

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

FRONTLINE
NEGOTIATIONS

CENTRE OF COMPETENCE ON
HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION

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JOËLLE GERMANIER,
CCHN DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) continued to expand its role as a leading resource for humanitarian professionals navigating complex and high-stakes negotiations.

In a year marked by escalating conflicts, bureaucratic restrictions, and threats to the safety of humanitarian personnel reaching an all-time high, the need for effective negotiation skills has never been greater. From Haiti to Ukraine and from Sudan to Yemen, the CCHN offered opportunities for training, exchanges, and tailored support to a growing network of practitioners working on today's most difficult humanitarian crises. As a key platform to analyse frontline negotiation practices and facilitate the exchange of expertise, the CCHN focused on the challenges perceived by practitioners on the ground – including negotiating healthcare and protection outcomes, community-led negotiations, and negotiations with armed non-State group, among other thematic areas. Working at the critical intersection between humanitarian negotiation and diplomacy, the CCHN fostered dialogue between the two domains by creating dedicated spaces for exchanges, interactions, and strategic alignment.

The growing demand for CCHN's services was reflected in the continued expansion of its community of practice, which now includes more than 8,300 humanitarian professionals from over 150 countries. Through workshops, thematic discussions, and peer exchanges, these members have contributed to a dynamic and engaged network that fosters learning and collaboration across organisations and regions. Increasingly, this network has also become a valuable space for exploring locally-driven negotiation approaches and strategies to address community-level challenges in humanitarian settings.

Geneva once again hosted the CCHN's flagship event, the World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation. This gathering brought together hundreds of humanitarian professionals, policymakers, and academics to explore emerging trends and challenges in humanitarian negotiations. The discussions reinforced the importance of frontline negotiations as a critical skill set for ensuring access to populations in need, securing the safety of humanitarian personnel, and building trust in volatile settings. The Summit also provided a platform to showcase new research and generate constructive debate, including on humanitarian diplomacy, protection negotiations, the role of women in negotiation teams, misinformation in humanitarian operations, and much more.

This year also marked a significant milestone for the CCHN community with the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Naivasha Grid, the negotiation framework that has guided thousands of humanitarian professionals since its inception. The occasion provided an opportunity to reflect on the evolution of humanitarian negotiations over the past decade and reaffirm the commitment to equipping practitioners with the tools and strategies needed to navigate increasingly complex operational environments.

Collaboration remained at the heart of CCHN's work in 2024. Strong partnerships with key humanitarian actors – especially our strategic partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross, MSF Switzerland, UNHCR, and the World Food Programme – ensured that CCHN's negotiation tools and methodologies remained relevant to those working at the frontlines. The year also saw the expansion of partnerships with government agencies, research institutions, and local humanitarian organisations, reinforcing a collective commitment to improving negotiation capacity across the sector.

Looking ahead, CCHN remains focused on expanding its reach, refining its methodologies, and supporting humanitarian professionals facing increasingly difficult negotiations. In a rapidly evolving humanitarian landscape, negotiation skills are more essential than ever in ensuring effective crisis response. As we close this chapter, we extend our sincere gratitude to our strategic partners, donors, and the entire CCHN community for their continued engagement and dedication to strengthening humanitarian negotiations worldwide.

A stylized blue ink signature of Joëlle Germanier.

Joëlle Germanier,
CCHN Director

A YEAR IN NUMBERS

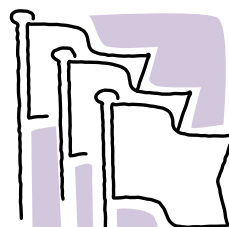
A thriving, global community of practice

The CCHN is home to a large and continuously growing community of humanitarian negotiators, who benefit from a range of learning and sharing activities. Once these professionals complete one of our foundational workshops, they gain access to additional opportunities to develop their negotiation skills while exchanging with colleagues facing similar challenges.

By December 2024, our community was composed of around... **8,200** humanitarian professionals

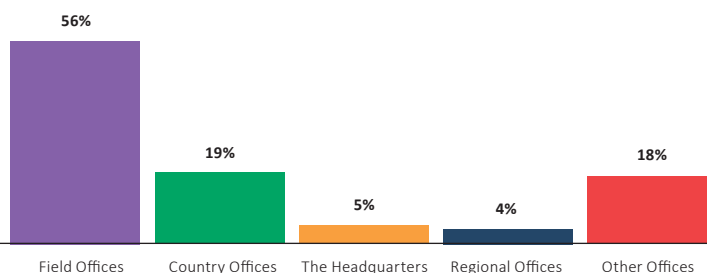


from
150+
countries



working for
400+
organisations

THESE
PROFESSIONALS
ARE BASED IN



International Committee of the Red Cross
12%

UN World Food Programme
7%

Médecins Sans Frontières
6%

UNHCR
6%

International Organization for Migration
3%

UNOCHA
3%

In 2024, the CCHN supported more than **2,200** humanitarian professionals

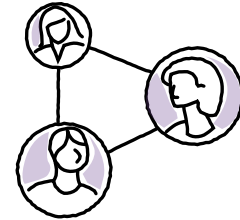
1,169
HUMANITIANS PARTICIPATED
IN A CCHN EVENT

1,062
HUMANITIANS PARTICIPATED
IN AN ADVANCED ACTIVITY

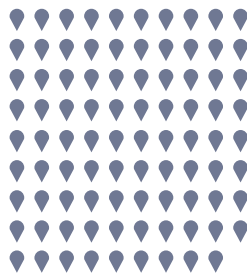
Welcoming new community members in 2024

1,160+

humanitarians completed a workshop for the first time in 2024



FROM **89** COUNTRIES



73% ARE NATIONAL STAFF IN
THEIR COUNTRY OF WORK
(**+33%** SINCE THE PREVIOUS YEAR)

2024

2023

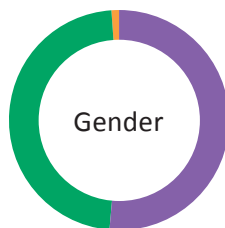
*New members
work for*

400+

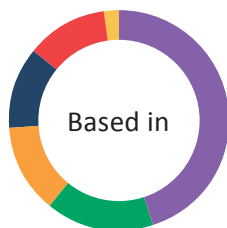
*different
organisations*

58%
ARE NATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS

42%
ARE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS



● Male **52%**
● Female **48%**
● Other gender / no response **1%**



● Africa **45%**
● Middle East and North Africa **16%**
● Asia **16%**
● Latin America and the Caribbean **12%**
● Europe **12%**
● Other regions / no information **2%**



Negotiation skills are increasingly recognised as essential to implement a humanitarian response and ensure sustainable access to populations in need of assistance. Photo: ICRC



Interviews confirmed that humanitarian negotiation plays a critical role in conflict de-escalation and protection efforts by establishing frameworks for dialogue and long-term relationships of trust to secure humanitarian operations.

HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION: AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE, TIMELY, COST-EFFICIENT AID

Far from simply supporting the professional development of humanitarian staff, negotiation skills are increasingly recognised as essential to implement any humanitarian project while guaranteeing sustainable access to populations in need of assistance.

Whether due to armed conflict, disasters, epidemics, or complex political environments, humanitarian organisations must engage with multiple stakeholders to protect civilians caught up in conflict, make aid delivery possible, ensure that resources go to those requiring them most, minimise bureaucratic and administrative impediments, and avoid costly delays.

These negotiations are not only about gaining access but also about building trust, mitigating risks, and ensuring that humanitarian principles are upheld in the face of competing interests.

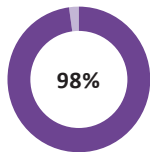
Over the course of 2024, the CCHN team continued conducting research among professionals in key humanitarian context worldwide. Once more, interviews confirmed that humanitarian negotiation plays a critical role in conflict de-escalation and protection efforts by establishing frameworks for dialogue and long-term relationships of trust to secure humanitarian operations. It also allows responders to navigate safety and logistical challenges, preventing aid blockages and minimising threats to humanitarian personnel.

In increasingly protracted crises, negotiation is not just a tool for immediate relief but also a mechanism for community engagement, reinforcing local resilience and ensuring that interventions align with their needs and priorities.

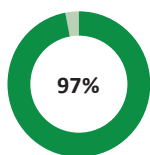
Interviews also highlighted a strong and increasing need for negotiation capacity building across the humanitarian sector, and of widespread appreciation for the unique learning opportunities offered by the CCHN.

An increasing need for skills development among frontline staff

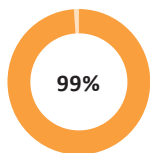
Of those who participated in a CCHN negotiation workshop for the first time in 2024...



Found the CCHN negotiation methodology useful or very useful.



Rated the quality of workshop content as 4 over 5 or higher.



Would recommend CCHN workshops to colleagues.

Why is humanitarian negotiation a critical tool in field operations?



Regular interviews conducted with humanitarian across the globe confirm that humanitarian negotiation...

- Allows to **establish and maintain access** to affected populations while also ensuring the **safety of aid workers** and operations.
- Fosters cooperation and **reduces resistance from counterparts** by promoting sustainable relationships of trust in the longer term.
- Helps humanitarian navigate bureaucratic, administrative and logistical impediments, **preventing aid blockages and delays**.
- Facilitates an ongoing **dialogue with communities** receiving assistance, ensuring that the aid delivered is appropriate, timely and inclusive.
- Complements, supports and amplifies **diplomatic efforts** for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The CCHN Field Manual on Humanitarian Negotiation helps humanitarian negotiators systematically prepare negotiations and achieve better outcomes, but also to observe and evaluate past negotiation processes.

“LOOKING AT THE CURRENT CRISES AROUND THE WORLD, IT IS CLEAR THAT BOTH ACCESS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS SAFETY AND SECURITY OF HUMANITARIAN WORKERS ARE INCREASINGLY AND OFTEN SYSTEMATICALLY THREATENED. THE NEED FOR AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS CONSTANTLY GROWING. HONESTLY, IF CCHN DIDN'T ALREADY EXIST, WE WOULD HAVE TO INVENT IT RIGHT NOW.”

– H.E. Ambassador Deike Potzel,
Director General for Crisis Prevention,
Stabilisation, Peace Building and
Humanitarian Assistance – German
Federal Foreign Office



Learning Catalogue

PART ONE:

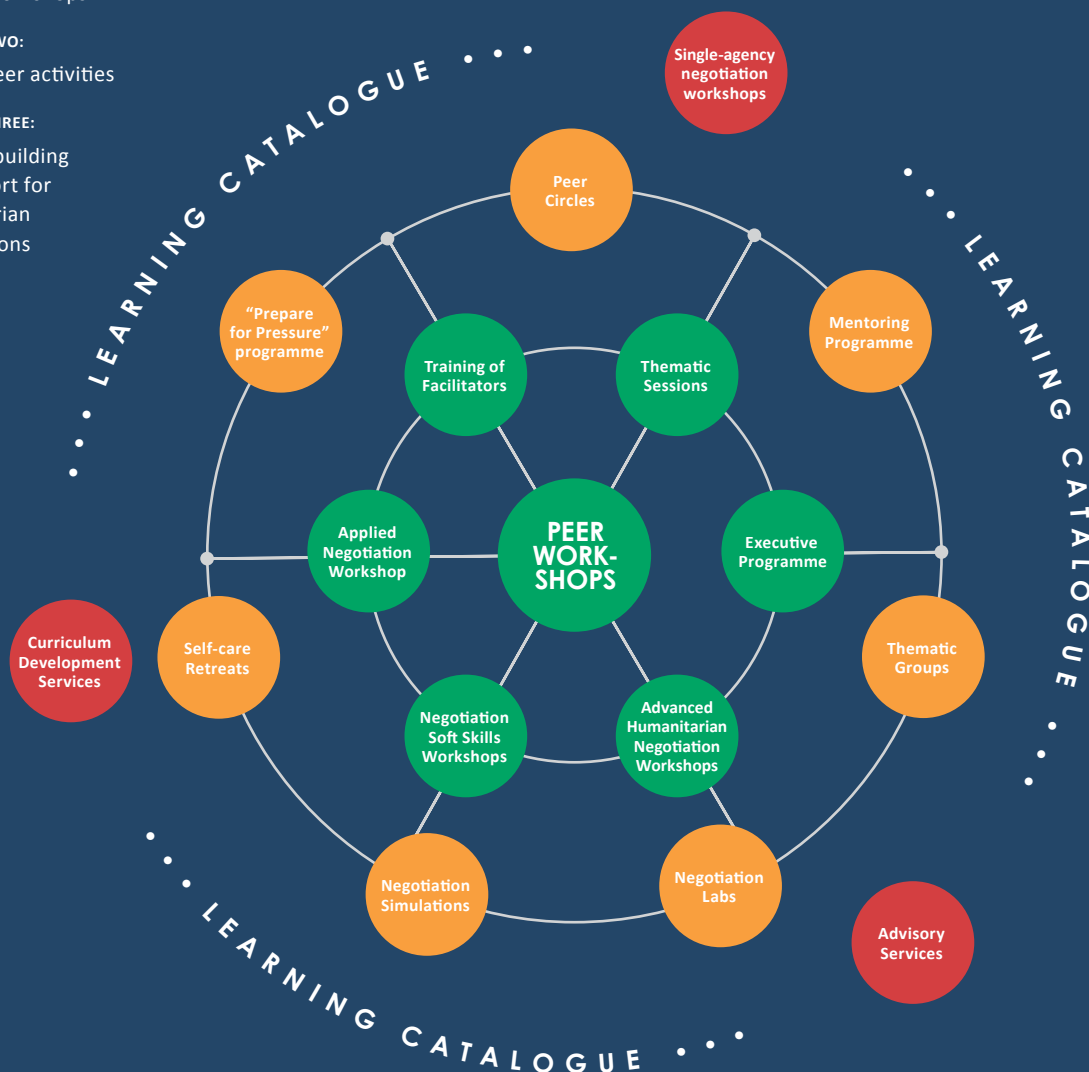
Individual capacity building workshops

PART TWO:

Peer-to-peer activities

PART THREE:

Capacity-building and support for humanitarian organisations



Helping humanitarians learn and share negotiation practices

During 2024, the CCHN delivered:

54	4	7	38	44	26	6	6
FOUNDATIONAL NEGOTIATION WORKSHOPS	ADVANCED NEGOTIATION WORKSHOPS	TRAININGS OF FACILITATORS	THEMATIC AND EXPERT SESSIONS	INFORMAL EXCHANGES ON NEGOTIATION CONTEXTS AND CHALLENGES	INFORMAL EXCHANGES ON PRESSURE MANAGEMENT AND MENTORING	WORKSHOPS FOR SENIOR MANAGERS	PRESSURE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS
1,169	82	88	1,161	540	441	188	102



In 2024, our participants' main reason to attend a CCHN negotiation workshop was to...

64%

DEEPEN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF NEGOTIATION PRACTICES

20%

JOIN A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK OF HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATORS

7%

USE THEIR NEGOTIATION EXPERTISE TO HELP OTHERS

4%

DISCUSS NEGOTIATION CHALLENGES WITH OTHERS

2%

LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS UNDER PRESSURE

3%

OTHER REASON / NO RESPONSE



The CCHN provides humanitarian with a wide range of learning and sharing opportunities, from guidance on specific matters to capacity-building services for organisations and staff on the ground. Photo: Igor Evdokimov / CCHN

THE CCHN'S SUPPORT IN 2024

Negotiation support

In 2024, the Centre of Competence of Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) reinforced its commitment to strengthening the negotiation capacity of humanitarian professionals worldwide through a combination of peer learning, tailored training, and direct support. As humanitarian crises became more complex and access more constrained, the ability to engage effectively with counterparts and secure humanitarian space has never been more critical. CCHN's negotiation support played a vital role in helping humanitarian actors navigate these challenges, ensuring that aid reached those in need while upholding humanitarian principles.

A key element of CCHN's approach is the emphasis on peer learning and community exchange. Humanitarian negotiation often takes place in high-stress, unpredictable environments where strategic planning must be combined with real-time decision-making. Peer learning creates a space where humanitarian professionals can share experiences, exchange strategies, and reflect on challenges together.

In 2024, CCHN facilitated more than 40 informal exchanges, providing a platform for practitioners to discuss negotiation dilemmas and adapt successful approaches from similar contexts. The CCHN community now includes over 8,300 humanitarian professionals from more than 150 countries, creating a powerful network for collective learning and support.

Supporting local actors remained a key priority in 2024. Recognising that national and local staff often face the most complex and high-risk negotiations, CCHN expanded its efforts to make negotiation training and support more accessible. Through the LocalLEARN initiative, more than 70% of new workshop participants were national staff from frontline contexts. This effort not only increased the reach of CCHN's training but also ensured that local negotiators – who are best positioned to understand the cultural and political landscape – were equipped with the tools and strategies to lead negotiations effectively.

By combining peer learning, tailored guidance, and direct support, CCHN strengthened the collective negotiation capacity of the humanitarian sector, empowering professionals at all levels to navigate complex environments and secure better outcomes for affected communities.



CCHN advanced negotiation workshops help humanitarian deepen their skills to plan, manage and evaluate complex humanitarian negotiations.

Developing advanced negotiation skills

Building on its foundational training, the CCHN provides advanced negotiation skills-building opportunities through two initiatives: a three-day Advanced Humanitarian Negotiation Workshop and a wide range of thematic modules or expert sessions on complex negotiation issues.

The advanced workshop allows humanitarian professionals to deepen their specialised skills to plan, manage and evaluate complex humanitarian negotiations. Trained practitioners can delve more deeply into the behavioural aspects of negotiation and lead their teams through the process.

Recognising that not every negotiation is the same and the level of complexity varies based on contexts and counterparts, the CCHN understands that negotiating with communities, armed groups and in disaster contexts requires tailored expertise. The CCHN, therefore, regularly offers modules, expert sessions, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities around specific challenges.

“The CCHN workshop equipped me with practical tools and techniques for effective communication, mediation and conflict resolution – a valuable asset in my efforts to navigate the complexities of humanitarian crises. Whether collaborating with local authorities, engaging with non-governmental organisations, or advocating for the rights of marginalised populations, I now feel better equipped to navigate the inherent tensions and power dynamics that characterise humanitarian contexts.”

Grace Awoyemi, Save the Children, Nigeria

Training workshop facilitators

Most of the CCHN’s negotiation workshops would not be possible without the support of facilitators – experienced humanitarian professionals who volunteer their own time and knowledge to help colleagues become more skilled negotiators.

CCHN facilitators must have successfully completed a “Training of Facilitators”: a workshop in which they review the CCHN negotiation methodology and develop specific skills and techniques to support other humanitarian’s learning through peer approaches.

Throughout 2024, the CCHN organised seven Trainings of Facilitators (six of which took place in person and one online), onboarding some 90 new community facilitators from around the world. This brought the total number of CCHN facilitators to over 1040.

“The CCHN facilitators were exceptional, providing well-planned and dynamic training, using clever strategies to encourage active participation. I had the opportunity to ask questions, contribute to brainstorming sessions and explore the use of tools to determine the typology of humanitarian negotiation, a part I particularly appreciated thanks to clear case studies.

– Djenny-Flore Bien-Aimé,
Humanitarian professional, Haiti



Our workshops would not be possible without the support of facilitators, who volunteer their knowledge to help colleagues develop stronger negotiation skills.



Among those who participated in a CCHN workshop for the first time in 2024...

95%

RATED THE QUALITY OF WORKSHOP FACILITATION AS 4 OVER 5 OF HIGHER

88%

EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN ATTENDING A TRAINING OF FACILITATORS



Participants in the Facilitators' Annual Meeting had the opportunity to visit logistic hub "Dubai Humanitarian", where CEO Giuseppe Saba shared insights on data, technology and innovations.

The Facilitators' Annual Meeting

Between 16-19 December, a group of committed CCHN community members met in Dubai, UAE, to attend the Facilitators' Annual Meeting: an intensive week of training, reflections and exchanges dedicated to those humanitarian professionals who volunteer their time and expertise to help colleagues develop their negotiation skills.

Participants discovered new facilitation methods, explored negotiation strategies, and took part in a hostage negotiation simulation. Some of them attended a special "Training of Facilitators", where they learned new skills and methods to support our more advanced negotiation workshops.

The week wrapped up with a visit to Dubai Humanitarian, the city's humanitarian logistics hub, where CEO Giuseppe Saba provided the participants with interesting insights on humanitarian data, technology and innovations.

Building the capacity of senior humanitarian leaders

After successfully piloting a negotiation curriculum tailored to the needs of humanitarians in leadership positions in previous years, the CCHN continued to help senior leaders build their negotiation capacity by partnering with the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the Global Executive Leadership Initiative (GELI). Collectively, these activities benefited 188 senior humanitarians.

In 2024, in partnership with ICVA, the CCHN delivered high-level negotiation and influencing training in complex environments – focusing on how to structure, support and execute effective negotiations and leverage the humanitarian system. Participants were able to explore collaborative approaches and common positions and a clear outlook of contextual dilemmas.

Collaborating with GELI and the European University Institute, the CCHN delivered the last instances of a senior leadership programme in Dakar and Bangkok, which concluded a series of workshops held in Panama City, Amman and Nairobi during the previous year. Each six-week programme featured a combination of online sessions and in-person workshops.



Senior humanitarian leaders attended a negotiation workshop in Senegal organised jointly by GELI, the European University Institute (EUI) and the CCHN. Photo: GELI



The CCHN continues to help senior leaders build their skills to lead complex negotiation processes. Photo: Igor Evdokimov / CCHN

Providing advisory support

In a sector that deals with life-saving needs, professionals often feel an urgent need for negotiated solutions. In high-stakes situations where investing in long-term capacity building is not the most pragmatic approach, the CCHN steps in to provide expert and confidential guidance tailored to the problem set at hand.

Throughout 2024, the CCHN assisted different agencies focusing on humanitarian access and negotiation strategies as well as teams confronted with specific negotiation dilemmas in challenging environments such as Sudan or Somalia.

Recognising the critical role that States play in humanitarian diplomacy, in 2024, the CCHN expanded its advisory support to governmental and diplomatic staff engaged in negotiation efforts pertinent to humanitarian issues.

The LocalLEARN Initiative: Elevating local negotiation expertise

Grassroots humanitarian organisations play a crucial role in responding to crises and negotiating assistance and protection for their own communities. However, local staff tend to have fewer opportunities for skills development and exchange with colleagues across the sector.

The CCHN supports these organisations by:

- Offering humanitarian negotiation training **free of charge** and in **multiple languages**, both online and in person.
- Providing eligible participants with **travel and accommodation support** to attend our workshops in their region of work.
- Offering skills-building and the assistance needed to **independently organise humanitarian negotiation training**.

In 2024, 73% of new workshop participants were national staff, a 33% increase from the previous year. With this initiative, the CCHN aims to make its learning activities accessible and inclusive to local actors, as well as to increasingly encourage the participation of practitioners at the grassroots level in its community of practice.



The LocalLEARN initiatives was established in 2024 to create more accessible negotiation training opportunities for local and national staff working in smaller NGOs.



"I recently had the privilege of being selected as one of the facilitators for a peer workshop on frontline humanitarian negotiations (...) hosted by the Global Protection Cluster. It was specifically tailored for participants working in the protection sector in Syria. This workshop was a two-way learning experience, offering participants a platform to practice negotiation skills while sharing invaluable field examples from their own experiences. It was an excellent opportunity to highlight the unique challenges and opportunities in protection work, fostering deeper understanding and practical insights and sharing my experience".

Jumaa Alhaj Khalaf,
Security and
Humanitarian Access
Manager, Global
Communities, Syria



In May, CCHN Director Joëlle Germanier provided insights on engaging with weapon bearers during UNOCHA's Protection of Civilians Week held in New York.

THE CCHN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The CCHN community across key thematic areas

Protection negotiations

The CCHN activities placed significant attention on protection negotiations as a critical, cross-cutting topic across world regions. In close collaboration with UNHCR and the Global Protection Cluster, the CCHN delivered negotiation workshops with an emphasis on protection for practitioners working in Myanmar, Sudan, Northwest Syria and Somalia.

The CCHN continued to explore the topic throughout the year by holding a panel on engaging weapon bearers in civilian protection during the World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation and starting a series of regular, informal online exchanges about protection negotiations and how they intersect with international humanitarian law.

The CCHN commissioned the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to research negotiations on the protection of civilians, which will be finalised in 2025 and will be used to fine-tune its approach.

In May, CCHN Director Joëlle Germanier spoke about engaging with weapon bearers for the protection of civilians during UNOCHA's Protection of Civilians Week, in a session hosted at the Permanent Mission of Norway in New York.

At the intersection of negotiation and international humanitarian law

To mark the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the CCHN delivered a series of four webinars exploring the intersection of humanitarian negotiations and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). These events addressed the perceived disconnect between legal frameworks and field realities, equipping practitioners with the tools to uphold humanitarian principles and navigate protection challenges effectively.

Discussions spanned from leveraging legal mechanisms to engaging non-state actors and navigating political sensitivities. Experts from various organisations, including the ICRC and Geneva Call, provided insights on how to translate legal norms into practical negotiation strategies, ensuring IHL remains a vital tool for humanitarian action. Overall, the webinars were attended by 1,180 participants.



*The CCHN delivered its first-ever workshop focusing on the intersection between humanitarian diplomacy and negotiation, held in December in Ukraine.
Photo: Igor Evdokimov / CCHN*

Humanitarian diplomacy as part of frontline negotiation strategies

In today's humanitarian landscape, humanitarian work and diplomacy are bound to intersect. Humanitarian and diplomatic actors increasingly share the same operational space, often at the risk of politicising humanitarian assistance. In this context, it becomes more and more important to leverage humanitarian diplomacy efforts as part of frontline humanitarian negotiation strategies.

In 2024, the CCHN spent several months researching how diplomatic efforts around humanitarian issues can be better aligned with the strategic negotiation approaches of humanitarian actors. The research findings were published in the report "Humanitarians and their engagement with the diplomatic community," while a series of monthly blog pieces supported professionals in applying the findings in their everyday operations.

The research was presented at several events, including the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, the Doha Forum and the Asian Regional Humanitarian Partnerships Week; it was then used to design new learning opportunities, including the first-ever humanitarian diplomacy workshop organised by the CCHN in Ukraine in December 2024. The same topic was also explored in detail during the World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation as part of a panel session which saw the participation of Peter Maurer and Dr Hugo Slim alongside speakers from the ICRC, the German and United Arab Emirates governments, UNHCR, and Nonviolent Peaceforce Ukraine.

Humanitarian diplomacy as a strategic negotiation tool

Published in November, the report "Humanitarian diplomacy: Humanitarians and their engagement with the diplomatic community" explores how humanitarian actors engage with diplomats to navigate political constraints, secure access, and influence decision-making in crisis settings. Drawing on over 42 interviews with experts across sectors, the study sheds light on the evolving role of humanitarian diplomacy in a shifting geopolitical landscape, highlighting that:

- **Humanitarian diplomacy is inherently political.** Practitioners must be comfortable navigating political landscapes to influence decision-making and secure humanitarian space.
- **Engagement is key.** Success relies on leveraging influencers, maintaining active dialogue, and framing humanitarian concerns in ways that align with state interests.
- **Strategy prevails over sentiment.** Facts, solutions, and well-crafted narratives resonate more with decision-makers than emotional appeals, making strategic communication essential.

Throughout the year, the CCHN offered training opportunities to senior diplomats from the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and the European Union. These events were organised in collaboration with different organisations, including the Emirates and Qatar Red Crescent Societies, the Doha Academy and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

"The two concepts, negotiation and diplomacy, overlap in practice. You cannot do one without the other. It's not just about your mandate; the legal framework is not enough to open doors for us. We need to strategically engage with our interlocutors, and that requires soft skills."

– Juliet Kenechi Unubi, Humanitarian Diplomacy Advisor, ICRC, Nigeria



In collaboration with the WHO, the CCHN organised sessions on humanitarian negotiation for healthcare, including in Sudan and Yemen.

Negotiating health care in crises

Based on research findings and on feedback received from the community of practice, the CCHN invested additional resources to scale up its capacity building activities targeted at healthcare personnel.

At the request of Médecins Sans Frontières, the CCHN provided tailored guidance on setting institutional red lines and navigating compromises.

CCHN staff also delivered several thematic sessions as part of the World Health Organization's "Leadership in Health Emergencies" course and collaborated with Médecins du Monde in the organisation of the first-ever multi-agency workshop centred around the topic.

In August, the CCHN held a thematic session on humanitarian negotiation for healthcare in crises with the World Health Organization (WHO) and health cluster partners in Sudan. In November, the CCHN held a session on negotiations, healthcare and diplomacy in partnership with the WHO office in Yemen.

Negotiating bureaucratic and administrative impediments

Bureaucratic and administrative impediments pose significant challenges to humanitarian organisations, affecting their ability to operate efficiently, deliver aid, and uphold humanitarian principles. Whether dealing with complex registration processes, visa restrictions, financial regulations, or political and economic constraints, these barriers require strategic engagement, careful negotiation, and a deep understanding of local and institutional dynamics.

"AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERT DEEPLY COMMITTED TO SERVING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND PROMOTING HEALTH EQUITY, PARTICIPATING IN THIS WORKSHOP PRESENTED A UNIQUE CHANCE TO BROADEN MY SKILL SET AND DEEPEN MY UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION IN COMPLEX SETTINGS. WHAT INTRIGUED ME MOST (...) WAS ITS FOCUS ON EQUIPPING PARTICIPANTS WITH PRACTICAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES TO NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGING DYNAMICS OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS."

— Grace Adeitan (Adeyemi) Awoyemi
Program Officer,
Save the Children — Nigeria

Understanding the serious hindrance that these challenges pose to humanitarian operations, in 2024 the CCHN focused on conducting research to understand how administrative hurdles concretely obstruct humanitarian access, and how practitioners may be able to negotiate around them. The findings were published in a report, "When bureaucracy gets in the way of aid", released in early 2025. These insights will also inform future events and tailored negotiation workshops planned for the following year.



*Throughout 2024, the CCHN invested efforts into making skills-building opportunities more accessible to women negotiators and discussed the matter in the framework of its World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation.
Photo: Marc Bader / CCHN*

Supporting women negotiators

An effective negotiation team should be diverse in its composition. Research has proven that women-inclusive negotiation teams bring a broader range of perspectives and strategic approaches and tend to ensure more sustainable negotiation outcomes in the longer term. Despite this, the CCHN found that female negotiators have traditionally been underrepresented in frontline negotiations and their contributions remain overlooked. In 2024, the CCHN continued to support female professionals as they strengthen their negotiation capacity while creating a safe space for exchanges across organisations.

In the framework of Women's International Day in March, the CCHN led a month-long communication campaign to shine a light on the challenges and contributions of female negotiators. In addition, three webinars explored the realities women negotiators face in French-speaking Africa, Latin America and Europe – and particularly in Ukraine.

In Afghanistan, the CCHN organised five in-person workshops, with two-thirds of the participants being national female negotiators. For the second year, CCHN facilitator Mariama Sawadogo facilitated a workshop tailored to the challenges of female humanitarian professionals. The workshop was extremely successful, receiving very positive feedback from participants: all of them rated the CCHN methodology “useful” or “very useful”.

“IN MY REGION, MEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A SAY. FOR WOMEN TO MAKE A PLACE FOR THEMSELVES IN THEIR COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATION, THEY MUST WORK DOUBLE AND PROVE THEMSELVES. [...] THANKS TO THE CCHN WORKSHOPS, WOMEN NEGOTIATORS CAN DEVELOP THEIR NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND BE BETTER EQUIPPED.”

– Mariama Sawadogo, Humanitarian consultant and organiser of the negotiation workshops dedicated to female negotiators

Finally, the CCHN organised four “Mastermind sessions: Women at the negotiation table”, a series of online events that originated from the World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation, where participants presented challenges and explored possible solutions with other attendees.

Negotiating in disaster contexts

As climate change, conflict, and humanitarian needs increasingly intersect, effective negotiation strategies for long-term solutions and resilience in regions affected by environmental challenges are becoming more and more essential.

To better understand ongoing negotiation practices, the CCHN interviewed 35 professionals on their experience working in disaster responses in Lebanon, Myanmar, Pakistan, Syria, and Türkiye. Their insights were consolidated in a report, “Negotiating in disaster contexts: Experiences of first negotiators and first responders in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa”, and which were used to inform thematic activities.

Throughout 2024, the CCHN also facilitated several online sessions across regions, during which practitioners explored the topic and exchanged their best practices for negotiating in disaster contexts.



A fundamental aspect of CCHN's workshops is creating a safe space for professionals to reflect on shared experiences and contribute to the development of the community of practice.



**Between
2023 and 2024,
the CCHN
trained nearly**

100

**FAMILY MEMBERS
NEGOTIATING
WHILE LOOKING
FOR THEIR LOVED
ONES IN**

20

**CONTEXTS
GLOBALLY**

Community negotiations

Supporting families looking for their loved ones

The families of people who went missing in the aftermath of conflict play a critical role in the search for their loved ones as frontline negotiators. As they interact with authorities, armed groups, religious leaders, communities and other families, they require solid negotiation skills and plenty of support in navigating emotionally charged situations.

Established in 2023, the CCHN's ongoing collaboration with the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency yielded two negotiation workshops catering specifically to the families of missing persons. These one-of-a-kind workshops were held online in English and Spanish, with interpretation provided in Arabic, Bosnian, Georgian, Hausa, Sinhala and Tagalog. Between 2023 and 2024, CCHN workshops allowed to train nearly 100 family members from over 20 contexts globally.

The CCHN also trained families of missing persons who had previously attended a negotiation workshop to independently facilitate these types of events in the future.

This unique Training of Facilitators was delivered online, over five weekly sessions, with the participation of 28 families – notably from Nigeria, Nepal, Lebanon, Mexico and Honduras.

"NEGOTIATION AND PROTECTION PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FACED [IN] SUDAN. THESE SKILLS HELP ENSURE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION, THE SAFETY OF BENEFICIARIES, AND MORE EFFICIENT AID DELIVERY. THANK YOU TO CCHN FOR THIS VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY."

– Ahmed Ali, Micro-grants coordinator,
Private Youth Centre, Sudan

For the 56 participants, who defined the experience "eye-opening" and "inspiring", it was an opportunity to exchange similar challenges, learn how to approach counterparts, and discover tools to better structure their negotiation. Overall, participants benefitting from this shared initiative reported increased confidence, a clearer understanding of how to approach authorities, and a stronger sense of empowerment in their advocacy efforts.



Practitioners who joined the “soft skills” workshop in the Ivory Coast had the opportunity to test their new conflict resolution and stress management skills in a series of simulations.

Negotiations with, by and through communities

Failed negotiations with communities may restrict access, disrupt operational continuity and create resistance to aid. In extreme cases, it can lead to security incidents for humanitarian staff.

Aware of these challenges, in 2024 the CCHN organised a negotiation workshop in Colombia that equipped 20 women community leaders with the negotiation skills needed to support their communities.

A similar workshop was organised in Ukraine to support civil society organisations and community leaders in their daily negotiations. Throughout the year, the CCHN facilitated several discussions among humanitarians on their experiences negotiating with, by and through communities across regions.

Pressure management and mentoring

Negotiating in high-stakes environment can take a toll on a team’s mental health, impact productivity and turnover, and ultimately affect humanitarian operations. For several years, the CCHN has placed particular attention on helping negotiators develop resilience techniques while providing them with a safe and confidential environment where to discuss challenges and receive guidance.

“THE WORKSHOP WAS INCREDIBLY BENEFICIAL AND WELL-ORGANIZED. THE FORMAT WAS ENGAGING AND INFORMATIVE, COVERING ALL THE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF NEGOTIATION. I FOUND THE PRACTICAL EXERCISES PARTICULARLY USEFUL, AS THEY PROVIDED HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AND REINFORCED THE THEORETICAL CONCEPTS DISCUSSED. THANK YOU FOR THE VALUABLE INSIGHTS AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE.”

– Hanna Rudenko, Project Assistant, IOM Ukraine and participant in the workshop on negotiations with communities

Throughout 2024, several “Prepare for Pressure” workshops were organised in different languages, tailored to professionals working in Brazil, Haiti, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Venezuela and Ukraine. Additionally, CCHN staff organised a series of “Resilience Coffees” – informal discussions around self-care and mental health – in collaboration with experts on topics such as dealing with anger and aggression, grief, and intuition in decision making. A public session on how to manage stress and remain in control during negotiations was held online in the framework of the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week.

At the same time, the CCHN continued growing its mentoring program, which puts frontline negotiators in touch with experienced colleagues willing to provide support and guidance in a confidential way. New mentors were onboarded, while professionals already taking part in this initiative met regularly online to exchange experiences and practice their skills.

The 'human' side of negotiation: Why soft skills matter

In 2024, the CCHN piloted new workshop modules on soft skills – in other words, those interpersonal and emotional intelligence abilities that enable negotiators to manage relationships and navigate complex human dynamics.

Delivered for the first time in November during a training in the Ivory Coast, these learning modules were built around three core pillars of negotiation: building trust, fostering connection and influencing effectively. Participants had the opportunity to explore new communication, conflict resolution and stress management techniques and put them into practice during a series of simulations. Following this successful pilot phase, the CCHN will continue to develop the programme in 2025.



In collaboration with the ICRC Virtual Reality team, the CCHN began developing an AI-based negotiation simulation allowing humanitarians to put their skills to the test.

Training negotiators with AI-powered tools

In collaboration with the ICRC Virtual Reality team, in 2024 the CCHN began developing a digital negotiation simulation based on Artificial Intelligence which allows humanitarians to fully immerse themselves in a realistic field negotiation scenario.

By attempting to negotiate passage through a checkpoint, users can exchange with an avatar whose reactions are trained through the experiences of actual humanitarian negotiators, putting their skills and strategies to the test.

The pilot simulation was presented for the first time in June during the World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation and once again in October in the framework of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

“I WAS NOT ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON MY WORDING. SOMETIMES, EVEN WHEN I WANTED TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE SPECIFIC ISSUES, I USED TO LEAVE THE SPECIFIC TOPIC AND MOVE TO SOMEWHERE ELSE. THE CCHN PRESSURE MANAGEMENT TRAINING HELPED ME, ESPECIALLY MY CONCENTRATION IN STICKING TO THE SPECIFIC TOPIC.”

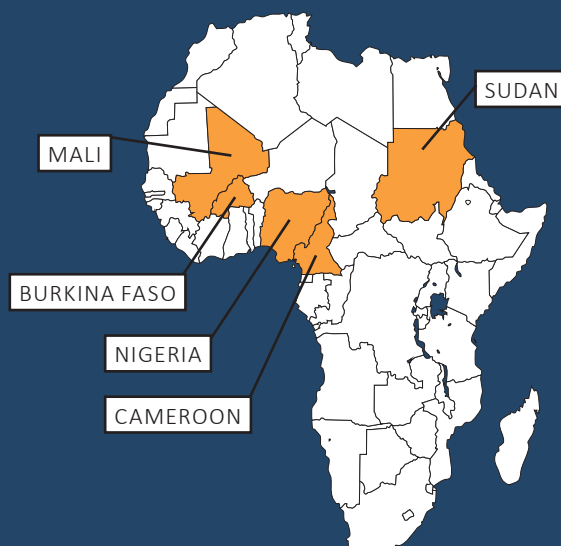
– Amir Khan Haqmal, Head of Faryab Satellite Office, World Food Programme, Afghanistan

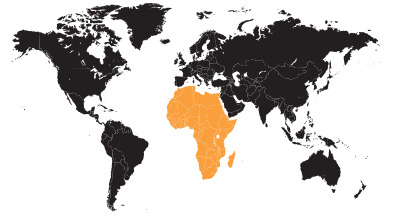


BY SHARING FIELD EXPERIENCES AND APPLYING THE CCHN TOOLS AND METHODS, WE GAINED INVALUABLE PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE TO ENHANCE OUR FUTURE OPERATIONS.

— Mussab Salah Aldin
Humanitarian professional, Sudan

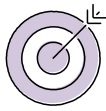
Most of the professionals trained in 2024 were based in...





Africa

Priority focus areas in the region include



PROTECTION NEGOTIATIONS

NEGOTIATIONS WITH ARMED AND DESIGNATED GROUPS

ACCESS NEGOTIATIONS

HEALTH NEGOTIATIONS

In 2024, the African continent faced escalating humanitarian challenges. Particularly in Sudan and the Central Sahel, access to affected populations became increasingly problematic; humanitarian workers faced severe restrictions due to the targeting of personnel and assets, administrative and bureaucratic hurdles, and armed groups limiting access. Hurdles imposed by authorities narrowed the margins for humanitarian operations, making it difficult to reach those urgently needing assistance. While the situation impacted all humanitarian actors and operations, national and local organisations or smaller NGOs disproportionately bore the brunt.

In response to this critical situation, the CCHN increased targeted efforts in the African region by facilitating an even wider range of workshops, sessions, and other learning and exchanging opportunities in the most high-stakes contexts, focusing on local and national agencies and staff.



In September, a Training of Facilitators, organised in Nairobi, Kenya, equipped humanitarian professionals with the skills to share their knowledge of negotiation tools with colleagues.

Throughout 2024, the CCHN invested considerably into providing dedicated skill building opportunities to humanitarian practitioners working in the Sahel region.



Meron Anteneh Getachew
Humanitarian professional, Ethiopia

It was a few days packed with honest conversations about what it means to negotiate in the humanitarian world. We tackled a bunch of tricky topics: how to handle the tough calls, balance different norms, and find the so-called 'Islands of Agreement', when everything around you feels like quicksand. The whole experience was both humbling and eye-opening. Grateful for the people I met and the insights shared – it's a reminder that, in this line of work, we're not alone.

Activity highlights

- The CCHN significantly intensified its efforts to cater to practitioners based in **Sudan**. These included general and specialised negotiation workshops focused on healthcare and protection issues. In support of the many access negotiation challenges, the CCHN provided negotiation guidance to the World Food Programme's Emergency Coordination Team. Two additional negotiation workshops were organised for humanitarian staff working for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the region.
- In the **Central Sahel** region, the CCHN organised an advanced negotiation workshop, trained a new cohort of workshop facilitators, and held its first soft skills simulation in Ivory Coast. A negotiation workshop was held in Bamako, Mali; the CCHN further collaborated with the Global Executive Leadership Initiative (GELI) to organise a workshop for senior NGO leaders in Dakar, Senegal.
- To support practitioners in the **Horn of Africa**, the CCHN provided advisory services to the Access Working Group in Sudan and organised an introductory session to humanitarian negotiation for Médecins du Monde in Ethiopia.
- A collaboration with UNHCR and the Global Protection Cluster yielded one workshop focusing on the **protection of civilians** in armed conflict targeting professionals in Somalia.

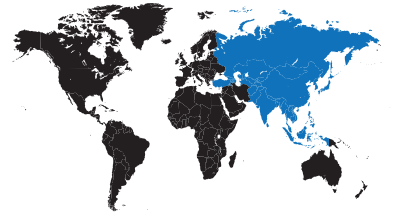


**I AM TRULY
GRATEFUL FOR THIS
EXCELLENT LEARNING
OPPORTUNITY. IT HAS
BEEN AN INVALUABLE
EXPERIENCE THAT
HAS SIGNIFICANTLY
CONTRIBUTED TO
MY PROFESSIONAL
GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT.**

— Rose Enn Tin Sung
Humanitarian professional,
Geneva Call, Myanmar

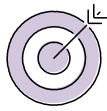
Most of the professionals
trained in 2024 were based in...





Asia

Priority
focus
areas in
the region
include



NEGOTIATIONS
IN THE
FRAMEWORK
OF DISASTERS

THE ROLE OF
COMMUNITY
NEGOTIATORS

NEGOTIATING
WITH DE-FACTO
AUTHORITIES

In response to the severe limitations to humanitarian access and the threats to the security of humanitarian workers recorded in Asia throughout 2024, the CCHN worked to support the negotiation efforts of local humanitarian staff and community negotiators, including by conducting research on their practices. To expand the effectiveness of its services, the CCHN consolidated its collaboration with humanitarian agencies which enjoy a solid presence on the ground.

Activity highlights

- Together with the UNHCR and Global Protection Cluster, the CCHN delivered a negotiation workshop for protection actors working in **Myanmar**. The CCHN organised an additional negotiation workshop and thematic session for humanitarians working in Myanmar, allowing for more inclusivity and building negotiation skills for national staff.
- In **Afghanistan**, the CCHN delivered three negotiation workshops in Herat, Kabul and Mezar, and trained two new cohorts of workshop facilitators. Two-thirds of the participants were national female negotiators.
- The CCHN delivered three negotiation workshops for senior leaders in partnership with the Global Executive Leadership Initiative (GELI) and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).
- In 2024, the CCHN conducted research on **negotiators working in disaster response**, a topic particularly relevant to humanitarians in Asia. It released its report “Negotiating in disaster contexts: Experiences of first negotiators and first responders in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.” The report combines the findings from more than 35 interviews conducted with experts across Lebanon, Myanmar, Pakistan, Syria, and Türkiye and contains practical recommendations for humanitarian workers operating in the region.

The CCHN delivered a negotiation workshop and a thematic session for practitioners working in Myanmar, with a particular focus on staff from national organisations.

Negotiating in the aftermath of a disaster: A CCHN research

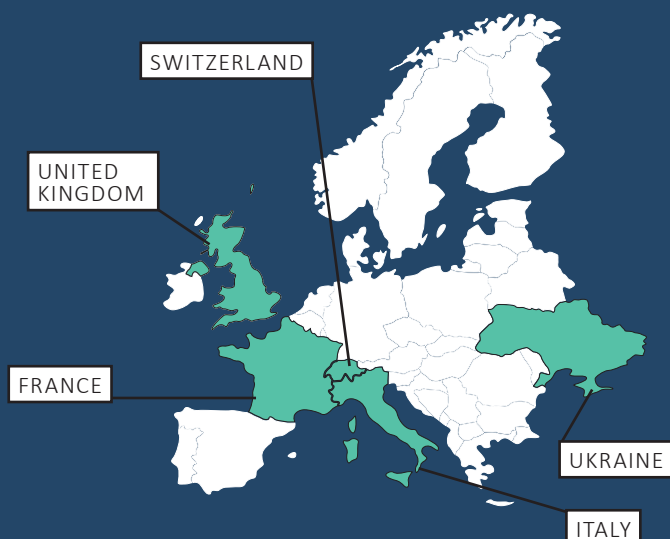
Released in April, the report “Negotiating in disaster contexts: Experiences of first negotiators and first responders in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa” is based on 35 semi-structured research interviews with humanitarian workers who worked in the aftermath of the Syria-Türkiye earthquake, the Beirut port explosion, floodings in Pakistan, and cyclone Mocha in Myanmar. Based on real-life practices, the report contains a series of recommendations for humanitarians working in disaster response, including:

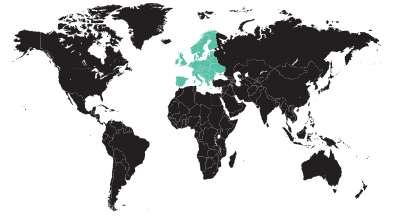
1. **Focusing on ‘relationships,’ ‘relevance,’ and ‘rapid response,’** which are key to establishing the right groundwork, strategising the next steps, and bringing humanitarians closer to the impacted communities and their counterparts.
2. **Building trust** through empathy and patience, being supportive and present, leveraging local networks and respecting protocols.
3. **Choosing a strategy that suits the organisation’s capacities, objectives and role.** After a disaster, organisations can either respond quickly, knowing that pace can only be sustained in the short term, or they can be slower while remaining effective in the long run.
4. Being aware that disaster response requires a **flexible approach** to processes. This might require negotiating compliance, funding, or resource mobilisation procedures with donors to reduce bureaucratic requirements for a more agile response.

WHILE WE OFTEN BELIEVE WE KNOW HOW TO NAVIGATE NEGOTIATIONS, IT WAS EYE-OPENING TO REALIZE HOW MUCH WE CAN IMPROVE WITH ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND CONTINUE LEARNING IN THIS COMPLEX YET ESSENTIAL PROCESS! BIG UP TO THE CCHN TEAM FOR CREATING SUCH A VALUABLE SPACE FOR EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES.

— Ronan Guillou, Humanitarian access specialist, Humanity & Inclusion, France

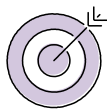
Most of the professionals trained in 2024 were based in...





Europe

Priority focus areas in the region include



NEGOTIATING IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION MOVEMENTS AND DETENTION ISSUES

NEGOTIATING ACCESS TO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

In response to the challenges generated by the ongoing conflict, the CCHN intensified efforts to support humanitarian practitioners working in Ukraine and its surrounding region. As humanitarian organisations must manage complex negotiations with both state authorities and armed groups to reach vulnerable populations, the CCHN also began investing additional resources into building the diplomatic capacity of humanitarian professionals.

Activity highlights

- In 2024, the CCHN delivered several trainings in **Ukraine**, including a workshop focused on negotiations with communities, an advanced negotiation workshop and a Training of Facilitators. The year saw a close and fruitful collaboration with the Ukrainian and Norwegian Red Cross, who supported the first **humanitarian diplomacy** workshop for humanitarian leaders working in the country.
- The CCHN continued its successful collaboration with the **Central Tracing Agency**, the ICRC entity providing services around missing persons. Two online workshops were provided to families who negotiate while searching for their loved ones, while trainees who had attended workshops during the previous year could develop their facilitation skills in one of the five Training of Facilitators offered to families of the missing.
- The CCHN participated in several humanitarian conferences, including the **European Humanitarian Forum** organised by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in Brussels, Belgium and the **Humanitarian Congress in Berlin**, Germany. CCHN staff and network members participated in panels on delivering humanitarian aid in crime-affected environments and locals leading humanitarian negotiations.
- The CCHN was one of the few initiatives invited to attend and exhibit at the launch of the **German Federal Foreign Office's** new humanitarian assistance strategy, where it was underlined that strengthening the negotiating capacity of humanitarian organisations is essential.

The CCHN held multiple negotiation workshops in Ukraine where participants from various agencies gathered to discuss access strategies, trust building techniques or upholding humanitarian principles.
Photo: CCHN



The stakeholder mapping – a negotiation tool used to identify negotiation counterparts – was particularly appreciated by practitioners working in Ukraine. Photo: CCHN



Maria Ieromenko
Movement Communication Officer, ICRC Ukraine

“While the skills for successful negotiations are honed over years of experience, many of these skills can be learned! This includes active listening, empathy, comprehending the opponent’s perspective, understanding your and their red lines, and many more – to achieve a consensus with your counterpart. These were the core focus areas of the Advanced Negotiation Workshop from the CCHN, which I was delighted to participate in, in Kyiv, Ukraine. It was a great opportunity!”

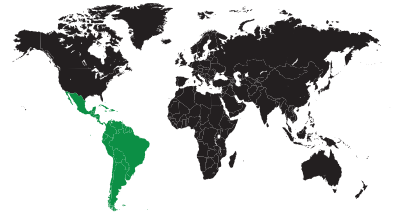


“
THE CCHN WORKSHOP WAS AN EXCELLENT SPACE FOR GROWTH AND OPTIMAL OPPORTUNITY TO NETWORK IN THE COMMUNITY. THE TOOLS PRESENTED WERE APPROPRIATE AND FLEXIBLE. I LIKED THE HORIZONTAL APPROACH DURING THE WORKSHOP THAT ALLOWED EVERYONE TO FEEL FREE TO CONTRIBUTE WITH QUESTIONS AND ENRICH THE CONVERSATION.

— Martina Adinolfi
Associate Humanitarian Affairs Officer,
UNOCHA, Panama

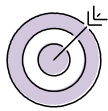
Most of the professionals trained in 2024 were based in...





Latin America and the Caribbean

Priority focus areas in the region include



NEGOTIATING WITH CRIMINAL GROUPS

ACCESS NEGOTIATIONS

NEGOTIATING WITH COMMUNITIES

NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION MOVEMENTS

Throughout 2024, Latin America and the Caribbean grappled with humanitarian access impediments, a surge in migration movements, and heightened tension due to the activities of guerrillas and criminal groups paired with the absence of solid governmental institutions. The CCHN focused its efforts on responding to the negotiation challenges emerging from this complex situation.

Activity highlights

- Amidst heightened tensions in the country, the CCHN was able to conduct essential capacity building activities in **Haiti** during the month of October. The CCHN staff provided a negotiation workshop and a thematic session, where professionals explored the negotiation challenges related to the Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission sent to support the Haitian government in curbing gang violence.
- The CCHN delivered a foundational and advanced negotiation workshop in **Venezuela** as well as an in-person Training of Host Facilitators. This workshop equipped committed community members with the necessary skills and knowledge to independently organise their own negotiation workshops, something which becomes particularly relevant in hard-to-reach areas that CCHN staff is otherwise unable to access.
- CCHN members in Latin America adopted a proactive stance and independently delivered four **community-led negotiation workshops**, two of which were organised in collaboration with Geneva Call. In November, CCHN community members independently held an online negotiation workshop aimed at humanitarian professionals in **Brazil**.

The CCHN provided practical and strategic negotiation tools to professionals who are working in the complex context of Haiti.

Humanitarian negotiation: A lifeline for affected populations in Haiti

Throughout 2024, gangs in Haiti intensified their siege of Port-au-Prince and the rural department of Artibonite. Security greatly deteriorated, while the collapse of institutions made access to protection, health care and essential infrastructure nearly impossible for the local population.

As a consequence, humanitarian operations have been affected by several levels of access constraints and security risks. Practitioners must regularly negotiate with multiple counterparts, including communities, gang members, local authorities, the Haitian national police, and Kenyan-led Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission members.

The CCHN supported practitioners in Haiti by providing negotiation training and creating a space for various organisations to discuss their negotiation practices in the current climate.



Tatiana Rubio Díaz
Technical coordinator – RET International, Peru

"I completed the CCHN humanitarian negotiation course and I am left with this insight: negotiators in the field must establish a congenial framework for exchange in a humane way, building the necessary trust on a shared experience by exploring the relevant facts and addressing the expected behaviour. Extraordinary course, very thoughtful and relevant."

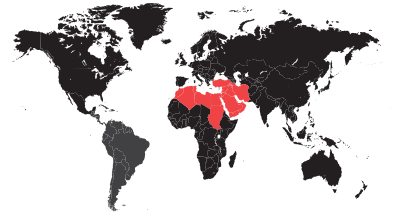


“
AS HUMANITARIAN
WORKERS, WE
NEGOTIATE EVERY
DAY AT EVERY LEVEL
TO DELIVER AID.
YET, LIMITED ENTITIES
INVESTED THE TIME AND
RESOURCES TEACHING
HUMANITARIAN
WORKERS HOW TO DO
IT EFFECTIVELY. IT WAS
A PLEASURE GETTING
TO KNOW THE CCHN
COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE.

— Masa Nehlawi
Humanitarian professional, Syria

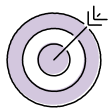
Most of the professionals
trained in 2024 were based in...





Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

Priority focus areas in the region include



NEGOTIATIONS
AMID
BUREAUCRATIC
AND
ADMINISTRATIVE
IMPEDIMENTS

THE ROLE OF
COMMUNITY
NEGOTIATORS

NEGOTIATIONS IN
THE FRAMEWORK
OF DISASTERS

PROTECTION
NEGOTIATIONS

In 2024, the humanitarian situation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continued to present challenges due to ongoing conflicts and political unrest, particularly with the high-intensity conflict in the Gaza strip. The CCHN continued to be mindful of the challenges of humanitarian practitioners in the most critical contexts while also focusing on community negotiators and those who negotiate in the aftermath of a disaster.

Activity highlights

- In response to the situation in the **Occupied Palestinian Territories**, the CCHN provided support to frontline staff involved in high-stakes negotiations. This included offering confidential advice to states and humanitarian organisations, assistance to those working on humanitarian protection issues, and guidance to our network of trained negotiators in the region.
- The CCHN scaled up its efforts to support local professionals working in **Northwest Syria** by delivering a negotiation workshop in collaboration with UNHCR and the Global Protection Cluster (GPC).
- In May, the CCHN delivered a series of workshops in **Jordan** focused on topics such as negotiation skills to promote the safety and dignity of crisis-affected populations, negotiating with power, and negotiations in the context of disasters and sudden escalation of conflict. The workshop was aimed at professionals working on protection issues at a regional level.



Millicent (Tatendaishie) Mudiwa
Humanitarian professional, Jordan

"At the end of October, at UNRWA HQ in Amman we participated in a training facilitated by the CCHN. Key takeaways from this training included a deeper understanding of four essential negotiation aspects: ideal outcomes, alternative scenarios, the bottom line, and the "red line," along with its sources and the legitimacy of the negotiator. We explored complex dynamics such as the polarity of dilemmas, power dynamics in negotiations, and the factors that shape our compromises. The importance of skill-building and professional development was emphasized throughout."

- The CCHN published its research on **negotiators working in disaster response**. Interviewees included mostly national staff, who play a key role in the early onset of a crisis. Several discussions between practitioners took place throughout the year to consolidate their knowledge of current practices around the topic.
- A **new collaboration** was established with the Qatari Diplomatic Institute and the Center of Conflict and Humanitarian Studies. Two sessions provided the opportunity to present the CCHN work, particularly to young diplomats interested in the topic of negotiation.
- Over 25 humanitarian leaders from international and local NGOs attended a negotiation workshop organised in **Yemen** in collaboration with the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), where they discussed shared challenges and possible opportunities for humanitarian negotiations in the country.

Mindful of the complex crises that are taking place in the region, the CCHN supported Middle East negotiators by providing them with training and guidance.



In July, The CCHN gathered its thriving and diverse community of humanitarian negotiators in Geneva. Using a peer-learning approach, participants engaged in thematic discussions and collaborative planning to improve negotiation practices in their regions. Photo: Marc Bader/CCHN



The
Community
Days brought
together

79

FRONTLINE
NEGOTIATORS
FROM

39

COUNTRIES

THE WORLD SUMMIT ON HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION AND CCHN COMMUNITY DAYS

Once again in 2024, the CCHN gathered frontline negotiators, policymakers, academics, and humanitarian decision-makers in Geneva, Switzerland for two major events:

- The CCHN Community Days (25-26 June) and
- The World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation (27-28 June).

These gatherings, which were co-organised by the Government of Germany and the State of Geneva, provided a key platform to reflect on emerging challenges, share best practices, and explore the future of humanitarian negotiation.

The Community Days: The 8th annual meeting of the CCHN community of practice

The Community Days brought together 79 frontline negotiators from 39 countries, who gathered in Geneva to reflect on shared experiences and contribute to the development of the community of practice.

Participants engaged in peer learning, thematic discussions, and collaborative planning, focusing on key challenges such as negotiating access, engaging armed groups, and ensuring principled humanitarian action.

Participants developed regional priorities to improve negotiation practice, emphasising capacity-building, coordination, and resilience strategies. Feedback highlighted the event's value in fostering a safe space for peer exchange, also appreciating the professional connections and mutual support which are made possible by membership in the community.

"I am still processing the avalanche of experiences, ideas and emotions of these intense days. As a Latin American humanitarian negotiator, I feel that I am returning home with a suitcase full of tools and reflections that can greatly enrich our practice in the region."

— Jhozman Camacho, Information Management Associate, UNOCHA, Venezuela



The World Summit was an opportunity for local and international humanitarian professionals to exchange practical knowledge through thematic sessions, panel discussions and storytelling.
Photo: Marc Bader / CCHN



**The 2024
World Summit
gathered**

250

PARTICIPANTS
IN GENEVA AND
NEARLY

1,000

ONLINE ATTENDEES
FROM MORE THAN

85

ORGANISATIONS
AND

50

COUNTRIES

The 2024 World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation

Building on the insights from the Community Days and celebrating the 10th anniversary of the creation of the CCHN's negotiation methodology, the 2024 World Summit gathered 250 participants in Geneva and nearly 1,000 online attendees from more than 85 organisations and 50 countries. The Summit featured thematic panels, high-level discussions, and interactive sessions focusing on key themes including humanitarian diplomacy, negotiating access in crisis settings, misinformation and digital threats, climate negotiations as well as the role of diversity and gender in negotiations team.

An exhibition space allowed multiple organisations involved in the negotiation domain and practitioners of diverse backgrounds to come together, meet and exchange. During the networking session, the CCHN presented an AI-based negotiation simulation which is the product of an innovative collaboration with the ICRC Virtual Reality team.

Feedback on the event was overwhelmingly positive, with 80% of surveyed participants stating the event met or exceeded expectations. Together, the Community Days and World Summit reinforced the importance of collaboration, continuous learning, and adapting negotiation strategies to today's complex humanitarian landscape.

"THIS SUMMIT WAS A REMARKABLE GATHERING OF PRACTITIONERS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATIONS IN CONFLICT ZONES AND CRISES AROUND THE WORLD. AS A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL WHO STARTED MY LEARNING JOURNEY IN HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO, MEETING AND DISCUSSING WITH FRONTLINE NEGOTIATORS FROM GAZA, SUDAN, AFGHANISTAN, UKRAINE, AND MANY OTHER PLACES WAS AN IMMENSE OPPORTUNITY."

– Julien Mangold
Humanitarian Desk Officer
for South Sudan – ECHO



More detailed accounts of the 2024 Community Days and World Summit, along with audio-visual materials and additional resources, are available at bit.ly/negosummit2024.

Naivasha grid

As the CCHN's flagship methodology, the Naivasha grid provides humanitarian negotiators with guidance to prepare, carry out, and evaluate negotiation processes.



CELEBRATING THE 10 YEARS OF THE NAIVASHA GRID, THE CCHN'S NEGOTIATION MODEL

In 2024, the CCHN celebrated the 10th anniversary of its negotiation methodology, the Naivasha grid, which was elaborated during a gathering of senior humanitarian professionals in the Kenyan village of Naivasha and draws on the collective experience of hundreds of practitioners.

Since 2014, this model – which constitutes the framework of all CCHN's negotiation workshops – has been helping humanitarian negotiators systematically prepare negotiations, achieve better outcomes and observe and evaluate past negotiation processes.

The CCHN celebrated this milestone with a year-long communication campaign. A short video documentary highlighting the origins and relevance of the Naivasha grid was first showcased during the opening of the World Summit on Humanitarian Negotiation, while a series of monthly blog pieces supported professionals in applying the methodology in their everyday operations.

Throughout 2024, a series of open and free webinars made the Naivasha grid easily accessible for all humanitarian professionals wishing to discover the CCHN negotiation framework. The webinars, offered in multiple languages and time zones, explored different steps in the negotiation process, from crafting a strong opening argument to de-escalating tensions and building a trust relationship to setting institutional red lines.

“With the CCHN tools, I understood what the responsibility of the management is; what we call mandator, what are the roles of the negotiation teams, what is the role of the negotiator, and how to plan negotiation using the Naivasha grid. For example, we can organize our network and stakeholders; who is a cooperator, who is a spoiler, and who is in the coalition. We use these tools to better plan and better conduct the negotiation. The impact of CCHN is capacity building.”

– World Food Programme staff member.
Excerpt from an anonymised research interview.



85,000

PEOPLE VISITED
THE CCHN WEBSITE



18,500

FOLLOWED THE
CCHN ON LINKEDIN



15,000

SUBSCRIBERS RECEIVED
CCHN NEWSLETTERS



In December, the CCHN was present at the Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week organised in Bangkok by the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). Photo: CCHN

COMMUNICATION

Sharing practices and showing impact through storytelling

Since 2022, the CCHN has been exploring storytelling through podcasting as a tool for humanitarian professionals to share their expertise and encourage additional learning. “Frontline Negotiators: Stories from the Field”, the CCHN’s podcast series, is available on Amazon Music, Apple Podcast and Spotify, as well as on the CCHN website.

After the podcast’s Season 2 wrapped up in late January, a third season composed of 10 episodes was launched in early October, with stories told by practitioners from a variety of humanitarian agencies and geographic contexts. For the first time, the interviews were recorded in French and Spanish as well as in English, allowing for a broader audience.

“Frontline Negotiators” episodes were streamed more than 4,600 times throughout 2024, while the entire series recorded around 13,100 listens since inception. The most successful episode of the year, “Mastering soft skills in negotiations”, was streamed 600 times.

The CCHN continued to systematically conduct interviews to gather information on the way community members apply negotiation tools and learnings in their day-to-day operations. This ongoing effort is producing a growing archive of practices and testimonials, painting the picture of a thriving community of practice which greatly benefits from negotiation skills development and mutual exchanges.

Digital community engagement

The CCHN Communication department works to disseminate negotiation tools and learning in a variety of forms and across different platforms.

In 2024, the CCHN website recorded almost 211,000 visits by more than 85,000 users. The most popular blog piece of the year, “How to start a negotiation: Four simple steps to build your opening argument”, received around 3,800 views. Social networks continued to witness extremely positive growth, with a +45% follower increase on LinkedIn (reaching a 18,500-strong audience), and a 15% follower increase on Facebook.

Over 1,200 new members joined the CCHN’s community-powered interactive forum, “CCHN Connect”, which reached a total of 8,260 contributors. About 19.6% of members actively contributed to the CCHN community by creating a post, messaging, commenting, answering a question, RSVPing to an event, voting on a poll, cheering a post, or sharing.

Throughout 2024, the CCHN Communication department sent a monthly newsletter in English, French and Spanish to over 15,000 subscribers. Both the newsletters’ average open rate (24.5%) and click-through rate (22.2%) were above the sector’s average.

“When dealing with national authorities, I had no previous training. I had no knowledge to improve my skills, my abilities to craft an argument that was useful to find common ground and get an agreement. That’s why I came to the CCHN. And I took the peer workshop and I learned a lot”.

– Arquímedes Farías, Venezuela
Excerpt from a podcast episode



After two successful seasons, the third season of “Frontline Negotiators: Stories from the Field” launched in October. For the first time, interviews were recorded in French and Spanish as well as English, allowing for a broader audience.



"We have to remain adaptable as organisations, as diplomats, as frontline negotiators [...] to cope with the enormous transformation of technology and communication and how we leverage it for humanitarianism today."

Peter Maurer,
former ICRC president
and Chair of the
CCHN governing
board

GOVERNANCE

During the year 2024, the CCHN was administratively hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Its governing board was composed of four representatives of the CCHN's founding agencies, a negotiation expert, and three members of the community of practice who act in their personal capacity.

In 2024, the CCHN governing board was composed of:

- Peter Maurer, President of the board (ad personam)

Representatives of humanitarian agencies contributing to the CCHN:

- Stephen Cornish – Director General, Médecins Sans Frontières Switzerland
- Filippo Grandi – High Commissioner, UNHCR
- Pierre Krähenbühl – Director General, International Committee of the Red Cross
- Carl Skau – Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, World Food Programme

Members of the CCHN community of practice (ad personam):

- Hanalia Ferhan
- Esther Opoka
- Dr Apostolos Veizis

Recognised negotiation experts (ad personam):

- Michael Møller



*The CCHN governing board is composed of representatives of its four founding agencies, a negotiation expert, and three members of the community of practice.
Photo: CCHN*

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

In 2024, the CCHN focused on diversifying its sources of funding, deepening existing relationships and onboarding new partners. The CCHN secured funding through multi-year agreements as well as contributions from strategic partners, government donors and special projects. Collaborations with local partners supported the implementation of the CCHN's programmes across regions.

Sources of funding

- Strategic partners (ICRC, MSF Switzerland, UNHCR, World Food Programme);
- Institutional donors, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (Governments of Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the State of Geneva);
- Other funding sources, including operational partners and partnerships for field implementation.

"WE ARE NAVIGATING IN MORE AND MORE COMPLEX CONTEXTS, SO WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED TO HAVE PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATORS. [...] WE CAN'T IMPROVISE. [WE CAN USE OUR] INTUITION MAYBE, BUT IMPROVISATION, NOT AT ALL."

– Caroline Gaudron, Conflict and Humanitarian Advisor, Médecins Sans Frontières – United Kingdom

