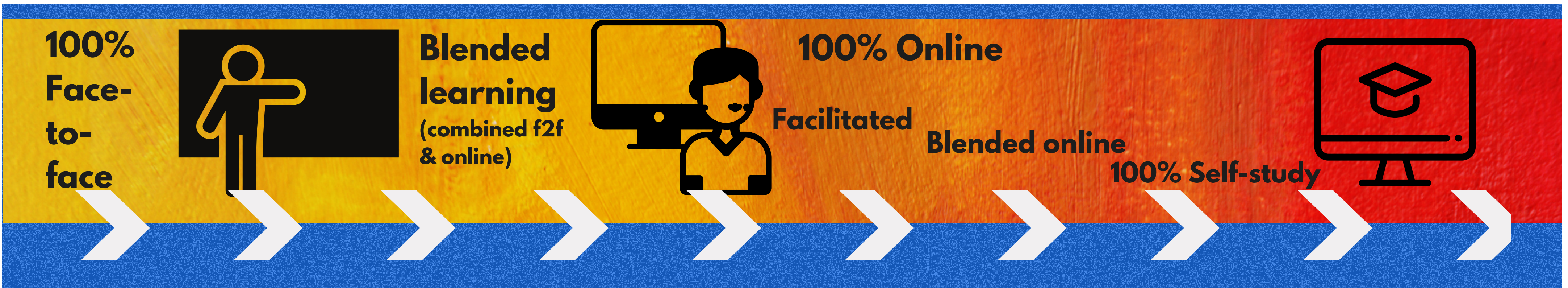


Choosing your learning format

Covid-19 led humanitarian organisations to experiment with new methods of learning delivery. Now that the pandemic has eased, what are the considerations when choosing a learning format?

First of all, what different learning formats can we choose from?



- in-person workshop
- in-person role-play such as HEAT
- conference
- in person mentoring / coaching

- online facilitated workshop
- facilitated MOOC
- online communities & fora
- 1-2-1 online tutoring
- virtual classrooms & webinars

- self-paced, self-study, online
- interactive games & immersive experiences using VR
- micro-learning - SMS / skill pill

What do I need to consider when choosing a learning format?

Who are my learners?

It can be helpful to start by picturing your typical learner.

What is their job role, level of seniority, gender, age, ethnicity? Does this vary much across the target group?

Now ask further questions about the learners which will help you think about what format might be appropriate.

How much time do they have available, & when?

What language(s) do they speak?

How many learners do I need to reach and what is the geographical spread?

How advanced are their digital skills?

Do they have access to laptops & a good internet connection, and space to work online?

Do they have financial means to travel?

Do they have special educational or access needs?

What are the objectives?

Now think about what it is they need to learn, and any other expectations they may have.

Will the learning focus on knowledge-transfer, skills & behaviour development, or team-building, or a combination?

Will practical demonstrations be required?

Is networking or team-building a key objective?

Does the content need to be tailored for a niche audience, or is it widely applicable?

Is there assessment required, and if so, what type? (eg observation, multiple-choice questions)

What metrics will I need to measure?

What resources do I have available?

How much time is there to develop the learning materials?

Are there existing materials available? What format are they designed for? Can they be adapted if need be?

What is my budget? Do I need to generate a financial return?

Are there trainers / Subject Matter Experts available with the relevant knowledge / languages?

Does my organisation have capacity to develop digital resources?

What venue space / technology / equipment is available?

What else?

How can I ensure that the learning agenda is rooted in local context?

Is social distancing a requirement?

To find out more about how the pandemic has affected organisation's choices around delivery format in the long term, we asked six organisations to answer these two questions in relation to a specific course or learning opportunity they offer:

What factors most affect your choice of learning format?

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

Their interesting answers are below. If you're reading this you may be thinking about your own organisation:

- **Did the pandemic lead to long term changes in your delivery format?**
- **Were there any changes to your target audiences?**
- **Did it lead to changes in learners' preferences?**
- **Have donor attitudes and approaches to funding for learning changed?**
- **What feedback are you hearing from learners now?**

All interesting questions for humanitarian learning in 2023!

Training objective : Enable organisations to deploy their staff and assets safely in remote, complex and hostile environments.

Audience: Staff of international organizations, NGOs, diplomatic representations, operating in West Africa.

Tell us more about the training you offer

AACCES works closely with its clients and partners to provide tailored trainings and consultancy services, enabling them to deploy their staff and assets in remote, complex and hostile environments. Most clients are either working in the humanitarian or development aid sectors, with a focus on the most vulnerable local populations (migrants, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and refugees fleeing terrorism and the impact of climate change).

What factors most affect your choice of training format?

It is essential for our trainees to go through field trainings and operational scenarios so they can acquire practical skills which cannot be learnt online (especially for medical courses). We do also have an increasing demand for online and webinar-based trainings as more organizations shift toward remote-work environments. We therefore offer a blended programme, with e-learning programmes available prior to the field trainings. We consider now more than ever the need to display different layers of recognition of the skills acquired by the trainees, which is why we decided to enhance our programme by processing HPass online certifications. It's essential for our trainees to receive evidence of their newly acquired skills and capacities, for them, their current employers and future ones

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

During the pandemic we hired an emergency physician and equipped our own clinic with all pertaining medical supplies for Covid testing and prevention. We decreased the number of trainees per session to fifteen and implemented social distancing. Trainees and instructors had their temperature and oxygen levels tested everyday and our classrooms were disinfected twice daily. We also provided PCR tests. In terms of lasting change, the way we train people was already evolving and the global pandemic hastened the process. We have maintained a blended programme, as the online components have resulted in increased commitment and preparedness of our trainees.



In-person security training

Training objective :

Build capacity of organisations' staff and consultants to facilitate training on the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).

Audience:

People who already have experience in facilitating face-to-face training workshops, and who have good knowledge and experience of accountability to affected people and communities.

Tell us more about the CHS Training of Trainers?

By the end of the training course, participants are expected to be able to explain key learning messages for the humanitarian principles and each of the 9 commitments; develop session plans for a training workshop on the Core Humanitarian Standard that is aligned to adult learning principles; and contextualise the training course to ensure it is relevant to the operating context of their future workshop participants.

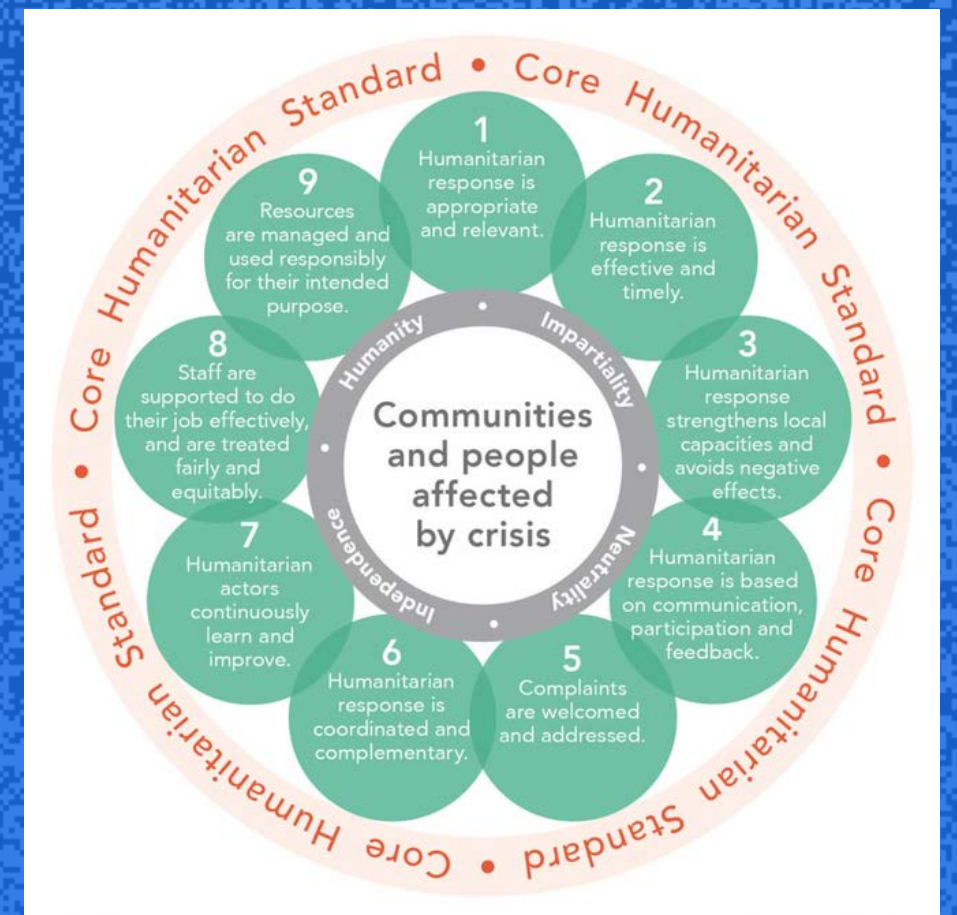
What factors most affect your choice of training format?

In face-to-face format, the training runs over 4 days, with the first two days dedicated to experiencing the CHS training as a learner, and the third day covering adult learning principles and preparing a session to facilitate on day 4. In the remote version, we spread the training over 6 weeks, with a half-day live session every week, and team assignments in between. The first live session focuses on adult learning principles. The humanitarian principles and the CHS 9 commitments are spread over sessions 2 to 6.

Participants in the remote training are not required to facilitate a session, but instead prepare facilitation plans for a range of audiences. While the in-person format is suitable for persons who are new to facilitation, providing ample time for questions, we deliberately adjusted the remote format for participants who already have facilitation experience. We now deliver open CHS ToT courses only in remote format.

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

We developed the remote format during Covid times and it has been working well. As it is facilitated remotely, it enables a larger audience to join. As it is spread over 6 weeks, it enables us to alternate between live sessions and team assignments. Each live session starts with a review of team assignments which takes different formats: plenary, peer, coaching etc. At the end of the training, participants have been able to see a variety of session plans on each of the CHS nine commitments, and have had plenty of time to exchange with other trainers on challenges and ideas.



Training Handbook

Introduction to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)

Draft revised version at September 2021

Case Study: DisasterReady.Org

Training objective :

In collaboration with leading aid agencies and humanitarian experts, make high-quality online training available for free, on a wide range of topics.

Audience:

Global audience and partners throughout the aid sector

Tell us more about DisasterReady.org's training offer?

Due to the growing frequency and complexity of relief operations, and the challenges brought by Covid-19, effective online training for humanitarians has never been more critical. Studies show that most relief workers still lack access to professional development opportunities due to the costs – both time and money – involved. DisasterReady.org bridges this gap by bringing together essential training on topics ranging from humanitarian standards and child protection to safety and security and project management.

What factors most affect your choice of training format?

All our content is self-directed – whilst serving a diverse global audience. We have to consider many factors including language, format, contextualisation, inclusivity, length, bandwidth & certifying pathway. Many learners prefer short, mobile-friendly “micro-learning” modules. We developed a format we called Mobile Guides which are short job aids with interactive infographics in a mobile-ready design, downloadable as a PDF and available even without internet connectivity. Free certificate and certification programs are also very much in demand, hence our choice to invest in high quality no-cost options – such as our Project Management Essentials Certificate.

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

During the pandemic we witnessed the accelerated adoption of online learning and digital transformation. We supported many partners by sharing good practices in terms of instructional design and accessibility whilst also responding to new training needs (around remote working, wellbeing and stress management and creating engaging webcasts, for example).

The pressure of the pandemic might be easing but its impact on how we, as a sector, create and deploy training that engages learners wherever they may be, continues to this day. This inspires us to keep working with our partners throughout the humanitarian aid sector to build a broad learning library to support their ongoing professional development.



Online courses & certificates

Case Study: Group URD

Training objective :	Enable participants to understand and use consulting techniques relevant to the aid sector.
Audience:	French-speaking professionals working as consultants on quality and accountability issues in the Sahel, or seeking to do so in future.

Tell us more about the 'Become a consultant in the aid sector' course?

The course provides aid sector workers with a methodology, techniques and tools to enable them to work as consultants on quality and accountability issues in the Sahel. It covers all the keys skills required by consultants, from responding to a call for tenders, to data collection and analysis, and presentation of recommendations to the client. For the first edition of the course we selected 30 professionals working in Chad, Mali and Niger. The course has 3 phases, 1) online content, 2) 1 week face-to-face training, and 3) practical assignment and mentorship.

What factors most affect your choice of training format?

Key factors for this training were the need for learners to continue their professional activities whilst doing the online learning activities, and get support from experienced consultants whilst they apply for consultancy work and carry out their practical assignment. The course also had to be flexible, as there are periods where learners are working in remote field situations, making it difficult for them to meet deadlines and attend live virtual classes. We knew from experience that bandwidth and the regularity of stable internet connection are issues in many locations in the Sahel so asynchronous online group activities were prioritised. As consultants, the participants may need to provide evidence of their learning so are issued with a certificate of completion.

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

As we already had an online learning platform, we did not have to invest in further technical capacity to set up this new training programme. However, the funding to design and deliver this training course was made available at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, and we recognise that restrictions on international travel prompted some donors to release emergency funds to support learning and development for humanitarian professionals based in crisis contexts. The majority of our bespoke training courses are being delivered face-to-face again. However, we are continuing to run our open training course on “Evaluating humanitarian aid” as an asynchronous online workshop, and looking to run a second edition of the “Become a consultant in the aid sector: foundation course” in future.



Consultants hold focus-group discussions

Training objective : The HOP was designed for those wanting to understand the fundamental principles of humanitarian action. It helps strengthen the capacity of staff working in emergency response at national and regional levels.

Audience: Entry-level humanitarians, starting their career in the sector, transitioning from the development sector, or who have never received formal training.

Tell us more about the Humanitarian Operations Programme (HOP)?

HOP is one of our flagship programmes and it has evolved a lot over the years, to ensure it stays accessible and relevant to its target audience. It has two levels:

HOP Fundamentals: an open-access, self-paced course. This is a catalogue of quality assured and interactive learning modules, created by partner providers, Save the Children and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy. We estimate that learners need about 40 hours to complete this programme as a whole. The course is free and available on Kaya. Graduates can receive HPass badges and certificates for modules, pathways and the course as a whole.

HOP Core: a five-day residential training aimed at strengthening knowledge, skills and behaviours to respond effectively and/or prepare to respond to emergencies. It blends training sessions, workshops and a two-day desk-based scenario. HOP Core was designed to travel easily: it can be run anywhere, only requires a small facilitation team and can train up to 25 participants at a time.

What factors most affect your choice of training format?

Learners are at the heart of everything that we do. We consult them to understand their specific needs, their learning preferences and priorities, and how best they can access learning. Online resources work in some locations but are unfortunately often still a luxury in places with unreliable internet and frequent power shortages- we would be neglecting a huge part of our audience if we only did online training. Hence our model is to develop solutions that fit the context: some are online, some are face-to-face and others are hybrid. HOP accommodates local contexts and is translated in many languages to ensure it benefits frontline staff, contributing in a non-intrusive way to supporting humanitarian responses.

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

We already had a digital team in-house working with our Learning Specialists on digitalising and modularising our learning resources. We were aware of the necessity of growing and translating our online portfolio to increase our reach and impact. Covid-19 confirmed we were on the right track as we saw a spike in access to our resources on Kaya, from all over the world.



HOP online course & a verifiable
digital credential for module completion

Case Study: Primary Care International

Training objective :

To equip healthcare workers to deliver consistent quality care to all, through Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Management training.

Audience:

Primary healthcare professionals all over the world (primary care doctors, nurses, Clinical Officers, midwives and community health workers). Training of Trainers (ToT) is provided to participants to support them to cascade their learning to a wider audience.

Tell us more about PCI's NCD Management training?

The training seeks to refresh clinical knowledge and skills, improve understanding of the operational implications for NCD care, and support participants to cascade what they've learnt. It's very practical, interactive and evidence-based. The core content is applicable to all humanitarian settings and is supplemented by context-specific learning. We take a multi-directional approach enabling participants to learn from each other. There is assessment throughout (both multiple-choice and through observation during the cascade training) and participants receive a completion certificate.

What factors most affect your choice of training format?

We work with our partners to develop and deliver our training in a way that best suits their needs. Key factors that affect the format are timeline, budget, location of participants (together or geographically spread out), location of our Clinical Associates (in relation to the participants) and participant numbers.

Has your delivery approach changed as a result of Covid-19?

We developed and launched the PCI Academy: our online learning hub. We shifted the NCD training to a blended online model, including 35 hours of interactive case-based, self-paced modules, live workshops and a discussion forum. This was a steep learning curve and we sought external expertise to develop the platform. We learnt that an online approach can create more options for partners and achieve greater reach. Results showed that levels of knowledge gain were equivalent to that for face-to-face training – quality was not lost. We learnt about the importance of 'champions' to drive interest and ongoing participation, as well as of ensuring that protected time is set aside for online learning participants. Now Covid restrictions are easing we may return to some face-to-face training, as part of our blended approach, but the PCI Academy is definitely here to stay.

