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# Humanitarian Studies and Research in Ireland: Lessons so far and next steps

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# Overview



- Background to DSAI HASG
- Review of work done 2014-2015
- Opportunities and next steps

# Background to DSAI HASG

- DSAI Humanitarian Action Study Group formed early 2014 as one of seven DSAI study groups
- Other groups included Child Health, Civil Society, Education, Gender, Nutrition and Water
- RK appointed as convenor, joined by Walt Kilroy

# Background to DSAI HASG

- Aim: To act as a catalyst for engagement between researchers and practitioners in Ireland on issues related to humanitarian action
- Means used: Seminars, Blogs and Annual Conference panels

# Seminars

- Forgotten Crisis? Emergency in Southern Sudan (April 2014)
- Ebola in West Africa (May 2014)
- Crisis in The Central African Republic (June 2014)
- International Law and Disasters (Sept 14)
- Disaster Response in Asia (Oct 14)
- Crisis in Iraq and Syria: Logistic challenges in responding to humanitarian needs (Oct 14, with CILT)
- Making Sense of Industrial Disasters (Nov 14, with Maynooth University)
- Psychosocial considerations in the Ebola response and promoting resilience in post-Ebola programming (Oct 2015, with UCC & Trocaire)



# Collaborations

- Eight standalone panels, 4 conference panels
- 14 NGOs, ICGBV
- 11 academic institutions
- Irish Defence Forces, Irish Aid and the Health Service (Annual conferences)
- Dochas – HAWG
- UCD – IHS related consultations

Bhopal  
Medical  
Appeal

# Collaborations

CONCERN  
worldwide

trócaire



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



# Collaborations

Aalborg University

Dublin City University

Kimmage Development Studies Centre

Queens University, Belfast

Maynooth University

Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland

The Open University

Trinity College Dublin

University College, London

University College Cork

University College Dublin





# Annual Conferences

## ➤ 2014

- Contemporary Issues in Humanitarian Action
- Gender Based Violence in Emergencies (with the DSAI Gender study group and the ICGBV)

## ➤ 2015

- What next for humanitarian action? Reflections on the Irish and World Humanitarian Summits
- Psycho-social considerations in emergencies: Promoting resilience and learning lessons from the Ebola response

# Lessons Learned So Far

- Wide range of expertise relevant to humanitarian action in Ireland
- Mobilizing around events / action has proven effective in creating linkages
- Country specific events offer opportunities to connect to diaspora communities
- Engagement between university based scholars and research oriented practitioners and / or subject matter experts creates useful opportunities for exchange
- Time limitations and other commitments

# Opportunities and next steps

## IHS process - Action Plan for Academia

1. Include participation, accountability and communication in programming, training and/or education curricula for humanitarian actors and increase research in the area of participation and accountability.
2. Explore the application of platforms that allow communities of affected people to provide feedback and to evaluate humanitarian initiatives that affect/involve them, building on examples of good practice
3. Incentivise recognition of and compliance with the Core Humanitarian Standard and create incentives for the systematic incorporation of participation and accountability at all stages of programme design, implementation and evaluation.
4. Collaborate through advocacy, policy and media engagement at national and global levels to ensure that the concept of subsidiarity is adopted and adhered to by the international humanitarian community.

# Opportunities and next steps

## IHS process - Action Plan for Academia

5. Include core humanitarian principles in ongoing training and research. Provide a suitable learning environment to realise recommendations. Establish a dedicated forum for developing the concept of subsidiarity and what it means in practical terms for the humanitarian system.
6. Develop and provide concrete recommendations for streamlining funding policies and mechanisms across donors and the INGO community based on emerging good practice, to make them more accessible to local actors.
7. Build the capacities of diaspora to involve them in dialogue, identifying, where appropriate ahead of time, the most affected and vulnerable groups during a crisis.
8. Explore options for building excellence in training and research in protection and gender-based violence, building on the advocacy efforts of the Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence and in collaboration with international expertise. Ensure training on protection and GBV for all staff

# Opportunities and next steps

## IHS process - Action Plan for Academia

9. Collaborate to establish joint mechanisms across a range of programming activities and share information with the public. Respect for, and affirmation of, the Principles of Partnership would greatly facilitate this process.
10. Map Irish humanitarian actors and improve coordination on local, national and global humanitarian issues. Build the capacity of the diaspora to participate in forum of coordination and consultation.
11. Establish an Irish Innovation Forum for Humanitarian Action, mobilising the Irish private sector, academia (greater collaboration between higher education institutions as well as improved engagement with the larger Irish humanitarian community) and government and non-governmental actors to work together on a regular basis.
12. Collaborate with Southern researchers for joint research programmes.

# Next Steps

- Consider evolution of the DSAI Humanitarian Action Study Group into the DSAI's Research & Learning Network on Humanitarian Action (proposed)
- Move from convenor to co-ordinating group with broader representation of interested parties (including academic and research-practitioner communities)
- Seek organizational mandates in support of the IHS Action Plan process
- Continue seminar, other activities but begin to unpack tasks set out in IHS Action Plan
- Consistent with successful activity focus but with a new dimension, including new research