MASTER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND PEACEBUILDING

AND RELATED QUALIFICATIONS
Peacebuilding is related to a non-linear blend of conflict prevention, political, security, humanitarian and development activities, tailored to the particular context. There is no single template for peacebuilding, or even a consensus operational definition, however there is a clear shared goal: to reduce the risk of lapse or relapse into conflict, to reduce violence and to enhance seeds for conflict transformation. The role of the international community in peacebuilding is to support the restoration or renewal of a social contract, and the return of stability, through supporting national capacities in 5 key areas: (i) safety and security; (ii) political processes; (iii) basic services; (iv) core government functions; and (v) economic revitalization.

The role of peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict is complex. While it may be important to deliver an early and visible peace-dividend to maintain a fragile political settlement, peacebuilding itself is a long-term process. Peacebuilding also recognizes that a long-term and sustainable peace can only be built by national actors – including central governments, civil society, local governments, the private sector and individual citizens.

Humanitarian action, broadly defined, seeks to save lives, alleviate suffering in response to need, maintain human dignity and restore men and women in their capacities of choice. Humanitarian action is guided by core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence endorsed by all key international humanitarian actors: international NGOs, ICRC and the UN General Assembly. The Humanitarian Code of Conduct reiterates these principles, stating that humanitarian aid “priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone” and “will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.”

Humanitarian actions often aim to build resilience at the community level: peacebuilding aims to build resilience at the societal and political levels. Humanitarians seek to assist national actors in developing the ability to cope with current and future crises – as do peace builders. Humanitarian assistance providers, after addressing core needs, focus on building the capacity to cope with future humanitarian emergencies.
OBJECTIVES

Built on the experiences and expertise developed by UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) and CENDEP (Centre for Development and Emergency Practice) at Oxford Brookes University, the Master explores the interactions between humanitarian action and peacebuilding by linking applied knowledge and practice with theory through online lectures, action research, sharing of experiences, discussions with key practitioners, and critical reflection on practices.

The programme is designed mainly for practitioners working in the fields of humanitarian action and peacebuilding, though it is open also to personnel working in relevant fields (such as military and police officers deployed or about to be deployed in field operations, civil servants – including diplomats – in charge of humanitarian affairs, academics teaching humanitarian affairs, journalists, etc.) seeking to develop a more holistic understanding of critical issues related to humanitarian action and peacebuilding.

More specifically, the programme allows this group of participants to broaden their perceptions, critically review their role, and develop and refine hard and soft skills needed to work effectively in the fields of humanitarian action and peacebuilding. Finally, the programme addresses practitioners working in

Main topics covered by the MA in Humanitarian Action and Peacebuilding include:

- Conflict and post-conflict contexts of humanitarian action and peacebuilding – including the urban and built environments and their impacts on the nature of humanitarian responses;
- Theories and practices related to the different dimensions of humanitarian actions and peacebuilding – with a specific focus on protection actions;
- Methods and tools (for mapping, assessment, management, etc.) needed for practitioners working in the fields of humanitarian action and peacebuilding to address current and emerging challenges.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the end of the MA, students are expected to be able to:

- Analyse critically the complexities of the linkages between humanitarian action and peacebuilding;
- Illustrate the conceptual and operational frameworks that apply to humanitarian action and peacebuilding;
- Assess the applicability of conceptual and operational frameworks to real cases;
- Develop alternative frameworks – where appropriate.

KEY FEATURES
- Innovative, multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural design;
- Complete online delivery;
- Work-based/lifelong learning approach;
- Highly interactive approach;
- Student-centered approach with a specific focus on exchange of experiences;
- Access to a unique community of professionals and researchers.

STRUCTURE
The programme is offered at PG Certificate level and is constituted of the three core modules. Each module can be taken individually.

The programme is made up of:
- Six taught modules, which will last approximately six weeks each;
- One self-taught module on research methods;

The total duration of the MA in Humanitarian Action and Peacebuilding is normally 24 to 30 months with possible extension*. 
MODULE 1: From conflict sensitivity to conflict transformation

The objective of this module is to equip students with a sound understanding of the complexity of conflicts, including conceptual frameworks and theoretical debates related to humanitarian action and peacebuilding in complex environments. It aims to provide students with some analytical tools to comprehend better the contexts of conflict and to make adequate assessments of the challenges faced as practitioners. Finally the module aims at analysing critically the links between humanitarian action and peacebuilding initiatives.

Themes covered:
- Understanding violence and conflict;
- Conflict analysis and conflict mapping;
- Conflict sensitive approaches to humanitarian action;
- Challenges and humanitarian ethics in conflict;
- Linking conflict sensitive programming and conflict transformation

MODULE 2: Culture-sensitive approaches in conflict and post-conflict environments

It is agreed that emergencies, rehabilitation and peacebuilding programmes need to be embedded in local cultures. How can we be truly culture sensitive? If this principle is clear, the practicalities remain confused and difficult to make operational. Culture sensitivity requires knowledge, skills and competences but also an attitude towards others. This module allows participants to understand and deal with core issues related to culture, communication, trust building and culture-sensitivity and also to explore issues related to cultural dimensions such as gender, displacement, identity, space and time.

Themes covered by the module:
- Understanding contexts of intervention;
- Cultural issues related to conflict;
- Building trust and communicating with all stakeholders;
- Culture-sensitive programming in conflict.

MODULE 3: Leadership, team and self-management in conflict settings

The objective of the module is to examine critically some of the personal skills (or soft skills) needed by professionals working in humanitarian action and peacebuilding. In particular, the module focuses on leadership skills, team management and self-management skills. The session on self-management is more specifically centred on stress and stress management and introduces students to a number of techniques that can be applied for self-support, but also to support peers and members of communities in conflict-affected countries.

Themes covered by the module:
- Leadership;
- Team management;
- Self-management (focus on stress and traumatic stress management).
ISSUES RELATED MODULES
(60 UK CREDITS)

Module 4: Humanitarian and peacebuilding programmes in urban conflict

Focusing on urban spaces becomes increasingly important for the efficiency of humanitarian actions, but presents new challenges as humanitarian and development traditions are usually focused on “open spaces” and rural environments. In urban conflicts, all lines are blurred and sound programming will need to take that into account. Conflicts particularly have an impact on the way people produce, understand, and inhabit spaces and places. Rebuilding some social links and re-inscribing solidarities in spaces will become one of the key elements in conflict transformation and humanitarian programmes. Through action research methods, issues related to urban settings and specificities of humanitarian projects can be investigated.

Themes covered by the module:
- Understanding urban conflicts and new vulnerabilities;
- Spaces and violence;
- Humanitarian and peacebuilding programming in urban conflict and post-conflict.

Module 5: Protection of civilians in conflict and post-conflict settings

The objective of the module is to review critically issues related to the protection of civilians in conflict and post-conflict contexts by exploring different conceptual and operational frameworks. In its second part, the module focuses on the planning and implementation of protection activities and offers students the opportunity to apply different tools to concrete situations. The module concludes with a discussion on community-based protection strategies, including unarmed civilian protection.

Themes covered by the module:
- Protection of civilians in conflict and post-conflict contexts;
- Ensuring the protection of civilians (programming tools);
- Community-based protection strategies.

Module 6: Post-conflict stabilisation and recovery

The objective of the module is to explore the different dimensions of post-conflict stabilisation and recovery, with a specific focus on restoration of governance and rule of law, justice and reconciliation. The module specifically looks at the role of different actors, involved at different levels and in different capacities in the above mentioned processes. The second part of the module focuses on programming tools in post-conflict contexts, and introduces in a critical and non-prescriptive manner the human rights-based approach, as well as the human security-based approach to stabilisation and peacebuilding, in which human rights and human security principles are presented in terms of potential operational standards for the planning, implementation and evaluation of interventions.

Themes covered by the module:
- Governance and transition;
- Human rights, justice and reconciliation;
- Programming tools in post-conflict contexts (focus on human security principles).

* Note that one of the six modules can be replaced by an independent study, should a student wish to investigate a specific issue in depth.

Research methods and dissertation/practice-based final work

The dissertation is a largely piece of work that enables students to explore an issue or theme in depth. The dissertation is a piece of self-driven work, where the supervisor plays the role of advisor, supporter and questioner.

The purpose of the dissertation is to:
- Develop research and analytical competencies;
- Stimulate reflection;
- Promote independent thinking and working;
- Foster in-depth analysis of a topic/area of personal interest;
- Relate research and analysis to practical development/humanitarian issues (this can include theoretical work so long as links to development/humanitarian realities are made);
- Support with the identification of an area of focus that may assist in professional development;
- Explore new tools and approaches.
FACULTY PROFILE

The MA in Humanitarian Action and Peacebuilding avails itself of an international faculty, composed of field experts, academics and researchers from UNITAR and Oxford Brookes University as well as other United Nations or relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations. This faculty made of reflective practitioners and practice-based scholars brings intellectual diversity and different perspectives on humanitarian action and peacebuilding to the virtual learning environment, creating a rich and challenging programme.
ADMISSION PROCESS

The MA in Humanitarian Action and Peacebuilding addresses highly-committed personnel working or intending to work in the fields of humanitarian action and peacebuilding, at different levels and in different functions.

The objective of the admission process is to select students with the greatest potential and who can make a significant contribution to the learning experience. We seek candidates who are dynamic, motivated, creative, and who have not only an excellent academic background and/or professional experience, but also offer the kind of interpersonal skills that will allow them to obtain the maximum benefits from the programme.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The programme is open to all candidates who fulfil at least one of the following conditions:

- Hold an approved undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline (humanitarian action and related fields).
- Or Hold a relevant recognised diploma or professional qualification in a relevant discipline, compounded with experience in the field of humanitarian action and related fields;
- Or Hold no prior diploma but have substantial and proven field experience in the area of humanitarian action and related fields.

If applicants' first language is not English, and if they have no previous qualification from an English-medium education institution or no significant professional experience in an English-speaking institution, they must satisfy English language requirements by providing evidence of an IELTS level of 6.5 or equivalent.

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/apply/english/index.html

for guidance

ADMISSION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to complete the application process through UKpass.

TUITION FEES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The total cost of the MA in Humanitarian Action and Peacebuilding for 2016/2017 amounts at 8,500 GBP.

To foster diversity within the programme, UNITAR and Oxford Brookes University will award partial scholarships to talented students in need of financial aid based on merit, distinctive competencies and academic excellence.

UNITAR and Oxford Brookes University are also working to establish agreements with financial institutions around the world to offer students attractive loan packages to finance tuition.

Finally, UNITAR and Oxford Brookes University will provide information on scholarship offered by external institutions, such as national or local governments, foundations, non-profit organizations or professional associations. Please note that these scholarships are dependent on third parties.