

Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action



Welcome to an advanced training program on humanitarian action

In cooperation with the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR), Sida has put together a humanitarian educational program at the Sida Civil Society Center in Härnösand, Sweden. ATHA – Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action – is about enhancing the knowledge of NGOs in the humanitarian field and creating greater awareness of the relationship between development cooperation and humanitarian operations in complex environments. ATHA aims to build a foundation of a profound and continuous dialogue on humanitarian issues among NGOs and other relevant stakeholders.

Roland Stenlund
Head of Division
Sida Civil Society Center

Tailor-made for Swedish NGOs

The Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action, (ATHA) is a program whose goal is the methodological development of humanitarian actions in complex environments. The objective of ATHA is to provide fundamental knowledge of humanitarian activities in both theory and practice, in an international context.



ATHA is a training program mainly intended for Swedish NGOs, their partners and other relevant stakeholders. The program does not focus on individual development. Instead, the focus is on ways of strengthening and developing the participating organizations.

Survey of requirements

During the autumn of 2004 a survey of requirements was made. All in all, 24 different NGOs, departments

and authorities were consulted regarding their perspectives on the issues as well as their ideas on the ATHA proposal.

Together with Harvard

Based on the points of view that surfaced during the survey, as well as the co-organizers experience, Sida has created ATHA together with the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR).



ATHA has three pillars

- Training activities.
- The ATHA-portal.
- Policy support and analysis.



Training activities

The five day ATHA Core Training on humanitarian action will be presented twice a year. Building on the core training, specialized trainings on key issues are offered a number of times throughout the year. The trainings differ in length, and are focused on specific pressing issues. The training activities will be designed to meet the participants' expectations and needs. Information on the trainings offered will be published on the ATHA-portal. www.atha.se

The ATHA-portal

Connected to the program is an Internet portal constructed by HPCR.

The idea behind the portal is for it to function as a communication platform, a forum for discussions and a place where you can find all the information on ATHA.

Policy support and analysis

Policy development will be promoted through an ongoing policy dialogue with participating NGOs whereby HPCR will provide policy inputs in support of the process. This support will include the production of thematic briefs targeted to NGOs and the particular challenges they face in complex political emergencies.



The humanitarian consequences of armed conflicts and natural disasters strike the poor worst of all. Well designed humanitarian actions, together with the preventative work with natural disasters and conflicts, play an important role seen from the poor people's perspective.

Harvard in cooperation with Sida for ATHA

The Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR) has played an important role in forming ATHA in cooperation with Sida.

The Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR) is a research and policy program based at the Harvard School of Public Health in Cambridge, MA. HPCR is engaged in research and advisory services on humanitarian operations and the protection of civilians in conflict areas.

Advises organizations

HPCR advises organizations such as the United Nations, governments and non-governmental actors, and focuses on the protection of vulnerable groups, conflict prevention, strategic planning for human security, and the role of information technology in emergency responses.

HPCR was established in August 2000 in close cooperation with the Government of Switzerland and the United Nations. The main objective of HPCR is to promote a professional and innovative approach to research and policy making on humanitarian operations and the protection of civilians in times of war.

Thoughtful insights

HPCR attempts to provide new and thoughtful insights into policy and academic debates that will enhance the capacity of governments, international organizations, civil society

groups and the private sector to address all the dimensions of conflict situations that affect people in conflict areas.

HPCR takes a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the humanitarian consequences of conflict situations as part of a new understanding of security and humanitarian requirements known as “human security”.

HPCR promotes the development of adequate strategies to respond to humanitarian and security crises in a comprehensive manner, engaging both local and international actors in concerted efforts to minimize the impact of armed conflict on the civilian population.

The impact of new IT

HPCR's fields of research cover various domains, including international law, international relations, political science, sociology, history and public health.

A major sector of the Program's activities is the impact of new information technologies on the work of governments and international organizations.



Thoughts from NGOs

“The program and level of expertise is good”

For a long time Medecins Sans Frontieres has searched for policy discussions on humanitarian issues. The program is good and the participants have the expected expertise which raises the level of the program and the interest. I would like to widen the circle of participants to include other Medecins Sans Frontieres organizations if possible. Good idea. Exciting with Harvard.

Anneli Eriksson
Medecins Sans Frontieres

“Where is the borderline?”

We often see the needs, and we know our own organization's expertise. But we often work in foreign environments together with other operators, for example occupying powers. Where is the borderline, what can one do, and not do? Can it be done, or is it not consistent with your basic principles? You can enter an operation and make the situation worse rather than better! How should one relate to contending parties in a conflict? Other questions that you need to throw light on are safety issues and codes of behavior.

Bo Forsberg
Diakonia



The Portal – a web platform for all information

Based on HPCR's substantive experience of using information technology in professional networks, it has developed a web platform designed to assist the target group in their search for information.

The Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action will be supported by dedicated web pages, which will provide policy analysis, information on key issues, a forum for networking and discussion, links to key organizations and policy initiatives, as well as information on relevant training opportunities.

A forum for discussion

The web pages will be the main form of communication for the target group of NGOs. It will be the location of information on training sessions, registration, and follow-up evaluations, as well as thematic briefs, produced by HPCR and other actors in support of the program.

The web pages will also offer a forum for discussion among those who have participated in the training. This will include the opportunity for password-protected E-conferences on pressing issues, and may also include message boards or other forms of communication between participants.

Feedback on topics

The web pages will be a means to garner feedback on topics of interest for thematic briefs and specialized training sessions, as well as provide the possibility of requesting information or documents from HPCR researchers.

The portal is available at www.atha.se

Thoughts from NGOs

“An excellent package”

You have an excellent package! It is relevant for all my program officers, counselors, and senior management at the Red Cross. Interesting with Harvard! Areas that you should focus on are: planning, follow-up and evaluation in complex environments. Important to include aspects on methods!

Björn Eder
Red Cross

“It's good to have a program, not just single courses”

I think this is very good idea. It is good to have a program and not just single courses. Seems very interesting with your links to different specialized courses, where we can contribute in the area of coordination.

Nils Förander
Folke Bernadotte Academy



ATHA Core Training

Venue

Sida Civil Society Center in
Härnösand, Sweden.

Purpose

The goal is to provide professional training to enhance the planning and operational capabilities of targeted NGOs in humanitarian emergencies.

The objective is to address the challenges to which NGOs are increasingly exposed in conflict environments, which generates the need for the development of strategic tools to enhance the capability of these organizations in high-risk environments in terms of planning, communication, negotiation of access and security of staff.

Target group

The main target audience will be Swedish NGOs and their local partners. Other target groups include European NGOs, Governmental Institutions, Academia, IGOs, and military.

Interested participants should be:

- Mid-career and senior management

professionals seeking to benefit from a broader understanding of humanitarian issues and principles.

- Professionals with prior exposure to the application or theory of humanitarian issues and/or development work.
- Professionals holding key positions, being identified by their organisation to engage in implementing tools and methods to be gained from ATHA.

Wide range of participants

Organizations that wish to participate in ATHA trainings can apply by filling in an online application form in which they describe how they plan to use the expertise offered by ATHA. Selection of course participants will be based on qualifications related to professional experience and interest in the sphere of humanitarian action, as indicated on the application form. A selection will be made in order to ensure as wide range of participants as possible.



Apply at www.atha.se



Training Content & Format

Content and methods

In the five-day core training course on humanitarian action, legal, operational and policy aspects of humanitarian action will be examined. Humanitarian principles and the legal framework of international humanitarian law will be considered in relation to humanitarian and operational tools and will serve as a conceptual underpinning for the training. Trainings will be interactive, and will include instruction modules, case studies based on situations familiar to participants, simulation activities, and high-level panel debates with experts in the field. The course includes opportunities for discussion and analysis of the particular dilemmas faced by NGOs operating in conflict situations, so that participants may exchange information multilaterally.

Each course may be oriented to accommodate specific needs of course participants identified by course management. The core training course aims to cover a selection of the following topics:

- Introduction to International Humanitarian Law
- Interplay between International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law
- Humanitarian Principles, Access and Assistance
- Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons – protection and relief
- Humanitarian Needs Assessment
- Child Protection in Emergencies
- Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action
- Women's Role in Conflict Resolution (e.g. UN SR 1325)
- Participation of Crisis-Affected Populations
- Quality Management
- Humanitarian Impact and Evaluation
- Conflict Management in Complex Political Emergencies (CPEs)
- Codes of Conduct (Do No Harm, the Sphere project)
- Staff Security Management in CPEs
- Humanitarian Coordination
- HIV/AIDS in CPEs
- Natural Disasters

How to apply

Coordinators:

Sida/SCSC: Ann-Mari Karlsson
HPCR: Elizabeth Holland

Language:

English

Package:

Each organization covers the cost of travel to and from Härnösand. For members of Swedish NGOs and their local partners, Sida will cover venue, meals and other costs related to the course. Participants from other European and international organisations will need to pay actual cost for

lodging and meals. All Sida personnel fall under normal travel regulations.

Apply online at:

www.atha.se

Contact & Inquiries:

Questions concerning the content of the course can be addressed to Project Coordinator Ann-Mari Karlsson, phone: +46 8 698 40 71.

Questions concerning practical issues, please contact Course Administrator Jeanette Andersson, phone: +46 8 698 40 44.

Sida Civil Society Center – where good ideas meet

Sida Civil Society Center in Härnösand was started in 2002 as a meeting place for NGOs and popular movements whose activities focus on the role of civil society in the field of development.

The Center's guest-houses

As a course participant you are welcome to stay at one of the Center's guest-houses, Lönnebo and Södergården, which are located beside the main building.

In the guest-houses there are both single and double occupancy rooms. There are also two double rooms with their own kitchenettes. Every room has its own bathroom. Rooms adapted for use by disabled persons are available.

Both guest-houses have their own spacious kitchens as well as TV-rooms and laundry-room. Sauna is available in the guest-house Lönnebo. Sheets and towels are supplied by the guest-houses.



Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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