Humanitarian learning resource guide

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This guide is designed to provide DFID staff and other interested parties with information about free online courses and materials they can use to develop or refresh their **humanitarian technical competencies**. It is not an exhaustive list, but provides a starting point for those working to support DFID's humanitarian objectives. Further resources may be added. The listing does not attempt to provide a sector by sector guide. It briefly explains what each course or resource is, what it covers, and how long it takes (where information is available). The courses and resources are mostly aimed at people with a general level of knowledge about humanitarian response or development. Most online courses require registration and can be started whenever the user wants. Inclusion in this list does not mean that courses or resources are officially endorsed by DFID or the GSDRC.

Contents

1. Humanitarian technical competencies: cross-cutting resources

Course / resource	Time / input required
Saving lives, preventing suffering and building resilience: The UK Government's humanitarian policy (DFID; 2011 – updated version in progress following a consultation in 2016) This policy document outlines how the UK will help build resilience to crises and respond to humanitarian need resulting from conflict and natural disasters. It covers the seven policy goals for improving the effectiveness of UK humanitarian support: 1) strengthen anticipation and early action in response to disasters and conflict; 2) build the resilience of individuals, communities and countries to withstand shocks and recover from them; 3) strengthen international leadership and partnerships; 4) protect civilians and humanitarian space; 5) support improvements in accountability, impact and professionalism of humanitarian action; 6) invest in research and find innovations; and 7) reinforce the British Government's own capacity to respond to humanitarian crises.	24 pages
Humanitarian action: Reading pack (GSDRC; 2014) This reading pack provides an introduction to humanitarian action. It covers the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, and issues with adherence to them; the framework of international humanitarian law; the formal and informal humanitarian system, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, governments, and political, private and civil society actors; and issues around the architecture of aid and the complexity of humanitarian engagement on the ground.	Suggests 7 readings and 4 discussion questions. Accompanied by a video presentation (15 mins).
Management of humanitarian assistance: E-learning (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative - ATHA) The Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action (ATHA) offers a set of 11 e-learning modules to help humanitarian professionals get up to speed on key topics. It covers: the role of international humanitarian law; humanitarian principles; humanitarian coordination; international humanitarian assistance and interventions; organisational mandates; human rights in humanitarian action; peacebuilding and linkages with security and stabilisation; health in humanitarian crisis; early recovery and the transition of relief to development; humanitarian preparedness, disaster mitigation and risk reduction; and humanitarian funding mechanisms. Each module establishes learning objectives, includes an overview of the key subject and a video interview, and looks in greater detail at a sub-topic or complicating issue.	Self-paced. Modules 15-30 mins each.
World Humanitarian Summit – Chair's summary: Guidance (2016) This presents the main conclusions from the May 2016 summit. It covers five core responsibilities to be used as a framework to improve the collective response to humanity: 1) political leadership to prevent and end conflict; 2) uphold norms that safeguard humanity; 3) leave no one behind; 4) change people's lives: from delivering aid to ending need; and 5) invest in humanity.	8 pages

2. Humanitarian and disaster risk planning and management of relief programmes

Course / resource	Time / input required
Sphere handbook in action: E-learning (Sphere Project; 2013) This course aims to strengthen the effective use of the Sphere Handbook, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. It uses realistic scenarios to help learners get acquainted with the core messages of the Handbook and how to use it holistically. It covers accountability to affected populations; needs assessments; response coordination; impartiality and non-discrimination; keeping populations safe from harm; 'building back safer'; and looking after oneself as a humanitarian worker. Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.	Self-paced. No time requirement given.
Gender and humanitarian issues: Reading pack (GSDRC; 2014) This resource provides a quick introduction to the differences between the needs, capacities and perceptions of women and men and boys and girls in relation to humanitarian assistance following a natural or man-made disaster. It contains: practical guidelines and examples from the literature on key sectors (such as agriculture and food security, housing, education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene); guidance and examples on how and why to collect sex- and age-disaggregated data; and articles on sexual violence against men and women to help the reader critically reflect on the term 'gender based violence'.	Suggests 11 readings and 10 discussion questions.
Different needs – equal opportunities: E-learning (Inter-Agency Standing Committee; 2010) This course looks at gender equality in humanitarian response. In a fictive emergency setting the learner is taken through basic and critical steps to promote gender equality and to develop a gender-sensitive response to the emergency.	Self-paced; 3 hours.
Ageing and disability in humanitarian response: Humanitarian guidance note (DFID; 2015) This guidance note provides an overview of how to ensure the needs of older persons and people with disabilities, including people with injuries and chronic diseases, are addressed in humanitarian response. It covers terminology; facts and figures; why support is needed; programming to support older persons and persons with disabilities; guiding principles; sector-specific guidance; ageing and disability throughout the programme cycle; coordination and leadership; and useful links.	8 pages
See also: **ADCAP's short e-learning courses** (2015) on **Basic Principles of Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response** and **Understanding Older People and Their Needs in a Humanitarian Context**.	Self-paced; 30 mins each.

Core commitments for children: E-learning (UNICEF; 2010)

This course provides an overview of core commitments for children in humanitarian action. It covers the elements of the core commitments to children; the four pillars of humanitarian reform; what the cluster approach is; and how it is activated.

Self-paced; 2 hours.

Coordinated needs assessment: E-learning (ACAPS; 2015)

This six-module course focuses on coordinated needs assessments. Modules cover key concepts; links to decision making; the framework for coordinated needs assessments; the good enough principle; the assessment cycle; and basic principles.

Self-paced, with additional suggested reading.

Modules up to 11 mins.

Cash transfers in humanitarian response: E-learning (Cash Learning Partnership)

These five modules about cash transfers in humanitarian response cover: an introduction to cash transfer programming; e-transfers and beneficiary data protection; urban cash transfer programming and livelihoods; introduction to market analysis; and a practical guide to market analysis.

Self-paced.

Modules of 30 mins to 3.5 hours.

Urban refugee learning programme: E-learning (UNHCR; 2014)

This course provides an overview of the knowledge and skills needed to provide better protection and assistance to refugees in urban settings. It has eight modules and covers being an urban refugee; UNHCR and urban refugees; collecting individual information about urban refugees; livelihoods; public health; supporting education and young people in urban settings; and shelter and settlement in an urban setting.

Self-paced; 5 hours.

Protracted displacement – uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile: Guidance (ODI; 2015)

This DFID-funded paper presents a pilot tool to help users understand the opportunities for self-reliance and livelihood assistance afforded by various situations of displacement: a basic typology for where assistance is needed and what kind of assistance may be best suited to the situation at hand. It provides an overview of protracted displacement and examines the legal framework and protection environment; access to markets and the private sector; the capacities, resources and assets of the displaced; and the environment for external intervention.

54 pages

Contingency planning: Learning module (UNHCR; 2011)

This module provides a practical introduction to scenario-based contingency planning. It covers: what contingency planning is; why and when to plan; who the planners are; how to initiate and maintain the process; how to develop scenarios and estimate needs; how to assess capacities and resources; how to identify potential response gaps; how to establish and support working groups; how to consolidate the plan; and using the plan and the process. Each chapter ends with a short test, allowing readers to assess their understanding of the material.

Self-paced; 148 pages.

Conflict sensitivity: Topic guide (GSDRC; 2014)

This topic guide provides an overview of conflict sensitivity as a concept and tool to help aid actors understand the unintended consequences of aid and act to minimise harm and achieve positive outcomes. It discusses the applicability of conflict sensitivity, and highlights the methods, advantages and disadvantages of the three key conflict-sensitive approaches and tools: Do No Harm, Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment and Aid for Peace. It also covers applying conflict sensitivity to particular sectors, including humanitarian programming, and provides links to other resources.

41 pages

DFID value for money in humanitarian programming: Guidance (DFID; 2011)

This paper outlines the principles and process that DFID uses to embed Value for Money (VfM) considerations within its rapid onset and protracted humanitarian programming. It covers DFID's thinking; the VfM model; the principles of measuring VfM in humanitarian programmes; assessing VfM in rapid onset crises; and assessing VfM in protracted crises.

5 pages

Introduction to evaluating humanitarian action: E-learning (ALNAP & UNICEF, with UNEG & EvalPartners; 2015)

This course provides an overview of evaluation practice in humanitarian contexts, alongside concrete guidance, tips and insights from experienced practitioners. The course covers planning; evaluation design; inception phase; desk review; engaging affected people; field methods and evaluation under constraints; real-time evaluations; humanitarian impact evaluations; and analysis, outputs, dissemination and take-up.

This course expands on the pilot version of ALNAP's **Evaluation of humanitarian action guide**. The final version of this guide will be launched on 10 Oct 2016.

Self-paced.

Includes lectures (25 mins on average); readings (40 pages on average); and tests (10 questions).

Certificate available on successful completion.

3. Humanitarian and disaster risk management theory and architecture

Course / resource	Time / input required
Building a better response: E-learning (Humanitarian Academy at Harvard; 2014)	
The Building a Better Response (BBR) project aims to enhance the capacity of national and international NGO workers and other humanitarian actors to engage with the international humanitarian coordination system in a way that improves coordination and responds to the needs of crisis-affected populations. It is led by the International Medical Core in collaboration with Concern Worldwide and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative.	E-learning course is self-paced. User can focus on particular sections if wished.
A training programme was designed in response to consultations with the international humanitarian community. This involves an online tool to walk through an emergency response, providing an introduction to engaging with the international humanitarian coordination system (available online / offline / low-bandwidth and in English, French and Arabic). The e-learning course has five units: Foundations of Humanitarian Action; The International Humanitarian Architecture; The Cluster Approach; Planning and Funding the Humanitarian Response; and International Law and Humanitarian Standards.	No time requirement given. Certificate available on completion.
In-person workshops are offered worldwide to enhance knowledge gained from the course for staff engaged with elements of humanitarian coordination.	
Humanitarian overview – from principles, to coordination: Reading pack (HEART; 2016)	
This reading pack provides an introduction to humanitarian principles; key conventions and codes of conduct; humanitarian actors; humanitarian coordination mechanisms, with a focus on the health cluster; and humanitarian financing.	Suggests 6 readings, 5 questions. Video (6 mins).
Working effectively in conflict-affected and fragile situations: Guidance (DFID; 2010)	
This paper provides an overview of DFID Briefing Papers written in line with OECD-DAC Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations. It gives readers a sense of the main issues to bear in mind when engaging in situations of conflict and fragility and of the nine papers in the series. The series includes: **Analysing conflict and fragility**; **Do no harm; Links between politics, security and development**; **Promoting non-discrimination**; **Aligning with local priorities**; **Practical coordination mechanisms**; **Act fast … but stay engaged**; **Risk management**; **and Monitoring and evaluation.**	20 pages
For further reading on state fragility and the challenge of international engagement see: GSDRC **Fragile states: Topic guide** (2016).	64 pages

UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) IMPACT: E-learning (UN; 2015)

This course facilitates the dissemination of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on multidimensional missions and reinforces humanitarian civil-military coordination.

5 hours, 20 mins

A 2015 UN-CMCoord **Field Handbook** also covers key humanitarian concepts and coordination mechanisms and their relation to civil-military cooperation; military organisations' functions in relation to civil-military cooperation; relevant civil-military cooperation guidelines; and guidance on how to implement civil-military cooperation in natural disasters and complex emergencies. Available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish.

4. International humanitarian law and humanitarian principles

Course / resource	Time / input required
International legal frameworks for humanitarian action: Topic guide (GSDRC; 2013) This topic guide provides an overview of the international legal frameworks for humanitarian action that provide guidance on delivering assistance in a variety of challenging contexts. The guide covers international humanitarian law (IHL); international human rights law, international refugee law and international criminal law, which can operate at the same time as IHL; international disaster response laws, rules and principles, for organisations operating in disaster areas not subject to IHL; challenges in relation to non-state actors; the responsibility to protect; and compliance and enforcement challenges .	57 pages Can be read from start to finish or with a focus on specific sections.
The basic rules and principles of International Humanitarian Law: E-learning (ICRC; 2014) This course introduces the basics of international humanitarian law (IHL) for non-specialised audiences. The eight modules cover what IHL is; its relationship with human rights law; its sources; when it applies; the basic principles; protected persons and objects; means and methods of warfare; and international crimes. Available in French, Spanish and English.	Self-paced; 3 to 5 hours.
Essentials of IHL: E-learning (Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection; 2010) This 15-module course covers topics including: International Humanitarian Law; protection of civilians; humanitarian access; human rights and armed conflict; civilian direct participation; repression of violations; enforcement mechanisms; engagement with armed groups; monitoring and reporting; and the status of individuals. The full course is only available to PHAP members.	Self-paced. No time requirement given. Certificate available on completion.

Refugees and statelessness self-study modules: E-learning (UNHCR; 2005-2012)
 	
These seven self-study modules are available in many languages.
 	
  ▪ **An Introduction to International Protection. Protecting Persons of Concern to UNHCR**
 	
  ▪ **Refugee Status Determination. Identifying Who is a Refugee**
 	
  ▪ **Interpreting in a Refugee Context**
 	
  ▪ **Human Rights and Refugee Protection (Vol. 1)**
 	
  ▪ **Human Rights and Refugee Protection (Vol. 2)**
 	
  ▪ **Statelessness**
 	
  ▪ **Resettlement Learning Programme**
	
	169 pages
	
	137 pages
	
	112 pages
	
	127 pages
	
	213 pages
	
	101 pages
	
	279 pages

5. Crisis resilience

Course / resource	Time / input required
Knowledge on resilience: Learning resources (Evidence on Demand; 2016) Evidence on Demand have put together a series of resources on resilience, covering: what is resilience (including **DFID's Defining Disaster Resilience approach paper** and the **GSDRC Disaster Resilience Topic Guide**); social protection and climate resilience; measuring resilience; risk management and financing; and risk informed infrastructure design and delivery. Includes a glossary, acronyms, and key contacts.	8 documents of up to 73 pages
Anticipating and responding to shocks – livelihoods and humanitarian responses: Topic guide (Evidence on Demand; 2015) This topic guide is a resource for people working on livelihoods, to help them to think, position themselves and act in fast-changing high-stakes environments. It covers the meaning and characteristics of shocks, crises and emergencies; humanitarian response, how it works, and how it differs from longer-term development assistance; tools and examples to examine how crises affect livelihoods (and vice versa); the 'protection' domain of humanitarian work; and opportunities for livelihoods interventions to bridge the humanitarian–development divide.	61 pages. Best read as a whole for a complete understanding, but sections can be read separately.
Introduction to Disaster Risk Management: E-learning (World Bank) This course introduces contemporary concepts and practices in disaster management. Facilitated course also coming soon.	Self-paced. No time requirement given.

6. Other sources of humanitarian training

DisasterReady.org

DisasterReady.org offers more than 600 free **training resources** covering core topics such as humanitarianism; programme/operations; protection; staff welfare; management and leadership; staff safety and security; and soft skills. Courses can be taken anywhere in the world at your own pace and are available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.

Red-R

Red-R offers **training courses** for humanitarian aid workers. They include courses in safety and field security management; humanitarian essentials; management; training of trainers; logistics; Water, Sanitation & Hygiene; needs assessment; shelter; inclusion and protection; health; refugee response; information management; and monitoring & evaluation. Courses take place across the world and costs vary.

It also offers a free, online technical advice service for humanitarians working in disaster-affected countries: **knowledgepoint.org**

Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action (ATHA)

The ATHA website provides useful learning resources for humanitarians including interactive briefings and podcasts. See **policy projects**; **thematic overview pages**; and ATHA **seminars** on key humanitarian issues (via vimeo).

Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP)

PHAP's website provides further learning opportunities for humanitarian professionals, including a system of live online continuous learning.

Reliefweb

Reliefweb provides a searchable **list of humanitarian training programmes**, both free and fee-based.

ALNAP

ALNAP has conducted **webinars** on, for example, strengthening humanitarian action, coordination, leadership and urban response.

DFID

DFID's humanitarian technical guidance notes cover topics such as: **Violence Against Women and Girls in emergencies**; Famine prevention and response; **Cash transfer programming**; Value for Money of Cash Transfers in Emergencies; Preparedness; Cholera; Sexual and reproductive health (forthcoming); and Mental health in emergencies (forthcoming). Available internally for DFID staff.

GSDRC

GSDRC provides a depository of humanitarian resources, including helpdesk reports responding to questions from DFID humanitarian advisors. See **all humanitarian resources** (from many publishers) or just **those from GSDRC**.

Edx and Coursera

edx.org and **coursera.org** offer free online courses run by universities across the world. Some of these courses relate to humanitarian competencies.

7. Annex: Additional resources

Course / resource	Time / input required
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) – version 2.0: E-learning (FAO; 2015)	
This e-learning course provides an overview of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification approach, with a focus on tools and procedures for acute food insecurity.	Duration: 9 hours.
Acceptance strategies in conflict: Reading pack (GSDRC; 2015)	
This reading pack provides an introduction to acceptance as a risk management strategy for humanitarian response based on reducing threats to aid workers by reducing the motivation of others to harm them.	Suggests 5 readings and 5 discussion questions.
Psychological first aid – guide for field workers: Guidance (WHO, World Trauma Foundation & World Vision International; 2011)	
This guide covers psychological first aid – humane, supportive and practical help for people suffering serious crisis events.	64 pages
Humanitarian crises, emergency preparedness and response – the role of business and the private sector: Guidance (ODI, King's College London, OCHA & Vantage Partners; 2014)	
This paper examines the role of business and the private sector in humanitarian aid. Accompanying case studies of Kenya, Jordan, Indonesia and Haiti are also available.	37 pages
Health responses to humanitarian crises: Reading pack (HEART; 2016)	
This reading pack provides an introduction to humanitarian health responses, including multi-sectoral approaches; key health topics, risk-factors and responses; assessment and monitoring; and the health systems approach.	Suggests 6 readings, 5 questions. Video (10 mins).
Communication is aid: E-learning (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network; 2012)	
This course is about communicating with crisis-affected communities. The later modules are interactive, scenario-based challenges and involve learners having to make key decisions to do with communication during an earthquake, a post-conflict situation, and a hurricane/flood.	Self-paced; 3 hours 20 mins.

NATO CMI/CIMIC awareness course: E-learning (Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence; 2015)

This e-learning course provides an introduction to NATO civil-military cooperation.

Self-paced. Certificate available. No time requirement given.

OCHA reference guides on humanitarian normative decisions: Policy guidance (OCHA; 2011)

These reference guides outline 1) **the normative developments on the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council since the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 46/182** and
2) **the normative decisions of key governing bodies of funds, programmes and specialised agencies of the United Nations System in humanitarian assistance**.

1) 113 pages

2) 111 pages

Toward resilience – principles in practice: E-learning

(Care, Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision)

This course accompanies the Emergency Capacity Building Project's 2013 **Toward Resilience guide**. It covers the 10 principles of an integrated approach to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. Based on real world case studies.

75 mins