses.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

The SOHP Conference

The SOHP study is a snapshot of the sector; based on the experiences, views and opinions of humanitarians. Retaining this concept of engagement, the SOHP Conference was planned as an appropriate way for humanitarians to gather and reflect on the findings of the study, and to discuss and propose recommendations.

Format and participation

The conference was initially planned, as an in-person event, to take place in May 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the event was postponed until November 2020 and conducted as a virtual event, supported by PHAP – to whom the author wishes to express their thanks.

The conference was designed in two parts – morning and afternoon (based on Central European Time):

Morning

The morning event was open to anybody who wished to subscribe and attracted 566 participants – 403 in the event platform, 150 via the YouTube video livestream, and 13 via the audio livestream. The core purpose of the morning event was present the main findings of the study and to hear reflections on those findings from sector experts. The format was as follows:

Introduction to the event, including presentations from

- Gilles Collard – Managing Director of Bioforce; and
- Bénédicte Schutz – Director of International Cooperation at the Government of Monaco, who sponsored the SOHP study

Presentation of key findings by Rory Downham and Charlie Dalrymple. This involved a number of polls, where audience members responded to questions relating to the study.

(The results of several of these polls are included in the next section of this report - "Outputs from the conference".)

Panel discussion to reflect on the findings, involving:

- Keiko Cornale - International Human Resources Manager, French Red Cross
- Yves Horent - Senior Humanitarian Adviser, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the UK government
- Virginie Lefèvre - Program & Partnerships Coordinator, Amel Association International
- Boris Lissassi - HR Manager, UNICEF

Brief survey of participants, to measure appetite for continuing the SOHP work

Afternoon

Invitations for the afternoon event were sent to selected humanitarian professionals with interest in human resources, learning & development, and professionalisation initiatives. The afternoon event involved 63 participants.

The afternoon event was designed to generate recommendations from the SOHP study, using the following format:

Introduction to the event, including presentation of four broad questions that emerged from the findings of the report.

(More detail on these questions is included in the "Recommendations" section below.)

4 breakout groups (each focused on one of the questions) undertook a series of exercises

- A poll to stimulate initial reactions to a series of statements related to the topic
- An idea generation exercise, where individual participants proposed possible solutions to the question posed
- A discussion around the proposed solutions, aiming to elaborate and refine the ideas

Feedback from the facilitator of each breakout group, before closure of the event.

Outputs from the SOHP Conference

Audience constitution and interaction

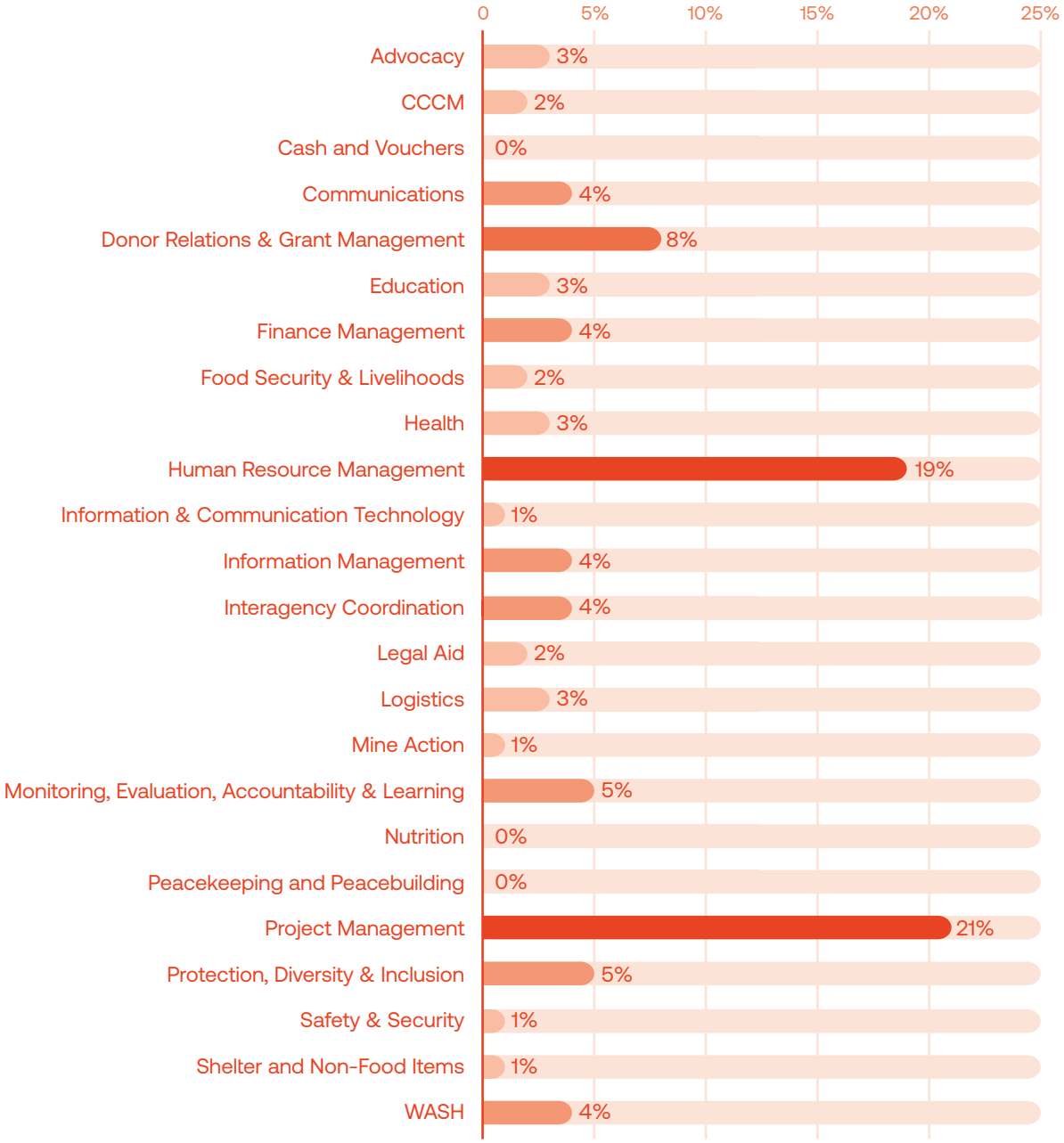
The audience seemed weighted towards Europeans working for INGOs and, as to be expected, included a higher number of professionals working in HR.

- 52% of the respondents stated that they worked in international NGOs; 8% in national or local NGOs; 9% in UN agencies; 6% in the RCRC Movement; 6% in academia; and the rest were spread across host governments, donors, private and others.
- 59% of respondents were based in Europe with 19% joining from Asia and 14% from Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Nearly 1 in 5 respondents affiliated most closely with HR as a profession area.

Aside from the high number of HR professionals, the distribution of other professions in the audience, including the notably high number of people who affiliate most closely with project management, was not significantly different from the profile of respondents to the initial survey (See Section 8).

The conference provided a good opportunity to add to the SOHP knowledge base. A series of audience polls, during the presentation of results, allowed further data to be gathered on

1. Which profession area do you affiliate most closely with?



some of the questions included in the original survey. Polling was optional and the number of respondents varied. Most questions received between 130 and 216 responses. Two questions were targeted at certain audience groups and received fewer responses.

Input from the audience at the SOHP Conference

Much of the interaction at the SOHP event appeared to reaffirm several key findings from the SOHP study. Participants also provided some useful additional inputs.

Suggested additions to the list of profession areas

During the event, two additional profession areas were proposed, and gained some support, via the chat function:

- Capacity Building
- Innovation

Changes in work patterns

When presented with this list of the most commonly identified changes in people's jobs, around two in every three respondents, said that the list affiliated mostly or completely with their own experience.

Adapting to new technologies
increasing use of CASH
Higher data literacy
Stricter donor requirements
More donor involvement in recruitement and MEAL
Greater understanding across a range of work areas
Knowledge of climate change responses
More time spent on accountability to communities
Increased protection requirements

Recruitment and professional development

85% of poll respondents said they had difficulty recruiting and retaining talent within their organisation. In the subsequent poll, 83% of respondents who were new to the sector said they found it very hard to break into humanitarian work

Using the chat function, one participant highlighted the additional issue of talented staff pursuing a departure from their own country to earn more, and have greater influence, in expat roles elsewhere. Others suggested that access to professional development opportunities was more restricted than the results of the study suggest.

Career paths in the humanitarian sector

When polled, the respondents from the audience at the conference did indicate a less transient approach to work in the humanitarian sector than respondents to the SOHP survey had done:

- The number of humanitarian professions that audience respondents affiliated with was centred around three. This differed from our survey results, where nearly half of all respondents selected "five or more".

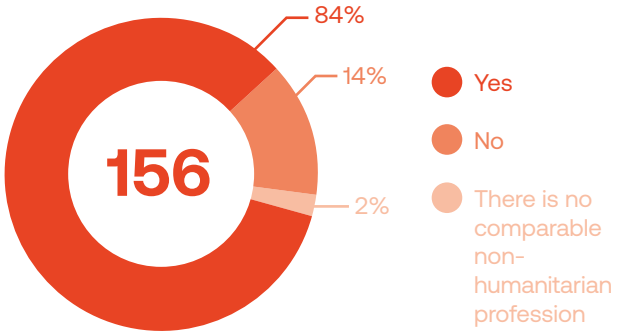
- 79% of audience respondents expected to work 10 years or more in the humanitarian sector (compared to 54% in the survey)

- 79% of audience respondents (versus 61% of survey respondents) expected their involvement in humanitarian work to be continuous, rather than broken by spells in other sectors.

Distinguishable competencies for humanitarian work exist and are valuable

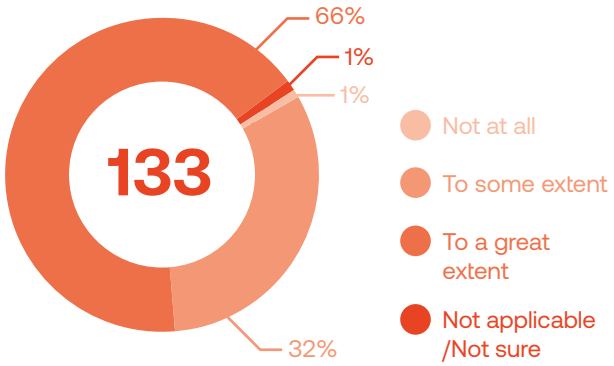
A total of 86% of audience respondents believe that their humanitarian profession requires competencies that are distinguishable from an equivalent non-humanitarian profession, or that their profession has no non-humanitarian equivalent (and is therefore unique). This compares with 82% from the survey results.

2. Are there skills, knowledge, and behaviours required for your humanitarian profession that distinguish it from an equivalent non-humanitarian profession?



Number of respondents : **156**

3. To what extent would such a list of competencies be useful for your organisation or you as an individual?



Number of respondents : **133**

Perhaps most importantly, audience members also affirmed the value of the list of distinguishable humanitarian competencies developed by the SOHP study. As the list was not created before the survey, this was the first time its value to humanitarian organisations and practitioners could be tested. 97% or respondents confirmed that it would be useful to their organisation, with two thirds of respondents identifying that the list would be useful "to a great extent".

How recommendations were generated from SOHP 2020

Methodology

The SOHP study started from an idea; that the quality of humanitarian action is largely dependent on the quality and professionalism of the humanitarian workforce. Therefore, the study aimed to support humanitarians and humanitarian organisations in their drive to professionalise and continuously improve humanitarian action. With this goal in mind, the study aimed to generate specific, practical recommendations, focused on the most important issues highlighted by the research.

The study generated a lot of information and highlighted a wide range of issues. To synthesise these findings and reach practical recommendations from a single afternoon's work during the conference, required a carefully structured methodology.

Initially, a small group of experts, including members of the SOHP Advisory Group, met to discuss the findings and implications of the research. This discussion highlighted 4 broad and interrelated challenges to professionalisation. These were then articulated as questions and presented to the 4 breakout groups at the SOHP conference.

Setting participants the challenge of answering 1 of the 4 questions provided several benefits:

- It ensured that discussion was focused on generating solutions,
- It directed the discussion to the most important issues highlighted in the research,
- Setting a single question to discuss, made the challenge seem reasonable and not overwhelming,
- The questions were broad enough, so not to restrict the generation of ideas,
- The interrelated nature of the topics included in the questions meant that solutions to different questions were often mutually supportive and addressed the overall challenge of professionalisation.

Four significant questions

The four questions were presented with supporting data from the study and a series of related sub-questions to stimulate reflection and ideas. Here are the questions, with a brief explanation of each.

1. How do we drive professionalisation when professions aren't recognised? Do we need professions to drive professionalisation?

The SOHP study highlighted limited levels of infrastructure to support professionalisation in humanitarian work. It also indicated that, whist humanitarians affiliate strongly with the humanitarian sector, they often don't recognise professions within humanitarian work. Could this lack of identified professions be retarding the professionalisation of the sector? Or can professionalisation be achieved without formalised professions? In either case, what can be done to accelerate professionalisation?

2. How do we stop bias making humanitarian recruitment less effective?

The SOHP study highlighted that the system of recruitment in the humanitarian sector is problematic for both organisations and individuals – especially those without existing humanitarian experience. Findings also indicated that recruiters rated humanitarian experience as more important than demonstration of professional skills. Is this bias towards humanitarian experience justified, or is it creating a closed club that prevents a flow of talent into the sector? Are the competencies required for humanitarian work really unattainable for those without experience? Survey respondents also identified other forms of bias, discrimination and even nepotism. Is this restricting diversity in the sector? How do we stop biases making humanitarian recruitment less effective?

3. How do we ensure that humanitarians have the competencies to do their job effectively? And what are the risks of not doing so?

More than ever, humanitarians need to deliver work to standards that justify the investment, and that ensure quality and accountability to affected people. How can we be confident that humanitarians have the competencies to do this? The SOHP study highlighted a lack of recognised certification in humanitarian work. Findings suggested that quality is assessed subjectively and seniority is often measured in "years in the sector" irrespective of performance during that time. Why do organisations not require their staff to have certification? Why is it so difficult to agree on competency frameworks? How do we ensure that humanitarians have the knowledge, skills and behavioural traits necessary? And what are the risk of not doing so?

4. How can we drive localisation in humanitarian staffing?

Localisation is frequently extoled but slow to materialise. For international organisations, staffing is often built around a system of "international" and "national" roles. Is this system making it hard for talented national staff to progress? Does it encourage talent to leave their own country for greater recognition as expats? The SOHP study showed that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused many international staff to relocate, raising questions about the value of their presence and role. What exactly are the competencies that international candidates have that national applicants don't? Why can't those be made explicit and built into development pathways? How can we drive localisation in humanitarian staffing?

Recommendations from the SOHP Study

The following recommendations were generated by humanitarians who engaged in the SOHP Conference in November 2020.

Question 1: How do we drive professionalisation when professions aren't recognised? Do we need professions to drive professionalisation?

1. Keep it simple

Professional associations need not be large, expensive or complex organisations. Significant progress in professionalisation could be achieved with simple organisations who manage a body of specific knowledge and a set of certifications. (Participants cited PM4NGOs and the PMD certification of examples of this).

2. Focus resources where there is potential to make greatest impact

Professionalisation of an entire sector does not need to, and could not, happen in one step. Instead professionalisation initiatives could be focused on areas of humanitarian work where there are greatest concerns over quality or performance. Accountability to affected persons and prevention of abuse of power should be amongst initial areas of focus.

Professionalisation could be considered as a vehicle to drive localisation. Developing accessible professional development and certification mechanisms in profession areas that are traditionally dominated by international or expat staff, could shift the balance or control towards local and national staff.

3. Build on existing infrastructure

Well established professions, such as health, law, education and finance, benefit from strong professionalisation infrastructure outside the humanitarian sector. Humanitarian equivalents of these professions can (and in some cases do) connect to existing professional development schemes and certifications. If necessary, additional qualifications could be established around competencies that are unique, or particularly important, in humanitarian work. This would also assist professionals to move between humanitarian and non-humanitarian professions.

4. Consider a single "humanitarian" profession

Given that humanitarians seem to identify more strongly with humanitarian work in general, rather than individual humanitarian profession areas, it may be easier to establish professional development and certification opportunities for those who wish to be recognised as a generic "professional humanitarian". Some initiatives (such as the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework) have worked towards this aim. The distinguishable humanitarian competencies, identified by SOHP, could be used to further this work.

5. Ensure inclusivity and accessibility

It is important that professional development towards recognised certification is not elitist or discriminatory. Professional knowledge should be open and accessible. Certification should be possible to achieve through working practice as well as courses of study.

Question 2: How do we stop bias making humanitarian recruitment less effective?

1. Clearer and more transparent information

Job adverts should be designed to attract a more diverse range of applicants. Posting adverts in different places, reducing jargon and focusing on competencies rather than specific experiences can all help. Salaries and remuneration details should be more open and transparent.

2. Anonymise the first stage of recruitment processes

It should become standard practice that candidates submit applications that do not contain information that could be used to discriminate for or against them, such as protected characteristics (i.e. age, disability, gender, partnership, pregnancy or parenthood, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation).

3. Adopt a competency approach throughout the employee lifecycle

Taking a competency approach can help individuals and organisations to be most efficient in managing the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need. Recruitment, induction or "on-boarding" processes, pay scales and reward schemes, can all be designed around competencies. This promotes transparency, clarity, objectivity, data-driven decision-making and fairness.

4. Collaborative humanitarian traineeships

In several non-humanitarian sectors, traineeships offer talented but inexperienced candidates a path to a recognised certificate of general competency for that sector of work. Similar schemes have been established by individual humanitarian organisations. A collaborative sector-wide humanitarian traineeship scheme, concluding in a recognised qualification would be a big step forward.

5. Take a change-management approach

Encouraging different types of people into "our" sector is a significant change that will make many people uneasy. Recognising such concerns, openly discussing them, and using change management techniques may help in gaining support and momentum.

6. Recognise our own bias and challenging it with knowledge

Whether it relates to corporate experience, or lack of formal education, bias is bias. We all carry conscious and unconscious bias. Being more open minded to engage with, and learn about, people, organisations and sectors we don't know as much about is an important step to challenging bias.

Question 3: How do we ensure that humanitarians have the competencies to do their job effectively? And what are the risks of not doing so?

1. Increase efficiency in HR processes

Inefficient recruitment, induction and performance management processes can seem like a waste of time and energy. Busy staff may, therefore, be tempted to avoid applying these processes. This has the potential to lead to the recruitment or retention of individuals without the required competencies. In some cases, this could result in poor performance, abuse of power or lack of accountability. Designing efficient and effective HR systems, and continuously working to refine them, can help eliminate the likelihood of such problems.

2. Organisation-wide adoption of a competency approach

To be effective, organisations need to commit to using a competency-based approach. Three key components key to this are: (a) Leadership who understand competency frameworks, their value and use. (b) A Human Resources team that is empowered to use a competency-approach throughout the employee lifecycle (c) Managers and staff that are trained, supported and mandated to use the approach.

3. Contextualised competency frameworks

Competency frameworks that are adapted to the operating context are more useful and more likely to be used. Engaging local teams in the design, or contextualisation, of competency frameworks will increase ownership and ensure that knowledge, skills and behaviours specific to a given context, are included. This may also contribute to driving localisation.

Question 4: How can we drive localisation in humanitarian staffing?

1. Challenge existing aversion to risk

To achieve the power shifts required for localisation, organisations need to be more open to piloting different structures and models for managing work and relationships. They should consider engaging with donors to discuss their commitment to localisation and openly assess the risks associated with new ways of working. Perceived risk of change, and comfort with existing models, are both barriers to localisation.

Changes adopted and lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic provide opportunities to reshape the structure and division of responsibility within organisations. It is important that these lessons are converted into actions.

2. Focus on competencies and role, not status or administrative titles

Greater focus and use of language related to the responsibilities of a role and the competencies required for that work can help drive localisation. Administrative labels such as "national" and "international", along with the implications in terms of status, are barriers to change.

3. Value local expertise

Organisations should place higher value on contextual knowledge and the skills to operate effectively in diverse contexts. This should be made explicit in recruitment and remuneration. Local staff who understand the importance of such expertise should be included in recruitment panels, both for national and HQ roles.

4. Use competencies to be transparent about the need for international roles

In some circumstances there is value in involving external staff with specific competencies. In these cases, organisations should define the competencies required and explain why they cannot be sourced locally. At the same time, organisations should implement activities to support local staff to develop the missing competencies.

International staff recruitment should be viewed as a temporary option – until competencies can be developed amongst other staff. The roles of international staff should be weighted towards enabling others rather than implementing tasks themselves.

5. Decentralise learning programmes

Rather than HQ teams developing learning programmes and "pushing" them to country offices, operational teams should define their own needs and request tailored support to meet them. This could include mentoring, hands-on support, knowledge sharing, or informal learning programmes, as well as training. In addition, organisations should promote peer learning across countries and regions rather than relying wholly on centralised resources.

Reflections on SOHP and next steps

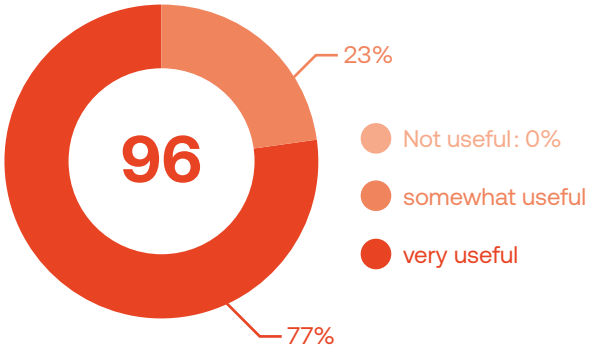
The following recommendations were generated by humanitarians who engaged in the SOHP Conference in November 2020.

Usefulness of the study

The study certainly generated interest - 566 people participated in the event and, one week afterwards, 250 had downloaded the video and audio recordings.

Feedback on the event suggested that the study and conference were also useful. 85% of those who gave feedback on the event, said it had improved their knowledge and 77% of attendees rated the event as "very useful".

4. Overall, how would you rate this event?



Number of respondents : **96**

5. How did this session improve your knowledge of the topic?

Number of respondents : **93**

In providing feedback, one participant said, "The event and topic responded to the needs of humanitarian practitioners." In the panel discussion, during the conference, the study was described as "A milestone, and timely research."

The SOHP study certainly didn't raise these important topics for the first time. However, much of the feedback from the conference suggested that the study has provided the opportunity to hold discussions about the professionalism and competencies of the humanitarian workforce with a backdrop of focused data on the topic.

Next steps

During the conference, the audience was asked about the value of the study and whether the work should be continued. In a poll, **95% of respondents said that the work of SOHP should be continued into the future.**

When asked how the work should be taken forward:

- 85% of respondents supported the concept of an ongoing observatory on humanitarian professions; and

- 45% supported the idea of reiterating the study every 3-5 years.

On the question of how the SOHP study could be improved, participants recommended greater involvement of humanitarian donors as well as private sector, and particularly, local and national actors in the study. More specifically, several respondents suggested that the results should be disaggregated and presented through a gender lens – something that was also suggested via the chat function, during the event.

Participants at the conference proposed that networks should be established to disseminate findings and recommendations. They emphasised the importance of humanitarian actors implementing those recommendations and the need to evaluate their take-up.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