

OTM-853 Humanitarian Logistics

1. “Boots on the ground” create the action in humanitarian action. Whether it be medicines, tents, blankets, pumps, textbooks, communications equipment or vehicles, materials and supplies must be in place for humanitarian response to take place. Humanitarian logistics is the management and execution of the activities needed to plan for and move relief materials and supplies, along with related funds and information, from suppliers to beneficiaries. Logistics activities include needs assessment, planning, procurement, transport, warehousing, distribution to beneficiaries, and reporting. Effective, timely logistics is critical to response to emergencies arising from armed conflicts, epidemics, famine, and natural disasters. This course provides an overview of humanitarian logistics by introducing the challenging context in which it takes place, the organizations typically involved, the products and services needed, and the operational approaches taken and challenges encountered in meeting the needs. Issues covered include operational challenges, funding issues, coordination and strengthening local capacity. The course combines lectures, readings and teaching cases covering organizations such as IFRC, UNICEF and MSF.

Content

2. The topics covered include: introduction to humanitarian logistics; control systems used in all stages of the logistics process; storage and warehousing for food, non-food items, cold chain, dangerous goods, key aspects of storage management and the basic principles of stock control and information flow; supply and transport options; distribution system; fleet management; staff management; procurement; contracts for transport/fuel/employment/rental/purchase; security in the logistics context; decision making; and conflict management.

3. **Objectives**

- a. To define key terms and introduce conceptual frameworks relating to the humanitarian and relief response logistics
- b. To explore the differences between business logistics and disaster/emergency/relief logistics
- c. To examine the objectives of disaster management, relief logistics and community supply chains and ways of measuring performance
- d. To outline the process of disaster / emergency / relief response and the impact on those affected by these events
- e. To examine strategic, tactical and operational decisions relating to

response and relief work

- f. To review major challenges in these environments

Outcomes

4. Student will be able to:

- a. Understand the importance of logistics function in provision of humanitarian assistance
- b. Learn the basics of managing logistics during humanitarian response
- c. Appreciate the significance of coordinated 'Supply Chain Management' for an efficient and effective humanitarian response
- d. Address the practical difficulties in Supply Chain Management
- e. Work towards optimizing the use of scarce resources during emergencies and enhancing the quality of humanitarian operations

5. **Text and reference books**

- a. Advances in Managing Humanitarian Operations (2015) by Christopher W. Zobel, Nezhir Altay, Mark P. Haselkorn
- b. Humanitarian Logistics: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing for and Responding to Disasters (2011) by Martin Christopher, Peter Tatham. Kogan Page Publishers
- c. Humanitarian Logistics in Asia-Pacific: Challenges, Opportunities and Perspectives (2012) by Robert de Souza, Jonas Stumpf