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Cover image from the Philippines courtesy of Mark Toldo, HHI Program on Resilient Communities.
Dear Friends of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative,

The past year has presented unprecedented challenges in the humanitarian space, as well as unique opportunities. The aid world continues to grapple with ongoing challenges: international conflicts continue, protracted conflicts are on the rise with grave security threats to aid workers and severe limitations on humanitarian access, and accelerating effects of climate change continue to displace populations and intensify conflicts around the world.

As the demand for expertise in the humanitarian space increases, HHI’s team of researchers, practitioners, and educators are working to build the evidence-base within the field and translate this evidence to improve humanitarian practice and to empower vulnerable populations. In the context of our rapidly changing world, HHI rewored our mission statement to research and education to empower communities in crisis. Relatedly in 2018, we were pleased to award Nadia Murad, a then soon-to-be Nobel Peace Prize Winner, with our Weintz Humanitarian Award for her work with the Yazidi community.

In our research, HHI programs explored topics critical to communities affected by crises, such as disaster preparedness, risk resilience, humanitarian negotiation, gender-based violence, program evaluation, and the ethical use of data in humanitarian settings. HHI has been particularly active in identifying and developing emerging trends and themes in the sector: the humanitarian triple nexus, the localization of aid, the proliferation of digital technologies, and the negotiation and leadership skills necessary to manage complex emergencies. HHI also increased domestic work on humanitarian concerns within the United States. We partnered with EnRoot, a Cambridge-based NGO focused on advancing mentorship for young immigrants, and supported Physicians for Human Rights work with the Navajo Nation.

As for humanitarian education, we were pleased to announce the Humanitarian Student Association to connect our Harvard community via series of talks, events and resources, and were thrilled to launch our “Spark” grants for student humanitarian research. Online, our free courses through HarvardX and Building a Better Response (BBR) reached over 100,000 learners globally, including professionals responding to active crises.

We look forward to a year of growth and continued innovation around these specific challenges in trying times. We are grateful to our dedicated supporters and collaborators who make this critical work possible and who join us to advance the future of effective humanitarian response.

Thank you,

Michael VanRooyen, MD, MPH
Director | Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
Lavine Family Professor of Humanitarian Studies | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
J. Stephen Bohan Professor of Emergency Medicine | Harvard Medical School
Chairman | Brigham Health Department of Emergency Medicine

Our Mission

Research and education to empower communities in crisis.
HHI at Harvard

Graduate Students at Harvard

University-Wide Resources

The humanitarian hub of Harvard University.
What is HuSEHR?

HHI manages the Graduate Concentration on Humanitarian Studies, Ethics, and Human Rights (HuSEHR). The concentration consists of four courses offered at the Harvard Chan School and is designed to prepare students for managerial and practical roles in the humanitarian field.

Why HuSEHR?

Our students leave with the skills to be leaders in the global humanitarian and human rights community.

The HuSEHR Concentration

Humanitarian Studies, Ethics, and Human Rights
What is HHI’s simulation exercise?

At the end of the spring semester, all concentration students take part in HHI’s annual Humanitarian Response Simulation Exercise, **a three-day intensive experiential training event** simulating a complex humanitarian emergency in Harold Parker State Forest.

Why experiential learning?

Students have an opportunity to test concepts learned in the classroom in a **live role-play setting** with experienced humanitarian professionals, before potentially going to the field.
Humanitarian Student Association

What is HumSA?

HHI aims to connect humanitarian-minded student groups and individuals across Harvard to better support student humanitarian activities. HHI hosts events and has a Harvard-wide student newsletter.

People

HHI’s student activities and the HuSEHR concentration are managed by Samuel Plasmati, Educational Programs and Operations Manager at HHI.

Student Research Funding

Claudio Reck Rivera
Harvard Undergraduate

Project: Summer Internship, Semilla Nueva (Food Security NGO), Guatemala

Esias Bedingar
HuSEHR Concentrator

Project: “Beliefs, Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Malaria Prevention Practices Among Caregivers of Children Under Five: A Mixed Methods Study in N’Djamena, Chad”

“I firmly believe that the findings of this project have the potential to help the Government of Chad plan for their future malaria prevention programs.”

- Esias Bedingar
Research to further best practices and empower communities.
The ATHA Program promotes policy reflections and decision-making in the humanitarian system toward more locally-driven approaches to assistance, protection, and development.

Program Year in Review

- Launched the Humanitarian Action at the Frontlines (HAF) initiative in direct response to demand in the humanitarian community for sharing of lessons learned and tools regarding humanitarian negotiation and access.
- Led country-specific, professional development workshops on humanitarian negotiation implemented in partnership with the Center of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation.
- Hosted an online portal, including a blog and podcast, for discussion of key policy challenges facing the humanitarian system.

Selected Publications

“Fragile Future: The Human Cost of Conflict in Afghanistan.” Scholarly Paper


Highlights

6 Regional workshops on humanitarian negotiation in Afghanistan, Jordan, Nepal, & Switzerland

11 Expert roundtables & practitioner discussions on stabilization zones, radicalized armed groups, Syrian humanitarian access, medical care in conflict, refugee returns, and civilian security & protection
The Evaluation and Implementation Science Program works to strengthen monitoring and evaluation research and its uptake with an aim to better address the needs of vulnerable populations affected by conflict and disaster. The program aims to build the capacity of organizations to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

**Program Year in Review:**

- Continued to engage in a three-year external impact evaluation of the **Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Program (DEPP)**, a humanitarian capacity development program aimed at improving the quality and speed of humanitarian response, funded by DFID.

- Conducted a series of case-based workshops on monitoring and evaluating research principles and methodologies, with an emphasis on practical application for humanitarian researchers and practitioners.

**Highlights**

2 New regions in which expanded M&E workshops were held for practitioners: Europe and Asia.

Learn More

Learn more about these professional workshops and other HHI training in the Professional Education section.
The Transitional Justice Program works with communities to address legacies of abuse regarding progress towards peace, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The program assesses perspectives of conflict-affected populations and engages with key stakeholders to implement transitional justice programming.

Program Year in Review

- Studied perspectives on justice among conflict-affected communities in northern Iraq as part of the Transitional Justice Perspectives: Transitional Justice in Iraq project started after the territorial defeat of the Islamic State.
- Undertook a longitudinal cohort study with Yazidi refugees in Germany as part of the Transitional Justice Perspectives: Trauma & Integration Among Yazidi Refugees project.

Selected Publications


“Technology and Transitional Justice, Editorial Note” Scholarly Paper

“Transitional Justice in the Age of Social Media.” Scholarly Paper

Highlights

5200 Interviews conducted as part of the Transitional Justice in Iraq project following the territorial defeat of the Islamic State, which were presented to stakeholders and will inform a forthcoming report on perspectives on transitional justice.
IDEP reduces the impact of infectious diseases in crises by conducting research on the transmission of epidemic-prone diseases. The program works on: understanding risks and behaviors; developing tools to effectively prevent outbreaks; detecting outbreaks; and convening collaborators to define research priorities and share best practices.

Program Year in Review

- Hired a new Deputy Program Director and became a lead partner with the WHO Health Emergencies Programme to develop global reference guidelines for early warning surveillance and response in humanitarian emergencies.

Selected Publications

“The Role of Institutional Trust and Misinformation in Outbreak Response: A Community Survey During the 2018 Ebola Outbreak in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.” Scholarly Paper

Highlights

$5.8M CDC award to conduct research on emerging & outbreak-prone diseases in Central America and the Caribbean. Collaborators include the Ministries of health of the Dominican Republic and Honduras, Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Yale University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Australia National University.
The Peace and Human Rights Data Program utilizes rigorous research methods to assess needs, perceptions, and behaviors among those affected by conflict and other forms of violence, with a focus on justice, peacebuilding, and social cohesion. The program also builds local research capacity.

Program Year in Review

- Undertook series of surveys in the DRC examining factors influencing Ebola-related behaviors including vaccine acceptance and care-seeking behavior.
- Published multiple reports and engaged with local and international stakeholders on critical findings like trust and effectiveness of peacebuilding operations in the Congo.
- Implemented series of bi-annual surveys to monitor violence and perception of peace and security, with a focus on social dynamics in CAR.
- Undertook participatory research to identify positive factors that decrease violence in communities, with a focus on cross-border dynamics in the Great Lakes Region.
- Launched a program to strengthen capacity of African academics and researchers to enhance the peacebuilding field.

Selected Publications

“The Role of Institutional Trust and Misinformation in Outbreak Response: A Community Survey During the 2018 Ebola Outbreak in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.” Scholarly Paper

Highlights

- Global studies conducted by the program in 2019, largely focused in Central Africa.
- War-affected people and survivors engaged with during studies.
PRC produces evidence and learning to support communities, organizations, and governments in developing lasting solutions to the varied threats posed by natural hazards. The program seeks to establish a foundation for more integrated, coordinated, and evidence-based preparedness and response to natural disasters, and promote participatory action research with communities.

Program Year in Review

- Relied on the strong talents of the team at Harvard and in the Philippines. Fellows lead research on the ground, identifying communities vulnerable to natural hazards and engaging them in training and activities designed to support and enhance local leadership.
- Mapped institutions working in disaster preparedness in the Philippines and Bangladesh. The program also explored resilience in territories exposed to both natural hazards and conflict.
- Developed a Resilience Scorecard for Bangladesh, a monitoring tool for Concern Worldwide to assess ongoing disaster resilience of communities to provide early warning on community needs and program design.

Selected Publications

The Women in War Program (now known as the Gender, Rights and Resilience Program) seeks to investigate and address issues relating to gender, peace, and security in fragile states. Diverse faculty, fellows, and researchers explore pressing issues that impact the security of women and girls as well as men and boys throughout the world.

**Program Year in Review**

- Collaborated with the International Rescue Committee to provide a mixed method, real-time assessment of risk mitigation and inclusion for their cash-based programming in Afghanistan.
- Worked with the Congolese women and men involved in the artisanal mining sector to support due diligence efforts to regulate mineral supply chains in DRC. Conducted a qualitative research study to assess the impacts of industry diligence efforts on the roles of women in mining communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Investigated and addressed challenges related to gender, peace, and security in fragile states by partnering with a number of humanitarian agencies, including UNICEF and the International Rescue Committee.

**Selected Publications**

- “Safer Cash: Ensuring Risk Mitigation and Inclusion in Multipurpose Cash Assistance.” *Practitioner Brief*
- “Measuring GBV risk mitigation interventions in humanitarian settings.” *Guidance Note*

**Highlights**

- Practitioners interviewed while undertaking the first effort to assemble good practices on measuring GBV risk in humanitarian crises.
- Documents synthesized to understand acceptable practices related to GBV risk mitigation activities as part of same effort.
Since 2014, HHI has collaborated with the MIT Media Lab, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and Flowminder to bring together researchers, experts, practitioners, and activists to promote a people-centered Big Data revolution through collaborative research, capacity building, and community engagement.

**Program Year in Review**

- Launched the Crimes and Impunity in Columbia / Big Data Practice study on factors that drive criminality and violence in Colombia. The program, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank, Data-Pop, and the Fondazione Bruno Kessler, aims to improve security in urban areas of Colombia through Big Data.

- Advised and evaluated the Data 4 Refugees Challenge (Turkey) / Big Data Practice Challenge organized in partnership with Turkish Telekom. Research teams were granted access to aggregated, anonymized data sets to explore measures of social, spatial and economic integration and to evaluate the potential of CDRs to inform humanitarian action.

**Selected Publications**

“Guide to Mobile Data Analytics in Refugee Scenarios - The ‘Data for Refugees Challenge’ Study.” [Scholarly Paper](#)

**Highlights**

- 3 Collaborators: MIT Media Lab, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Flowminder
- 50 Partnerships with organizations from all sectors.

People

Patrick Vinck
Director

Phuong Pham
Co-Director

Julie Ricard
Program Manager

Emmanuel Letouzé
Senior Adviser

Research – Technology and Innovation

Overview

Big Data Science and Data-Pop Alliance
KoBoToolBox is a digital data collection platform co-founded by HHI faculty, and has been supported by the United Nations and non-governmental humanitarian agencies since 2013.

Program Year in Review

• Celebrated the software’s status as the leading platform for humanitarian and development actors and their operations.

• The platform is now adopted by UNOCHA, UNHCR, IOM, and many other local and international non-governmental organizations. Its functionalities and ease of use have been designated as a “game-changer” by many local stakeholders.

Highlights

135K KoBoToolbox users surpassed in 2019.

100M KoBoToolbox form submissions surpassed in 2019, a milestone towards improving the quality of humanitarian response.
The Signal Program on Human Security and Technology conducts research and education that advances the ethical and effective application of information communication technologies (ICTs) during humanitarian responses to crises. It trains and equips professional practitioners with tools needed to responsibly use these technologies as part of operations.

Program Year in Review

- Conducted critical research in conjunction with GovLab and UNICEF with support from the World Bank on the use of geospatial, agent-based modeling methods to simulate migratory changes of pastoralists in Somaliland.
- Extended research on the relationship between mental health and digital access for refugees with support from Mercy Corps on refugee camps in Italy, including the release of a Humanitarian WiFi Guide for more rigorous standards for refugee connectivity that may serve as a first step toward stronger arguments for data as a human right.

Selected Publications

To date, Signal has become a leader in the development of ethical applications of ICTs with Signal Code, as well as developing new methodologies specific to remote sensing and assessing the connectivity of displaced populations.

signalcode.org

Highlights

Provided critical analysis to escalating conflict in Northern Syria, including the application of Signal Program methods to monitor attacks against health centers and estimating resource constraints against displaced persons.

This was a part of informing broader work on strengthening the core theory of early warning forecasts in conflict and fragile state environments.
HRIC: The Humanitarian Response Intensive Course

Overview

Participants gain familiarity with the primary frameworks in the humanitarian field through presentations and hands-on table-top exercises offered by faculty and guest lecturers who are experts in their topic areas. The two-week classroom-based workshop is followed by a three-day field simulation exercise portraying a complex disaster and conflict scenario (together with HHI’s HuSEHR graduate students).

Local Focus

Our workshops emphasize the importance of training practitioners coming from local organizations. HRIC fully funds a handful of humanitarians working for small organizations; in 2018 and 2019 our local practitioners came from contexts across the globe. Apply for a fully funded spot for next year’s course at hhi.harvard.edu.

Stephanie Kayden  
Course Director,  
Director of  
Lavine Family Humanitarian Studies Initiative at HHI

Samuel Plasmati  
Manager

Katie Farineau  
Program Coordinator
Monitoring and Evaluation for Humanitarian Programs Workshop

Overview

An overview of the basic principles and methodologies for program monitoring and evaluation with emphasis on practical application for humanitarian researchers and practitioners.

The course provides conceptual, quantitative and qualitative frameworks for mixed methods use in program monitoring and evaluation.

Expanded Workshops

Starting in summer 2018, the Professional Education Workshops increased global impact by expanding internationally to serve humanitarian students in Shanghai, China and Brussels, Belgium. Running courses in these locations helped HHI reach humanitarian practitioners who otherwise would be unable to access trainings.

People

Phuong Pham
Course Director
HHI

Vandana Sharma
Course Instructor
HHI

Patrick Vinck
Course Instructor
HHI

Samuel Plasmati
Manager

HHI Education - Professional Workshops
HHI EDUCATION
The Remote Sensing for Humanitarian Programs Workshop is designed to equip participants with the necessary expertise to manage, design, and utilize geospatial technologies in humanitarian emergencies. Through lecture, tech demos and practical exercises, participants learn how to process and analyze satellite imagery and GIS datasets that pertain to humanitarian crises.

Global Reach

In 2019, the Professional Education Workshops reported its greatest reach yet, serving over 150 practitioners from over 50 countries. To date, the workshops have trained over 1000 students and professionals from across the globe.
Overview

Humanitarians and populations affected by crises increasingly find themselves in urban settings, complicated physical layouts, unprepared institutions and infrastructure, and mixed target populations of refugees and underserved communities. The Urban Humanitarian Emergencies Course trains humanitarian professionals on current issues and best practices involved in this ever-expanding and unique area of research and practice.

Future Focus

The Urban Humanitarian Emergencies Course thinks critically about how cities operate in crisis, especially in the face of climate emergency and pandemics with the added focus on the evolving nature of humanitarian migration.

Stephanie Kayden
Course Director
HHI

David Sanderson
Instructor
UNSW Australia

Ronak Patel
Instructor
HHI

Samuel Plasmati
Manager

People
NNPHL: National NGO Program on Humanitarian Leadership

The National NGO Program on Humanitarian Leadership (NNPHL) offers dynamic and relevant training opportunities that help humanitarians build their skills, knowledge, and confidence to take on leadership responsibilities to improve delivery of services to those in need. NNPHL is an innovative blended-learning leadership training program for national and local humanitarian practitioners that combines in-person and online learning.

NNPHL uses a regional approach that focuses on national staff and provides training at no cost to the participants. NNPHL has recently launched the NNPHL Online Course, an e-learning platform that delivers open-access leadership training to humanitarians and all those passionate about humanitarian action.

Highlights

- Cohorts (114 participants) trained, comprised of humanitarian professionals from around the world.
- In-person intensive trainings held in the Philippines (June 2018), Ireland (September 2018), Jordan (March 2019), and Kenya (July 2019).
The “Building a Better Response (BBR): Strengthening Capacity for Coordination in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies” project is an online training that aims to strengthen the capacity of humanitarian actors to engage with the international humanitarian coordination system during complex humanitarian emergencies, and to improve coordination and response to the needs of affected populations.

BBR includes:
- A 6-unit online certificate course in English, French, and Arabic.
- 70 + links to essential resources and training tools freely available to aid workers.
- A webcast series with nearly 30 short lessons.
- A downloadable curriculum manuscript in 9 languages, and curriculum for 1, 2, and 3-day workshops, that has been rolled out to 1,500 participants from every region of the world.

Learn More
http://buildingabetterresponse.org/

Highlights
55K+ Number of global users who accessed BBR since 2014, including humanitarian practitioners in low-resource settings.
This course from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and HarvardX seeks to prepare learners to recognize and analyze emerging challenges in the humanitarian field. The course explores the ethical and professional principles that guide humanitarian response to conflict and disaster.

About the course:

Through four case studies covering the responses to crises in Goma (Zaire), Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Pakistan, participants engage with Harvard faculty, current practitioners, and one another. Cases focus on major trends affecting humanitarian response. Participants may become better informed and aware humanitarian practitioners, scholars, policy-makers, and global citizens.

Learn More

Highlights

93K+
Number of global users who accessed “Humanitarian Response to Conflict and Disaster since 2016, including humanitarian practitioners in low-resource settings.
HHI Fiscal Year 2019 in Review

Sources of Operating Revenue

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Sponsored Awards, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health &amp; Brigham and Women’s Hospital Emergency Department</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,319,230</strong></td>
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HHI is extremely lucky to have generous donors who support both research and educational endeavors, including a named professorship for HHI’s director, Dr. Michael VanRooyen. The Offices of External Relations and Sponsored Program Administration as well as the Department of Global Health and Population at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health support the management of gifts and sponsored awards.

Additionally, HHI sponsored awards are executed via Brigham and Women’s Hospital as most HHI core faculty are both professors at Harvard Medical School and clinicians in the Emergency Department at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, where Dr. Van Rooyen is the Chair of Emergency Medicine.