

Advanced Training on Humanitarian Negotiation

Overview

Since its establishment in 2004, Conflict Dynamics International (CDI) has worked with United Nations- and non-governmental humanitarian organizations, academic institutions and select U.N. Member States to advance the policy and practice of humanitarian negotiations through its Humanitarian Negotiation Initiative. The overarching objective of this work is to enhance the capacity of humanitarian actors to secure better humanitarian outcomes for civilians affected by armed conflict and other crises.



Consultations with an opposition group in Darfur, 2007

“On all occasions, Conflict Dynamics have delivered on quality results. In particular, they understand the subject and contexts extremely well, they understand the U.N./Humanitarian structures mechanisms, International Humanitarian Law and the legal foundation for [non-State armed groups]. They are experienced trainers and facilitators. The team has strong analytical and communication skills. Conflict Dynamics has an excellent working relationship with partners.”

Testimonial from U.N. partner

CDI’s Humanitarian Negotiation Initiative engages a multi-faceted approach comprising four interrelated components: (i) policy development; (ii) delivery of advanced training; (iii) provision of ‘technical support’ on specific negotiation challenges; and (iv) outreach and dissemination activities.

CDI delivers seminars and advanced training workshops on humanitarian negotiations for partners in locations across the globe. The training offered by this initiative is unique as it is based on the U.N. policy guidance on humanitarian negotiations as well as on the field experiences of U.N. and non-governmental humanitarian workers. This initiative also benefits from Conflict Dynamics’ direct experience of negotiations with a range of actors, including State forces, national authorities, and humanitarian organizations. The advanced training component was initially developed in collaboration with Mercy Corps Conflict Management Group.

Some of the topics typically covered in the trainings include: frameworks and methods for humanitarian negotiations; communication and relationship strategies; specific humanitarian issues (such as humanitarian access); multi-party negotiations; and dilemmas in humanitarian negotiations.

In addition to trainings, CDI provides U.N. and other humanitarian organizations with targeted ‘technical support’ at the headquarters, regional and field office levels to assist practitioners on specific negotiation challenges or dilemmas.

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Objectives and Methodology

The primary objective of CDI's Advanced Training on Humanitarian Negotiations is to enhance humanitarian practitioners' ability to prepare for- and conduct humanitarian negotiations, when necessary, to achieve better humanitarian outcomes.

In pursuit of this objective, this work seeks to:

- Increase humanitarian practitioners' awareness of the negotiation process and their own negotiating behavior;
- Share an operational framework and analytic tools to prepare for and conduct more effective and structured humanitarian negotiations;
- Help humanitarian practitioners improve personal and team skills in negotiation and communication;
- Assist practitioners in working through dilemmas in humanitarian negotiation.

The training methodology reflects a blend of two policy- and skill-based methodologies: Interest-based negotiation ("IBN") theory and methodologies, and the three-phase methodology and framing approach presented in the U.N. manual on Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups (2006). The content and delivery of the advanced training is constantly refined based on feedback from training workshop participants and developments in humanitarian policy and practice.

Partners and Previous Locations

Since 2006, Conflict Dynamics has delivered seminars and advanced training workshops on humanitarian negotiations for partners in locations spanning Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Organizations that have received training or seminars include: the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Food Programme (WFP); World Health Organization (WHO); United Nations Humanitarian Coordination Support Section (HCSS).

Facilitation Team

The Advanced Training on Humanitarian Negotiations facilitation team is made up of highly experienced professionals bringing expertise in the areas of negotiation theory, humanitarian policy, international law, as well as their own field experiences of negotiations.

Gerard Mc Hugh, President of Conflict Dynamics and Advanced Training on Humanitarian Negotiations Team Leader, is the co-author, with Manuel Bessler (OCHA), of the UN publication, *Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups: A Manual for Practitioners*, and the accompanying set of Field Guidelines (2006).

Customized Package

CDI offers a customized training and learning package which is developed with the partner organization for each specific context. Components of the package offered include:

- 3- or 4 day Advanced Training Workshop on humanitarian negotiations
- 2- or 3 hour Executive Seminar for senior managers of humanitarian organizations (e.g. United Nations Country Team)
- A range of role plays and simulations customized to reflect the specific negotiation challenges encountered by the partner

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