

# The Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation

**Enhancing Professional Exchanges and Peer Learning  
Among Frontline Humanitarian Negotiators**



**FRONTLINE  
NEGOTIATIONS**

CENTRE OF COMPETENCE ON  
HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION



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## WHAT IS HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION ?

Humanitarian negotiation is defined as a set of interactions between humanitarian organizations and parties to an armed conflict, as well as other relevant actors, aimed at establishing and maintaining the presence of these organizations in conflict environments, ensuring access to vulnerable groups, and facilitating the delivery of assistance and protection activities.



## HOW CAN HUMANITARIANS STRENGTHEN THEIR NEGOTIATION SKILLS ?

Sharing of experience and peer learning among frontline humanitarian negotiators are important to enhance their negotiation capabilities. Humanitarian professionals increasingly recognize commonalities in negotiation practices in complex environments – both within a given conflict and across conflict situations. Also they are more aware of the impact of parallel negotiation efforts on the outcome of their own. The multiplicity of humanitarian actors and their growing interdependence on the ground imply a greater need for sharing of experience and peer learning in assistance and protection negotiations.



## ABOUT CCHN

The Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) was established in 2016 to enhance professional exchange and peer learning among frontline humanitarian negotiators. We are a joint initiative of the Strategic Partnership of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Food Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Médecins sans Frontières and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.



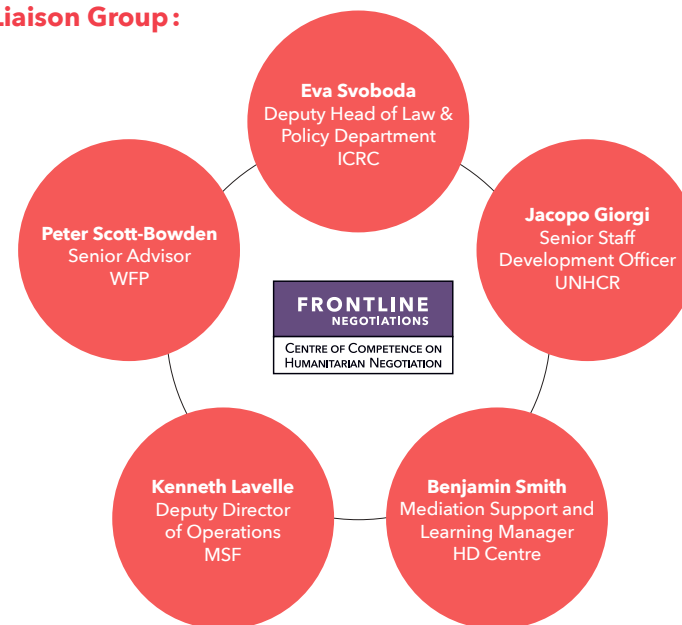
As a central hub for the Strategic Partners' efforts to enhance the ability of humanitarian professionals to effectively prepare and conduct frontline negotiations, we provide a space for both multi- and single-agency dialogue on current negotiation challenges and dilemmas. Experiential learning and peer exchanges lie at the heart of our mission, aiming to foster the emergence of a global community of practice.

## OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Strategic Partnership on Humanitarian Negotiation was adopted in October 2016 by high-level representatives of the five strategic partners – namely ICRC, WFP, UNHCR, MSF and HD Centre. During a five-year incubation phase (2016-2021), the CCHN is hosted by the ICRC. We work closely with our strategic partners in planning our operational activities.



### Members of the CCHN Liaison Group:







## OUR MISSION

As stipulated by the Strategic Partners during the High-Level Meeting on Humanitarian Negotiation in 2016, our mission is three-fold:

### 1. **Fostering a community of practice among humanitarian professionals engaged in frontline negotiations.**

CCHN's core mission is to facilitate the emergence of a global community of practice among professionals engaged in frontline negotiations across agencies, regions and themes.

### 2. **Promoting critical reflection, learning and informal peer exchanges among frontline negotiators.**

The Centre offers a safe, informal and neutral space to discuss and review humanitarian negotiation practices in regions affected by conflicts.

### 3. **Developing a stronger analytical framework and greater capacity for effective humanitarian negotiation.**

Informed by current practice, the Centre contributes to the professional and policy debates surrounding frontline negotiation processes, tools and strategies. It cooperates with leading policy and academic centres in the elaboration of analytical frameworks to plan and review humanitarian negotiations.



## OUR WORK

Based on the CCHN's mission, we focus our work on four types of activities to enhance professional exchanges through peer learning on humanitarian negotiations.

### • **Capture & Analysis of Negotiation Practices:**

We collect and analyze the experiences and reflections of frontline humanitarian negotiators. We also document their strategies, challenges and dilemmas at the local, national and regional levels.

### • **Development of Negotiation Tools & Methods:**

We create practical negotiation tools, methods, case studies and simulation exercises to support field practitioners in preparing for and conducting negotiations.

### • **Sharing of Experience:**

We facilitate the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between experienced humanitarian professionals; providing a platform to learn from peers who face similar negotiation challenges and dilemmas.

### • **Advisory:**

We advise field teams from partner agencies in terms of negotiation of access and protection based on analytical tools and policy work of the CCHN.

## THE NAIVASHA GRID

The CCHN methodology revolves around the analytical framework of the Naivasha Grid that came out of an informal meeting of 25 ICRC frontline negotiators in Naivasha, Kenya, in November 2014.

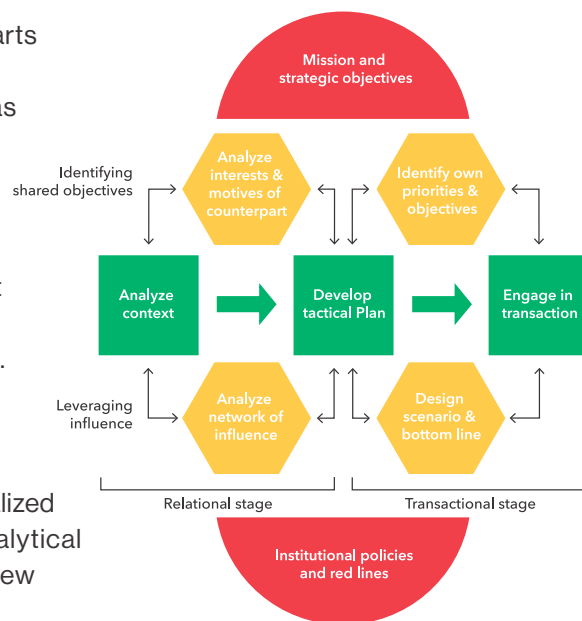
During this meeting, frontline negotiators reflected on the common features of their negotiation practices and outlined a set of practical negotiation tools. Since then, the CCHN has further developed the Grid and its components, drawing on the insights and experiences of hundreds of humanitarians from around the world.

Incorporating 9 different parts and 17 negotiation tools, the Naivasha Grid serves as a map to plan the successive tasks, roles, and responsibilities between the frontline negotiator **Green section**, the support team **Yellow section**, and the mandator **Red section**.

The Naivasha Grid is extensively used in CCHN peer workshops and specialized activities, serving as an analytical framework to plan and review negotiation processes.

The negotiation tools contained in the Naivasha Grid can be downloaded on:

[www.frontline-negotiations.org/cchn-negotiation-tools](http://www.frontline-negotiations.org/cchn-negotiation-tools)



## OUR NEGOTIATION RESOURCES

Drawing on the first-hand experience of hundreds of field practitioners, the CCHN has developed a comprehensive toolkit for humanitarians who negotiate on the front-line.

The **CCHN Field Manual** proposes a method to conduct humanitarian negotiation in a systematic and organized manner. Built around the Naivasha Grid it includes a set of practical tools, drawn from field practices, and a step-by-step pathway to plan and implement a negotiation process in a structured and customized way.

To support the learning, peer exchanges and networking activities, the CCHN also has developed a **Negotiator Handbook**, **Facilitator Handbook**, **Negotiator Notebook**, Online **Case Studies**, and the community forum **CCHN Connect**.



The **CCHN Case Studies** present the application of the Naivasha Grid framework to real-life situations from the field that have been synthesized and decontextualized for the purpose of the exercise and maintaining confidentiality.

The negotiation resources of the CCHN are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. They can be accessed, downloaded or purchased on:

[www.frontline-negotiations.org/cchn-field-manual](http://www.frontline-negotiations.org/cchn-field-manual)

## OUR ON-SITE AND ONLINE ACTIVITIES

The CCHN activities are available on-site and online and divided into three different levels with a view to tailoring the format and content of the sessions to the interests and commitment of community members. Community members can move up to the next level after attending at least one activity.

### 3 Levels of Engagement:



#### LEVEL 1: Gateway to a global community of practice

Humanitarians with at least 3 years of field experience can apply for:

- **Peer Workshops** – on-site and online peer exchange and introduction to practical negotiation tools

#### LEVEL 2: Specialized activities

Community members who have completed a Level 1 activity can continue with:

- **Specialized Sessions** – applying negotiation tools to a specific operational context
- **Training of Facilitators** – learning to facilitate practice-oriented negotiation workshops
- **Live Sessions** – refreshing and updating knowledge of negotiation tools and methods through webinars

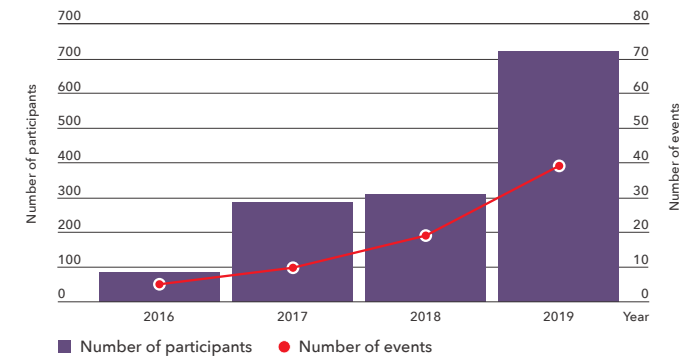
#### LEVEL 3: Advanced-level activities

Community members who have completed a Level 2 activity are invited to:

- **Thematic Retreats** – in-depth peer exchange with subject-matter experts
- **Peer Circles** – community-led informal gatherings on specific topics
- **Community Assembly** – (re-)connecting with peers, reviewing difficult negotiations and guiding the orientation of the CCHN

## Growth of activities

Number of events and participants (excl. Annual Meetings)



Source : CCHN Database 2016–2019

Between 2016 and 2019, we organized over 70 Peer Workshops and welcomed nearly 1,300 humanitarian professionals to the community. On average, two thirds of community members have more than 10 years of professional experience and almost 90% are based in the field. Almost 30% return to participate in a specialized activity later on.

"The CCHN Peer Workshop went beyond my expectations ! Very well organized, very interactive, amazing energy and a lot of opportunities to share real-life experiences !"

Sybilla Kitsios, ACTED Camp Manager in Mosul, Iraq



"The Training of Facilitators met my expectations because now I am more confident in using CCHN tools. I am negotiating on a daily basis with different counterparts and providing support to the access team in the field. I plan to facilitate internal training sessions first and then also participate in facilitating a CCHN workshop,"

Abdul Rahman, WFP Programme Policy Officer in Kabul, Afghanistan



In addition to the activities within the 3 level of engagements, we also offer other kinds of activities responding to specific requests and needs of frontline negotiators worldwide. For more information and to apply for CCHN on-site and online activities, please visit:

[www.frontline-negotiations.org/events](http://www.frontline-negotiations.org/events)

## OUR REGIONAL OPERATIONS

We consult with a wide range of stakeholders from within and outside the strategic partnership to respond to request of country offices and field teams in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.



Our activities have covered complex humanitarian operations such as Afghanistan, Colombia, DPRK, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lake Chad Basin, Mexico, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.



Our peer exchange activities are regularly organized in **Amman, Jordan** (for the Middle East), **Bangkok, Thailand** (for South/Southeast Asia), **Bogota, Colombia** (for Latin America); **Caux, Switzerland** (for Global), **Dakar, Senegal** (for West Africa), and **Nairobi, Kenya** (for East Africa). In each of these locations, we work in close collaboration with local partners and field-based teams. Upon request, we also run activities in other field locations.



## OUR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



The core mission of the CCHN is to facilitate the emergence of a global **community of practice of frontline negotiators**. A community of practice is a group of individuals who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

The CCHN is also committed to connecting **humanitarians** with professionals from other sectors, including political mediators who mediate humanitarian arrangements between parties to the conflict; **government representatives** who may influence humanitarian negotiations through their political power; **local NGOs** involved in the humanitarian response; and **researchers** who publish papers and books on this topic.

The CCHN Community of Practice has shown a growing sense of ownership as members contribute to designing and organizing peer exchange events in their regions.

## CCHN CONNECT

With CCHN Connect, we run an online forum for community members to facilitate discussions on the challenges and dilemmas of humanitarian negotiations and connect them with peers from around the world. The forum is packed full of interviews, webinars, blog series, research papers and more. CCHN Connect is open to humanitarian professionals who joined the CCHN Community of Practice by attending a peer workshop. For more information, please visit: [community.frontline-negotiations.org](https://community.frontline-negotiations.org)







## ANNUAL MEETING OF FRONTLINE HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATORS

Since 2016, community of practice members are annually invited to the Annual Meeting of Frontline Humanitarian Negotiators –a global gathering of field practitioners, senior managers and subject-matter experts and scholars.

*"This conference (CCHN Annual Meeting) is a safe haven for informal debate and to discuss how we can prepare for the negotiations of tomorrow, improve practices and the designs of what we do."*

**Peter Maurer**, President of the ICRC



The CCHN Annual Meetings have facilitated dialogues of high-level speakers from leading humanitarian organizations. With growing members of the community of practice, we have also fostered and captured the discussion between humanitarian professionals, practitioners, donors and researchers on how to move forward the agenda to strengthen the capability of humanitarian negotiations. After each Annual Meeting, we publish a report which can be accessed by the public.

In place of the Annual Meeting in 2019, CCHN organized the Berlin Conference on Strengthening the Capabilities of Humanitarian Organizations to Negotiate on the Frontline.

More information and to download the Annual Meeting reports, please visit:  
[www.frontline-negotiations.org/annual-meetings](http://www.frontline-negotiations.org/annual-meetings)



## OUR DONORS

This joint initiative is supported by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Luxembourg.



## OUR SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATIONS

CCHN also collaborates with **researchers, leading academic institutions** and **training centres** to transform negotiation experiences and practices into knowledge. Among our partners are:



## CONTACT US

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