

Humanitarian Assistance Management Programme at Stenden University

The Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence contributed to the Professional Competence Profile (PCP) that was developed and validated in close cooperation with representatives of 17 organisations active in Humanitarian Assistance (HA), including: Warchild, the Netherlands Red Cross, the Inter Church Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO), the association of humanitarian and development organisations PSO, the School for Peace Operations of the Royal Netherlands Army, the academic Master programme “Network on Humanitarian Action” (NOHA) and several individual professionals and consultants at local community level in areas affected by manmade or natural disaster.



Humanitarian Assistance can be defined as *‘the aid and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of manmade (war) or natural disasters’*. This definition was agreed upon the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) in 2003.¹ In practice, Humanitarian Assistance covers a range of activities such as setting up shelters, camp management, logistics & facility management and project management. Training of local staff is essential in most humanitarian operations, as are aspects such as an awareness of and the responsibility for stimulating capacity building, cultural sensitivity and value-oriented action.

In most instances, HA Managers are trained to work for and with International Organisations, International NGOs or Civil Society Organisations, such as the ICRC, Oxfam and many other organisations; and intergovernmental Organisations (GOs) such as the United Nations Agencies and last but not least Military Organisations.

The following is a description of the job of the HA Manager as it applies to the new Stenden University Bachelor’s programme:

“The Humanitarian Assistance Manager manages and facilitates the support of people affected by disasters at financial, technical and logistical level, fostering the humanitarian standards and the rights of primary stakeholders, in order to save lives and to enhance the empowerment, wellbeing, dignity, community building and social and economic independence of disaster survivors. “

In March 2008 Stenden University subscribed her vision “Serving to make a better world” wishing to professionalise Humanitarian Assistance. Through the existing training

¹ The Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative provides a forum for donors to discuss best practices in Humanitarian Financing and other shared concerns and was established after a meeting held in Stockholm in 2003 that brought together donor countries, United Nations (UN) agencies, the ICRC and Red Crescent Movement and other NGOs.

programmes of Service Management and International Hospitality Management (see <http://www.stenden.com/nl/studies/Pages/studiesPortaal.aspx>) Stenden shows great interest and affiliation with service and hospitality, also for people in extraordinary situations like refugees and displaced persons. The result was starting with a minor in Humanitarian Assistance Management.

The experience with this minor study and the demand from the working field HAM for further reaching professionalization were important reasons for Stenden University to start up a Bachelor in Humanitarian Assistance Management. An important role is played by the fact that the number of crises shall certainly not decrease in the near future. On the contrary, studies on climate change and global water management show that the chance of suddenly occurring emergency conditions can only increase, in particular in poorer countries.



Later in 2008, Stenden University in cooperation with NOHA and experts from the professional field - including the military - reassessed **ten competencies** for their relevance. These competencies enable the HAM graduate to contribute at operational level (read: field level) to the management of security, communications and common logistical systems in order to achieve a process that is participatory, impartial and transparent.

These 10 competencies are:

1. Developments of a vision on changes and trends in the external environment and developing relationships, networks and chains.
2. Analysing policy problems and translating these in policy objectives and alternatives, and preparing for decision-making.
3. Implementation of Human Resource Management in view of the strategy of the organisation.
4. Organising, controlling and improving business and organisational processes.
5. Analysis of the financial and legal aspects, internal processes and the company or organisation's environment in order to strengthen connection and interaction.
6. Development, implementation and evaluation of the change process.
7. Social and communicative competence (interpersonal and within the organisation).
8. Self Management.
9. Value oriented action.
10. Intercultural sensitivity.

These 10 competencies are more developed and described in the HAM PCP and the HAM Blueprints and Competency Grid.

The new HAM degree programme aims to provide students with the competencies expected of starting professionals in the national and international professional field of HAM. As such, graduates of the programme will be able to demonstrate their competencies in the required knowledge, abilities and attitudes as a coherent whole.



The HAM will teach the student to operate professionally in a wide range of practical situations and to act professionally in real-life situations. The programme is based on an extensive labour survey and an in-depth discussion with representatives from Humanitarian Assistance Organisations. Professionals from HA organisations have identified a growing need for management qualities, especially in the Relief & Reconstruction phase

following a natural disaster or manmade humanitarian crisis. The educational content of the required competencies are determined by the employed demands in the field of HAM.

The HAM Bachelor's programme offers a four-year curriculum which gives the students a broad view of the field, as well as specific knowledge of different aspects of their future profession. It consists of various learning-methods, designed to give the students the basis, practical and actual knowledge of the Humanitarian Assistance environment. Problem Based Blended Learning², lectures, workshops, practical training and exercising constitute the key methods of the programme. The outline of the study is reflected in the use of literature and in the actual contact with representatives from the field, including the military. Guest lectures and humanitarian experts form a wide range of fields; will give lectures and workshops at Stenden University throughout the curriculum in which CCOE will offer support. In addition students will go on field trips and excursions.



Study materials from the humanitarian field



All sources materials used in the HAM curriculum have been checked for currency, realistic, valid and of practical use. Aside from the research, conducted by Stenden University library staff and lecturers, the sources are also screened on an ongoing basis by the organisations and professionals that contribute to (modules of) the curriculum. The following materials will be provided for CIMIC (e.g. by CCOE): doctrinal documentation, handbooks, manuals, approaches, policy papers, simulations, case studies. As the

curriculum will be developed per academic year, additional organisations will cooperate with Stenden University, to ensure the availability of all the necessary and appropriate study materials for each new study year.

² Stenden University has chosen to adopt Problem Based Learning as its main didactic concept. PBL is a learner centered educational system. PBL is a result of the assumptions of social constructivism about reality, knowledge and learning. In practice, students work in small groups of 12 students with a tutor on cases in a professional context. Stenden University aims to use only the best elements of thematic, case-based and PBL education, and has therefore adopted the term "PBL Blended".

Cooperation with the professional field

The HAM Bachelor's programme intended to link up with the Master's programme offered at the University of Groningen (RuG), who are a member of NOHA, the network of seven European universities involved in the development of Humanitarian Action education. The cooperation partners with the professional field also include the multinational CIMIC Centre of Excellence in Enschede and the School for Peace Operations of the Royal Netherlands Army in Amersfoort. The cooperation with those partners will focus specifically on the practical experience of students in humanitarian actions in real-life situations.

Interaction with the work field

In each academic year, students will benefit from actual contact with representatives from the field. This will benefit the student's learning process, as well as promote a realistic approach to the current challenges in the field of humanitarian assistance.

Guest lecturers – also provided by CCOE – and humanitarian experts from all relevant fields will give lectures and workshops at Stenden University Leeuwarden, throughout the curriculum. For example: in the first year the management students will be offered excursions to training facilities of the Royal Dutch Army and Navy. In the second year they will follow excursions to training facilities of CIMIC; guest lecturers and simulation.



In the professorship Humanitarian Assistance the following lines of research are considered that will subscribe the relationship between CCOE and Stenden University:

- To contribute to a more professionalization of the Humanitarian Assistance Work Field;
- To provide and exchange Subject Matter Expertise from both participants in the Work Field of Humanitarian Assistance;
- Coordination and cooperation of the different actors in the Humanitarian Space;
- Explore and explain the relation and connection between the Humanitarian Field and Area of Development Aid and the role and position of the military;
- Input of Cultural Awareness and relevant local information in the planning processes;
- Evaluation and accountability of Humanitarian and Development Activities and projects;