

Resources:

Isixsigma.com. (2017). Deming Cycle, PDCA.

<http://bit.ly/DemingCycle> A continuous quality improvement model consisting out of a logical sequence of four repetitive steps for continuous improvement and learning: Plan, Do, Study (Check) and Act

Trainingindustry.com. (2017). Agile Learning Design.

<http://bit.ly/AgileLearningDesign> An overview of the 'Agile Learning Design'. Introduces several related methodologies and terms.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. and M. Snyder, W. (2002). Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge - Seven Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice.

<http://bit.ly/CultivatingCommunities> Book: a practical guide to making knowledge work inside an organisation



Agility

Section 7

Find out more at
bit.ly/AcademyLearningArchitecture

Agility

In the humanitarian sector, the ability to move quickly, decisively and efficiently in sensing and responding to crises is necessary to stay relevant. Learning design that is built on agile principles makes it possible to learn by doing, try new ideas again and again and foster a culture of responsiveness and innovation in a rapidly changing sector.

To support agile learning design and foster agility in the learning environment, you must position yourselves and learners as explorers. Rather than spend days crafting the perfect solution, start with a quick experiment where both you and learners can take new knowledge away.

How will you know when you have agility? It is when learners feel they have the permission to participate by freely providing feedback, experimenting and trying new ideas and skills. Embrace social learning as a journey of discovery both for yourself and learners, about the community and context you are designing for.

Agility in Learning Design

Description: What was the challenge? / What happened?

In 2016 the Humanitarian Leadership Academy joined forces with its partner organisation in response to the European Refugee Crisis. The partnership built on initial three one-day courses developed and delivered in autumn 2015 to support individual volunteers and grassroots collectives responding to the refugee situation, specifically in Calais, France. Faced with increased requests for additional and further training in the UK, France and elsewhere in Europe, the partnership acted quickly and based on needs and feedback from 2015, developed a second day of training, rolling-out a two-day face-to-face training package multiple times in the UK, France, Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Croatia.

Solution: How did we approach it? What did we do?

Simple feedback mechanisms were put in place to further understand whether the newly adapted learning offer was adequately meeting needs. To explore whether the offer could be made more scalable and sustainable, it was delivered, not by partner pool of Associate Trainers as in autumn 2015, but by a cohort of staff from humanitarian INGOs nominated by their organisations who underwent a train-the-trainers short course. Feedback was viewed as a continuous process throughout the delivery of this work with content and the approach was adapted as needed to best meet demand and identify what worked and what didn't. Challenges and further opportunities to enhance the learning offer were also identified.

Conclusion:

How did it work? / What are lessons learned? How does it relate to broader context?

In 2017, the Academy built on this experience by experimenting with the development of a scalable and blended online learning offer. A pragmatic approach was adopted, building an online learning pathway by aggregating existing e-learning from a range of sources. This Volunteer Essentials pathway was made available free of charge via the Academy's learning platform, Kaya to individual volunteer and voluntary groups who continued to respond to the crisis. Once again user feedback proved crucial in identifying the areas needed for further development. Listening to the user experience, the next iteration of the Volunteer Essentials offer is now under development, exploring additional design methodologies that might better meet needs for volunteers in this crisis but also those engaging in other emergencies worldwide.