

THE YOUNG HUMANITARIANS HANDBOOK



**Compact for
Young People**
in Humanitarian
Action

OCTOBER 2024



Youth Working Group,
Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
CREDIT: *Plan International*

Contents

Introduction	4
Welcome from Youth Collaborators	8
Chapter 1: How to deliver services to those in need	10
Step 1: Find out what people in the community need	10
Step 2: Analyse the information- what is it telling us?	14
Step 3: Ensure that young people's needs are included in the response	15
Chapter 2: How to get your voice heard when decisions are made	18
Step 1: Find out who is making the decisions and how	18
Step 2: Understand how you can get involved in humanitarian action	23
Step 3: Use the IASC Guidelines to hold humanitarian stakeholders accountable	23
Chapter 3: How to grow your skills and knowledge on humanitarian action	26
Step 1: Identify your existing knowledge and expertise	26
Step 2: Increase your technical humanitarian knowledge	29
Step 3: Learn from others and become an expert	32
Chapter 4: How to access the resources you need to support your humanitarian work	34
Step 1: Understand how humanitarian action is funded	34
Step 2: Identify which humanitarian actors you should partner with	39
Step 3: Develop your 'pitch' - the youth perspective	40
Chapter 5: Looking after yourself and keeping safe as a Humanitarian	43
Closing note, from the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action	48



Fahida Sultana from Bangladesh led a team of 80 volunteers to support those trapped in floods in Noakhali in 2024. She is founder of the youth-led organisation SHBO, a partner of ActionAid. CREDIT: ActionAid Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Young Humanitarian Handbook!

This handbook has been designed for all young people who are currently, or may in the future, be engaged in humanitarian action. The handbook includes a step-by-step guide to answer four big questions that you may have as a young humanitarian.

- “How can I deliver services to those most in need?”
- “How can I get my voice heard when decisions are being made?”
- “How (and where) can I grow my skills and knowledge?”
- “How do I access the resources you need?”

The handbook also includes guidance on how to look after yourself and others, as well as lots of examples and stories from other young humanitarians around the world. You may wish to use the guide from the beginning or skip to the most relevant sections.

This handbook has been developed to support the implementation of the **IASC Guidelines on Working with Young People in Humanitarian Action**. This is sometimes called the ‘IASC Youth Guidelines’. You can read more about them on page 6.

This handbook has been published by the **Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action** in collaboration with youth contributors and civil society organisations. You can read more about them on pages 8 and 9.

What is included in the Handbook?

[Welcome from Youth Collaborators](#)

[Chapter 1: How to deliver services to those in need](#)

[Chapter 2: How to get your voice heard when decisions are made](#)

[Chapter 3: How to grow your skills and knowledge on humanitarian action](#)

[Chapter 4: How to access the resources you need to support your humanitarian work](#)

[Chapter 5: How to look after yourself as a Humanitarian](#)

[Closing note from the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action](#)

What do we mean by ‘young people’?

The Young Humanitarians Handbook guidelines use the term ‘young people’ to include adolescents and youth (ages 10–24 years, inclusive). For more information on why, look at pg 20 of the [IASC Youth Guidelines](#).

The Young Humanitarians Handbook has been written with those aged 15-24 in mind, however everyone is welcome to use and learn from the document;

Under 18? Please ask your family members, school or community groups for advice before getting involved in any humanitarian action on your own. If you are volunteering with an organisation, they should be putting extra protections in place to keep you safe. [If you are working with Under 18s, [check out these guidelines from Save the Children](#)]

Over 24? Please still read and use the Young Humanitarians Handbook for yourself and to share with others in your community. We have tried our best to make the document easy to read, but we know that due to language or education barriers, there will be many young people who will need support from others to navigate and use this document.

Who are the ‘young people taking part in humanitarian action’?

A good question! There are many different reasons why you as a young person may wish, or need to, take part in humanitarian action. Here are some examples of young people who are taking humanitarian action.

Your community has been hit by a crisis or disaster.

“My community has been hit by a drought due to climate change. This has resulted in a lack of food and the closure of schools and businesses due to lack of water. Sadly, many animals on my uncle’s farm have died which means he can no longer pay my school fees. I want to do something to help my community and help us prepare better for the future” **Abdi, 17**

Your community is welcoming other people who have been affected by a crisis or disaster.

“There has been conflict in the region so many families have fled across the border. They are living in refugee camps just outside my town. I met a refugee girl in the market and she said that they were struggling with menstrual hygiene. So me and the other girls at my college want to help. We can fundraise and buy period products for them” **Clara, 19**

You have specific skills or expertise that you think could help in a crisis

“I am studying medicine at University in my country. An international organisation came to present and said they were asking for volunteers to help with first aid response. There are often earthquakes in the northern region and people get injured. I decided to apply and do the training. I am now available to be called upon when there is need.” **Kamala, 23**

Each young person who uses the Young Humanitarians Handbook will have a different experience due to their age, gender, sexuality, race, religion, disability - and many other factors. We invite you to engage with the information shared with a critical eye and always contextualise it to your context.

Each young person will also be impacted by a crisis differently, and due to your experiences, you may be living with physical, mental and emotional challenges. Read more on how to look after yourself as a humanitarian on page 43.

What are the IASC Guidelines on Working with Young People in Humanitarian Action?

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system. It was created by the United Nations in 1991.

The IASC Guidelines: “With Us and For Us: Working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises” (often referred to as the IASC Youth Guidelines) is a document that helps humanitarian agencies and partners improve how they work with young people.

The IASC Youth Guidelines includes a set of principles as well as case studies and practical information for organisations. You can read more about the guidelines on page 25.

Who are the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action?

The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (often referred to as the Youth Compact) is a group of over 60 organisations. Since 2016 they have worked together to put young people at the centre of humanitarian action.

You can find out more at <https://www.youthcompact.org/>



WELCOME FROM YOUTH COLLABORATORS



We are some of the youth collaborators involved in the development of this handbook.

Alongside passionate young humanitarians from around the world who have contributed in different capacities, together, we are calling for greater recognition of the important role youth play in humanitarian action. This handbook is a testament to our collective efforts and dedication to create a resource that empowers and guides young people in responding to crises.

We have lived experiences of how crises can shape and challenge the lives of young people. Growing up in communities have fueled our passion for humanitarian work and inspire us to take careers where we can make a meaningful impact in humanitarian action.

For young people living through crises, humanitarian action is a lifeline. It provides hope, support, and a pathway to recovery. However, the challenges we face are immense. Conflict, climate disasters, and pandemics are disrupting the lives and futures of millions of young people worldwide, some of which become refugees for life. We believe that our involvement in humanitarian action is crucial to addressing these challenges and ensuring that the needs of our communities are met.

Baraka, a young refugee and humanitarian leader based in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi.



Why is it important for young people to know about the IASC Guidelines?

Young people play a crucial role in humanitarian work, and it is vital for them to be well-informed about the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines. These guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for ensuring that humanitarian responses are effective, inclusive, and respectful of the rights and needs of all individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. By understanding and implementing these guidelines, young humanitarians can contribute to creating safer and more equitable environments in times of crisis.

Samantha, a young philanthropist and humanitarian in Trinidad and Tobago.



What inspires you to be a humanitarian?

I am inspired to be a humanitarian because I hate to see people suffer in pain and helplessness at the same time. My childhood story led my path towards serving humanity without expecting anything in return. I come from a minority tribe located in the north central part of Nigeria where little or no access to basic needs were available.

However, one thing that wasn't taken away from me was my dream to empower communities to be resilient and free from violence. I have witnessed and escaped different events that took many lives and property, but the push factor for me becoming a humanitarian and developing a career in that path was my interface with internally displaced women and children (IDPs) who faced the worst form of dehumanisation during a terrorist attack.

That was the moment I chose not to be a bystander, but to take action in protecting the rights and dignity of those women and children.

Kaltumi, a humanitarian and peace builder, working with both victims and survivors of violent conflict in northern Nigeria.



How should the handbook be used?

This handbook is designed as a basic guide for young people, and among other things it provides information with real-life examples, and practical tools for engaging and supporting communities before, during, and after crisis situations. So, whether you are new to humanitarian work or have some experience, this handbook could be a useful toolkit for increasing your knowledge and boosting your confidence to make a difference.

Nancy, a humanitarian and law graduate from Northern Uganda.



What advice do you have for young people new to humanitarian work or responding to a crisis?

My advice is to continuously educate yourself on humanitarian principles, ethics, and best practices and to never doubt your impact. Engage with mentors and peers for guidance. Approach your work with empathy, humility, and a commitment to making a positive impact. Listen to affected communities and prioritise their voices. Remember to take care of your mental health. Your dedication and passion can significantly impact the lives of those in crises.

Mariem, a medical intern and humanitarian volunteer and activist from Tunisia.



Lebanon Youth
volunteer at work.
CREDIT: UNFPA and
IFRC

CHAPTER 1: HOW TO DELIVER SERVICES TO THOSE IN NEED

In this chapter we will be looking at your role in finding out what services people need and how to understand and use this information to inform how humanitarian responses are designed.

Step 1: Find out what people in the community need

Before you find out what people need, it is helpful to understand the **Humanitarian Programme cycle (HPC)**. The humanitarian programme cycle is the order in which action is taken following a crisis happening, or sometimes whilst it is still ongoing. This starts with finding out what people need and is followed by planning, finding funding, implementing and monitoring the response and evaluating its impact. See the diagram on page 12.

The first step of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle is to write the **needs assessment**. When a crisis hits a community, or an ongoing crisis hits a new peak, humanitarian agencies will develop a document which will tell them what services people need. A needs assessment may also give us information on the state of the infrastructure and social and economic conditions of the region where the crisis is taking place.

A needs assessment is used by community groups, civil society organisations, governments and international charities to **design the humanitarian response**. This is done to make sure the aid and assistance is most effective and reaches the people who need it most and has the biggest impact on their lives. You may decide to focus your needs assessment on one target group or do a broader assessment for the whole community.

There are many different ways you can undertake a needs assessment, however it often involves things like **doing interviews with people who have an understanding of the community** and the current situation (e.g. elders, religious leaders, women's groups, teachers, government officials). It also could involve **going on a 'site visit'** to see, for example, the destruction of a building. It also may involve doing 'desk research' by using the internet and speaking with other organisations to share information. However, it's important that whoever you speak to, you always have consent **to gather the information**.

Sometimes organisations do need assessments on their own, and sometimes they work together to do joint assessments. Therefore before starting yours, you may want to **speak to other organisations** to see if you can work together. Often organisations may complete a 'rapid needs assessment' or situation report within the first 24 or 48 hrs, and then do a longer needs assessment once the situation is clearer.

When taking part in needs assessment activities, which could include travelling to dangerous places or speaking with people who are traumatised, it is really important that you **conduct a risk assessment** and are aware of what to do and who to speak to. To learn more about this, look at the guidance on pg 193 of the [IASC Youth Guidelines](#).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SERVICES?

Services are the essential things that humans need to survive, and can often be denied during a humanitarian crisis.

This could include food, shelter, water and sanitation and education. It also includes health and psychosocial support.

Depending on the community and the crisis, different services will be needed during a crisis.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CONSENT?

Consent means getting permission from individuals or communities before gathering information or data related to their needs, challenges, or experiences.

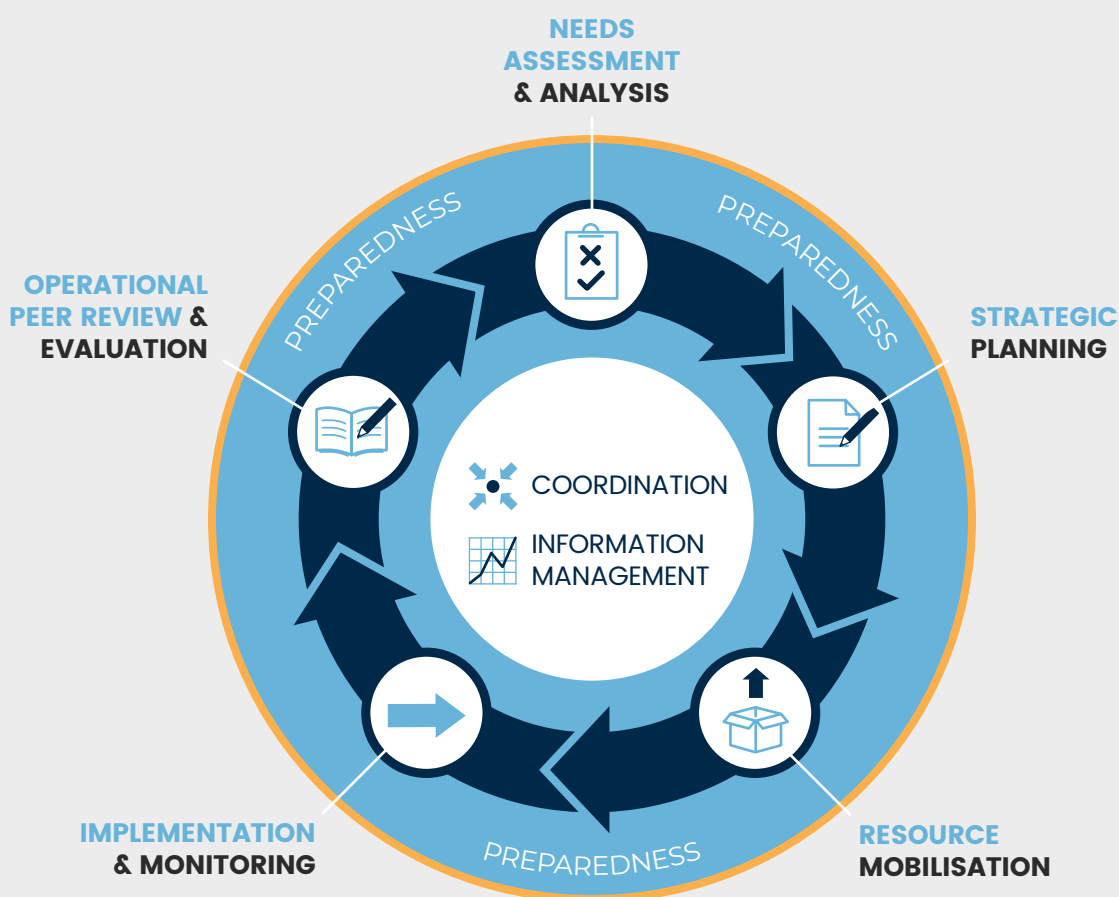
You must clearly explain the purpose of the needs assessment, how the information will be used, and any potential risks or benefits involved. Respecting people's rights is important, and ensuring informed consent helps create trust.

WHAT IS THE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE?

The Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) is a model used by many organisations to help them plan and respond to humanitarian crises. It has 5 stages; needs assessment, strategic planning, resource mobilisation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The HPC also includes three 'enablers' coordination, information management and preparedness.

If you want to learn more about the role of young people in the HPC check out [SECTION E of the IASC Youth Guidelines](#).



The story of how young Rohingya refugees have redefined their role in society

Due to the armed conflict and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Myanmar Government, since 2017 nearly a million Rohingya have fled their villages since 2017 and are living in refugee camps and informal settlements. This has resulted in many young people missing out on education and employment. They were left feeling unsure of their future and role in society. Some young people had developed mental health problems and were using alcohol and drugs to cope. There was an increase in youth violence and some girls were being forced into early marriage.



Youth Working Group, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
CREDIT: Plan International

To help understand the needs of displaced young people, a civil society organisation decided to organise a youth-led needs assessment.

The organisation recruited young Rohingya refugees and trained them in technical skills such as data collection and facilitation. They were also asked to help design the tools used to conduct the needs assessment. They were then tasked with doing the needs assessment, which involved travelling around their communities to speak with other young people to gather their experiences. They found out that young people's biggest priorities were lack of education and mental health and presented this information to the civil society organisation and funders.

Through this experience, the young refugees built their confidence and skills. They were also able to capture the specific challenges that young people faced, which could be communicated to the humanitarian agencies working in the communities. This helped make sure that organisations designed programmes that met the needs of young people. It also gave them more respect in the community as they were seen as leaders.

This story is based upon a case study from Norwegian Refugee Council

QUESTION TIME

- **What did you think about the story?**
- **Can you see the different steps that the young people took?**
- **What impact did young people make on their community?**
- **Do you know of any young people who have taken part in needs assessments?**

Step 2: Analyse the information- what is it telling us?

Once you have completed your needs assessment, you will need to analyse the information you have collected and decide on the best way for it to be communicated.

Firstly you will need to identify what are the **immediate needs** of people in your community, this often includes things like food, shelter and healthcare.

You will then need to identify the **longer-term needs** of the community. This often includes things like education and psychosocial support. However, depending on the situation faced, these could be identified as immediate needs.

It is also important to consider if there were some in the community who were impacted more than others, and what the effect has been on marginalised groups. You may need to prioritise which needs are most important or most urgent. This is called a **hierarchy of needs**.

You will then need to present the information in a way that is accessible and impactful, such as a short report or some graphics. You may also be invited to contribute your data to a Humanitarian Needs Overview or Dashboard.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MARGINALIZED GROUPS?

A marginalised group often refers to a group of people who are disadvantaged or excluded from the main society, even before the crisis took place.

Depending on the situation, this can include girls, people with disabilities, religious minorities and LGBTQ+ persons.

Often marginalised groups are impacted more by humanitarian crises as they are less likely to be able to access services.

WHAT IS A HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW OR DASHBOARD?

This is a document that summarises all the different needs assessments completed by different agencies and organisations. The key data is often stored on a dashboard.

In most cases, these are now published online and updated regularly.

Hierarchy of needs - Maslow Pyramid

The Maslow hierarchy of needs triangle psychological theory about what drives human behaviour and what makes humans feel fulfilled. It represents five key human needs that people must meet in order to achieve well-being. They are:

- physiological needs
- safety
- love and belonging
- esteem
- self-actualization

Maslow mapped these needs onto a pyramid diagram, with each need occupying a different level of the pyramid.



However, the best way to find out the most urgent needs of a community is to ask them!

Step 3: Ensure that young people's needs are included in the response

Now that you understand the needs of the community, the next (and most important!) step is to design a response that meets these needs. This is called a **humanitarian response plan**.

Whilst some organisations will develop individual humanitarian response plans, it is more common for organisations and young people to work together to decide on how best to respond to the crisis. The humanitarian response plans will influence the country strategy, which itself will influence the individual cluster plans (skip back to Chapter 2 to learn more about clusters!).

As a young humanitarian you have a role in influencing the humanitarian response plans to ensure that the needs of young people and the communities you work with are reflected accurately.

Once you have got young people's needs included in the response plans, it is important to follow up to check that they are included in the implementation of the response, this is called **monitoring**. A key way to be able to track whether young people are being included in the response is for those implementing the response to use **age disaggregated data**.

Young people should also be included in the evaluation of whether the response was able to meet the needs you helped identify. There are the last two stages of the humanitarian programme cycle (go back to page 12 to read more).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A COUNTRY STRATEGY?

The country strategy is a document which sets the strategic objectives for the response. It explains what the humanitarian community wants to do and how it will achieve it.

The country strategy is informed by the humanitarian response plans, however other factors and influences are also considered, such as security risks.

WHAT IS DISAGGREGATED DATA

When an organisation is implementing a response, they will need to track how many people they are able to help. However, unless they track the age of those they are assisting, you will not be able to monitor if young people's needs have been met.

The term 'disaggregate' means when you separate something into its separate parts - so disaggregated data is when you break it down to be more specific. For example, data disaggregated by age (age disaggregated data) is when the data is broken down for different age groups, while sex disaggregated data is separated by sex (women/men).

Here is an example of when the data was not disaggregated!

*"After we presented in our needs assessment that young people really wanted help to continue their education, we were told by the Education Cluster that they would include all young people in the temporary school they were setting up, not just the young children. However, we noticed that there are still many teenage boys hanging around in the camp. So we asked the NGO to tell us how many adolescents (10-19) were attending the school, but they could not tell us as they only counted the number of pupils each day, they were not tracking the age!" **Musa, 22***

It is also important for humanitarian organisations to disaggregate data by other factors, such as sex, disability or religion - depending on your context. To learn more about the importance of data check out page 82 in the [IASC Youth Guidelines](#).



Youth participating in emergency simulation activity as part of MYCHA Training.
CREDIT: War Child UK

The story of how a Youth Task Force in Jordan is making sure that the needs of young refugees are included

Due to the civil war, thousands of Syrian young people currently live in refugee camps in Jordan. One of these camps is called Zaatari Refugee Camp. The majority of the young people have not completed high school or university, and most have no access to paid employment, and are only allowed by the government to leave the camps for a limited number of hours a day.

The young people living in the camps felt powerless, hopeless and were living with lots of stress and personal conflict. It was very hard for young women, as many families feared letting them leave their tents.

To help humanitarian organisations understand the needs of young people better, a Youth Task Force was created. This group aims to ensure that young people’s needs are prominent within the planning processes of the Education and Protection sectors, and that they are on the agenda of key stakeholders and donors. The Youth Task Force helped ensure that the needs identified by young people themselves were integrated into the Jordan Refugee Response Plan.

This is based upon a case study from Norwegian Refugee Council, featured in the IASC Youth Guidelines

QUESTION TIME

- **What would have happened if the Youth Task force had not been created?**
- **Do you know if there is a Youth Task force, or similar, in your community?**

CHAPTER 2: HOW TO GET YOUR VOICE HEARD WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE

In this chapter we will be looking at how you can get your voice heard when decisions are made about a humanitarian crisis. We will consider who is making the decisions and identify key arguments for why young people should be included.

Step 1: Find out who is making the decisions and how

In a humanitarian crisis there are many different people who are making decisions on what should happen next. For example, families are deciding if they need to leave the area, teachers are deciding if they need to open the school as a shelter and businesses are worried if they will have to shut down.

However there are other **humanitarian stakeholders**, from both inside and outside the community, who will make important decisions, such as who needs help and who gets it first. They may also be making decisions on how the crisis is reported to the media or how funding is spent and reported. The first step for you as a young humanitarian is to find out who is making the decisions



ActionAid Global Platform Youth at Solidarity March during World Social Forum in Nepal 2024.
CREDIT: ActionAid/Anish Vaidya

and how. In most cases, humanitarian stakeholders are organised in the **'cluster system'**.

However in response to refugee situations, including where there is a mixture of refugees and internally displaced people, the 'cluster system' is not used. In these cases, the **'Refugee Coordination Model'** is used.

Both the 'cluster system' and 'refugee coordination model' are often referred to as **humanitarian coordination mechanisms**.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY HUMANITARIAN STAKEHOLDERS?

Humanitarian stakeholders include everyone who has a 'stake' or an interest in the impact of the crisis.

This most often includes the government, UN agencies, international non-governmental organisations (INGOS) and national civil society organisations (CSOs).



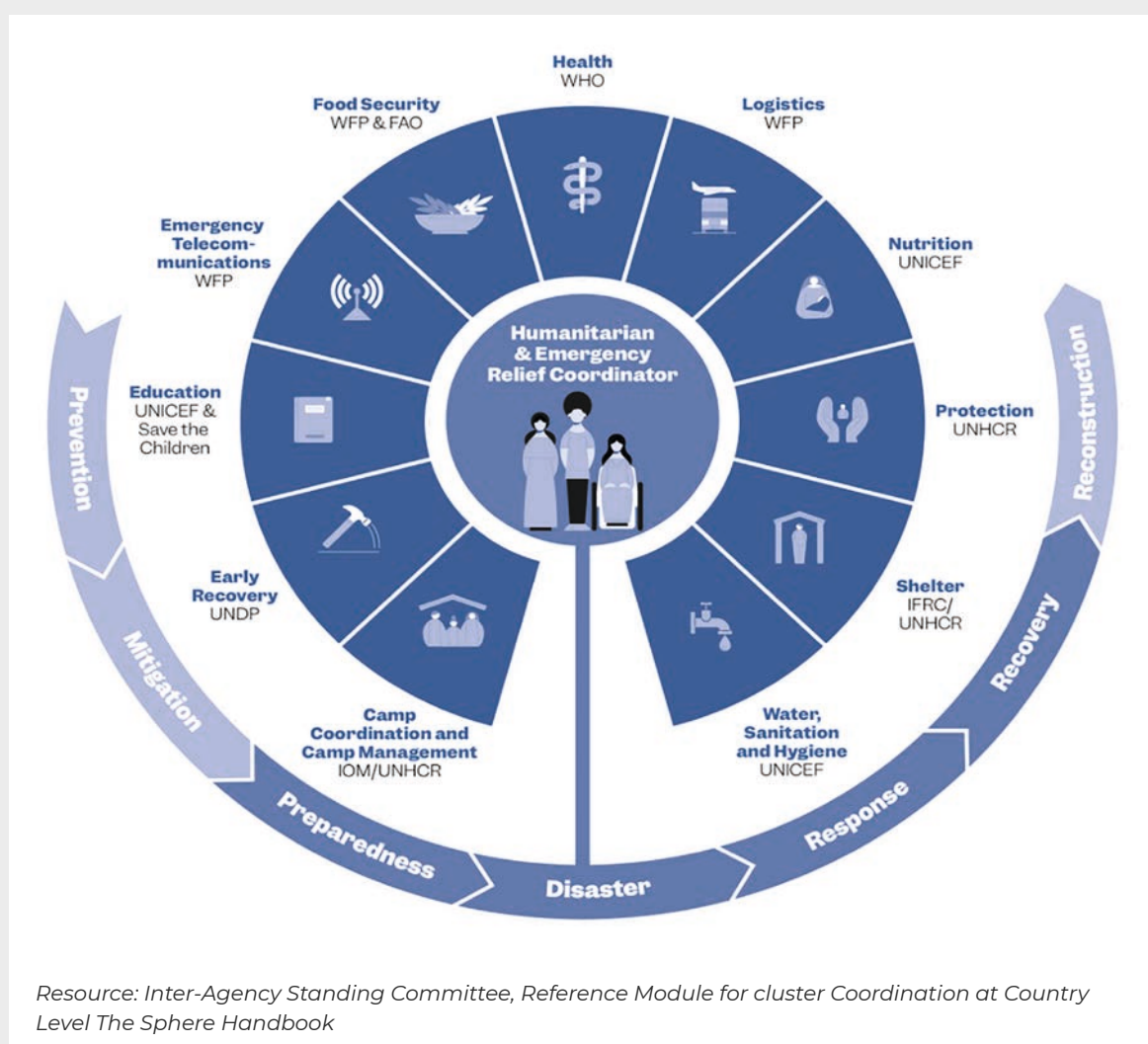
World Scout Bureau, Inc. Haiti.
CREDIT: UNFPA and IFRC

WHAT IS THE 'CLUSTER SYSTEM'?

Clusters are voluntary groups of humanitarian organisations that are working on different technical areas, for example health or education.

Cluster members can include UN agencies, The Red Cross/Crescent, NGOs and government bodies. Each cluster is led by 2 members, normally UN agencies or NGOs.

The Cluster members work together to develop a 'cluster plan' to guide their work. They also share information and best practices with each other and help build national capacity for emergencies.



WHAT IS THE 'REFUGEE COORDINATION MODEL?'

The 'refugee coordination model' (RCM) is the approach used when a country has a sudden increase of people from outside coming to seek safety. This is often due to conflict or an environmental disaster.

The 'refugee coordination model' sets out that it is the host government's responsibility to coordinate and respond to the needs of refugees.

However they are supported by a range of agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

To find out more about the RCM and how it works in practice, look at the [UNHCR 'Emergency Handbook'](#).

Refugee Response Coordination

Mandate of the High Commissioner		Refugee Response Coordination
↑ Accountability ↓	Leadership	UNHCR Representative works directly and in collaboration with the government to achieve the protection of refugees.
	Strategic planning	UNHCR Representative with partners and development actors leads contingency and response planning which is underpinned by protection and solution strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency Plan & Refugee Response Plan.
	Coordination	Partner inclusive; efficient and predictable coordination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNHCR Refugee Coordinator / Regional Refugee Coordinator. UNHCR-led Refugee Protection Working Group.
	Delivery of services	Sector service delivery with partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-chaired by Government / partners and UNHCR.
	Resource Mobilization	Partner inclusive platform for raising funds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugee Response Plan.
Persons of concern		

Example RCM

The story of how young people in the Central African Republic got the Education Cluster to listen to them!

In the Central African Republic, in the context of conflict between rebel groups, foreign mercenaries and government forces, a group of young people came together to find out what challenges children and young people in their community were facing.

They found out that children and young people were experiencing sexual abuse and coercion from teaching staff. They were frustrated that no one was doing anything about it.



Girls from North West Nigeria.
CREDIT: NRC

They did their own research and collected data from 10 schools across the capital city, Bangui. They also developed a poster campaign and radio programmes to help build awareness of the issue.

They presented their results to the Country-level Education Cluster, which included the Ministry of Education. This was not easy to do, they had never attended a meeting like this before. They thought that they would be ignored and dismissed. In their presentation, they demanded the enforcement of staff codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms in schools.

The Ministry responded by sending circulars to all schools emphasising their responsibilities to prevent abuse. This meant that all headteachers and teachers were reminded of their role and the code of conduct they had agreed to. This encouraged students, parents and community leaders to report cases of abuse to the school and police authorities.

The group also presented their concerns to the Global Education Cluster and presented their report at two United Nations events. This increased awareness of the issue at a global level and resulted in international agencies committing more time and resources to assess the risks posed by teachers to students.

As a result of their research and advocacy, young people were being included and listened to by those in the humanitarian coordination mechanism, and action was taken to stop the abuse.

This story is based upon a case study submitted by War Child UK

QUESTION TIME

- **What did you think about the story?**
- **What was the impact of young people speaking with the cluster?**
- **What challenges do you think you might have presenting at a cluster meeting?**

Step 2: Understand how you can get involved in humanitarian action

Now that we have better knowledge on how decisions are made in humanitarian crises, it is important to understand why and how young people can and should be included.

To enable youth representation. Young people make up a significant portion of the population in many regions, and their needs, perspectives, and voices should be represented and considered in decision-making processes.

To adapt to the unique needs of young people. A dedicated focal point/ person ensures that plans and activities are designed to meet these specific needs and that interventions are effective in reaching and supporting youth populations.

To minimise risks. Young people are often the most affected by social, economic, and political vulnerabilities during crises, including recruitment into armed groups, trafficking, exploitation, and lack of access to essential services. It is important that this vulnerability is factored into actions and response across different humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A FOCAL POINT OR PERSON?

A 'focal person' is an individual who is part of the humanitarian coordination mechanism.

They are often from an organisation that was already working with young people before the crisis happened, or who has expertise in youth engagement or education.

The IASC Guidelines included a commitment to require that each cluster/ working group include a focal point on adolescent and youth issues. Preferably this is a young person themselves.

Step 3: Use the IASC Guidelines to hold humanitarian stakeholders accountable

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines: "With Us and For Us: Working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises" provide a framework for working with and for young people throughout the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC).

The guidelines include helpful tips, real-life examples and stories from other young people, and act as a guide for organisations to create programmes that fit the needs of young people in their specific situation.

However, as well as providing a guide to humanitarian organisations and their staff, they can also be used by young people as an **accountability tool**.

If an organisation you are working with has already endorsed the IASC guidelines, you can remind them of their commitment! If they have not seen them before, you can show them and ask them to commit to the principles. If you are not sure if the organisation you are working with has endorsed it - just ask them!

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY AN ACCOUNTABILITY TOOL?

An 'accountability tool' is a resource that you can use to hold decision makers accountable for their commitments.

This could include

- A report or policy document they have written
- A statement they made publicly
- A quote from an interview or social media post
- A legal instrument - such as a national law or UN convention.

WHO HAS ENDORSED THE IASC GUIDELINES?

The majority of humanitarian stakeholders have now committed to implement the guidelines. This includes:

- Members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee
- Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)

There are also many international humanitarian organisations who have supported the guidelines. This includes

- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Action Aid International
- Plan International
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- Save the Children

[Find out more about the membership on the IASC website.](#)

WHAT ARE THE KEY PRINCIPLES IN THE IASC GUIDELINES ON WORKING WITH AND FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

The IASC Guidelines on Working with and for Young People includes 8 principles.

These principles were informed and developed with and for young people in humanitarian action.

These are principles that organisations who have endorsed the guidelines have committed to.

The principles are a useful tool when speaking with humanitarian stakeholders about why and how they should include young people.

You can read more about the principles in the [full report](#).

If you want to share knowledge about the IASC Youth Guidelines, [check out this facilitators guide](#) developed for online and offline training.



Young people from Ukraine, Georgia and Romania collaborate in a project on feminist leadership for youth in war, conflict and democratic crises through the ActionAid Global Platforms network. CREDIT: ActionAid/William Vest-Lillesøe



CHAPTER 3: HOW TO GROW YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ON HUMANITARIAN ACTION

In this chapter we will be looking at some key skills and knowledge that may help you as a humanitarian. We will also share where to find more information and learning opportunities.

Step 1: Identify your existing knowledge and expertise

The first step is to realise that you are already an expert in your own experience! Nobody knows more about the situation you are experiencing than you do. You understand what has happened to your community and the impact it is having on young people's lives.

However, it is often challenging to identify this and communicate what our experience is; consider what you know the most about? What subjects did you study at school or do you have any work or volunteer experience? Do you know more about agriculture or about technology?

To help organisations plan how they can support young people they often undertake a Youth-Focused **Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment**. The assessment helps us understand



Through a student visa for Ukraine, Qamar avoided forced marriage and violation of her right to education in Somalia. Fleeing from war in Ukraine to Poland, she attended cooking, dance and Polish lessons at Kuchnia Konfliktu (Conflict Kitchen), a partner organisation of ActionAid. CREDIT: ActionAid/Magda Klimczak

the challenges or ‘vulnerabilities’ that young people face, and what capacities they might have to try and address this. It also helps identify what support they might need from humanitarian stakeholders. Once these have been identified, capacity building activities can be used to help build skills and knowledge.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘CAPACITY BUILDING’?

Capacity-building is defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organisations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world (United Nations).

Some organisations prefer to use the term Capacity Strengthening, as this acknowledges the existing capacities and strengths individuals have. The term ‘Capabilities’ is also often used in a similar way.

UNICEF South Sudan, Kit for Expression and Innovation.
CREDIT: UNFPA and IFRC



An interview between Rewan, NGO worker and Mohamad, Youth Leader

R: I am here today to speak with young people in the camp about the challenges they are facing and their skills and experience. To start with, what is the situation you are facing? Tell me more about what happened?

M: Last month my village was targeted by rebel groups, so we had to flee. I travelled to the camp with my brother and there are many others here from my school. It was not safe for the men to stay behind.

R: What has been the impact on the conflict for young people such as yourself?

M: We have had to stop our education, we were meant to have exams at the end of the month. I also have a lot of fear for my family members who we left behind. I also used to have a small business fixing phones but I lost all my equipment.

R: Who are the most vulnerable groups here? Who are you worried about the most?

M: I worry about some of the girls. It is not safe for them to move around the camp. There are also some children who have lost their families and are alone. I worry about them being tricked into joining the rebels.

R: What skills and experience do you have that could help?

M: Well at our school my brother and I used to run a football club in our village. I think this could be good for the children so that they keep busy and we could keep an eye on them.

R: That is a great idea. What support do you need from the NGO?

M: We may need some sports equipment and refreshments. It would be good to help us to talk to the camp coordinator and find a good space for us to practise.

R: Ok great, I think we can also give you some training on gender to help make sure the sessions are comfortable for the girls too.

This is a fictional interview, based upon a Youth-focused Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment model developed by GIZ

QUESTION TIME

- What did you think about the conversation between Rewan and Mohamad?
- What makes the children in the camp vulnerable?
- What capacities do young people have to help?

Step 2: Increase your technical humanitarian knowledge

Now that you have identified your skills and expertise, it can be useful to increase your technical humanitarian knowledge. The humanitarian sector is full of jargon - and there are many different tools and resources that organisations use to guide their work. It is useful to become familiar with these as you may come across them!

The two main frameworks are **Humanitarian Principles** and the **Core Humanitarian Standard**.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'JARGON'? SOME EXAMPLES!

'Jargon' is specific words or expressions used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand.

Examples of 'jargon' used in the humanitarian sector include;

Grand Bargain - *a commitment made by donors to increase funds to local humanitarian actors*

Triple Nexus - *when a situation requires both humanitarian, peace and development solutions*

Do no harm - *the commitment to not cause any further harm to the people you are helping*

[Check out the Humanitarian Encyclopaedia to learn more](#)

WHAT ARE THE 'HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES'?

The Humanitarian Principles guide the work of humanitarian actors. They were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1991, with the fourth principles added in 2001.

- **Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.
- **Neutrality:** Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.
- **Impartiality:** Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.
- **Independence:** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

The principles are used by humanitarians to guide how they do their work and the decisions that they make. The principles assist humanitarian agencies to gain access to affected populations, mitigate risks, promote human rights and establish engagement with authorities.

WHAT IS THE CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARD?

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) includes nine key commitments designed to ensure that humanitarian actors effectively support individuals and communities facing crisis and vulnerability.

The CHS provides globally recognised and measurable standards that everyone involved in humanitarian action should follow. The CHS is a foundation for understanding the expectations placed upon us when we engage in supporting communities.

The CHS is a voluntary standard which humanitarian agencies and organisations may adapt or integrate into their own work.

To learn more about the CHS visit <https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/>



Children, adolescents, youth, community personnel and State institutions participate in workshops on the correct approach to people with disabilities during emergencies, with the aim of becoming facilitators in their communities.
CREDIT: RET International



The story of how young people with disabilities gained knowledge on disaster risk reduction in Panama

Panama is a country in Central America that experiences a lot of humanitarian and climate related disasters. It is important that children and young people know how to prepare and keep themselves and their families safe.

Teachers and community groups had provided information to children and young people through school clubs and sharing leaflets on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). However there was one group of young people who were not being included and they did not have any information about DRR.

Young people with hearing impairments did not have access to the information. Therefore some organisations came together and created some Spanish language vocabulary for DRR. It was also realised that children with visual impairments could not use the leaflets. Therefore DRR materials were produced in Braille.

This meant that when the next disaster hit their community, all the children had the correct information. They were able to share this with their family members and take actions to prepare their home.

This story is based upon a case study from RET International

QUESTION TIME

- **Why do you think it's important for all children and young people to have information about DRR?**
- **Are there any groups in your community who have been excluded from preparation activities?**

Step 3: Learn from others and become an expert

There are lots of ways that you and other young people can learn from each other and partner organisations, to support you as a young humanitarian. This could include;

- Providing education and training on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) so that young people can communicate about prevention, preparedness, response and recovery within their community.
- Training refugees and affected facilitators and project managers, so they can be employed as part of the humanitarian response.
- Equipping youth with skills to be effective peacebuilders and agents of reconciliation.

There are also other ways you can build your knowledge and expertise. If you have internet access, check out the list of free online resources. If you are living in a community with other humanitarian workers, take time to speak with them and learn about their work.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DRR?

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) aims to make disasters less likely to happen. The aim is to make disasters less damaging when they do occur. It also aims to make communities stronger and better prepared to handle disasters.

When disasters are impacted by the climate, then there is also a focus on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). To learn more about how these concepts link together, [visit the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction website.](#)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'PEACEBUILDING AND RECONCILIATION'?

Reconciliation is the long-term process by which groups who have been in conflict with each other learn to live together in peace.

Peacebuilding is a process which seeks to address the root causes of conflict to help people resolve their differences peacefully and lay the foundations to prevent future violence.

To learn more about these concepts [visit the Conciliation Resources Learning Hub.](#)

Free Online Learning Resources

Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

The Compact has a library of free resources.

<https://www.youthcompact.org/new-page-1>

Humanitarian Leadership Academy

The HLA has free online courses on topics ranging from conducting needs assessments to safety and security to wellness and resilience in up to 15 languages.

<https://kayaconnect.org/>

Disaster Ready

Disaster Ready has over 1500 free online courses in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

Topics include programme management, protection and data analysis.

<https://www.disasterready.org/>

Adolescent Kit - for Expression and Innovation

The Adolescent Kit is a set of free resources targeted at 10-18 year olds affected by humanitarian crises.

<https://adolescentkit.org/>

Youth4Peace Training Toolkit

The Youth4Peace Toolkit was developed by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders and is available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

<https://unoy.org/downloads/youth4peace-training-toolkit/>



Youth volunteers from ActionAid Global Platform “Yard” and partner organisation SHiFT in Tripoli, Lebanon, support displaced families from southern Lebanon in October 2024.

CREDIT: ActionAid



Friend group in Tanzania.
CREDIT: NRC

CHAPTER 4: HOW TO ACCESS THE RESOURCES YOU NEED TO SUPPORT YOUR HUMANITARIAN WORK

In this chapter we will be learning about the different ways that humanitarian action is funded, and what resources are available for young people.

Step 1: Understand how humanitarian action is funded

There are lots of different ways that humanitarian action is funded. This includes:

Global Pooled Funds

This is where governments, charities and private donors come together to combine their money. This money is then managed by a UN Agency. By combining their money they are able to have a bigger impact. Examples include the Central Emergency Response Fund (managed by OCHA).

Crisis or Country-based Pooled Funds

This is where governments, charities and private donors combine their money, but focus it on a specific country or crisis. This includes First Emergency Response (managed by Education Cannot Wait/UNICEF) and the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal.

Individual International and National NGOs

This is where organisations fundraise from the public, government or other donors to fund their humanitarian response work. Sometimes groups of charities come together to do an appeal to combine their fundraising efforts, such as the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal in the UK.

If you want to find out who is funding what in your country you can do by using the [**Financial Tracking Service**](#).

Community Fundraising

This is where members of the communities that have been affected come together to fundraise. How this is done will depend on the context and resources available, but often includes using faith-based networks, online crowdfunding and remittances.

Funding for Youth Organisations

Whilst there are lots of different ways that humanitarian action is funded, it can be very difficult for community and youth organisations to access funding directly. However, here are a few suggestions to get you started!

- Find out if your local government, municipality or council have any funding or subsidies for young people available, including specific funding for young women, young refugees or young people with disabilities.
- Connect with local, national and international NGOs to establish yourself as the 'go-to' youth organisations or network to partner with [more information on this in Step 2].
- Look out for opportunities to join UN Agency and NGO Youth Networks, Youth Advisory Groups, or Youth Panels. These are often a great way to get yourself known and find out about funding opportunities. They may also include stipend payments for participation.
- Research youth-led funding platforms that are issue-based (e.g. health, climate change) or who want to fund specific youth demographics (e.g. refugee youth, LGBT youth, out of school youth). These are often more common than funding advertised specifically for youth in humanitarian contexts. *See some examples in the box below.*
- Get creative in where and how you find your information! Follow the social media accounts (e.g. Instagram, LinkedIn) and join the mailing lists for funders and organisations operating in your country.
- Be prepared! Often application deadlines are very short, so it can be useful to have all your documents and references organised in advance. You may also wish to have a template narrative description and budget that you can adapt, based upon the situation and donor.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'DONOR'?

A donor is a term used to describe where the funding comes from for humanitarian work. There are lots of different types of donors.

Private donor: This is an individual who has given funds, if they are very wealthy they may be called philanthropists or high-net-worth.

Trusts and Foundations: This is when funds are given by a private trust or foundation. They are often set up in memory of someone or are the charitable function of a private company.

Bi-lateral donor: This is when one country's government decides to give funding to another country's government, a UN agency or an NGO.

Multilateral donor: This is where funds are given from an UN agency or pooled fund to an individual country or NGO.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'CROWDFUNDING'?

Crowdfunding is a process of gathering small amounts of money from a large number of people.

This is often done online using platforms such as;

- [GoFundMe](#)
- [Global Giving UK](#)
- [Catapult](#)

However crowdfunding can also be done offline, such as through fundraising events or sponsorship.

Examples of Funding Platforms for Youth-Led Organisations

Global Fund for Children - The Spark Fund

The Spark Fund is a pooled fund designed and decided by youth that invests in youth-led and youth-focused groups around the world tackling important issues such as inequality, climate change, and mental health.

EU Youth Empowerment Fund

The Youth Empowerment Fund provides resources to youth-friendly funding for projects that contribute to the sustainable development of local communities. It is coordinated by the [Global Youth Mobilisation](#), a partnership of the 'Big 6' youth organisations.

Global Resilience Fund

The Global Resilience Fund is a collaborative feminist fund working with and for girls and young feminists responding to crises, that was launched in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Diaspora Humanitarian Partnership Programme

The Diaspora Humanitarian Partnership Programme provides small grants to organisations working with diaspora communities - including young people - in response to humanitarian crises in the UK or abroad.

UNESCO Global Youth Grant Scheme

The Global Youth Grant Scheme (GYGS) supports youth-led actions and research globally, and builds capacities of young people.

Please note that these are examples and at the time of reading this document the funding may no longer be available.

WHAT IS THE 'FINANCIAL TRACKING SERVICE'?

The Financial Tracking Service was set up by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to monitor the funds being donated and spent on humanitarian affairs.

Using an online platform you can track funding by country, donor, issue & other factors.

<https://fts.unocha.org/home/2024/donors/view>



Shorouq Al-Naimat, 23, at the Evidence Symposium on Adolescents and Youth in Beirut. CREDIT: UNICEF MENA (Middle East and North Africa).



The story of how young people participated in grantmaking in a crisis context

During a humanitarian crisis often young people, especially young women, do not have very much say on how funds are spent. They often are not able to access funding due to the restrictions on how organisations are registered or how many years of experience they have.

An organisation called 'FRIDA: The young feminist fund' decided they wanted to change this. They decided that they wanted to create a fund that young people could apply for even if their organisations were not formally registered.

Each application was assessed against a set of clear eligibility criteria. Applicants were then asked to vote anonymously on the proposals (not their own, of course) and so they collectively got to decide who would receive the grants. The staff at FRIDA were able to support applicants to understand the and use the model. This resulted in funding being granted to youth in many humanitarian settings, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Libya.

This example is based upon a case study from FRIDA, featured in the IASC Youth Guidelines.

QUESTION TIME

- **What do you think of this funding approach?**
- **How do you think the applicants felt?**
- **How do you think you could make this funding more accessible to young people?**

Step 2: Identify which humanitarian actors you should partner with

As explained in Step 1, there are many barriers to young people and their organisations directly accessing large pooled humanitarian funds. Therefore often the most effective way for young people to access resources is through partnership with national and international organisations.

However it is difficult to know where to start! Often in a humanitarian response there are hundreds of different organisations involved. As described in Chapter 2, the government, UN agencies and large INGOs are often organised through the cluster system or refugee coordination model. However there will also be many other community groups, faith groups, charities and private companies responding to the crisis.

Therefore the next step is to do some research into which organisations are active in your country and who is likely to respond when you are faced with a humanitarian crisis, or in a surge of an ongoing or protracted crisis.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'HUMANITARIAN ACTOR'?

The term humanitarian actor refers to a wide range of organisations, agencies and inter-agency networks.

The most important humanitarian actors are the individuals and communities affected.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'PROTRACTED CRISIS'?

A protracted crisis is a term used to describe a country or group of countries that face ongoing states of emergency.

This is often because the country has many natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes) or are in ongoing conflict situations.

The reasons behind the crisis can be varied and complex, but often include poor governance and poverty.



WHAT IS 'STAKEHOLDER MAPPING'

Stakeholder mapping involves identifying and analysing the individuals, groups, or organisations that have an interest in or are affected by a particular project, initiative, or decision.

This is a useful process to do when you are trying to identify which humanitarian partners you could partner with. It may also help you identify funders or organisations that you do not agree with or have different values.

Here is summary of the process

- 1. Make a list** of all the different stakeholders that are doing something similar to you. This could be you work on the same issue (e.g. child protection) or you work with the same community (e.g. LGBTQ+).
- 2. Assess power and interest** of the different stakeholders. Who has the most power and resources? Who would be interested in working with you? Map them on a grid - like this example.
- 3. Prioritise stakeholders.** You should focus your energy on the organisations with the most power and interest in working with you.
- 4. Plan your engagement.** Think about how you are going to approach them, what your strengths are that you can offer. Don't rush this stage. Relationship building can take time.
- 5. Keep stakeholders informed.** Use communications tools like social media, mailing lists and taking part in events to keep potential partners updated on your activities.

[Find out more about stakeholder analysis here](#)

Step 3: Develop your 'pitch' - the youth perspective

Now that you understand how funding streams work, and you have some ideas of who potential partner agencies could be, it is now time to build your pitch to help advocate for why young people and youth organisations must be included in preparedness, response and resilience work.

It is useful to try and define the crisis from an intersectional youth perspective. Consider questions such as - what does the crisis, or potential future crisis, mean for young people? How are they impacted? Consider how the crisis could evolve?

Does it differ by ethnic group or gender? Or sexuality or disability? Remember that your perspective reflects only your experience, and it's important that you can speak to a diversity of experiences.

Once you have a strong understanding of how the crisis impacts young people - you can develop your 'pitch' - this could be in the format of a concept note, a case for support - the format will depend on the situation. To do this you will need to start with some SMART objectives.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'INTERSECTIONAL'

The term 'intersectionality' refers to the acknowledgement that everyone has their own experiences of discrimination and oppression, due to their different and 'intersecting' identities. This could include gender, race, class, sexuality orientation or disability or a combination of many.

The term was coined by Kimberly Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate and academic.

[Watch this video to learn more](#)

Make your Strategic Objectives SMART

SMART goals are a guide used to set clear and achievable objectives. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. It's a way to plan out what you want to do step by step. This approach helps us clarify our intentions and create a roadmap for success.



1. Identify the goal: Start by clearly identifying the overall goal you want to achieve.
2. Make it Specific: Define the objective in detail, specifying the desired outcome and any key actions involved.
– *What crisis are you responding to? Which communities are you supporting?*
3. Make it Measurable: Establish a quantifiable metric to track your progress, such as a specific number, percentage, or timeframe.
– *How many people will you reach? How will you track this?*

4. Make it Attainable: Set a realistic and achievable target within your capabilities and resources.
– *Be realistic! Think about all the potential barriers you could face.*
5. Make it Relevant: Ensure the objective aligns with your overall goals and priorities.
– *Will your approach be welcomed by the community?*
6. Make it Time-bound: Set a specific deadline for achieving the objective.
– *How long will the response be? Do you have an exit plan?*

Example SMART Objectives

- Distribute emergency shelter kits to 1000 families in disaster-affected areas within one week to address immediate housing needs.
- Provide psycho-social support sessions for 100 refugee children to address trauma and promote resilience within the next month.



Kakuma Youth Training Centre.
CREDIT: NRC



In Syria, Ayat is a volunteer for youth-led organisation Violet, who is a partner of ActionAid. She is working at a shelter after the Earthquake in 2023.
CREDIT: ActionAid/Muhammad N. Haj Kadour

CHAPTER 5: LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AND KEEPING SAFE AS A HUMANITARIAN

As a young humanitarian you are at high risk of physical and emotional exhaustion, often referred to as **'burn out'**. This is because the environment you are working in can be stressful, dangerous and even harmful. You are often faced with a huge need to work extra hours and due to the travel or environment you are working in, you could be separated from your support network of family and friends.

Sometimes you may find you even reach a point where you feel 'compassion fatigue' and feel disconnected from the community you are working with.

If you have already experienced traumatic events in your life, the onset of a humanitarian disaster or conflict also poses a risk to re-traumatise you. You may also be personally affected by the humanitarian crisis itself, and you may have to balance your humanitarian work with efforts to support or manage family or caring responsibilities.

This is why it is really important for you to be aware of and have the language and confidence to advocate and take action to support your own well-being, mental and physical health. It is also important that we work together to enable and support each other's wellbeing. This is called 'collective care'.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF 'BURN OUT'?

Burnout looks different in each person, however common symptoms include;

- Lack of passion or belief in the cause or 'mission' you are working towards.
- Feeling of being lost or frustrated
- Low in energy and not enjoying hobbies and interests
- Getting easily irritated, angry or upset
- Not being able to eat, or sleep.
- Feeling distant from your colleagues, family or friends.
- Ignoring your feelings by using drugs or alcohol

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'RETRAUMATISE'?

'Re-traumatisation' is a term used to describe when a person experiences a previously traumatic event. This could be consciously, through their thoughts, or unconsciously, such as through dreams.

A person may be triggered when the situation, such as a new humanitarian crisis or conflict, feels, looks or even smells similar.

A person could also be 'retraumatized' when they are asked to repeat the story of their trauma, such as when reporting to police or speaking at an event about the issue.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'COMPASSION FATIGUE'?

Compassion fatigue is a form of stress that comes from working with people who are traumatised, or being exposed regularly to the details of traumatic events.

It can result in you feeling helpless, irritable or angry, exhausted and struggling to feel empathy for others.

WHAT IS 'COLLECTIVE CARE'?

Collective care is where a group of people take communal responsibility for each member's well-being. This helps build personal resilience and sustainability for the group.

It is a common strategy used by feminist and civil rights movements.

Gordhim, South Sudan.
CREDIT: NRC



A Self-Care Checklist

Here is an example checklist for use before leaving your home or base to travel to the location of humanitarian response (often referred to as 'the field').

This can help you 'check-in' with yourself and identify what you need to do to be prepared.

I am hydrated, and have a water bottle with me	✓
I have slept well	
I have eaten, and have packed snacks	
I have hand sanitizer and my medication	
I have a fully charged mobile phone with data/credit	
I am feeling emotionally stable	
I have something with me that brings me joy (e.g. music, a book, card game)	
I have a clear goal and understand the tasks required	
I know who to speak to if I need support or face any challenges	

[inspired by 'SELF-CARE' Manual For Humanitarian Aid & Development Workers' Plan International, 2020]

QUESTION TIME

- **What would you put on your self-care checklist?**
- **What would you do if your situation meant that you could not complete the checklist? What would you prioritise?**

Some useful tools and resources for self-care

SPARK: self-reflection evaluation tool that you can use to reflect on your well-being and make a personalised self-care plan with.

The Feelings Wheel: The feelings wheel is a chart that can help you identify and simply communicate your emotions.

Mindfulnext: A list of resources for humanitarians to avoid burnout.

Plan International self-care manual: An informative and engaging guide to promote conversations around self-care for humanitarian staff.

It is also really important to be aware of the different **risks to your safety** due to the environment. For example because of conflict or the after effects of an earthquake. There also may be specific risks that you could face as an individual due to your gender or ethnic group.

If you have been impacted by a humanitarian crisis, whatever country you are now living in has a legal responsibility to protect you and uphold your basic human rights. This includes if you have been displaced or are a refugee in another country. This is called **protection**.

If you are volunteering or working with humanitarian organisations, they have a responsibility to keep you safe and 'do no harm'. This is particularly important if you are under 18, or due to your circumstances, considered a vulnerable young person. This process of keeping you safe - is called **safeguarding**.

Whilst organisations may be able to help keep you safe, it is also important that you understand how to **assess your own personal risk**. This will help you communicate if you feel worried or uncomfortable about a situation. Whilst it may be scary to think about all the different things that could go wrong, it is important to be aware of the risks so you can plan and make good decisions.

WHAT IS PROTECTION?

"A responsibility entailing restoration of the most basic of rights to the people affected"

Put simply, this means the right to life, to live free from torture or discrimination and to have human dignity and the ability to look after your family.

You can learn more about protection through the [Global Protection Cluster](#).

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding is a term used to describe the policies and procedures that humanitarian agencies, such as UN organisations or charities, should have in place to protect the people that are working for them.

It also helps them protect the communities they are working with from harm that could be caused by their staff.

Safeguarding focuses on many types of abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional. As a young humanitarian you should know who to report any safeguarding concerns you have.

To learn more about safeguarding check out Save the Children's ['Safeguarding in Emergencies' Toolkit](#).

Personal Risk Assessment Template - an example

What are the violent threats I could face?	<i>Kidnapping</i>
What are the environmental threats I could face?	<i>Traffic accident, dehydration</i>
What are the personal threats I could face?	<i>Discrimination - religious</i>

What am I most worried about? What is most likely to happen?

I am most worried about a traffic accident as these are common and the roads are dangerous. I am also a bit worried about working with people from a different religious group.

I am not as worried about kidnapping as this is not very common and I will never be travelling or working alone.

What can I do to prepare and avoid some of these problems?

I can check that I am always travelling with official cars from the aid organisation. I will not take public transport or motorbikes. I am also worried about getting sick from lack of water as it is very hot in the camp so I will always carry water with me.

Who can I talk to at my organisation to share my worries?

I will talk to the security officer. I will ask them if there is a security training I can attend. I will also find out what the safeguarding procedures are if I need to report any abuse or discrimination.

To learn more about risk assessments, check out page 192 of the [IASC Youth Guidelines](#)

Closing note, from the **Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action**

In 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit over 60 different organisations came together with the ambition of transforming Humanitarian action with and for young people. This was a global call to humanitarian stakeholders to prioritise the needs and rights of young women and men, girls and boys affected by disaster, conflict, forced displacement and other emergencies.

Since then we have seen huge strides forward, with the publication and dissemination of the IASC Guidelines on Working With and For Young People, through integrating young people into the Compact itself through the Youth Compact Champions and through supporting Compact members around the world to strengthen the knowledge, skills and capacities of young people directly impacted by humanitarian and protracted crisis.

We have also been able to come together in moments of crisis to respond and adapt our work accordingly. For example we developed COVID-19 guidelines for working with and for young people and set up a COVID-19 fund for youth-led groups. We have also taken action on the Ukraine response, supporting young humanitarians to navigate the humanitarian sector, identify entry points and increase the effectiveness of their work.

However despite all this great action, we recognise that there are still thousands if not millions of young people affected by or working in a humanitarian crisis who do not have access to the information or resources they need to do their work effectively. We recognise that there are still many barriers that prevent young people from accessing decision making spaces and funding. We also acknowledge that many of the guidelines and resources produced are not always 'youth-friendly'

Therefore we hope that the **Young Humanitarians Handbook** is a useful tool to demystify the humanitarian sector and provide you as a young leader the information you need to take action and hold leaders accountable for their commitments to young people.

However we know that it does not cover everything and the way the humanitarian sector works is changing and new ways of working or concepts will be developed. We hope to be able to update the handbook in future.

We wish you the best in your work, stay safe, look after yourself and remember - **'Nothing About Us, Without Us'**

The Young Humanitarians Handbook was created in collaboration with young leaders within the Compact, as well as technical and field staff from across many organisations. ActionAid Denmark led and funded the process with support from Danida and Plan International. Specific recognition goes to Miranda Sinkala, Mary Ndiritu and Jen Bowie for their work drafting the document.

The Young Humanitarians Handbook, ActionAid Denmark for The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, 2024.

THE COMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

List of members (October 2024)

1. Act for Human Rights - ALEF
 2. ActionAid
 3. Anti-Tribalism Movement (ATM)
 4. arche noVa
 5. Association ALJIL
 6. Barranquilla +20
 7. Benetton Group
 8. Canadian International Community Association
 9. CARE International
 10. Committee for ASEAN Youth Cooperation
 11. Crown Agents
 12. Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
 13. Denmark
 14. DOZ e.V.
 15. FinnChurch Aid
 16. Fós Feminista
 17. Germany
 18. Global Development Community - Boston University
 19. Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)
 20. Global Platform for Syrian Students (GP4SYS)
 21. Global Refugee Youth Network (GRYN)
 22. IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap)
 23. International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA)
 24. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
 25. International Labor Organization (ILO)
 26. International Movement of Catholic Students - Pax Romana
 27. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
 28. Istanbul Youth Assembly
 29. Kara Organization
 30. Mercy Corps
 31. Mosaik Education
 32. Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network - Australia (MYAN)
 33. National Youth Foundation of Romania
 34. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
 35. One Young World
 36. Plan International
 37. Population Council
 38. Reach out to Asia (ROTA)
 39. ReBootKamp (RBK)
 40. Relief & Resilience through Education in Transition (RET International)
 41. Republic of Madagascar
 42. Restless Development
 43. Right To Play
 44. Save the Children
 45. Save Youth Future Society (Sypfal)
 46. Terres Des Hommes (TDH)
 47. The Netherlands
 48. The World Humanitarian Action Forum
 49. UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth - (SDSH-Youth)
 50. United Muslim Relief (UMR)
 51. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 52. United Nations Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA/PBSO)
 53. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 54. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
 55. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 56. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
 57. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
 58. United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY)
 59. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
 60. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
 61. United Nations Volunteers (UNV)
 62. United Nations Youth Office (UNYO)
 63. United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders)
 64. War Child
 65. WeYouth
 66. Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)
 67. World Food Programme (WFP)
 68. World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM)
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