

# Health Emergencies in Large Populations

## The Regional H.E.L.P. Course in India

A training course for managing relief  
operations in disasters

19 - 30 September 2016, New Delhi, India

*In collaboration with*



Indian Red Cross Society



ICRC

## Course

Health Emergencies in Large Populations (H.E.L.P.) is a two-week course that trains humanitarian workers on public health and relief in disasters and complex crises. It was created in 1986 by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the University of Geneva, to professionalise the provision of humanitarian assistance during emergencies. The course provides a multidisciplinary learning experience of humanitarian relief in disasters and emergencies through a public health approach taking in to account emerging issues globally.

## Objective

To train professionals in the principles and practice of humanitarian action in response to disasters, with a focus on needs, public health and health care responses, ethics and public health laws and contribute to academic training, research and development, in humanitarian action during health crisis.

## Participants

The course is for health, public health and other professionals with field experience in disasters and are responsible for assistance programmes during disasters and other emergencies. Participants in the H.E.L.P. Course include public health professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, nutritionists, environmental engineers, epidemiologists and public health practitioners, as well as operational managers in humanitarian action. Those with experience in humanitarian response in disasters and entrusted with responsibilities of the management of humanitarian assistance or emergency programmes are encouraged to apply.

## Language

The course will be in English

## Course fees

USD 1000 for International participants

INR 40000 for Indian participants

Travel costs to be borne by the participant

## Programme content

The programme explores key elements in the principles and practice of humanitarian assistance in emergencies and major crises. It opens with key concepts, including the public health tools, ethical principles and ethical decision-making process, in order to make appropriate and effective decisions in crises involving large populations. The focus is on needs assessment, planning and evaluation of activities, as much as on humanitarian principles and ethics in the practice of humanitarian action. The course develops essential aspects regarding health care, nutrition and economic security, water, habitat and environmental health. It also covers prevention and control of infectious diseases, practical epidemiology in the field, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as well as, security and stress of professionals. During the course, participants are invited to share their field experiences and reflections.

The course prepares the ground for common approaches among organizations involved in the disaster management, thus contributing to better program coordination in emergency operations.

## Planning and evaluation

An overview of the main steps of the planning process provides the participants with common terminology. Assessing health needs, constraints, available health services, prioritization of action and Result-Based Management would be some of the topics covered.

## Practical ethics in humanitarian action

To respect the affected persons, to protect their dignity and life is a core duty in any relief operation. Taking relevant decisions and implementing appropriate action in response to a situation of crises involves a strong commitment to ethics, to respect fundamental ethical values and humanitarian principles. It also involves the recognition of dilemmas, and the need for a structured and ethical decision-taking process.

## Nutrition and economic security

Malnutrition, lack of income and lack of economic security at household level are severe determinants of disease and mortality in crises. Insufficient food supply and poverty create significant health risks. The course will address nutritional assessment and planning, measuring nutritional status of the population, restoring economic security, ways to deal with malnutrition, methodological guidelines for planning, implementation and surveillance of general and specific food-aid operations and feeding centres.

## Environmental health

Survival without water is impossible. The provision of an adequate supply of safe water is an absolute priority in any emergency action. Poor hygiene, overcrowding and pests are the main killers during such situations. The course will look in to the linkages between them and health. Basic methods for emergency water supply, garbage disposal and energy assistance will also be explored.

## Epidemiology

Epidemiology is an essential tool in relief operations. In an emergency situation the initial health assessment, the monitoring of assistance programmes and the evaluation of the impact of the relief operation must be documented by an effective health information system.

## Communicable disease control

Control of communicable diseases is a major task in disaster situations, especially where large concentrations of people are living in precarious conditions of hygiene. Early warning and response system, outbreak preparedness, investigation and response will be discussed.

## Health care services

Disasters are characterized by a heavy demand for curative care, which may overwhelm existing health services. But prevention of illness and injury is also a key component of primary health care services in emergencies, and should be closely integrated with curative services. Special consideration must be given to vulnerable groups such as women and children. Reproductive health and management of childhood illnesses, and health services management are major challenges during crisis situations.

## Mental health

Mental health is an important area to be addressed among victims of disasters. This dimension has been long neglected and must be addressed in a professional manner.

## International Humanitarian Law

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) forms a major part of international law. It comprises the rules, which, in times of armed conflict, protect persons who are not or no longer involved in the fighting, and restrict the methods and means of warfare employed.

## Security and well-being of professionals

Humanitarian professionals have a duty to ensure the security of their teams and themselves in the field. In response to critical incident or to chronic challenges, they must manage the stress and ensure the well-being and safety of all.

## Presentation by the participants

All participants are invited to make a short presentation on an activity or relief operation in which they have been involved. The purpose is to share experience, reflect on its strengths and weaknesses, and to open a discussion on operational challenges, ethical dilemmas and the proper ways to address them in humanitarian crises.

## Other topics

Special sessions are organized according to local needs, experience and interest. These may include mass casualty and triage, management of dead bodies, sexual violence, nuclear, biological and chemical threats, weapon contamination, or vulnerable groups.

## Partnering organisations

The regional H.E.L.P. course in India is jointly organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO), South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO)

## Learning methods

Methods used would be lectures, case studies, focus group discussions, presentations, field work and scenario-based learning and reflections.

## Certification

Upon successful completion of the course, each participant will be awarded a certificate of attendance.

## How to apply

Application form can be downloaded from [www.phfi.org](http://www.phfi.org) and [blogs.icrc.org/new-delhi](http://blogs.icrc.org/new-delhi). Completed application form can be submitted along with required documents at [help.india@phfi.org](mailto:help.india@phfi.org) and alternatively, can be submitted by post to the PHFI address below.

**For further information regarding H.E.L.P. Course, please contact :**

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