Humanitarian Leadership Academy

Problem statement – 2013

1. Introduction

Climatic, demographic and political trends are increasing the scale and complexity of crises worldwide. Estimates suggest the number of people affected by climate-related disasters each year will rise to 375 million by 2015, up from 250 million in 2009.[1] Population growth is occurring at a rapid pace, with an extra 82 million people each year, mainly in developing countries.[2] As many as half the world's internally displaced people, more than 30 million people, migrate to cities, increasing the scale of urban vulnerability.[3] Equally, on-going conflict internationally, including both the recent wave of violence in the Middle East and long term instability in contexts such as the Democratic Republic of Congo or Myanmar, reflects the scale of humanitarian impact associated with conflict-affected and fragile states.[4]

Despite this increasing level of humanitarian need, the humanitarian system is not well-placed to respond. The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)'s most recent 'State of the Humanitarian System' report found continued gaps in humanitarian coverage despite increased levels of funding.[5]

Simultaneously, rapid technological change is bringing both risks and opportunities, while the humanitarian landscape is becoming increasingly diverse. In many cases, governments in crisis affected countries are taking an increasing role in risk management and disaster response,[6] and the military and private sector involved in the delivery of assistance.

These trends have enormous implications for the humanitarian sector, and for humanitarian capacity strengthening in particular. To meet current and future challenges the humanitarian system must change to bring in new stakeholders and new agendas. Humanitarian capacity strengthening cannot be limited to those traditionally considered part of the humanitarian system. In the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR), and subsequently in the UK Government's Humanitarian Policy[7], DFID has placed resilience at the centre of its approach to addressing both natural and human-made disasters. This entails integrating work across the humanitarian and development sectors, particularly on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, social

> **Resilience**
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> According to DFID's working definition, resilience is 'the ability of countries, communities and households to manage change by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses without compromising their long term prospects.'
>
> DFID (2011) *Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID*

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[1] Oxfam (2009) *The Right to Survive.*
[2] Haub, C. (2009) *Demographic Trends and their Humanitarian Impacts,* Feinstein International Center.
[3] Davies (2010) 'Profiling Urban IDPs', *Forced Migration Review,* 34.
[4] WFP (2009) *Humanitarian Assistance in Conflict and Complex Emergencies.*
http://home.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp225450.pdf
[5] ALNAP (2012) *The State of the Humanitarian System.*
[6] Save the Children (2012) *Responding to emergencies in Southeast Asia: Can we do better?*
[7] DFID (2011) *Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper.*

protection and humanitarian response and preparedness. DFID's resilience strategy also requires implementing key principles including anchoring work in national and local stakeholders' own realities and contexts; being shaped by local understanding and priorities; being owned at country level; and being long-term and collaborative, building on local relations and new partnerships.[8] To make a resilience approach a reality, capacity strengthening to reduce the impact of crises must take place across a wide range of different sectors and stakeholders[9] – an approach that DFID research indicates is significantly better value for money.[10]

The humanitarian system

Traditionally, the humanitarian system has comprised a patchwork of different groups, at local, national and international levels, delivering assistance to communities affected by crisis. It has been centred around governmental bodies, the military, United Nations agencies, NGOs, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement. It has historically focused principally on delivering response to crises.

In recent years, however, there has been increasing recognition of approaches not traditionally considered part of humanitarianism. This includes the much-discussed issue of integrating humanitarian and development approaches, particularly in the case of cyclical crises. It has increasingly sought to move away from a response-dominated approach, incorporating disaster risk reduction, risk management, climate change adaptation, social protection and addressing the underlying drivers of crisis. These have been incorporated by DFID and others into developing resilience approaches.

The expansion of mainstream humanitarianism has also included recognition of a more diverse range of stakeholders. It is increasingly acknowledged that much assistance is provided by 'informal' humanitarians. These include community groups, the private sector and religious organisations that have historically operated outside the formal humanitarian system.

For the purposes of this business plan, we will refer to humanitarianism and the humanitarian system in the broadest sense. The Academy's vision is to help transform a centralised, response-oriented system into one that is decentralised, diverse, flexible, and better able to provide assistance to vulnerable people. It should also reach across traditional boundaries to incorporate a wide range of approaches to reducing the impact of disaster, and focus on delivering assistance

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2. Needs analysis

The following needs have been identified during wide consultation through engagement events and other processes across 15 countries, discussions with over 300 people and organisations (including civil society, the private sector, academia and governments, as well as international and multinational organisations), supported by extensive desk research:

1. There is **a lack of sustainable and strategically oriented approaches** and investment in learning in the resilience and humanitarian sector.

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[8] *Ibid.*
[9] Mitchell, T. and K. Harris (2012) *Resilience: A risk management approach,* London: ODI.
[10] Cabot Venton, C. et al (2012) *The Economics of Early Response and Disaster Resilience: Lessons from Kenya and Ethiopia.* DFID.

2. The current system **does not consistently deliver** capacity strengthening that meets professional quality standards.

3. There is **little evidence of capacity strengthening impact**, or what approaches work best. Learning support, and approaches to resilience and humanitarian action generally, are often **not appropriate for local contexts**.

4. There is **insufficient provision** of high quality learning and development for people engaged in humanitarian and resilience work, across all levels and ranges of skills. This is **most acute at leadership levels**, for women and for 'softer', non-technical skills.

Where these needs are not met, communities are unable to build resilience, responses are poorly led and targeted without meeting community needs, leading to increased vulnerability, greater loss of life and property, and wasted resources. The economy, efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian and resilience interventions are negatively affected, resulting in reduced value for money.

Across the sector, there are issues related to the need to **expand the boundaries of the traditional humanitarian sector** and work together in a different way. If we are to be successful in preparing adequate numbers of people to engage and respond to disasters, manage risk and adapt to climate change, a radical transformation is needed in how we understand and engage with other sectors and facets of civil society, working with and learning from the development, the private and the social innovation sectors and more importantly, local communities, as advocated by DFID's Resilience Framework[11]. To achieve this different approach the boundaries of the 'humanitarian system' must be widened (see box above) and the humanitarian and development sectors must work together[12].

Capacity strengthening activity must increasingly **include 'non-traditional' stakeholders;** it should increasingly **include national and local government;** and capacity strengthening of national NGOs needs to be more **structured, systematic and based on equal partnership.**

In addition, there are **cross-cutting themes** that are important elements of future capacity strengthening. There is a need:

- for **business sustainability** in capacity strengthening, particularly in terms of resourcing (both funds and people) that are not bound by 'project cycles'
- to see capacity building and capacity strengthening as part of **an overall learning cycle**, that goes beyond ad hoc training provisions
- to demonstrate **value for money** of different approaches to capacity strengthening
- to ensure **greater collaboration** and to avoid duplication
- for capacity strengthening to begin with **an understanding of climatic, environmental, demographic and political trends** influencing the humanitarian sector in order to inform a resilience-based approach
- for learning provision to contribute to **addressing conflicted-affected or fragile states**
- for capacity strengthening to contribute to **addressing violence against women and girls**.

3. Detailed findings of needs analysis

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[11] DFID (2011) *Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper.*
[12] World Bank (2011) *Press Release* www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2011/09/23/humanitarian-development-partners-agree-concrete-steps-tackle-disasters

3.1 There is a lack of sustainable and strategically oriented approaches and investment in learning in the resilience and humanitarian sector.

3.1.1 Capacity strengthening should be less fragmented and more strategic.
Historically, capacity strengthening to enhance resilience and humanitarian action has been fragmented and not strategic. Causes include the **lack of professional development infrastructure**, and **insufficient strategic investment**. Research on professional development in the humanitarian sector[13] has highlighted that despite an extraordinary range of capacity building initiatives the sector lacks the professional development architecture and systems that can support widespread delivery and signpost to minimum quality standards. Some progress has been made over the years through the development of cross-organisational programmes, the creation and application of competency frameworks, the emergence of some quality assured and accredited training but without a supporting infrastructure, the sector is vulnerable to further fragmentation.

Insufficient strategic investments in learning and development have been the result of both donors and agencies not funding collaborative partnerships for resource sharing and joint strategy development. Donors have responded to crisis calls when particular shortages of skills have been critical; agencies have been undertaking capacity building activities more often as quick fixes in the absence of longer term, better invested and carefully planned efforts. This makes the implementation of a resilience approach, addressing long term vulnerability rather than individual crisis responses, particularly difficult to achieve.

The Red Cross movement, UN and other humanitarian agencies have started to collaborate on networks and consortia but the lack of a strategic platform for learning and development has meant investments remain discrete and separate. Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA)'s Professionalisation Working Group[14] has been developing and lobbying for a professional development framework and humanitarian skills passport to recognise local and field level workers' knowledge, skills and experience for the humanitarian and development sectors. This cross-sector initiative represents the highest level collaboration across the UN, Red Cross movement, NGO, academia and private sectors and provides an opportunity to continue to harness a critical mass to give this project the necessary traction.

The **nature of funding for capacity building has tended to result in inconsistent and fragmented programme availability** as can be witnessed by the disparate offer on Reliefweb alone. ELRHA found: 'As soon as a funding period (typically one to three years) is over, the likelihood is that a particular course will disappear and the funding will go to another agency to fill the critical gap. This essentially removes any possibility of setting benchmarks and measuring the long-term impact of investments in capacity building in the sector.'[15] Different capacity building networks and consortia have developed varying levels of collaboration but largely with their own members. There is little cross promotion or rationalisation of efforts and virtually no learning pathways created between them. Information and access to resources from any of these initiatives has to be searched out from individual websites with no single focal point where connections can be made.

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[13] ELRHA (2010) *Scoping Study on Professionalising the Humanitarian Sector* and ELRHA (2012) *Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalisation.*
[14] Comprising members from the UN, Red Cross movement ,INGOs, academia and corporate sectors.
[15] ELRHA (2011) *Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalism*.

Significant effort is needed to link different parts of the humanitarian sector in relation to capacity building.[16] In the rapidly changing and complex humanitarian environment of South East Asia and the Pacific, a consistent opinion expressed in the engagement events was the need for existing institutions and initiatives to be effectively linked together. Independent studies like the USAID/OFDA funded OCHA report on mapping and analysis of Humanitarian Reform Training[17] highlight the lack of systems in the sector to capture and respond to the learning needs of individuals and agencies. Increased interconnectedness is also essential for the implementation of resilience activity, which entails the blending of a range of different approaches. Individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, not just humanitarian response, will require appropriate learning and resources if resilience approaches are to be realised.

3.1.2 Information and guidance on existing learning and career development opportunities should be made more easily accessible and coherent.

There are numerous learning and development providers describing themselves as part of the humanitarian system. It is increasingly challenging to filter the highest quality offer, recognising that perceptions of what constitutes some aspects of quality may be contextually dependent. A mapping of the South East Asia region training providers[18] highlighted some 150+ providers all with varying relevance and connection to the sector; without a steer or filtering service this makes it virtually impossible for someone to sift through and identify the best provision.[19] It is imperative to create a focal point for accessing and distilling the information in a variety of formats with the supporting technology. In relation to leadership training, human resource specialists highlight an inability to navigate what training is available and that leadership training is not tailored to different particular contexts.

3.2 The current system does not consistently deliver capacity strengthening that meets professional quality standards.

3.2.1 Learning provision should relate to recognised global standards or accepted good practice.

There is a clear **need for globally recognised standards** in the sector. The lack of infrastructure for professional development means there is little in the way of recognised qualifications and learning pathways, particularly at entry and mid-levels. A global survey by ELRHA found that there is also little quality control for humanitarian training: 'While most people reported that courses provided detailed learning outcomes...it was clear that fewer courses provided assessments, and only a fraction provided a pass or fail grading... the majority of training courses that people attended were informal, presenting certificates of attendance at the end.'[20] Thus it is difficult to set baselines for measuring impact and learner retention and their currency is reduced.[21] It causes setbacks for learners in terms of career

> 'The traditional view of many northern aid agencies is to build capacity through a workshop - that's not what's needed: it means money, people to be seconded into local authorities to strengthen them internally.
> Jemilah Mahmood in a recent IRIN article
> www.irinnews.org/report/98500/analysis-the-un-in-2023

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[16] Ibid

[17] *Building a Better Response: Gaps and Good Practice in Training for Humanitarian Reform*.

[18] *Disaster Management Training Institutes (DMTIs) in Southeast Asia- Preliminary Mapping Research* by: Yasmin O. Hatta Assisted by: Elizabeth Pua Villamor Reviewed and Edited by: Robert Francis B. Garcia, Advisor for Training and Knowledge Management Systems ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER).

[19] Ibid

[20] ELRHA (2011) *Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalism*.

[21] Lack of assessments in courses, make them ineligible for recognised quality assurance and credit rating purposes.

development, and prevents the system from developing sufficient capacity at scale to meet the needs.

Most internal learning and development programmes that are developed and delivered within NGOs are informal with little reference to globally recognised standards. Exceptions to these are the delivery of programmes that have been benchmarked against recognised quality assurance mechanisms such as the Project Management training Project Management for Development (PMD) PRO 1&2 which was developed in partnership with the recognised APMG Group[22] (who developed Prince2 qualifications)[23]; or those programmes which are accredited through delivery partnerships with universities.

The design and delivery of learning materials are of variable quality. With little awareness of the complex technical requirements for developing learning programmes, there is vast variance in the quality of materials found in the sector. It is difficult to know whether training has enhanced performance, and for individuals concerned who are left unclear about the value they will gain from attending training. At the Academy engagement event in Manila a participant reported that quality is a major issue: 'There are people who have undergone multiple trainings and yet still don't seem to know anything.'

3.2.2 More expertise and skills are needed in humanitarian learning and development, including for trainers.

Limited understanding of effective learning and development processes[24] within organisations and the longer term investment needed for developing the skills and competencies of staff has hampered the raising of quality and progress to establishing more professional systems. The HERR stated: 'There is a need to grow the pool of competent professionals involved in humanitarian work. This requires investment, and a commitment from humanitarian agencies to create career paths for humanitarian professionals.'[25] This view is supported by People in Aid, who state: 'Several reports and surveys in the course of 2011 have criticised learning and development processes particularly for field staff. As one report explained, "staff training and a lack of appropriate skill sets were raised in many evaluations. Evaluations of mega-disasters predictably note influxes of relatively new staff with limited experience."'[26]

Little attention has been given to the quality and skills of those delivering training, with limited use of recognised standards. This adds to the confusion for deliverers and recipients of the ubiquitous training of trainers programmes. The sector has a tradition of using field practitioners to support the building of skills; while this can work well in many instances, there is no guarantee that the practitioner is able to understand and use the appropriate adult learning methodologies required in training delivery to maximise learning retention and transfer of learning into improved working practices. Training of trainers is most often used as a quick fix to both train people in the technical skills needed - such as logistics or security - as well as to immediately impart the skills of a trainer.

Given that most training of trainers courses in the sector range from two to five days, it is unrealistic to assume that this is sufficient time to develop the necessary skills of learning and development professionals. The international training for teaching English in a foreign

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[22] APMG-International is a leading Examination Institute for Accrediting Professionals
[23] Prince2 is also a de facto standard which has been rigorously peer-reviewed under a comprehensive continuous improvement regime.
[24] Learning needs analysis, learning design, delivery, evaluation and wider organisational development dimensions.
[25] DFID (2011) *Humanitarian Emergency Response Review*.
[26] People in Aid (2013) *The State of HR 2013 in International Humanitarian and Development Organisations*.

language is at least a one month course with rigorous practice and feedback; professional qualifications in training and facilitation take an average of 6 -18 months to achieve. These courses will also, as standard, include good practice and guidelines in working with gender, disability and culture all of which would be difficult to address in a short course.

Progress has been made to streamline approaches to training of trainers and provide a longer term skills development process. The development of the international development and humanitarian trainer competency framework represents the culmination of the combined efforts of RedR UK and the Bioforce Institute in France with input from a variety of organisations. This could be developed further, using recognised industry standards to train and assess trainers, supported by appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. This approach will broaden the range of delivery methods (e.g. coaching, online) which are needed to effectively train others and facilitate measurable performance improvement for their organisation. There will be a shift in balance of the learning and development professionals' skillset towards greater business understanding, change management, organisation development and use of new technologies.[27]

3.2.3 Humanitarian and development capacity strengthening should link together more effectively, and with other sectors.

Access to learning and knowledge is fragmented between the development and humanitarian sectors, reducing the potential for implementing resilience approaches. There has also been insufficient effort to draw learning from other sectors such as the private sector. In capacity strengthening the development and humanitarian sectors have yet to fully link enhancing resilience, disaster preparedness, response and reconstruction. More needs to be done to provide a curriculum that spans the entire range of approaches to tackling crises and reducing vulnerability. This is starting to happen through training providers' forums joint working, but efforts have to be accelerated if we are to maximise the expertise, knowledge and resources of multiple different sectors.

BRAC, in Bangladesh, one of the world's largest NGOs and a leading capacity builder in the development sector is investing in a continual process of learning and experimentation and is a good example of an organisation to watch and learn from.

Many participants at the engagement events talked about the need to bridge the divide between humanitarianism and development and one suggested that 'a push towards resilience could help donors work better together'. Another asked: 'Is this a development or humanitarian initiative? If it is on the divide, then it needs to work with both sides. It should have a focus on vulnerability, but also an ability to respond to emergencies'.

'43% of HR professionals said that senior managers in the executive team don't recognise why leadership and management training is key to the organisation delivering its business strategy'.
CIPD Research Report

3.3 There is little evidence of capacity strengthening impact, or what approaches work best. Learning support, and approaches to resilience and humanitarian action generally, are often not appropriate for local contexts.

3.3.1 Building evidence of capacity strengthening impact and problems of measuring impact.

Across the humanitarian sector and efforts to enhance resilience, DFID has identified the problem that 'we don't really know which existing interventions are most effective in

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[27] Learning and Development 2020 http://bit.ly/15nDhBr

reducing risk and vulnerability, saving lives and rebuilding livelihoods after crises.'[28] The lack of a strong evidence base is a problem for humanitarian capacity strengthening. Work is needed to build evidence that such programmes have the desired impact.

Donors and NGOs have invested considerable sums of money in capacity building in both the development and humanitarian sectors; but with few tangible results as the HERR recommendation confirms: '…the level of professionalism in the humanitarian sector needs to be raised through better investment in skills and training'.[29] Impact methodologies used by mainstream learning and development may not apply to the humanitarian sector or may apply differently. More resources need to be invested in order to determine appropriateness and scale for these efforts, including how they contribute to enhancing resilience.

> **'Evaluations of disaster responses consistently find that it is these local and national organisations that are particularly critical to survival in the immediate aftermath of disasters'.**
> ALNAP 2012

Added to the overall challenges of generating evidence of capacity strengthening impact, the definition of success is also poorly understood between different local and national contexts. Considerable work is needed to identify common elements of success, and to generate an evidence base that can be compared between different contexts. DFID is already working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and the University of East Anglia on how innovation and evidence relates to local and national humanitarian stakeholders, including what success means.

3.3.2 More resources are needed to support informal local stakeholders.

The first responders in crises are members of the community themselves, helping neighbours, friends and relatives, local schools and businesses. The logistics of deploying, and often recruiting, an international response team can lead to life-threatening delays. Christian Aid's research on local capacity and partnership[30] confirmed that the quality of a humanitarian response (in terms such as appropriateness, efficiency and access) can be significantly enhanced where local and national responders are key stakeholders and equally, if not more so, for building resilience, preventing or minimising the impact of crises.

> **'Mobile phones and remote contexts - there is a need to harness new technology for capacity building. There is an oral culture here so face-to-face is important. Younger generations are digitally competent, but internet connectivity is still an issue'**
> Academy engagement event participant, Nairobi

Sixty four per cent of organisations working in the humanitarian sector are locally and nationally based as opposed to only 18% which are internationally based.[31] Despite this, local communities and organisations consistently report a lack of investment and recognition of their capacity. Individuals will increasingly look for ways for their informal learning to be recognised (accredited) to demonstrate their value and transferability from one work place to another. To meet the growing humanitarian needs these humanitarians must be better able to access resources and the chance to develop their skills to increase their ability to provide more effective humanitarian assistance.

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[28] DFID (2012) *Promoting innovation and evidence-based approaches to building resilience and responding to humanitarian crises: a DFID Strategy Paper.*

[29] DFID (2011) *Humanitarian Emergency Response Review*,

[30] Nightingale, Katherine, *Building the future of humanitarian aid: Local capacity and partnerships in emergency assistance*, Christian Aid.

[31] ALNAP (2012) *State of the Humanitarian Systems*, p.28

Capacity building in the humanitarian sector and related areas is in its infancy in terms of adjusting to the changing social context[32] and there is **insufficient provision for and access to technology**. The technological explosion is impacting on learning and development through a much more innovative use of interactive web-based tools in promoting change, delivering training, webinars, and hosting communities of practice. Mobile phone technology increases the number of users accessing learning on and off-line and will account for the majority of users accessing the internet. Technology will also provide increased opportunities to deliver content, combining recognition of a development need with timely delivery of the right content. While some local stakeholders will continue to lack access to technology and require 'low-tech' learning approaches, the engagement events confirmed that an increasing number of people are able to access resources using information and communication technology.

These networked uses of technology require a different way of thinking about learning which is not about content delivery necessarily, but about providing the means for people to find and share information for themselves. Understanding the psychology of relationships and networks will be critical to creating effective learning environments.[33]

> **'The Academy could add value by disseminating (resources) in more languages.'**
> Academy engagement event participant

The default position for most learning and development provision in the sector is for it to be in **English followed by French and Spanish**. Resources must be available in local languages and adapted to the appropriate context. Countries like Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan are almost entirely cut off from mainstream provision and it is through the internet and local languages that they will be able to invest in their professional development. Even in places like the Middle East there has been limited efforts to ensure materials and training are widely available in Arabic. For example, Reliefweb lists 534 training programmes, of these, only two are in Arabic.

3.3.3 Learning and knowledge resources must be adapted and designed for different contexts, and allow diverse, context-specific forms of action.

There is a need to ensure risk management and humanitarian response is context-specific, building on the knowledge and cultural approaches of the crisis-affected community.[34] This has been found repeatedly by research and evaluations[35], and is in line with the principles of DFID's resilience framework.[36] It also came up strongly in the Academy's discussions with stakeholders in both South East Asia and East Africa, alongside the sense that most resources are dominated by sources from the Global North.

Another factor hampering the development of local capacity builders is that capacity building may be becoming the new operational arena for INGOs. In an effort to justify their role they are emphasising their own ability to build local capacity in vulnerable crisis-

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[32] This can be witnessed by the minimal offer of blended and online learning programmes across the humanitarian and development sectors.

[33] Learning and Development 2020 - http://bit.ly/15nDhBr

[34] ALNAP (2008) *The State of the Humanitarian Enterprise*.

[35] See, for example, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006) *Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami: Synthesis Report.*

[36] DFID (2011) *Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper.*

affected countries. This in turn inhibits the development of local capacity building providers - a danger pointed out to INTRAC itself in its own work in Central Asia.[37]

3.4 There is insufficient provision of high quality learning and development for humanitarian workers at all levels and ranges of skills. This is most acute at leadership levels, for women and for 'softer', non-technical skills.

3.4.1 Professional humanitarian experience should be more systematically recognised.
No regulator, professional association or learning council currently exists specifically for the sector. The humanitarian sector has made significant strides towards professionalising in the last decade. Initiatives have been formed to address quality and accountability within organisations;[38] however, while these efforts have been crucial in increasing the standards, accountability and trust of established humanitarian organisations they have not to date addressed this for individual professionalisation nor delivered the transformation of the sector into a globally defined and recognised professional community. The idea of a professional association for humanitarian workers has been consulted on for a number of years[39] and a clear need has been expressed across the sector.

3.4.2 Leadership should be improved.
Leadership was one of the pillars of the UN-led Humanitarian Reform Process that began in 2005, and is a key area of its successor, the Transformative Agenda. Leadership is 'widely considered to be the most crucial element in making the rest of the components [of the humanitarian system] effective.'[40] However, leadership has been repeatedly found to be an area of weakness. Poor leadership has been identified at humanitarian coordinator level and cluster coordinator level,[41] and in the wider humanitarian system.[42] This was recognised in the HERR, which stated '...we need substantially to improve the strategic, political and operational leadership of the international humanitarian system.'[43]

> **'There is a clear compelling link between best practice leadership and management and overall business performance.'**
> Institute of Leadership Management

As recent research identifies: 'there is no question that we know a lot about leadership – the amount of evidenced and experienced opinions on the subject abounds. Yet, we still see organisations struggling to see enough effective leaders in practice....need to improve and focus on developing these critical capabilities in a more strategic and systematic way' [44].

Increasingly the **type of leadership** required has been under scrutiny. Modern leadership approaches indicate that leadership is not just a feature of the top team, and not even of those in managerial positions.[45] They advocate shared or distributed leadership which enables all people to lead depending on the situation, thereby opening up new ways of developing talent. In the humanitarian sector, increasingly, leaders need to lead beyond the

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[37] James, Rick, Hailey, John, *Capacity Building for NGOs - Making it Work*, INTRAC, Praxis Series 2.

[38] HAP, Sphere, People in Aid etc.

[39] ELRHA (2009) *Professionalisation of the Humanitarian Sector* and ELHRA (2011) *Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalisation*.

[40] NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project (2010) *Fit for the Future? Strengthening the Leadership Pillar of Humanitarian Reform.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Cited in ALNAP (2013) *Who's in charge here?*

[43] DFID (2011) *Humanitarian Emergency Response Review.*

[44] CIPD Research Report (2013) *Real-life leaders: closing the knowing-doing gap*,

[45] Carson, JB, Teslik, PE and Marrone, JA (2007) *Shared leadership in teams: an investigation of antecedent conditions and performance* Academy of Management Journal Vol 50, No 5, pp1217-34

traditional boundaries of their organisations; proactively leading and developing results through multi-stakeholder partnerships. This is particularly the case for adapting humanitarian action to encompass resilience approaches. Furthermore, humanitarian leaders are faced with greater levels of complexity requiring very different skills and capabilities. The role of the leader is changing and we need to change our approaches to developing leadership.

During the Academy's engagement events, the need for 'softer' skills to be developed in humanitarian leaders, and a lack of appropriate training for this was expressed. An ALNAP study highlighted a dearth of effective operational humanitarian leadership where women played a key role and called for an analysis into barriers facing national and international women to taking up field-based management positions.[46] As discussed above the humanitarian sector must link more effectively with other sectors – including both those traditionally considered part of the 'development' sector and others such as the corporate sector. Participants at Academy events saw the need for leaders at all levels to develop the ability to network and collaborate, as well as provide clear direction and management. Many within the sector have expressed the view that, ultimately, the ability to form effective partnerships will lead to overall greater aid effectiveness and benefit crisis affected populations.[47]

There is a need for **greater scale and range of leadership training and development.** Research has shown that the core management competences can be taught.[48] However, this works best where the learning programmes are integrated with other interventions[49] that support enhanced self-awareness and reflective practice, based on a manager's knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses.[50]

Recognising that so much now depends on collaborative work, management and leadership development interventions need to be designed to bring different leaders together from across the sector. This represents a significant shift away from historical preferences for delivering leadership training within the boundaries of individual organisations.

As with other sectors, the humanitarian and development world suffers from a woeful lack of equitable representation of women in leadership roles and not enough is being done to address this issue.

The sector has recognised the need for a greater scale and range of approaches to developing leaders and managers. Investment has already been made in developing humanitarian leadership, for example, Building a Better Response found: 'The Humanitarian Leadership Strengthening Unit in OCHA which has provided training to Humanitarian Coordinators and pool candidates has complemented a broader leadership development push within the sector. Competency frameworks have been developed and many of the largest NGOs and interagency networks now have programmes in place to strengthen

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[46] ALNAP (2011) *Leadership in Action: leading effectively in humanitarian operations*.

[47] For example, *Partnerships for Humanitarian Aid*, NGO Voice Newsletter, Issue 14, October 2011

[48] Burgoyne J, Hirsch, W and Williams, S (2004) *The development of management and leadership capability and its contribution to performance: the evidence, the prospects and the research need.* Research Report RR560 DfES

[49] Boyatzis, RE, Leonard, D and Rhee, K (1996) *Competencies can be developed but not in the way we thought* Capability. Vol 2, No. 2 pp25-41.

[50] Waldman, DA, Galvin, BM and Walumbwa,FO (2013) *The development of motivation to lead and leader role identity*. Journal of Leadership and Organisational Studies. Vol 20, No. 2 May pp156-68

leadership.'[51] Another form of leadership development that can foster improved confidence and capability is coaching. Save the Children has developed a network of high-level professional coaches who have been successfully partnered with staff as part of leadership training. This is now being extended to Humanitarian Coordinators in a partnership with OCHA. However, efforts remain limited and reactive and there is little evidence of their impact on improved performance.

There is a **lack of 'leadership' training in the sector for those not occupying senior positions**, or not working for international organisations and this affects the talent pipeline for developing new leaders. ALNAP found that: 'operational leadership opportunities currently favour internationally recruited staff. Nationally recruited staff – who offer wider sets of cultural identity – face structural and attitudinal barriers in developing their leadership potential and moving into international leadership positions.'[52] The need to provide leadership and management competencies for people at all levels has also been indicated as a need within the UN system: 'While [cluster training] has contributed to a cadre of cluster-coordinators-in-waiting and has also seen middle- and senior-managers and technical coordination staff skilled up there was broad concern that these trainings are most often focused at capital level and as such tend to omit front-line humanitarian staff.'[53]

3.4.3 Better mechanisms are needed for accessing knowledge, information and other resources in the humanitarian and related sectors.

'Although it could be improved, the content of the training is not where the improvement most needed… The most significant improvements lie in rethinking the mind-sets that employees and leaders bring to the training, as well as the environment they come back too. These are the tasks that only senior leaders can take on.'
McKinsey & Company October 2010 white paper *Getting more from your training programs*

In the humanitarian sector, 'decision-makers are not always using available evidence to inform their decisions. Either because they can't find it or they don't have the incentives to apply it.'[54] Even when good data are available it may not be used: 'There are a number of reasons for this, including data not being available in the right format, not widely dispersed, not easily accessible by users, not being transmitted through training and poor information management.'[55]

While there are organisations whose function is to maintain and promote humanitarian knowledge and information, as well as the role played by the global clusters, what does not exist in significant form is a means of linking these information and knowledge sources and making them more easily accessible to practitioners. Initiatives such as the Humanitarian Shelter Library and the Humanitarian Genome Project, which have received some DFID funding, have so far only been developed through pilot phases.

Alongside this, organisational change is needed to ensure practitioners are in a position to make use of available knowledge, and the evidence base for humanitarian interventions

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[51] Featherstone (2012) *Building a Better Response: Gaps and Good Practice in Training for Humanitarian Reform* p.8

[52] ALNAP (2011) *Leadership in Action: leading effectively in humanitarian operations*.

[53] Featherstone (2012) *Building a Better Response: Gaps and Good Practice in Training for Humanitarian Reform* p.10

[54] DFID (2012) *Promoting innovation and evidence-based approaches to building resilience and responding to humanitarian crises: a DFID Strategy Paper.*

[55] Ibid.

must be improved (see also 3.3). If the culture of organisations does not allow individuals to use the new knowledge they have acquired then the impact will be hindered. Behavioural change as well as organisational change is therefore central to achieving any change.

3.5 Capacity strengthening activity must increasingly include 'non-traditional' (non-recognised) stakeholders.

A consistent theme heard at the Academy's engagement events is the increasing significance of 'non-traditional stakeholders'. As well as local responders, this includes the private sector and military. One participant in the Philippines stated that, 'because of the intensity of disasters, almost all sectors are beginning to be involved in humanitarian work. There is no real distinction between different sectors, including development, churches and the military. Each is evolving beyond its own area.' This relates to the wider inter-connection of different sectors encompassed in resilience approaches.

The HERR commits to finding 'new ways to engage with the private sector and to bring their skills and expertise into humanitarian action, especially in areas where they have comparative advantage such as urban crises.'[56] Harnessing the power of the private sector will mean that humanitarian capacity strengthening, learning and development must address the needs (and draw on the skills) of private sector organisations.

The need to do this was raised in the Academy's engagement events and scoping studies. In the Philippines, for example, large corporations see a need to provide basic humanitarian training to their employees. Their employees are members of communities, many of which are disaster prone. By building the humanitarian competencies of their workforce private sector organisations help to protect themselves from the effects of crises as well as strengthening resilience.

While the involvement of the military in humanitarian activity is a contentious and much debated subject, in many places the military is playing a role in disaster response and management[57]. Here too there is a need to develop effective partnerships between humanitarian personnel and the military on capacity strengthening, to deliver learning and development for military personnel that is seen as positive by both groups. For example, courses on protection of civilians or International Humanitarian Law would be relevant to many peacekeepers who are often from neighbouring and/or other developing countries.

3.6 Capacity strengthening activity must increasingly include national and local government.

National governments such as those of ASEAN and BRICS countries and East Africa are engaging more in the delivery of aid in their own countries and more closely defining the parameters of engagement by external stakeholders to disasters, the disaster preparedness and response curriculum for capacity building.[58] The implementation of resilience strategies is also integrally linked to the capacity of governments to mitigate risk. This suggests both a need for and an opportunity to bring harmonisation to various countries' efforts by creating a global professional development structure. At an ALNAP conference in Malaysia national government disaster management agencies made the following requests:

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[56] DFID (2011) *Humanitarian Emergency Response Review*,

[57] Global Humanitarian Assistance programme (2013) *Counting the cost of humanitarian aid delivered through the military* 'Between 2006 and 2009, an average of 2% of official humanitarian aid reported to the OECD DAC was channelled via military actors. In 2010 this share more than doubled as major military involvement in humanitarian operations increased in response to the earthquake in Haiti and flooding in Pakistan.'

[58] Both the Indonesian and Philippine governments are investing significant funds for disaster preparedness and response training of their national and regional staff.

First, the international humanitarian system should refocus on national capacities, including those of national and local governments. Second, there is still an urgent need for better coordination of capacity-building and institutional strengthening between emergencies, rather than just during the disaster phase itself. Third, the flow of both financial and technical resources needs to be smoother to avoid overwhelming influxes during the relief phase of high-profile disasters and to increase longer term, planned and coordinated risk reduction, capacity building and preparedness.[59]

Participants at engagement events in Jakarta and Manila called for ways in which the Academy could fit in with ASEAN initiatives and tap into their training and development networks; a recommendation was made that it could seek endorsements from them and their equivalents in Africa and jointly work to develop accreditation systems.

3.7 Capacity strengthening of national NGOs must be more structured, systematic and based on equal partnership.

The humanitarian system – including the development sector, continues to be dominated by the Global North missing opportunities for identifying new communities to work with. Participants across all countries where the Academy engagement events were held highlighted the opportunities to reach new groups, the need to support local humanitarian responders, and to make humanitarian and resilience resources more locally appropriate. An OCHA funded NGO consultation in 2012, agreed that 'more needs to be done to further a true sense of partnership between international NGOs (INGOs) and national NGOs, observing that INGOs sometimes use national NGOs as contractors, not as partners. In regard to capacity strengthening among national NGOs, participants stated that neither INGOs nor the UN have a clear budget line for capacity strengthening for national NGOs. Because there is no clear commitment to do that, the real partnership is missing.'[60] An opportunity must be taken to invest appropriately in the skills and time needed for development and maintenance of partnerships. 'If partnership is about relationships, then it follows that personnel capacity is critical. Too often, partnerships are seen as a matter of good intentions rather than of necessary skills.'[61]

'National organisations have identified a 'brain drain' resulting from a lack of progression possibilities within their own agencies: Participants observed that as soon as capacity is strengthened in local partner organisations, their staff leave to work for other INGOs or the UN. In the participants' view, this illustrated a challenge in partner engagement, but also further highlighted why it is important to have capacity strengthening efforts for NNGOs be on-going and not necessarily offered as a one-off initiative.'
Building a Better Response: Summary of NGO Consultation Meetings 2012

Partnerships developed with local responders should be seen as part of a sustained effort to build capacities for overall resilience and future responses, working across development and humanitarian parts of the system to ensure that resilience is built.

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[59] Bannerman,Matt, Rashid, Md. Harun Or, Rejve, Kaiser NGO (2011) *Government partnerships for disaster preparedness in Bangladesh* - Humanitarian Partnerships, Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 50.
[60] Featherstone (2012) *Building a Better Response: Gaps and Good Practice in Training for Humanitarian Reform: Summary of NGO Consultation Meetings* 2012.
[61] Senge, Peter (2008), *The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals and Organizations are Working Together to Create a Sustainable Future* (Cambridge, MA: Society for Organisational Learning).

Annex A: Participants of Academy Engagement Events

A.1 Participants attended from across **East Africa** representing, among others:

ACF; Action Aid; Action for Children in Conflict; Adeso Africa; CAFOD; CARE East and Central Africa Regional Management Unit (ECARMU; Care International; Cash Learning Partnership; Concern Worldwide; Daystar University; DOM SPARK; Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB); Faida Kenya; Help Age International; Independent Consultant; Inter Agency Working Group; Inter Health; International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) - Africa Centre; International Medical Corps; International NGO Safety Organisation; International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional Office (IPPF); International Rescue Committee; IOM; KAARC; Kenya Institute of Management; Makerere University; MDF-ESA Nairobi; NETWAS; Norwegian Refugee Council Horn of Africa; Oxfam GB; Oxfam GB - Horn, East and Central Africa; Plan International; Platform for Youth Development; Red-R; Save the Children; Shadrack & Co., Certified Public Accountants; Somali Aid; Transparency International; Trocaire - Horn & East Africa; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); UNHCR; University of Nairobi; WFP Regional Bureau External Relations Unit; WFP Regional Bureau for East and Central Africa; World Vision.

A.2 Participants attended from across **Europe** representing, among others:

Action Aid; ADRA UK; ALNAP; BRC; CAFOD; Catholic Relief Services; CBHA; CDAC; Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport; Cranfield University; DEC; Disasterready.org; ECB; ELRHA; Galway University; Geromino Consulting; Handicap International; Help Age International; Humanitarian Futures Programme, Kings College London; Humanitarian Logistics Association; Humanitarian Training Institute; IFRC; IMC UK; Independent Consultant; Interhealth; IRC NY; LINGOs; Liverpool School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Mango; Met Office; Middlesex NOHA Universities; NRC; ODI; Osman Consulting; OXFAM; Pearson International; PHAP; Plan; RedR; Relief International; RNLI; Save the Children; Tearfund; Tufts University; UCL; UKCDS; UNICEF; University of Birmingham; World Vision.

A.3 Participants attended from across **South East Asia** representing, among others:

Border Consortium Thailand; CARE International; World Vision International; IOM; Hospitality House - partner of the National Catholic Mission on Migration; ECHO; DPMM; World Vision Singapore; Centre on Child Protection; Indonesian National Platform for DRR; World Vision Asia; Disaster Management Programming; Disaster Resource Partnership; WEF and OCHA (private sector partnership); University of Indonesia; Centre for Community Journalism and Development and Centre for Disaster Preparedness; Ateneo School of Government; International Institute of Rural Reconstruction; Citizen's Disaster Response Centre; Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative (EMI); Lutheran World Relief; Social Services and Development Ministry; Oxfam; Centre for Disaster Preparedness; Training and Capacity Development Program; CDP; Informal Settler Families programme (AusAid); Buklod Tao, Inc. – community based disaster risk reduction; CNDR; DRRM; Oxfam Philippines; Albay Public Safety; Emergency Management Office; IFRC; Terres des Hommes; Disaster Resource Partnership; Nurani Dunia; HFI (Humanitarian Forum for Indonesia); Pusat Kajian Perlindungan Anak (Centre on Child Protection); Universitas Indonesia; University of Indonesia (faculty of Psychology); World Vision Indonesia; BPPT Agency for Assessment and Application of Technology Center for Region, and Disaster Mitigation; PLAN; Mercy Corps; Catholic Relief Services; ASEAN; AHA Centre; Humanitarian Benchmark; University Forum for DRR; Humanitarian Forum Indonesia.

A.4 We also held a series of individual meetings with some the organisations listed above as well as others including:

Disaster Response Unit, Australian Agency for International Development; CARE, Germany; Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Thailand; Human Development Forum Foundation, Thailand; Red Cross, Philippines; The Nurani Dunia Foundation, Indonesia; BNPB Training and Education Centre, Indonesia; Cahaya Guru, Indonesia; Asia Institute of Management, Philippines; Civil Defence Academy, Singapore; UN OCHA, Thailand; UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Centre, Thailand and ICRC, Thailand.

A.5 There was also an event in Melbourne, Australia with a range of participants.