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Advanced Certificate in Global Humanitarian Partnerships

# Advocacy and Policy Development in Humanitarian Contexts

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## **\*\*Advocacy:\*\***

Advocacy is the process of actively supporting a cause or proposal. In humanitarian contexts, advocacy often involves raising awareness of issues affecting vulnerable populations and pressing for policy changes to address these challenges. Advocacy can take many forms, including media campaigns, lobbying, public speaking, and coalition building.

\*Related terms:\* Lobbying, Public awareness, Policy change

\*Challenges:\* Gaining the attention of policymakers, overcoming resistance to change, ensuring the sustainability of advocacy efforts

\*Practical application:\* An advocacy campaign to address food insecurity in a conflict-affected region might involve conducting research to understand the root causes of the problem, developing key messages and materials to communicate these findings, and engaging with local and national authorities to press for policy changes.

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## **\*\*Capacity building:\*\***

Capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, knowledge, and resources of individuals, organizations, and communities to enable them to effectively address challenges and achieve their goals. In humanitarian contexts, capacity building often involves providing training, mentoring, and technical assistance to local organizations and communities to enhance their ability to respond to crises and build resilience.

\*Related terms:\* Training, Mentoring, Technical assistance

\*Challenges:\* Ensuring the sustainability of capacity building efforts, addressing language and cultural barriers, coordinating with multiple stakeholders

\*Practical application:\* A capacity building program for a local organization providing emergency shelter to displaced persons might involve providing training on best practices in shelter construction and management, mentoring staff to build their leadership and decision-making skills, and facilitating access to tools and resources to support the organization's work.

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## **\*\*Coordination:\*\***

Coordination is the process of bringing together different actors and stakeholders to work towards a common goal. In humanitarian contexts, coordination is essential to ensure that resources are used effectively and that the needs of vulnerable populations are met. Coordination can take many forms, including information sharing, joint planning, and resource mobilization.

**\*Related terms:**\* Information sharing, Joint planning, Resource mobilization

**\*Challenges:**\* Ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders, addressing power imbalances, managing competing priorities

**\*Practical application:**\* A coordination mechanism for responding to a natural disaster might involve establishing a coordination body made up of representatives from government agencies, international organizations, and local civil society groups. This body might be responsible for sharing information on the needs and resources available, developing a joint response plan, and mobilizing resources to support the response.

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**\*\*Disaster risk reduction (DRR):\*\***

Disaster risk reduction is the process of identifying, assessing, and reducing the risks associated with natural and human-induced hazards. DRR aims to prevent or minimize the negative impacts of disasters on communities and ecosystems. In humanitarian contexts, DRR is an essential component of preparedness and response efforts.

**\*Related terms:**\* Preparedness, Response, Hazard identification

**\*Challenges:**\* Ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders, addressing the root causes of risk, securing funding for DRR initiatives

**\*Practical application:**\* A DRR program for a community vulnerable to flooding might involve conducting a risk assessment to identify the factors contributing to the community's vulnerability, developing a plan to reduce the risk of flooding, and implementing measures such as improving drainage systems and building flood-resistant infrastructure.

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**\*\*Evaluation:\*\***

Evaluation is the process of assessing the effectiveness and impact of a program or intervention. In humanitarian contexts, evaluation is an important tool for ensuring that resources are used effectively and that the needs of vulnerable populations are being met. Evaluation can take many forms, including monitoring and evaluation (M&E), impact assessments, and needs assessments.

**\*Related terms:**\* Monitoring and evaluation, Impact assessment, Needs assessment

**\*Challenges:**\* Ensuring the objectivity and independence of evaluations, addressing data quality and availability issues, incorporating the perspectives of affected communities

**\*Practical application:\*** An evaluation of a health intervention for refugees might involve collecting data on key indicators such as access to healthcare services, utilization of services, and health outcomes. This data might be collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with refugees and service providers. The evaluation might also involve comparing the results of the intervention to a baseline or control group to assess its impact.

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**\*\*Gender equality:\*\***

Gender equality is the principle of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their gender, have equal rights, opportunities, and resources. In humanitarian contexts, gender equality is an essential component of protecting and promoting the rights and dignity of vulnerable populations. Gender equality can be promoted through a range of strategies, including policy development, advocacy, and capacity building.

**\*Related terms:\*** Women's rights, Men's rights, Gender-based violence

**\*Challenges:\*** Overcoming deeply entrenched gender stereotypes and power imbalances, ensuring the participation of women and girls in decision-making processes, addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls

**\*Practical application:\*** A gender equality program for a community affected by conflict might involve conducting a gender analysis to understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls, developing policies and programs to address these needs, and providing training and resources to support the implementation of these policies and programs.

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**\*\*Humanitarian principles:\*\***

Humanitarian principles are the fundamental values that guide humanitarian action. These principles include humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Humanitarian principles are intended to ensure that humanitarian actors provide assistance and protection to vulnerable populations in a way that is ethical, effective, and respectful of their rights and dignity.

**\*Related terms:\*** Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence

**\*Challenges:\*** Balancing the need to uphold humanitarian principles with the need to engage with political and military actors, ensuring the participation of affected communities in decision-making processes, maintaining the neutrality and independence of humanitarian actors in the face of competing interests and agendas

**\*Practical application:\*** A humanitarian organization responding to a complex emergency might use the humanitarian principles to guide its decision-making and ensure that its actions are in line with the organization's values and commitment to protecting and promoting the rights and dignity of vulnerable populations.

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**\*\*Inclusion:\*\***

Inclusion is the principle of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, identity, or abilities, have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and services. In humanitarian contexts, inclusion is an essential component of protecting and promoting the rights and dignity of vulnerable populations. Inclusion can be promoted through a range of strategies, including policy development, advocacy, and capacity building.

**\*Related terms:** Diversity, Equity, Accessibility

**\*Challenges:** Addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of marginalized and excluded groups, ensuring the participation of these groups in decision-making processes, challenging and changing discriminatory attitudes and practices

**\*Practical application:** An inclusion program for a community affected by natural disaster might involve conducting an assessment to understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities of marginalized and excluded groups, developing policies and programs to address these needs, and providing training and resources to support the implementation of these policies and programs.

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**\*\*Localization:\*\***

Localization is the process of empowering local actors and communities to take the lead in humanitarian response and recovery efforts. Localization is based on the recognition that local actors and communities are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of their own communities, and that their participation and leadership is essential to the success and sustainability of humanitarian action.

**\*Related terms:** Community-based organizations, Local capacity, Participation

**\*Challenges:** Building the capacity of local actors and communities to take on leadership roles, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and excluded groups in local decision-making processes, addressing power imbalances between local and international actors

**\*Practical application:** A localization program for a humanitarian response might involve providing training and resources to support the development of local organizations and networks, facilitating the participation of local actors and communities in decision-making processes, and ensuring that international actors support and reinforce, rather than undermine, local leadership and capacity.

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**\*\*Monitoring and evaluation (M&E):\*\***

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is the process of collecting and analyzing data on the implementation and impact of a program or intervention. M&E is an important tool for ensuring that resources are used effectively and that the needs of vulnerable populations are being met. M&E can be used to track progress, identify challenges and opportunities, and make informed decisions about the design and implementation of programs and interventions.

\*Related terms:\* Data collection, Data analysis, Performance measurement

\*Challenges:\* Ensuring the objectivity and independence of M&E processes, addressing data quality and availability issues, incorporating the perspectives of affected communities

\*Practical application:\* An M&E