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“MIND THE GAP”: THE STANDARDIZATION OF MASTER-LEVEL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES AMONG HUMANITARIAN AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

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Quality education of international development/humanitarian professionals is of high importance due to increased donor demands for projects’ transparency, accountability, and efficiency. However, there is a lack of standardization of learning outcomes among the educational institutions that train the workforce for the non-profit sector.

The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to describe how humanitarian professional alumni think their Master’s program aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) and how these competencies assisted them in their current work. Additionally, the study explored what NGO employers think of applicability of the Framework’s competencies in their organizations and the preparedness of Master level hires aligned with the CHCF. Through this descriptive survey study of 70 alumni and 36 employers, the researcher evaluated frequency, mean scores, and standard deviation of how 50 specific sub-competencies of the Framework were rated.

This research indicated that University X addressed well the Framework’s competencies; however, overall new hire preparedness was below the market needs. There was an obvious discrepancy in terms of the specific competencies’ applicability within the NGO community and actual demonstration of those competencies by the new Master-level hires. Therefore, the study identified the existing gaps and provided recommendations for further research to standardize the core humanitarian curriculum for Master’s education in the field of international development.
“MIND THE GAP”

*Keywords*: international development, education, professionalization, competencies.
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If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants.

Sir Isaac Newton

First and foremost, I am ever grateful to God for His blessings, wisdom and strength through my entire program of study and enabling me to its completion. My church family became my safe haven away from home. Thank you.

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“MIND THE GAP”

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Contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 1

Problem Overview .................................................................................................................................. 1

Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................................................. 8

Significance of the Study .......................................................................................................................... 9

Delimitations ........................................................................................................................................ 10

Limitations ............................................................................................................................................ 10

Organization of the Dissertation ............................................................................................................. 12

Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................................... 13

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................................................. 16

International Development .................................................................................................................... 16

Nonprofit Sector ................................................................................................................................... 19

NGO criticism ....................................................................................................................................... 22

Millennium Development Goals .......................................................................................................... 23

Standards ............................................................................................................................................... 25

Competencies ....................................................................................................................................... 26

Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework ...................................................................................... 27

Perception ............................................................................................................................................. 31
“MIND THE GAP”

Education of Humanitarian Aid Workers

Mode of instruction: distance learning

Overview of the Master of Science in Community and International Development

Program Components

Curriculum

Overview of the Master’s in International Development Administration Program

Components

Curriculum

International Development Career Demand

Summary of the Chapter

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Organization of the Study

Research Design

Population and Sample

Data Collection Procedures

Instrumentation

Data Analysis
Quality Standards ........................................................................................................ 51

Limitations .................................................................................................................. 52

Chapter Summary ..................................................................................................... 54

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS ........................................................................ 55

Part One Results ....................................................................................................... 55

Part Two Results ....................................................................................................... 69

Part Three Results .................................................................................................... 83

Summary of Results .................................................................................................. 89

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION .............................................................................. 93

Introduction ................................................................................................................. 93

Overview of the problem ............................................................................................. 93

Purpose statement and research questions ................................................................. 93

Review of the methodology ....................................................................................... 94

Major Findings ............................................................................................................ 94

Alumni survey and research question one ................................................................. 95

Employer survey and research question two ............................................................ 104

Research question three ............................................................................................ 108

Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 111
List of Figures

*Figure 1.* Type of organizations alumni represent.

*Figure 2.* Number of employees within the organizations that employ alumni.

*Figure 3.* Alumni familiarity with the CHCF.

*Figure 4.* Representation by the type of employer respondents’ organization.

*Figure 5.* Number of employees within employer respondents’ organization.

*Figure 6.* Number of master-level graduates hired annually within organization.

*Figure 7.* Employer familiarity with the CHCF.

*Figure 8.* Alumni survey gap results.

*Figure 9.* Employer survey gap results.

*Figure 10.* Research question three gap results.
“MIND THE GAP”

List of Tables

Table 1. MIDA core courses.

Table 2. Reliability analysis: Cronbach’s Alpha scores.

Table 3. Alumni survey results.

Table 4. Employer survey results.

Table 5. Research question three results.

Table 6. Alignment between the alumni and employer surveys.
“Mind the Gap”: The Standardization of Master-level Education Competencies of Humanitarian/International Development Professionals

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem Overview

The global picture of 2015 is essentially that of a huge crisis (ELRHA, 2015). All around the world, people are suffering from the effects of natural disasters, wars, terrorism, and the violation of human rights. Shortages of food, water, and land cause further suffering, contributing to the international conflicts that threaten global peace. People experience vast inequalities in access to resources, ability to make decisions, human rights, and safety. Violence and poverty have the worst effects on the most vulnerable, needy, and less fortunate people of society: women, children, and the elderly. Reducing inequalities and bettering the lives of those in need are prerequisites to global prosperity and security (ELRHA, 2015). These tasks are accomplished primarily through a global network of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). These organizations work to change and improve the lives of people on local and international levels. NGOs represent local community agencies, service-learning organizations, advocacy groups, international relief and development agencies, and faith-based agencies. NGOs are faced with the increasing need to deploy a professional workforce that is specifically trained in tactics to address the emergency relief and long-term development needs of local and international communities.

Humanitarianism is generally defined as “the vocation of helping people when they most desperately need help, when they have lost or stand at risk of losing everything
they have, including their lives” (Rieff, 2003). Fox (2001) provided a more detailed definition of humanitarianism. “There is a ‘new humanitarianism’ for the new millennium. It is ‘principled,’ ‘human rights based,’ politically sensitive and geared to strengthening those forces that bring peace and stability to the developing world” (p.275). The term “international development” is associated with the notion of poverty alleviation and improving the quality of life of underprivileged people in the developing world (Kingsbury, McKay, Hunt, McGillivray, & Clarke, 2012). Poverty is measured by access to the basic human rights of food, shelter, water and sanitation, basic education, and land ownership (Gedde, 2015). The field of international development comprises the following main sectors: education, gender, health, water and sanitation, human rights, shelter, agriculture, and economics (Alkire, 2010). In recent years, the international development community has been challenged with an increased number of major cataclysms in the world, which in its turn has increased the need for a well-prepared and professional response by qualified humanitarian aid practitioners.

In summarizing a survey of 1,500 humanitarian workers and stakeholders, Walker and Russ (2010) revealed a strong demand for the professionalization of the humanitarian sector. This study was a project of the United Kingdom's Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance, and was implemented by the Feinstein International Center and RedR UK. This study provided recommendations to enhance the accountability, the quality of humanitarian assistance, and the overall professionalism of the international development sector. Prior to this study, humanitarian and development assistance was provided in a somewhat ad hoc manner (Johnson et al., 2013). However, lack of necessary coordination, proper adaptability and accountability, and quality
standards in service delivery led to a need for the professionalization of the humanitarian work. The challenges are rooted in a lack of specific skills in development workers. Some examples of poorly managed humanitarian responses include Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2005 and the Haiti earthquake of 2010 (Johnson et al., 2013).

To respond effectively in a resource-poor setting, development workers must have specific practice and application-oriented training. Having a compassionate heart and desire to help the less fortunate is necessary, but it is not sufficient for the success of the development or humanitarian intervention, especially during a major catastrophe. Whether you are a nutritionist, a water and sanitation specialist, or an accountant, it is beneficial to have a specific concentration in the international development field. Therefore, many seek to get specialized degrees in the area of international development (Johnson et al., 2013).

A number of higher education institutions offer degree programs in the not-for-profit sector. More than 100 graduate-level degree programs are offered in North America and Europe (Johnson at al., 2013). Rainhom, Smaibegovic, and Jiekak (2010) presented a comprehensive overview of 77 educational opportunities for humanitarian workers worldwide. Universities offer a wide range of advanced degrees to those interested in the professional career in the field of international development. Common programs include a Master’s in International Development, International or Global Studies, International Development Administration, Global Community Development, Development Practice, and Management of Not-For-Profit Organizations (“Inside Disaster,” n. d.).
The availability of these programs leads to various questions related to their content:

“What are the differences between these degrees?”

“What are the core curricula of these programs?”

“How often have the curricula been reevaluated to depict the growing and constantly changing field of international development?”

Professionals who are seeking a degree in this field of study face challenges regarding which program to select to increase their employability, since job opportunities in this field are limited and require a specific skill set of humanitarian competencies.

In our global economy, there has been an increased demand for skilled professionals. Career skills consist of marketable abilities, experience, and knowledge. As students are thinking about future employment, they should look into the job market requirements of their respective fields and determine whether the program of their interest fulfills those requirements. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2015), a prospective employee’s competencies predict that person’s outcome expectations and anticipated levels of performance.

Søndergaard and Murthi (2011) highlight the existing problem of graduates from institutions of higher education in various fields of study who do not possess marketable skills to be successful in the workforce. This shortage of skilled workers also creates barriers to the successful delivery of international development and relief programs. Lessons learned from Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Søndergaard & Murthi, 2011)
education guide this survey study to ensure the absence of the skills and competencies gap of the graduates from the masters’ programs that prepare future humanitarian professionals.

This dissertation’s research presents a survey study on the standardization of Master level competencies among humanitarian and international development professionals. Alumni from two Master’s programs at a University X in the Midwest were surveyed: an on-campus Master of Science in Community and International Development (MSCID) and an off-campus Master in International Development Administration (MIDA) programs. Both Master’s programs prepare their graduates to join the nonprofit sector. The main difference between the programs lies in the format of instruction: on-campus vs. off-campus.

The University X was founded in 1874 and has a current student population body of 3,418 (as of 2014) and offers nearly 80 major fields of study. It is a non-profit institution of higher education and “embodies a mission of service and leadership.” U.S. News and World Report 2015 ranks it among one of the most culturally diverse universities in the nation with over 25% of its student population being international students representing 98 countries. It ties for second in the nation for campus ethnic diversity and ties for seventh in highest percentage of international students. University X “has been a leader in the field of distance education offering programs in many countries, and embodies a global mission of service to mankind through education” (International Development Program, 2016).
Both University X master’s programs educating future humanitarian workers were chosen due to their large number of alumni (approximately 550) and a well-established interdisciplinary curriculum dating back to 1990. The unique selection of the instruction mode, on-campus of the University X or off-campus at different venues around the globe, offers flexibility and draws diverse student body which is a representative not only of the American but also of the world’s humanitarian network of professionals. Therefore, the research sample differs not only ethnically, culturally, and socioeconomically within one country, but also spans globally providing a researcher with a broader feedback.

Currently, MSCID is an on-campus program with a mission of “preparing individuals for excellence during a lifetime of professional service and compassion in action.” The program is built on the premises of providing “accessible and quality education for leadership and service, creating networks to support community development and practice research, and building capacity toward creating sustainable communities worldwide.” It usually requires between 18 to 24 months full-time commitment. Between 2006 and 2015, over 50 students received this on-campus Master’s degree from the University X.

The off-campus MIDA degree program has been offered since 1996. The program attracts full-time working professionals to advance their project management, leadership and administration skills in humanitarian work, economic development, international business, education or other careers involved with social and community needs. The program is conducted in various sites around the world, such as Chile, Italy, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan and Togo with two more new sites to
commence in 2016 which are Pakistan and the Dominican Republic. The program is also offered in a number of languages, such as English, Spanish, and French (International Development Program, 2016).

Currently, there are no set standards for education of humanitarian professionals or specific licenses or certifications required to work in the development field (Johnson et al., 2013). This lack of standards creates a major issue for graduates from various international development programs who might not be ready to meet field-based requirements upon their graduation. It is difficult to identify components of international development/humanitarian workers training due to the differences of each program. However, the most common areas covered during education of humanitarian workers include social science foundations (e.g., Development Theory & Practice and Cultural & Development Anthropology), planning and evaluation (e.g., Needs Assessment, Capacity Mapping & Program Planning and Development Design & Evaluation), and NGO management and leadership, and accountability (e.g., Ethics in Development and Public Policy, Civil Society & Development).

This study is based on the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF), one of the first specifically designed humanitarian competency frameworks (Rutter, 2011). The framework’s validity has been verified and endorsed in the Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA) Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalization that tested its relevancy in meeting the needs of the international development sector. Therefore, the researcher feels confident to use this framework as a tool for the dissertation study.
The Framework developed by Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (Rutter, 2011), which distinguishes 16 specific competencies grouped into six general areas of comprehensive core competencies. These competencies serve as fundamental behaviors required by the humanitarian aid market to adhere to by all development workers. The six areas include the following: (1) understanding humanitarian contexts and application of humanitarian principles; (2) achieving results effectively, considering the need for speed, scale and quality; (3) developing and maintaining collaborative relationships; (4) operating safely and securely in high risk environments; (5) managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment; (6) leadership in humanitarian response. The list of specific competencies and sub-competencies can be found in Appendix E. These international development market competencies will serve as a benchmark in measuring the extent to which University X MSCID and MIDA programs address the market competencies in the field of humanitarian aid work and the overall job preparedness of the incoming NGO hires aligned with the CHCF.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this survey study is to describe how humanitarian professional alumni think their Master’s program is aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) and how these competencies assist them in their current work. Additionally, the purpose is to describe what NGO employers think of the CHCF competencies and the preparedness of Master level hires aligned with the CHCF competencies. The independent variables will be defined as the competencies of the CHCF. The dependent variables will be defined as (1) the scores of how the humanitarian professional alumni at University X rated the acquisition and usage of CHCF
competencies, and (2) the scores of how the NGO employers evaluate the CHCF applicability and the extent of employment preparedness of incoming Master level hires.

The research questions for this descriptive survey study are given below:

1. What do University X alumni think is the alignment between their employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?
2. What do non-profit employers think is the alignment between incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?
3. Is there alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in determining whether the CHCF designed in 2011 is currently used/hold true in the NGO community. University X Master’s alumni were chosen since they represent a convenient and diverse “sample” of all the alumni from different programs educating future aid workers. Since the study surveys various NGO employers around the world who employ alumni from different institutions, not only University X programs, the findings of this study will shed the light in general on how well Master alumni from programs educating humanitarian practitioners are prepared for workforce in the humanitarian aid sector. Thus, providing suggestions for designing core humanitarian curriculum/protocols that can serve as a benchmark to be followed for graduate education in the field of international development. If determined,
the unique University X programs’ components will be highlighted and suggested to be included in the similar educational programs to increase students’ learning outcomes.

**Delimitations**

The delimitations of this study include the following:

- Only alumni from University X both on-campus and off-campus programs preparing future humanitarian professionals will be taking the alumni survey.
- University X programs were chosen due to their unique components: (1) on-campus program offers heavy emphasis on research; (2) off-campus degree offered in 8 different sites across the globe that allows full-time working professionals to further their education and get an American Master’s degree close to their country of work; and (3) alumni of both programs represent diverse ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds.

**Limitations**

The general study limitations included the sample limitations as well as the possibility of the researcher’s and alumni biases.

Being an alumnus from an on-campus Master of Science in Administration, Community and International Development Program at University X, who has been heavily involved in the off-campus program for a number of years, the researcher is familiar first hand with both programs that might potentially create researcher bias.

Both alumni sample groups represented alumni from one educational institution, University X, might be a limitation. The sample size of 90 was relatively small. Further research could target a sample of universities offering similar degrees that would be more
representative of the population of humanitarian professionals nationwide. The fact that about 28% of 550 alumni that represent the population of this study graduated over 15 years ago and the University X did not have their updated contact information had an impact on the study sample. Yet another limitation of this study is that MIDA was offered in 4 different languages, English, Spanish, French and Russian, but the survey was available only in English that potentially limited the response rate. All of the above added additional pressure of possible high non-response rate. However, due to personal familiarity and professional involvement with the programs of study, the researcher’s response rate is 17% and reached the set minimum number of 80 required respondents.

The limitations of this study also included the possible erroneous judgement of the students in self-evaluating the skills and competencies they acquired solely during the University X program. For example, without a pre-survey before starting the program, it is difficult to conclude that it is the Master’s degree education alone that directly contributed to the acquisition of the CHCF competencies. Since the researcher has not asked them to indicate how long time ago they graduated, it is hard to judge whether the skills acquisition happened as a result of the Master’s degree or a professional work experience since many of the alumni, especially from MIDA program, were working full-time in the humanitarian field during the study program. Therefore, I plan to minimize the potential biases and address the validity issues by including the employer survey where various employers will be asked to rate CHCF competencies of their incoming hires who represent alumni from multiple institutions not only University X.
Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation was organized into four chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter One introduced the reader with the research topic, rationale, purpose, research questions and limitations of the study. Chapter Two provided an overview of the relevant literature as well as the framework utilized for this study. Chapter Three explained the research design and methodology of the study. It included sample selection, data collection methods, and analysis. Chapter Four described the results of the study, while Chapter Five closed the study with a discussion of the findings, provided a summary and conclusions drawn from the results as well as recommendations for further research.
Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research the following definitions will be used:

*Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)* is the global humanitarian organization that delivers relief and development assistance to individuals in more than 130 countries.

*Beneficiary* is a designated recipient of humanitarian assistance intervention.

*Competencies* are defined as a set of behaviors/standards for the employee’s expectations and anticipated levels of performance.

“*Completed*” questionnaire is the survey response where the respondents answered questions in all parts of the survey.

*Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF)* is a specifically designed framework that identifies core and leadership humanitarian competencies, core and additional behaviors, and the expected outcomes that ensure the quality and effectiveness of a humanitarian intervention.

*Gross Domestic Product (GDP)* is the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country in a specific period of time to determine a country’s economic performance and standard of living.

*Gross National Product (GNP)* is an economic statistic that includes GDP and any income earned from overseas investments minus income earned within the domestic economy by overseas residents.
Humanitarian intervention is the aid to prevent or alleviate suffering and assure human rights protection as a result of natural or man-made disasters.

Humanitarian/international development practitioner is defined as an individual who is involved in a professional capacity of the work of humanitarian aid sector.

International development represents the notion of poverty alleviation and bettering the quality of life of underprivileged people in the developing world.

Master in International Development Administration (MIDA) is an inter-disciplinary off-campus Master’s program at the University X that prepares its graduates to assume various project management positions in the nonprofit sector.

Master of Science in Community and International Development (MSCID) is an on-campus Master’s program at the University X that prepares its graduates for local and international community development work.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is an umbrella term for all the organizations that are not classified as government or private sector industries and work with civil society towards promotion of common community goals for the well-being of humanity.

Non-Profit Organization (NPO) is an organization working for the benefit of the general public and where the trustees or shareholders do not benefit financially.

Perception is the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.

Qualtrics is the open source survey application.
The United Kingdom government Department for International Development (UKAid) is responsible for administering overseas humanitarian assistance to ensure poverty eradication and sustainable development around the globe.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher presents an overview of selected literature and highlights the research as it relates to the study, titled *Mind the Gap: The Standardization of Master-level Education Competencies among Humanitarian and International Development Professionals*.

**International Development**

Traditionally, a country’s development has been measured by looking at economic indicators which divide the world’s countries into more economically stable, also called developed or North, and less economically stable, called developing or South (Quilligan, 2002). The field of international development addresses the challenges of the 80% of the world population living in poverty, calculated to be less than $10 a day. While significant development work has been going on for years, more than three billion people still live on less than $2.50 a day. The poorest 40% of the world’s population earn only 5% of the world’s income, while the richest 20% earns three-quarters of the global income (Shah, 2013). According to the Millennium Development Goals Report (2007), 72 million primary school age children living in the developing world were not in school in 2005 and 57% of them were girls. The report also indicates that the actual numbers are even higher due to the fact that many children who are enrolled in schools do not regularly attend. The reasons vary from the financial constraints that prevent them from buying the necessary school uniform, shoes and supplies to the distance students have to travel to get to school. Forty two percent of primary age children who do not attend school reside in conflict affected areas (The 2011 Millennium Development Goals Report, 2011). In addition, data from conflict and post-conflict countries is usually not easily
available, which would likely increase the numbers of unschooled children. UNICEF (1999) indicates that almost a billion people still cannot read, which also means they cannot write, thus continuing the vicious cycle of poverty. Ironically, less than 1% of what the world spends yearly on weapons would educate every child in the world (Brazier, 1997). Tragically, we oftentimes hear the emphasis on peace and security from the global governments, yet the conflicts intensify. For example, ten active international conflicts were registered in 1959 which resulted in 1.4 million refugees. However, this number drastically increased by 1995 totaling at least fifty conflicts which left 20 million refugees as well as between another 20 to 25 million internally displaced people (Hansen, 1995). UN data indicates that the number of refugees from Somalia and Sudan seeking refuge in Kenya more than doubled in a ten year span from 1999 to 2009 (UNData, 2011). According to the World Bank (2010), 40% of the world’s population still has no proper sanitation facilities – pit latrines or public sewers which ensure hygiene and health. Statistics on infectious diseases, child and maternal mortality rates are also not encouraging. For example, according to 2013 World Health Organization statistic report, approximately 35% of all deaths of children under five years of age were attributed to malnutrition, 287 000 cases of maternal deaths per annum, and 34 million people living with HIV.

Even though all the above-mentioned components directly influence human development, the Basic Human Rights Framework expands that list to include a few more essential components. The Center for Policy & Human Development defines human development as follows:
Much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus about much more than economic growth, which is only a means—if a very important one—of enlarging people’s choices.

(Human Development Reports, United Nations Development Program)

Therefore, sustainable and equitable economic growth, gender equality in access to basic human rights, and social and political stability are the central foci of the modern international development field. Thus, economic, social, and demographic indicators measure the level of development of a particular country. Economic indicators include Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), income per capita, employment structures, and unemployment rates. Social indicators are comprised of adult literacy rates and education, access and quality of healthcare, and state of welfare system. The major demographic indicators include life expectancy, infant mortality rates, and migration. Yet another development measure was created by the United Nations in 1990 - Human Development Index (HDI). It took into account life expectancy at birth, GDP per capita, indices of schooling and literacy. However, it failed to measure gender, urban/rural, and ethnic equality of these indicators, thus not reflecting true income distribution (UNDP, 1990). Currently, there is an emphasis on sustainable development that emphasizes the use of natural resources in a responsible way not to hinder future generations’ ability to meet their need. It also describes the type of development without creating a dependency on a donor continuing support.
Nonprofit Sector

The work of international development is carried out by a number of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). NGO is an umbrella term for all the organizations that are not classified as government or private sector industries. The term NGO is synonymous to Non-profit Organization (NPO). Martens (2002) defines NGOs as “formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level” (p.282). Lambell, Ramia, Nyland, and Michelotti (2008) describe NGOs as:

“organizational actors that do not belong to either the government sector or the for-profit/market sector. They represent communities, social and political movements and special interests of all ideological persuasions and all geographical levels from the local to the global” (p.75).

NGOs can be partially or fully funded by the government through competitive grants, however they never have government representatives in organizations. Other sources of funding may include contributions from various charities, donations, and foundations. NGOs do not use their revenue and surplus to profit the investors, but they often reinvest those resources into the new projects to benefit the general public. In a number of countries, the NPO status also allows the organization to be exempted from income tax (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008). For example, in the United States of America, all the NPOs, coded as 501(c)(3) organizations, are exempt from taxes. Many NGOs are also considered NPOs and constitute a so called “civil society” that is mission-driven and works for the economic and social well-being of humanity (Edwards, 2013).
The work of NGOs ranges from relief and humanitarian aid work during the emergencies, to sustainable community development and advocacy work to promote and protect the rights of its beneficiaries and make a difference in the lives of people on local, national, and international levels (Clark, 1991). At the same time, donors expect NGOs to design and implement projects that show measurable improvements in the quality of life among the targeted beneficiaries. Humanitarian program monitoring and evaluation play a crucial role since it is a data-driven “tool” to depict the reality of the anticipated impact of a particular intervention. Due to the major government budget fund cuts specifically designated for international development and foreign humanitarian assistance, the competition for funding opportunities is increasing. Donors tend to grant the projects that not only offer but also prove the best value output for their investment. This competition and accountability demands shape the need for NGOs to ensure its workforce is professionally equipped to manage successful aid projects. Therefore, the relevance of specific education in the field of community and international development has been increasing with the donor demands that set rigorous requirements for measuring project impact.

The modern humanitarian development sector stems from post-World War II times when a number of countries, especially in Europe, were left in ruins and their economies and infrastructure needed restoration and development. However, only a few decades ago, NGOs did not play a prominent role in the local and international community. The 1980s marked a new era for NGOs in terms of their global exposure. From the relative neutrality of the previous years, finally, NGOs presented “a vision of an active and responsible civil society underpinned by flexible, effective and accountable
institutions” (Edwards, M & Hulme, D., 1996, p.24). It was then that the NGOs filled the existing niche and began to offer what governments did not provide, which included a representation and addressing the needs of the excluded, needy, and vulnerable populations who were left unreached. In the not too distant past, most of the delivery of humanitarian aid was performed by internationals NGOs with international humanitarian aid practitioners. However, studies support the claim that successful humanitarian interventions are best supported by national NGOs and local humanitarian aid practitioners who bring to the table invaluable indigenous knowledge, understanding of local culture, as well as sense of ownership and trust by the beneficiary’s community (Gizelis & Kosek, 2005, Ager, van Pietersom & Simon, 2002).

It takes a very special commitment and dedication of NGO workers and volunteers to work in these organizations, since their wages and benefits are usually lower than in the business sector. Often, motivation for NGO workers comes from the belief that it is their calling. These employees truly believe in the mission and vision of the organization thus aligning their professional goals and sacrificing their possibility of a higher paycheck in order to follow their dreams of making a difference (Emanuele & Simmons, 2002).

and Development, and the International Monetary Fund that provide a platform for all the member countries to meet and discuss the priorities and set up tangible goals. These organizations, as well as the country governments, are the donor entities that work to implement their set agenda through a number of international and local NGOs. Bill Gates highlighted the importance of a mutual cooperation among large corporations, nonprofit organizations, governments, and philanthropists in the fight of the global development issues (Hamm, 2009). Only when humanitarian efforts are unified and coordinated, will the ultimate result of bettering the lives of the less fortunate people be reached.

**NGO criticism.** NGOs face severe criticism in regards to professionalism and ethics of their workforce. Even though NGOs do not generate profit, they are often viewed as businesses that either misuse or waste private and public funds. A number of ineffective development projects created beneficiary dependencies from aid rather than providing a sustainable development (Sogge, 1996). Weiss (2000) pinpoints the lack of a “culture” of learning from past development project experiences and states that the “most important change in the “culture” of humanitarian agencies over the course of the last decade has been recognizing the need to reflect and calculate rather than to react viscerally” to humanitarian catastrophes (p.425). Carr (2000) supports the need to “pay for performance” and “performance management” (p.173). At the same time, Townsend and Townsend (2004) argue that the real need is for intelligent accountability within NGOs that seek to improve outcomes and partner with beneficiaries at the grass roots, rather than an accountability that protects donors from accusation of failures (p.275).

The international development sector is facing a challenge to respond professionally in a timely manner to community needs whether it is a humanitarian crisis.
or any other public need (Kent, 2004). Therefore, the professional skills and competencies of international development practitioners have come under scrutiny, thus contributing to reevaluation of the current educational preparation of international development workforce.

**Millennium Development Goals**

The United Nations Headquarters adopted the Millennium Declaration on September 8, 2000. 190 United Nations member countries, representing ten regions, committed to work mutually to meet the following eight specific goals with 20 targets and over 60 indicators, which are known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by 2015:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (halve the number of people suffering from hunger and living on less than $1.25 a day and secure employment for all regardless of gender);
- Achieve universal primary education (regardless of gender and location);
- Promote gender equality and empower women (eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education);
- Reduce child mortality (reduce by two thirds the under-five mortality rate);
- Improve maternal health (reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio and achieve universal access to reproductive health);
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS; achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those in need; and half halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases);
- Ensure environmental sustainability (integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources; reduce biodiversity loss; halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers);

- Develop a global partnership for development (develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system; address the special needs of least developed countries; address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries; in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; in cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications).

(UN Documents, 2000)

The work on MDGs started only in 2002 when the leaders from developed nations committed 0.7% of their GNP to support the MDG agenda (McArthur, 2012). Other major world donor organizations, like the World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, also incorporated MDGs into their agenda which subsequently became the agenda for most of the other NGOs working in the field of international development.

There is a lot of dispute about whether the MDGs will be met and about the accomplishments to date. Some indicators demonstrate that there has been a significant decline in extreme poverty, which is defined by living on under $1.25 a day. However,
the data showed that most of the development is happening in China, while poverty rates have remained the same in most of the other struggling countries (Camfield, Crabtree, & Roelen, 2013).

**Standards**

The international development humanitarian sector has been condemned for lacking professionalism (Walker & Russ, 2010). Yet it is being driven to compete in a fast moving, competitive and changeable world. Due to a growing emphasis on accountability and transparency across the humanitarian aid industry, coupled with higher visibility of humanitarian organizations in global affairs, capacity building through specific community development education is attracting more attention from those interested in the professional career in this sector.

However, there is no single international humanitarian professional organization that oversees certification of the development professionals and keeps a registry of certified providers as well as ensuring “the ongoing professional status, research, standards of care, advocacy, and monitoring of member training centers” (Johnson at al., 2013, p. 371). There were a number of initiatives to improve the quality of aid delivery and accountability in this sector, such as: “the Sphere Project, Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, People in Aid, the Good Enough Guide by the Emergency Capacity Building Project, the Compass method by Groupe Urgence, and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies” (Johnson at al., 2013, p.371).
Since many people who come into the development field bring diverse academic and professional backgrounds, it is important to establish benchmark skills and competencies all humanitarian workers should possess which would be transferable across different agencies. Similarly to the international development sector, the education sector lacks standards in regards to the education of the humanitarian/international development professionals. Johnson et al. (2013) highlights a need to link “the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies competencies to measurable learning objectives, creating metrics to evaluate competency-based learning, employing the competency-based curriculum in the classroom and in simulation exercises through different organizations and institutions, and apply the monitoring and evaluation tools in a standardized framework in the field” (p.371).

**Competencies**

“Competencies are behaviours that individuals demonstrate when undertaking job-relevant tasks effectively within a given organizational context” (Whiddett & Hollyforde, 2003, p.7). Therefore, they are job-specific skills and personal characteristics for excellence in job performance. Usually, competencies provide a common set of performance criteria “in the form of behavioural indicators…and maybe made up of one or more lists or related behavioural indicators” and typically form the foundations of core Human Resource processes that include hiring, evaluation, promotion, etc. (p.2).

Competencies, as an organizational tool, emerged in the 1980s “as a response to the way that organizational thinking and society in general, were changing” (Rutter, 2011, p.4). Richard Boyatzis (1982) was one of the pioneers in researching competencies and competency frameworks. “Initially many organisations focused on defining the technical
competencies required, but over time this has broadened to include the behaviours and attitudes required. This has encouraged organizations to use competencies in a very practical way to improve professionalism at both an individual and organizational level” (Rutter, 2011, p.4).

Whiddett and Hollyforde (2003) define a competency framework as a set of structured performance criteria that “provide a common foundation for a range of people-management activities and processes.” Usually, competency frameworks consist of “behavioural indicators: the detailed statements that make up competencies; competencies: lists of related behavioural indicators; and clusters: groups of related competencies” (p.23). Successful competency frameworks ought to be “clear and easy to understand, relevant to all who will be affected by them, account for expected changes, made up of discrete elements, elements will be of the same type, behaviours are both necessary and appropriate, and fair towards all actual or potential jobholders” (p. 23). Rutter (2011) outlines the following benefits of incorporating a competency framework: assist the organization to take stock of staff capability and the organization’s ability to deliver against its goals; help to describe what attributes staff need to develop to meet present and future organizational challenges; clarify expectations in a consistent and objective way; create a shared language about the expectations from staff; support a feedback and development culture using measurable evidence (p.4).

Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework. As highlighted by Johnson et al. (2013), “at the very core of standardization lies the need for an agreed set of comprehensive, common humanitarian competencies that define the foundation of humanitarian education and practice” (p. 370). Therefore, to fill this gap, UKAid through
the United Kingdom Department for International Development in 2010 funded the work to improve humanitarian response and humanitarian capacity building. The Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) is a framework for core and leadership humanitarian competencies, core and additional behaviors, and the expected outcomes that ensure the quality and effectiveness of a humanitarian intervention. Keeping crisis-affected people at the center is the goal of this Framework.

CHCF as well as the Guide were developed in 2011 through the joint work of the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA), led and edited by ActionAid and facilitated by People in Aid. Fifteen leading UK and international development agencies were part of the Framework’s development. Lynn Rutter is the principal author of the Core Humanitarian Competencies Guide, a “hands-on” resource that provides further details for NGO leadership team on how to use the Framework to “strengthen the capacity and ability of the NGO sector to deliver appropriate high quality, effective and timely humanitarian response” (Rutter, 2011, p.3). The Guide provides guidance on how to use CHCF in each different phase of the project cycle management: planning and preparedness (recruiting and selecting), orientation and setting objectives, managing performance, personal/professional development, and debriefing.

This Guide also contains a number of various examples of how some of the major NGOs adopted the CHCF in the work of their organizations. For example, Oxfam GB created a competency-based job profile as well as notes on responding to a competency-based cover letter request and core humanitarian skills development program participant’s self-assessment wheel. Christian Aid incorporated a competency-based job application form to identify competencies. Save the Children designed a short-listing grid
form as well as competency-based interview questions and interview assessment grid coupled with self-assessment form that incorporated CHCF. Concern Worldwide also constructed competency-based interview form, competency-based performance management form, and international staff debriefing form. IRC created competency-based reference questions and self-assessment and development plan; World Vision set up competency-based self-assessment form as well as competency-based 360° assessment form.

CHCF is one of the first specifically designed humanitarian competency frameworks that truly reflects the reality of humanitarian work. It was built on a number of previous initiatives from within and external to the CBHA, “with the goal of drawing out the behaviours that are fundamental to all humanitarian positions” (Rutter, 2011, p.5). Since CHCF reflects “a consensus-built, inter-agency approach” and it has been endorsed in the Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA) Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalization that tested its relevancy in meeting the needs of the sector, the researcher feels confident to use this framework as a tool for my dissertation research. Its validity has been verified by the above mentioned endorsement.

The Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework was created to enhance the performance of the humanitarian and development agencies in order to fulfill the following five objectives:

1. “Increasing access to fast, efficient, and effective funding for front-line humanitarian work;
2. Increasing numbers of competent national and international managers and leaders;

3. Increasing agency surge capacity to respond appropriately to new emergencies;

4. Strengthening humanitarian logistics systems;

5. Learning and education”

(Johnson et al., 2013, p. 370).

The framework identifies 16 specific core competencies that each humanitarian worker should possess grouped into the following six areas/categories:

1. Understanding humanitarian contexts and application of humanitarian principles;

2. Achieving results effectively, considering the need for speed, scale and quality;

3. Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships;

4. Operating safely and securely in high risk environments;

5. Managing yourself in a pressurized and changing environment;


A list of 16 specific core humanitarian competencies and 50 sub-competencies can be found in Appendix E. The Framework is also divided into two main sections, which are core behaviors for all staff and additional behaviors for first-level line managers (See Appendix F). A separate leadership behavior framework is integrated into
the main framework and presented as a separate document (The Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies, 2012).

Due to the lack of standards in the field of international development, Johnson et al. (2013) raise an important topic of competency-based professionalization that entails standardization of humanitarian training programs and establishment of a mechanism for tracking the development of required skills and be “practice- and application-oriented, teachable, and measurable” (p. 369).

**Perception**

Perception is the way we judge or evaluate others (Allport, 1966). Eggen and Kauchak (2001) view perception as the process by which people attach meaning to experiences. The notion of perception can be defined from physical, psychological and physiological perspectives. Bem (1967) defines “self-perception as individual’s ability to respond differentially to his own behavior and its controlling variables” (p.184). Adediwura and Tayo (2007) also describe the term “apperception” used in pedagogic that refers to “the act of taking a thing into the mind” (p.165). This study will utilize the perceptions and opinions of both alumni in self-evaluating their job competencies and the perceptions of employers of the incoming hire job preparedness in relation to the CHCF.

**Education of Humanitarian Aid Workers**

Like any other field of work, the field of development work requires specialized training. It is not just enough to be an accountant, or a nutritionist, or an agrarian. For example, a doctor or a nurse who has never worked in complex emergencies or conflict situations involving a large numbers of refugees, a high risk of epidemics, limited
resources and infrastructure, would not be adequately prepared to face these challenges unless they have undergone specific training. For medical professionals who are interested in working in the development sector, there are a number of short-term training options, such as the Public Health in Emergencies course offered by the International Health Exchange, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine diploma in humanitarian assistance, Catastrophes and Conflict course run by the Society of Apothecaries of London, the Gender Issues in Humanitarian Assistance through Oxfam, and the International Health Exchange (Birch & Miller, 2005).

Relief and development assistance skills and competencies are very specialized. Anderson (1999) highlights the existing challenge of NGOS to “figure out to do the good they mean to do without inadvertently undermining local strengths, prompting dependency, and allowed aid resources to be misused…” (p.2). Due to the lack of standards in the field of international development, Johnson et al. (2013) raises a very important topic of competency-based professionalization that entails standardization of humanitarian training programs and establishment of a mechanism for tracking the development of required skills. In order to be competitive and relevant to the needs of the international development industry, the competencies students need to acquire should be “practice- and application-oriented, teachable, and measurable” (p. 369).

**Mode of instruction: distance learning.** Bollettino and Bruderlein (2008) tested the feasibility of distance learning with humanitarian professionals. Even though the MIDA off-campus program is not a distance education program, it offers a few compulsory online classes. The authors highlight the need for further research to assess the impacts of distance learning on the student professional development and consider
creation of professional networks and communities of practice to enhance skills and competencies.

**Overview of the Master of Science in Community and International Development**

**Program Components**

The interdisciplinary on-campus Master’s program started back in 1990. However, in 1995, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) though ADRA Professional Leadership Institute (APLI) received a USAID capacity building grant to create an advanced professional degree for international humanitarian practitioners. The main purpose was to educate the staff within its international network. ADRA partnered with the University X to develop an off-campus interdepartmental master’s degree program. In 1996, about 200 students started that initial off-campus program at various sites like Kenya, Bolivia, Peru, Costa Rica, and Thailand with about 90% graduation rate. To make it affordable, yet sustainable, 4-ways tuition payment system was developed. University X offered a subsidized tuition cost, ADRA paid a portion, and a student’s job covered some, leaving a student’s share to be reasonably priced for the region it was offered in (International Development Program, 2016).

MSCID is an on-campus program at a University X that offers its students a Master’s degree that takes between 18-24 months full-time enrollment and ranges between 30 and 40 credits of coursework and at least 300 hours of internship. University X Bachelor of Science in Community and International Development alumni qualify for advanced standing that requires only one year of MSCID program that equals to 30-35 credits.
The program website highlights that its graduates are expected to develop the following competencies: “social science foundations of community and international development, especially with regard to understanding the causes of poverty and the meaning of people-centered development; skills related to planning, implementing and evaluating development projects including grantsmanship; knowledge of basic principles of organizational behavior; leadership and management as they relate to not-for-profit organizations; understanding of ethical principles and financial analysis for assuring individual and organizational accountability; competency in at least one area of concentration to meet the student’s career goals; mastery of social research methods appropriate to the chosen field of concentration; and the ability to communicate effectively to stakeholders about community development programs and plans.” The MSCID program offers personalized student-professor interaction and a mentoring research environment by the highly qualified and experienced faculty. It is expected that students will present at least one paper at a conference and publish at least one article in a professional journal during their program. The program curriculum coupled with international academic field tours (Thailand, Haiti, Namibia, and Madagascar) prepares and empowers students to respond effectively to global humanitarian challenges (MSCID, 2016).

**Curriculum.** The regular standing two-year program consists of 39-40 credits and 300 hours of field practicum/internship in the area of concentration. The core courses equal to 10 credits and include the following: Development Theory and Practice (3cr), Development Policy and Analysis (3cr), Cultural and Development Anthropology (2cr) and Humanitarian Studies: Theory Practice (2cr). The development management block
also consists of 10 credits and includes: Needs Assessment, Capacity Mapping and Program Planning (3cr), Development Design and Evaluation (2cr), Budgeting, Fundraising and Grantsmanship (2cr) and Organizational and Human Resources (3cr). Research tools and skills component equals 6-7 credits and comprises of Research Methods III: Advanced Research Design – Experiential and Survey (2cr), Research Methods IV: Advanced Statistical Analysis and SPSS (2cr), Comprehensive Examination (0cr) and Research Project (2cr) or Master’s Thesis (3cr). Field practicum is 300 hours and equals 1 credit hour.

The concentration area consists of a minimum of 12 credits of elective courses related to the chosen concentration to meet the student’s interests and career goals. Research projects/theses are also linked to the student’s concentration emphasis. The following concentration areas are offered: advocacy, development communication, development education, emergency preparedness and management, gender and development, global health, international relations and development, NGO development and operations, and youth and sustainable development.

The advanced standing MSCID option consists of 30-35 credits and a 300-hour field internship practicum. BSCID University X bachelor’s alumni qualify for advanced standing. Equivalents from other institutions are considered as well.

The MSCID program attracts a culturally diverse student body. Due to the University X philanthropic mission to “seek knowledge, affirm faith, and change the world,” commitment to support this program and an understanding that the program’s
alumni will unlikely be making a six figure salaries, MSCID offers a 50% tuition discount to its students.

**Overview of the Master’s in International Development Administration Program**

**Components**

The format of MIDA’s off-campus program offered by the University X is designed to provide a venue for professionals who are not able to undertake a full-time study at a university. The goal of this program is “to build capacity in project management based on principles of excellence, justice, and advocacy to embrace sustainable partnerships” (International Development Program, 2016). Students are required to attend four two-three week intensive sessions and additionally take a few semester-long online courses. It is advisable to attend one or more sessions per year. It usually takes between three to five years to complete this degree program. The program offers two choices of major for Master of International Development Administration (MIDA): International Development and Organizational Leadership. There is also an option of obtaining a Graduate Certificate in International Development or Organizational Leadership after completing only 15 credits. The purpose of this graduate level certificate is to provide specialized knowledge within a certain emphasis. However, only MIDA in International Development will be studied for this dissertation research.

The off-campus program is significantly larger than the on-campus one. At present, the off-campus Master’s degree is offered through the University X Affiliation and Extension Programs that offers its educational opportunities to about 7,200 students around the world. Since the year 2000, over 600 additional students have enrolled into the MIDA program, about 180 of them graduated between 2005 and 2014, with 400 students
currently finishing their research projects or taking classes at existing sites around the

globe. The current student body represents over 70 countries. These students are
employed at 112 organizations. Based on the latest program alumni evaluation survey as
of February 2014, alumni confirmed that this diversity enriches the student learning
experience. According to the survey, 90% of alumni liked the intensive format of this
program and 73% of alumni would recommend this program to their colleagues.

Curriculum. This interdisciplinary program “draws on the strength of all six

schools of the university.” The curriculum consists of 10 core courses, which constitute
26 credits, with an additional 13 credits of concentration requirement. The eight core
courses are taught during the intensive sessions and the other two courses are offered in
an online format. The core courses are grouped into the following four categories:

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<tr>
<th>Social Science Foundations</th>
<th>Planning and Evaluation</th>
<th>NGO Management and Leadership</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
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<tr>
<td>Development Theory &amp; Practice</td>
<td>Needs Assessment, Capacity Mapping &amp; Program Planning</td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Management of Not-for-Profit Organizations</td>
<td>Ethics in Development (2 credits)</td>
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<td>(3 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; Development Anthropology</td>
<td>Development Design &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>Communication in Development Practice</td>
<td>Public Policy, Civil Society &amp; Development (2 credits)</td>
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**Online courses (3 credits each):**

**Organizational Behavior & Leadership and Financial Analysis & Reporting**

*Table 1. MIDA core courses.*
Students are also required to complete a focus area involving 13 semester credits in a selected specialization area. The majority of these courses are completed in a directed study format with the balance as online courses. This allows the student’s specialization area to be uniquely tailored to suit personal and professional goals. A focus area is selected in the first year of study.

The focus area courses consist of the following: Portfolio (1 credit, directed study), Applied Statistical Methods (2 credits, online course), Development Research Methods (2 credits, online course), Professional Training (2 credits, directed study), Field Practicum (2 credits, directed study), Specialization Essay (1 credit, directed study), Research Project (3 credit, directed study). Focus area topics include, but are not limited to, the following: Advocacy, Agro Forestry, Child Advocacy, Civil Society, Cross Cultural Relations, Development Policies of Government, Disaster Preparedness, Education, Environmental Studies, Food Security, Gender and Development, Microenterprise, NPO Policies and Operations, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Poverty Mitigation, and Public Health.

Similarly to MSCID, the MIDA program is also offered with a significant discount to students to ensure greater affordability. Tuition rates are reduced through scholarships and utilize a differentiated pay scale based on the Human Development Index (HDI) rankings of a student’s country of citizenship or/and employment. For example, the tuition per session varies from $2,100 to $3,800.

**International Development Career Demand**
According to Walker and Russ (2010), since the 1960s, the demand for humanitarian/development professionals has grown at a 6% annual rate. The largest free and open access online websites that advertise international development jobs are Reliefweb, Devex, and Idealist. Washington DC, New York, and California are the major hubs for the US-based jobs in international development and humanitarian assistance.

Between 2009 and 2010, Pittman, Sugawara, Rodgers, and Bediako (2015) conducted a systematic analysis of 500 international humanitarian assistance job descriptions focused on the market skills required of potential employees. The main findings indicated that the humanitarian employers are looking for technical expertise, intra- and extra-organizational competencies, personal abilities, sector specialization, education, overseas experience and language requirements.

More specifically, the researchers identified that within the technical expertise, 56% of the job descriptions required knowledge of social development and 26% requested familiarity with the international donor community. Within intra-organizational theme, the following competencies were in demand: project and financial management, leadership, strategic management, and marketing: 67% the employers were looking for proposal and report writing, 58% for training skills, 44% for advanced computer skills, 45% for financial management, 42% for program/project management, 41% for organizational skills, 39% for leadership, and 34% for team planning. Extra-organizational competencies covered donor relations (47%), ability to foster networks (43%), and diplomatic skills (37%). Within personal abilities, the researchers highlighted strong interpersonal skills (33%), flexibility (30%), negotiable problem solving skills (22%), and cross-cultural skills (20%). The study also indicated that 50% of the
development assistance jobs are available within coordination and support services sector. Sixty-one percent of the applicants are required to have a master’s degree and 34% a baccalaureate degree. According to 65% of the job searches, an international development professional is expected to know more than one language (Pittman, Sugawara, Rodgers, & Bediako, 2015, p. 5-9).

**Summary of the Chapter**

The literature supports the need for professionalization of humanitarian sector which includes the education of humanitarian and international development professionals. Due to the lack of standardization of educational curricula for specialized education of humanitarian professionals, there are discrepancies in terms of acquired skills and competencies between the graduates of various institutions preparing future humanitarian workforce.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, rationale and assumptions as well as population and sample, measures and their reliability and validity, data collection procedures, data analysis, threats to validity, and limitations of the research design for this study.

Introduction

Quality education of international development/humanitarian professionals is of high importance, since the donor governments’ budget cuts, which usually act as main financial contributors, create limited job opportunities for recent graduates thus contributing to the existing competition. Therefore, it is important to assess incoming Master’s level hires job preparedness to ensure that educational programs indeed prepare their alumni for professional success. Current research literature does not address this topic. The results of this study hope to fill this gap of knowledge.

The purpose of this survey study was to describe how humanitarian professional alumni think their Master’s program is aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) and how these competencies assist them in their current work. Additionally, the purpose was to describe what NGO employers think of the CHCF competencies and the preparedness of Master level hires aligned with the CHCF competencies. The independent variables were defined as the competencies of the CHCF. The dependent variables were defined as (1) the scores of how the humanitarian professional alumni at University X rated the CHCF competencies, and (2) the scores of how the NGO employers evaluate the extent of employment preparedness of incoming Master level hires.
The research questions for this descriptive survey study are given below:

1. What do University X alumni think is the alignment between their employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

2. What do non-profit employers think is the alignment between incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

3. Is there alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

**Organization of the Study**

This study consisted of three parts and utilized survey methods and reported descriptive statistic findings. Part one intended to answer the following research question: “What are University X alumni perspectives of their employment preparedness aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?” Part two specifically concentrated on the question of “What are non-profit employer perspectives of incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?” Part three determined whether there is alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF).

**Research Design**
This study used a survey research methods design. Part one of this survey study consisted of a questionnaire that was sent out electronically to all the MSCID and MIDA’s alumni from University X (around 550) using Qualtrics. Part two also utilized Qualtrics survey that was electronically sent out to the department heads of different NGOs around the world (around 60) and also posted in professional groups on LinkedIn. Part three consisted of cross analyzing the data from both surveys to determine alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the CHCF.

The survey method approach was selected to provide an efficient data gathering since it was the most appropriate for the population of this study that would not be easily observed directly (Shi, 2008). A survey design aimed to collect the same data for each study participant. The main goal of quantitative methods design was to create a sample that is statistically representative of the whole population of study in order to generalize the findings from a sample to a population (Fowler, 2008). Therefore, this survey study provided a quantitative description of humanitarian professional alumni job preparedness by studying a sample that included two Master’s programs at the University X as well as employers’ feedback on alumni representing various educational institutions, which is a representative of all Master level humanitarian professional alumni.

**Population and Sample**

This study utilized purposeful sampling to meet our participant criteria (University X MSCID and MIDA alumni). According to Marshall (1997), a researcher uses purposeful sampling to select the most productive sample to answer the research question(s). The main purpose of this sampling is to “select information rich cases
strategically and purposefully; specific type and number of cases depends on study purposes and resources” (Patton, 2002, p.243). Since the researcher is interested in knowing the perceptions of MSCID and MIDA alumni as well as NGO employers, it was appropriate to set such criteria in order to gain information rich data. Patton (2002) explained that criterion sampling is the process of “picking all cases that meet some predetermined criterion” (p.243). For example, a predetermined criterion that was utilized is that all participants must be University X MSCID or MIDA alumni; this allowed the study to be narrowed down and focus to be on the feedback of the alumni vs. current students. The researcher expected alumni to provide more information rich data because they were able to reflect on past academic journeys. The researcher did not place any age or country of residence restrictions on the participants; however, the researcher acknowledges that those factors could play a role in their academic and professional experiences and could be considered for future research.

The first population group for this research study comprises of 550 University X MSCID (approximately 80) and MIDA (approximately 470) alumni who were given an online questionnaire (N₁=550). This number represents all the MSCID and MIDA alumni from University X. Second population group for this study consisted of 60 NGO employers around the world and all the other employers who received this survey through a colleague or LinkedIn professional group post (N₂=60+).

The first sample group is 90 alumni who took the survey (n₁=90). Anticipated survey response rate was between 80 and 100 alumni. However, the results are only based on 70 complete responses. For the purpose of this study, responses were defined complete if a respondent proceeded and took the survey beyond the first block of general
questions to the competency specific items. This university was chosen due to its unique feature: it offers on and off-campus education options for humanitarian professionals to get a Master degree. The sample, especially MIDA alumni, differs ethnically, culturally, and socio-economically and represents a good sample of the population of all Master’s alumni in the field of international development and humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, through purposeful sampling, the researcher contacted via email approximately 60 department directors of various local and international NGOs with a request to take a survey and also share it among the colleagues. The survey was also posted in a number of professional international development groups on LinkedIn. The researcher targeted all the NGOs that she was personally familiar with either through internship or volunteer experiences as well as some well-known large international NGOs. The rationale, purpose and benefits of this dissertation research study were conveyed to potential respondents to solicit greater response rate. The second sample group consisted of 69 employers took the survey \( (n_2=69) \). However, the actual number of complete responses, 36, exceeded by 20% the anticipated number of 30.

**Data Collection Procedures**

During part one of data collection, data was collected through an online alumni questionnaire using Qualtrics. The MIDA and MSCID program directors sent out the alumni surveys on behalf of the researcher to approximately 470 MIDA alumni and 80 MSCID alumni, which means that every MIDA and MSCID alumni had a chance to contribute to this study. During part two, the researcher sent out a different online questionnaire using Qualtrics as well to approximately 60 department directors of various NGOs with a request to take the survey and also share it among their colleagues. The
researcher also posted the survey in a number of international development professional groups on LinkedIn. It is important to acknowledge that the high response rate is correlated with the researcher’s established professional relationships at both, the University X as well as a number of NGOs.

Since the researcher is interested in understanding how Master’s programs prepare alumni for workforce in international development sector, the survey questions were intended to encourage participants to reflect upon their past academic experiences at MSCID and MIDA. Likewise, the employers were prompted to reflect on their perceptions on incoming Master level hire job preparedness.

As Scheuren (2004) highlights, “An integral part of a well-designed survey is to “plan in” quality all along the way. One must devise ways to keep respondents mistakes and biases to a minimum (p.18)”. Therefore, the researcher conducted two pilot surveys to allow her to gauge the time it takes to take the survey. The alumni survey was also pilot-tested by one alumni as well as one international development expert, while the employer survey was tested by one of the employers. A few questions were refined based on the feedback received.

The Dillman (2000) approach encourages personalized and repeated contact to questionnaire respondents that the researcher incorporated to increase the response rate of these online surveys. The researcher’s contact info was provided in the email, and the value of each respondent’s feedback and the purpose of the study were emphasized. For repeated aspect of this approach, the researcher requested the program directors to send
out an initial email with personalized survey link and two follow-up reminder emails to non-respondents over a 2-week period at about week two and three.

The researcher obtained approval from the UMSL Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. University X provided an Institutional Consent Letter since their IRB was not required due to the fact that the data was collected only from the alumni and not the current students or faculty. A copy of the formal IRB approval is included in Appendix I.

**Instrumentation**

Two instruments included two web-based Qualtrics online surveys with both closed and open-ended items. The online questionnaires offered convenient tool for gathering data in terms of cost, access to respondents, and speed of data collection and analysis (Hooley, Wellens, & Marriott, 2012). Qualtrics, the open source survey application, was selected due to being user-friendly and providing multiple question formats, offering needed security to ensure confidentiality of respondents, easy data export and analysis, and last but not least being offered for free through the researcher’s school.

Alumni survey respondents were asked to answer 22 questions, 18 of which were related to their previous educational experiences during their time in the MIDA or MSCID Programs as well as their current employment. More specifically, alumni survey respondents were asked 16 questions with multiple sub-questions to rate if they agree the specific listed Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in their Master’s program. If they are currently employed or have been recently working for an
NGO, they were asked to rate how frequently they use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in their job. Two open-ended questions at the end of the survey inquired about additional competencies that they feel were not addressed in their Master’s program but would aid them in their current position and the respondents were asked to list any characteristics or program components that made their Master’s program exceptional. Since the respondents of both surveys were also asked to answer some general questions about themselves and their organization, alumni survey contain 3 of those questions inquiring about the type of organization alumni are currently working for, indicating its size and the position they are holding. In addition, participants of both surveys were also asked a question to rate how familiar they were with the CHCF.

The employer survey consisted of 23 questions. Respondents were asked to provide the assessment of their organization’s goals and hiring competent humanitarian practitioners in comparison to the CHCF. First five general questions inquired about the name of an organization, asked to specify its type and size, requested to indicate the responder’s position in this organization, and a number of Master level graduates they usually hire annually. The next 16 questions with multiple sub-questions asked the respondents to rate (1) if they agree the listed specific CHFC are applicable to their organization’s needs and goals, and (2) in general, how well their incoming Master level hires demonstrate these specific CHCF competencies. The employer survey concluded with an open-ended question inquiring about any additional competencies not listed in the Core Humanitarian Framework that they might feel are important for Master level incoming hires to demonstrate.
A personalized email was sent out by the program directors to each alumni participant introducing the study and asking to contribute his or her feedback. It also included the researcher’s contact information if a participant would have any questions or concerns regarding participation in the study. Once a participant clicked on a survey link in an email, he or she was redirected to the page of an online survey. Both surveys started with a brief explanation of the study, gave instructions on how to complete the survey, provided information on privacy protection for participants, described the approximate amount of time required to complete the survey, and provided an option to exit the survey at any given time without penalty. The questionnaire included informed consent to ensure that answers would be voluntary and the data would be kept confidential. There were no forced responses; therefore questionnaire items were optional. Skip logic was applied to some questionnaire items so respondents would not be required to answer irrelevant items that would not apply. Both surveys were available online for a four-week period with two separate reminders that were sent out to those who wouldn’t participate by the second and third week of this four-week timeframe. See Appendices A and B for a copy of each survey.

The variables are CHCF competencies and the survey scores of alumni and employers. Thirty CHCF competencies are the independent variables and quoted word-by-word to ensure validity and reliability. Appendix C contains a detailed list of these variables. Survey scores of alumni and employers are the dependent variables. The majority of questions are rated on a variety of Likert-like scales ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree; or Demonstrate Exceptionally, Demonstrate Well, N/A, Somewhat Demonstrate, Do Not Demonstrate; Strongly Agree,
Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree; or Always, Frequently, Occasionally, Rarely, Never.

Both questionnaires were initially drafted based on the CHCF that has been previously endorsed in the Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA) Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalization that tested its relevancy in meeting the needs of the sector, the researcher feels confident to use this framework as a tool for her dissertation research. Its validity has been verified by the above-mentioned endorsement. Additionally, the questionnaires were reviewed by several international development experts and pilot-tested to ensure validity, measure the approximate time, clarity, flow and to ensure everything worked correctly. Then, the surveys were revised according to the received feedback.

The researcher checked content validity by assessing how well her measure was able to provide information to help improve similar Master programs. The researcher conducted overall internal consistency reliability analysis of the Alumni and the Employer Surveys to ensure that both survey scales consistently reflect the construct they are measuring (Field, 2005). Additionally, competency area subscale reliability was conducted for each six competency areas in both surveys. Nunnaly (1978) identified alpha coefficient of > .07 as a good reliability score indicator. The study results indicated all good values for alpha, which means that the scales and subscales are reliable and have good internal consistency. Table 2 presents the alpha scores in detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alumni</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>.968</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, the researcher addressed measure reliability by using test-retest reliability. Two University X MIDA and MSCID alumni and two NGO employers were requested to take the survey. Two weeks later, the same respondents took the original surveys. The researcher compared the data and found the responses identical.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data collected through both alumni and employer surveys. Descriptive statistics was used to present frequencies and mean scores to interpret the University X alumni evaluation of their employment preparedness and non-profit employer evaluation of incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF). Alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the CHCF was determined.

**Quality Standards**

Threats to internal validity of this design include history and maturation. The fact that a big number of alumni graduated over seven years ago might interfere with their judgment of the specific program components that contributed to their professional success and most of the participants have been full-time working professionals in their
field of study while in school can also contribute to the false perception that it was the educational components alone that directly influenced their professional growth. I incorporated a statement describing those threats. I outlined my known experiences, program involvement and biases that can possibly affect the reality of the finding interpretations. Since external validity is concerned with the generalizability of findings from one study to another and from a sample to a population, the researcher selected a wide range of diverse survey respondents. To address the reliability issues with the design of this study, the researcher provided a detailed description for design replication. The study design can be replicated by various educational programs that are looking to standardize their learning outcomes. In order to ensure that the findings of this study can be generalized to another Master’s programs in International Development, only the competencies highlighted in Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework were measured in the questionnaire.

There are threats to internal and external validity. For example, without a pre-survey before starting the program, it is difficult to conclude that it is the Master’s degree education alone that directly contributed to the acquisition of the CHCF competencies. Therefore, the researcher tried to minimize the potential biases and address the validity issues by including the employer survey where various employers were asked to rate CHCF competencies of their incoming hires who represented alumni from multiple institutions, not only the alumni from the University X MIDA and CSCID programs.

Limitations

The researcher of this study has a passion for international development and issues pertaining to education of humanitarian professionals due to the fact that the
researcher herself is a humanitarian professional. Being an alumnus from the University X MSCID program who has been heavily involved in MIDA program for a number of years, the researcher is familiar first hand with both programs that might potentially create researcher bias. It might be a limitation to the study since the researcher might assume that some notions of the educational process and experiences might be self-explanatory. However, an outsider might need further details to be able to fully comprehend the notion. On the other hand, being so familiar with this narrow field of study provides a researcher with an added bonus in designing the study and interpreting the data.

The alumni sample size is relatively small which added additional pressure of possible high non-response rate. Cochran (1977) cautions that any substantial non-response might make it difficult to assign useful confidence limits to the mean from the sample results. Being an alumnus from the institution of study and personal familiarity and involvement with both programs possibly also helped to generate a higher response rate since the researcher is personally acquainted with a number of alumni who might be willing to share their feedback due to the trust and camaraderie to support their fellow colleague. The researcher expected 30-35% response rate, yet it turned to be only 17%. Nevertheless, a minimum required number of responses, 90, were obtained to ensure meaningful analysis.

The limitations of this study include the possible bias of the students in self-evaluating the skills and competencies they possess after the program completion. Only two University X programs were the focus of this study. In order to ensure that the findings of this study can be generalized to another Master’s programs in International
Development, only the competencies highlighted in Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework vs. various specific Master’s in international development competencies were studied.

Any method of study, in this case the survey method, has its own limitations. For example, in this study the respondents provided their opinion and perceptions on the skills acquisition and demonstration vs. performance evaluation artifacts. Lack of assessment prove might create a limitation.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the rationale for the survey study methodology and how it will be utilized to research the topic of standardization of Master-level education competencies of humanitarian and international development professionals. Research questions, population and sample, measures, reliability and validity, data collection procedures, data analysis, threats to validity, and limitations of the research design for this study were discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. This survey study describes how humanitarian professional alumni think of how their Master’s program is aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) and how the competencies assist them in their current work. Additionally, the study depicts what NGO employers think of the CHCF competencies and the preparedness of Master level hires are aligned with the CHCF competencies. Since the study is divided into three parts related to three research questions, this chapter is organized around these questions. The results for each research question will be presented separately. The section on part one describes the study results that answer the first research question “What do University X alumni think is the alignment between their employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?” Additionally, this section explores alumni familiarity with the CHCF as well as the Master’s program components that made their education exceptional. Section two investigates the second research question “What do non-profit employers think is the alignment between incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?” Furthermore, this section also describes how familiar NGO employers are with the CHCF. Then part three reports on the third research question “Is there alignment between the alumni perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?”

Part One Results

The data collection for the study took place between February and March 2016. Ninety alumni from MIDA and MSCID took the survey although 20 of those respondents
answered only the first few general survey questions and did not proceed to provide their feedback related to the CHCF. Therefore, the data analysis was based on 70 completed surveys. After a short introduction about the needs and importance of the study and explanation of the CHCF, respondents were asked some general questions about their current employment. Alumni working for NGOs (international and national) represented 50% of the respondents. Research participants who chose “other” to the question of the type of organization where they currently work equaled 26%; they indicated working for the United Nations agencies, various educational and church institutions, being independent consultants or full-time PhD students. Figure 1 indicates the alumni responses in terms of the type of the organization they are currently working for.

![Figure 1: Type of organizations alumni represent.](image)

The respondents positions range from the deputy minister of programs for the ministry of rural development of Afghanistan, foreign service officer, director of Master’s program in international and community development, country director, deputy
executive director, director of finance and operations, assistant director, director for program implementation, project manager, project officer, principal alumni development director, regional monitoring and evaluation officer for east and southern Africa, monitoring and verification manager, senior nutrition officer, HR manager, communications and development officer, independent consultant, to advisor on education, postdoctoral associate, faculty, journalist, and pastor. Respondents, who are currently employed, were asked to indicate the number of employees within their organizations. The majority of respondents work for organizations with 100+ (41%) and from 50 to 100 (18%) employees. The frequency results are reported in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Number of employees within the organizations that employ alumni.](image)

The researcher also wanted to determine whether the NGO community knew about the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework designed in 2011. Therefore, alumni respondents were also asked to identify their familiarity with the CHCF. Interesting to highlight that 41% of the respondents heard about the Framework for the
first time. However, only 18% of alumni indicated being very familiar with the Framework. Figure 3 displays the frequency results.

Figure 3. Alumni familiarity with the CHCF.

The next part of the questionnaire concentrated on the first research question, “What do University X alumni think is the alignment between their employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?” The Framework competencies are divided into six competency areas with 16 specific competencies and 50 sub-competencies. Respondents were provided with each competency area description and asked to select one of the five ratings demonstrating their opinion regarding the acquisition and practical application of each competency. Alumni were requested to rate two statements related to each competency: (1) Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master’s program; and (2) If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job. The first question was rated on the following Likert scale:
strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. The second question was rated always, frequently, occasionally, rarely, to never.

The frequency results were presented in two ways: 1) percentage of combined positive replies of “strongly agree” and “agree” in response to the first survey question and “always” and “frequently” in response to the second survey question; and 2) mean scores and standard deviation. There are two different scales of means: 1) when the ranges are strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree/undecided in the first survey question, the responses for “undecided” are not counted, and other answers are coded 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively; and 2) when the range is always/frequently/occasionally/rarely/never in the second survey question, then all the answers count, and they are coded 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The researcher reported the number of “undecided” responses for each particular sub-competency (Appendix G).

Appendix G displays a list of specific sub-competencies and Appendix K presents the figures of the mean score gaps between the alumni responses of how the specific sub-competencies for each competency area were addressed in their Master’s and how frequently they utilize them in the workplace. Table 3 below demonstrates the overall descriptive data from the Alumni Survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCY AREAS</th>
<th>AREA 1: UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND APPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES</th>
<th>AREA 2: ACHIEVING RESULTS EFFECTIVELY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK COMPETENCIES</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Mean/SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 1: UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND APPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.28/1.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 The humanitarian context</td>
<td>3.27/1.10</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>3.12/1.09</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>3.25/1.14</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>3.32/1.03</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4</td>
<td>3.40/1.15</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Applying humanitarian standards/principles</td>
<td>3.29/1.28</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1</td>
<td>3.29/1.19</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.2</td>
<td>3.32/1.40</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.3</td>
<td>3.34/1.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.4</td>
<td>3.22/1.46</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 2: ACHIEVING RESULTS EFFECTIVELY</td>
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<td>3.50/0.94</td>
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<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>3.62/0.52</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>2.2 Accountability</td>
<td>3.50/1.05</td>
<td>91.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>3.53/1.01</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>3.46/1.09</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3 Decision-making</td>
<td>3.34/1.07</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>3.28/0.98</td>
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<td>2.3.3</td>
<td>3.41/1.03</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Impact</td>
<td>3.46/0.97</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Score 1</td>
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<td>Developing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Listening and Dialogue</td>
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<td>Working with Others</td>
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<td>Area 4</td>
<td>Operating Safely and Securely in a Humanitarian Response</td>
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<td>Security Context and Analysis</td>
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<td>Personal Safety and Security</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Minimizing Risk to Communities and Partners</td>
<td>3.53</td>
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<td>Area 5</td>
<td>Managing Yourself in a Pressured and Changing Environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>3.24</td>
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<td>Standard Deviation1</td>
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<td>5.1.4</td>
<td>3.34/1.22</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>5.1.5</td>
<td>3.25/1.44</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>5.2 Maintaining professionalism</td>
<td>3.63/0.90</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>3.68/1.02</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>3.52/1.20</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>3.61/0.91</td>
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<td>5.2.4</td>
<td>3.72/0.45</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>AREA 6: LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>3.45/1.24</td>
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<td>6.1 Self-awareness</td>
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<td>6.1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3.5</td>
<td>3.45/1.19</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Alumni survey results.

**Understanding of Humanitarian Contexts and Applications of Humanitarian Principles.** The first competency area referred to key issues and practices impacting current and future humanitarian interventions. This competency area included the
following specific competencies: *the humanitarian context* and *applying humanitarian standards/principles*.

The researcher measured alumni agreement on how well the *humanitarian context* competency was addressed during their Master’s program. Overall, between 80% and 90% of the respondents specified that each particular sub-competency was addressed throughout their study (M=3.27, SD=1.10). Figure 26 in Appendix H displays the detailed frequency data.

The researcher also requested alumni who are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO to rate how often they utilize the *humanitarian context* competency in their job. *Demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery* sub-competency was rated at 63% (M=2.65, SD=1.13), while other sub-competencies within this area received a rating between 76% and 84%, M=3.18, SD=1.01 (see Figure 27, Appendix H).

In regard to *applying humanitarian standards/principles* competency, between 70% to 87% (M=3.34, SD=1.07) of the respondents indicated that each particular sub-competency was addressed throughout their study (Figure 28, Appendix H). Between 76% and 82% (M=3.08, SD=1.11) alumni indicated that they apply the specified sub-competencies in their job (Figure 29, Appendix H).

**Achieving Results Effectively.** The second competency area referred to behaviors to use resources efficiently and effectively to achieve results, considering the
need for speed, scale, and quality. This competency area included the following specific competencies: *program quality, accountability, decision-making*, and *impact*.

Alumni were requested to measure their agreement on how well *program quality* competency was addressed during the Master’s program. Overall, between 97% and 98% (M=3.68, SD=0.65) of the respondents agreed that both specific sub-competencies were addressed throughout their study (Figure 30, Appendix H). Between 77% and 84% (M=3.16, SD=1.04) of the respondents always or frequently apply the two measured specific sub-competencies (Figure 31, Appendix H).

Between 90% and 93% (M=3.50, SD=1.05) of alumni respondents agreed that both of the specific sub-competencies under *accountability* competency were addressed in their study (Figure 32, Appendix H). The researcher asked alumni who are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO to rate how often they utilize *accountability* competency in their job. The data showed that between 76% and 80% (M=3.08, SD=0.98) of the respondents always or frequently use the two specific sub-competencies (Figure 33, Appendix H).

Between 83% and 90% (M=3.34, SD=1.07) agreed and strongly agreed that the specific sub-competencies related to *decision-making* were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 34, Appendix H). The data showed that between 76% and 85% (M=3.13, SD=1.06) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 35, Appendix H).

Ninety-three percent (M=3.46, SD=0.97) reported that the specific competency related to *impact* was addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 36, Appendix H). The
data showed that 89\% (M=3.37, SD=0.87) of the respondents always or frequently use this specific sub-competency related to impact in their job (Figure 37, Appendix H).

**Developing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships.** Third competency area referred to behaviors designed to develop and maintain collaborative, coordinated relationships at times of heightened complexity and risk. This competency area included the following specific competencies: *listening and dialog*, and *working with others*.

Between 94\% and 96\% (M=3.58, SD=0.85) identified that the specific sub-competencies related to *listening and dialog* were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 38, Appendix H). The data showed that between 72\% and 82\% (M=3.08, SD=1.00) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 39, Appendix H).

Overall, between 88\% and 91\% (M=3.45, SD=1.07) agreed and strongly agreed that the specific sub-competencies related to *working with others* were addressed in their Master’s study. However *challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Coded of Conduct* specific sub-competency was rated lower at 68\%, M=3.19, SD=1.49 (Figure 40, Appendix H).

The data showed that between 80\% and 90\% (M=3.12, SD=0.97) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies related to *working with others* in their job. However, *challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Coded of Conduct* specific competency was rated lower, at 64\% (M=2.66, SD=1.08). The frequencies on how respondents reported the application of this competency are presented in Figure 41 in Appendix H.
Operating Safely and Securely in a Humanitarian Response. Fourth competency area addressed the behaviors required to take responsibility to operate safely in a high-pressure environment. This competency area included the following specific competencies: security context and analysis, personal safety and security, and minimizing risk to communities and partners.

Eighty-seven percent (M=3.39, SD=1.19) specified that the specific sub-competency related to security context and analysis was addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 42, Appendix H). The data showed that 68% (M=2.92, SD=1.02) of the respondents always or frequently use this specific sub-competency in their job (Figure 43, Appendix H).

Between 70% and 78% (M=3.35, SD=1.41) identified that the specific sub-competencies related to personal safety and security were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 44, Appendix H). The data indicated that between 73% and 82% (M=3.15, SD=0.95) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 45, Appendix H).

Ninety-one percent (M=3.53, SD=1.00) reported that the specific sub-competency related to minimizing risk to communities and partners was addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 46, Appendix H). The data showed that 92% (M=3.37, SD=0.76) of the respondents use this specific sub-competency in their job (Figure 47, Appendix H).

Managing Yourself in a Pressured and Changing Environment. Fifth competency area referred to essential personal behaviors required to operate effectively
within a humanitarian context. This competency area included the following specific competencies: *resilience* and *maintaining professionalism*.

Overall, between 65% and 82% (M=3.24, SD=1.34) reported that the specific sub-competencies related to *resilience* were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 48, Appendix H). The data showed that between 74% and 92% (M=3.23, SD=0.87) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 49, Appendix H).

Between 85% and 94% (M=3.63, SD=0.90) agreed and strongly agreed that the specific sub-competencies related to *maintaining professionalism* were addressed in their Master’s study. However, *Demonstrate personal integrity* received a 100% rate, M=3.72, SD=0.45 (Figure 50, Appendix H). The data showed that between 94% and 98% (M=3.66, SD=0.57) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies related to *maintaining professionalism* in their job (Figure 51, Appendix H).

**Leadership in Humanitarian Response.** Sixth competency area addressed seeing the overall goal within the changing context and taking responsibility to motivate others to work towards it, independent of one’s role, function or seniority. This competency area included the following specific competencies: *self-awareness*, *motivating and influencing others*, and *critical judgment*.

Overall, between 81% and 86% (M=3.35, SD=1.26) identified that the specific sub-competencies related to *self-awareness* were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 52, Appendix H). The data showed that between 79% and 92% (M=3.41,
SD=0.76) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 53, Appendix H).

Between 81% and 91% (M=3.52, SD=1.17) specified that the specific sub-competencies related to *motivating and influencing others* were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 54, Appendix H). The data showed that between 79% and 94% (M=3.36, SD=0.82) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 55, Appendix H).

Between 71% and 85% (M=3.47, SD=1.30) agreed and strongly agreed that the specific sub-competencies related to *critical judgment* were addressed in their Master’s study (Figure 56, Appendix H). The data showed that over 84% and 88% (M=3.26, SD=0.95) of the respondents always or frequently use these specific sub-competencies in their job (Figure 57, Appendix H).

**Additional questions.** Alumni respondents were also requested to list any competencies that they felt were not addressed in their Master’s program but would aid them in their current position. The responses ranged from donors relations, NGO marketing and communication skills, technical writing, humanitarian sector collaboration, disaster risk reduction, security (mitigation, prevention, preparedness), disaster/emergency response and building resilience, gender in international development, creativity in program design and skills on how an NGO can generate own funds, strategic planning, stronger emphasis on research to Theory of Change, managing militarized development environment and counter insurgency strategies, HR management, conflict management and problem solving skills especially during emergency response.
The last alumni survey question inquired about the characteristics and program components that made their Master’s program exceptional. The respondents highlighted the benefit of networking and diversity of participants’ backgrounds (faculty and students) brought to the program, inspiring faculty with vast field experience and not only academic knowledge, Christian values, Program Cycle Management approach, practical assignments and hands-on instruction, multi-sectoral and cross-sectional scope of topics covered that provided a solid foundation, flexibility to work and study, online courses, exceptional program administration, international site locations.

**Part Two Results**

The data collection for this part of the study took place simultaneously with the alumni surveys for the part one of the study. Sixty-seven NGO employers took the Employer Survey although 31 of those respondents answered only the first few general survey questions and did not proceed to provide their feedback related to the CHCF. Therefore, the data analysis is based on 36 finished responses. After a short introduction about the needs and importance of the study and explanation of the CHCF, the respondents were asked some general questions about their organization.

The respondents represent a wide-range of various (1) local (e.g., Project Bread, Boston Network for International Development, International Institute of St. Louis), (2) national (e.g., IBIS South Sudan, LIN Center for Community Development, Water for Good, Africa 2000 Network, Barakat) and (3) international NGOs (e.g., The Asia Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, ADRA International, MSF Doctors Without Borders, Maranatha Volunteers Interantional, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, SOS Children’s Villages, World Vision, Clinton Health Access Initiative, World Education).
Respondents from international NGOs comprised the largest group (58%), followed by 21% representatives from national NGOs. Figure 4 demonstrates in more detail employers’ representation by the type of organization.

![Figure 4. Representation by the type of employer respondents’ organization.](image)

Representatives from the United Nations agencies (e.g., Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, and United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office) and the U.S. government entities (e.g., United States Agency for International Development and American Councils for International Education) also provided their feedback in the Employer Survey.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of employees within their organizations. Representatives from the organizations that have 100+employees comprised the largest group (38%), followed by 23% from the organizations that employ between 11 and 29 employees (see Figure 5).
Figure 5. Number of employees within employer respondents’ organization.

The respondents’ positions range from the program officer/coordiantor, monitoring and evaluation manager, communication specialist, director of community outreach, director of development, program development specialist, food security field officer, livelihoods project supervisor, organizational emergency preparedness, to founder and senior advisor, president and CEO, executive director, country director, programs director, director of operations, private grants manager, deputy country representative, vice-president for HR and leadership.

Employers were also asked to identify the approximate number of Master level graduates they usually hire annually within their respective organizations: 38% of the respondents hire between 1 and 4 employees and 29% hire 10+, while 17% don’t hire any personnel on an annual basis (see Figure 6).
The researcher also wanted to determine how well the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework designed in 2011 received publicity within the NGO community. Employer respondents were also asked to identify their familiarity with the CHCF. The data ranged from 45% who reported that it was their first time hearing about the Framework to 9% who indicated being very familiar with the Framework (see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Number of master-level graduates hired annually within organization.

Figure 7. Employer familiarity with the CHCF.
The next part of the questionnaire concentrated on the second research question, “What do non-profit employers think is the alignment between incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?” The Framework competencies are divided into six competency areas with 16 specific competencies and 50 sub-competencies. Similar to the Alumni Survey, respondents were provided with each competency area description and asked to select one of the five ratings demonstrating their opinion regarding the acquisition and practical application of each competency: (1) Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization’s needs and goals; and (2) Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies. The first question was rated on the following Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. The second question was rated from demonstrate exceptionally, demonstrate well, n/a, somewhat demonstrate, to do not demonstrate.

The frequency results will be presented in two ways: 1) percentage of combined positive replies of “strongly agree” and “agree” in response to the first survey question and “demonstrate exceptionally” and “demonstrate well” in response to the second survey question; and 2) mean scores and standard deviation. Both scales are coded 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 where “0” represents “undecided” and “n/a” responses. The researcher did not count answers labeled “0”. However, the numbers of “undecided” and “n/a” responses were reported respectively for each particular sub-competency (Appendix G).

Appendix G displays a list of specific sub-competencies and Appendix K presents the figures of the mean score gaps between the employer responses of how the specific sub-competencies for each competency area were addressed in their Master’s and how
frequently they utilize them in the workplace. Table 4 below demonstrates the overall descriptive data from the Employer Survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCY AREAS</th>
<th>Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization’s needs and goals.</th>
<th>Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.</th>
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<td>SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK COMPETENCIES</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Mean/SD</td>
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<td>AREA 1: UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND APPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES</td>
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<td>3.46/1.07</td>
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<td>3.37/1.22</td>
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<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>3.39/0.69</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>3.50/1.06</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.1.4</td>
<td>3.60/0.91</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Applying humanitarian standards/principles</td>
<td>3.45/1.17</td>
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<td>1.2.4</td>
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<td>3.62/0.99</td>
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<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>3.76/0.77</td>
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<td>AREA 3: DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS</td>
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<td>3.1Listening and dialogue</td>
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<td>4.3 Personal safety and security</td>
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<td>4.3 Minimizing risk to communities and partners</td>
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<td>AREA 6: LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE</td>
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<td>6.3.5</td>
<td>3.58/0.79</td>
<td>97</td>
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*Table 4. Employer survey results.*
Understanding of Humanitarian Contexts and Applications of Humanitarian Principles. The first competency area referred to key issues and practices impacting current and future humanitarian interventions. This competency area included the following specific competencies: the humanitarian context and applying humanitarian standards/principles.

The researcher measured employers’ agreement on whether specific sub-competencies within the CHCF humanitarian context competency were applicable to their organization’s needs and goals. Overall, between 80% to 94% of the respondents (M=3.47, SD=0.97) agreed or strongly agreed that that each specific competency is applicable (Figure 58, Appendix J).

The researcher also requested employers to rate in general how well their incoming Master level hires demonstrate specific competencies within the CHCF humanitarian context competency. In regards to demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery sub-competency, the employers rated that 56% (M=2.79, SD=1.22) of their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally”, while other competencies within this area received a rating between 67% and 83% (M=2.98, SD=1.07) for combined responses to the same answer options (Figure 59, Appendix J).

Applying humanitarian standards/principles competency results reveal that between 83% and 89% of the respondents (M=3.45, SD=1.17) specified that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure
60, Appendix J). Between 71% and 78% of the respondents (M=2.91, SD=0.96) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 61, Appendix J).

**Achieving Results Effectively.** Second competency area referred to behaviors to use resources efficiently and effectively to achieve results, considering the need for speed, scale, and quality. This competency area included the following specific competencies: *program quality, accountability, decision-making, and impact.*

*Program quality* competency results show that between 94% and 98% of the respondents (M=3.69, SD=0.88) answered that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 62, Appendix J). Between 78% and 84% of the respondents (M=3.16, SD=0.87) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 63, Appendix J).

*Accountability* competency results indicated that between 90% and 91% of the respondents (M=3.54, SD=1.09) that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 64, Appendix J). Between 78% and 81% of the respondents (M=3.07, SD=0.91) specified that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 65, Appendix J).

*Decision-making* competency results reveal that between 91% and 97% of the respondents (M=3.58, SD=0.98) stated that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 66, Appendix J). Between 74% and 84% of the respondents (M=2.95, SD=0.80) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 67, Appendix J).
Impact competency results revealed that 94% (M=3.59, SD=0.99) of the respondents agree or strongly agree that this particular competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 68, Appendix J). Eighty-seven percent of the respondents (M=3.03, SD=0.84) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency (Figure 69, Appendix J).

**Developing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships.** Third competency area referred to behaviors designed to develop and maintain collaborative, coordinated relationships at times of heightened complexity and risk. This competency area included the following specific competencies: *listening and dialog*, and *working with others*.

*Listening and dialog* competency results revealed that between 84% and 94% of the respondents (M=3.50, SD=1.13) stated that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 70, Appendix J). Between 67% and 81% of the respondents (M=3.02, SD=1.00) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency (Figure 71, Appendix J).

*Working with others* competency results revealed that between 82% and 97% of the respondents (M=3.58, SD=1.04) specified that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 72, Appendix J). Between 72% and 94% of the respondents (M=2.93, SD=0.93) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency. However, the results for *challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Coded of Conduct* sub-competency were reported at 47% (M=2.52, SD=1.34). Figure 73 in Appendix J provides the frequency distribution.
Operating Safely and Securely in a Humanitarian Response. Fourth competency area addressed the behaviors required to take responsibility to operate safely in a high-pressure environment. This competency area included the following specific competencies: security context and analysis, personal safety and security, and minimizing risk to communities and partners.

Security context and analysis competency results reveal that 85% of the respondents (M=3.57, SD=1.20) agree or strongly agree that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 74, Appendix J). Fifty-seven percent of the respondents (M=2.75, SD=1.16) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency (Figure 75, Appendix J).

Personal safety and security competency results reveal that between 85% and 88% of the respondents (M=3.58, SD=1.29) specified that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 76, Appendix J). Between 61% and 72% of the respondents (M=2.99, SD=1.18) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 77, Appendix J).

Minimizing risk to communities and partners competency results reveal that 94% of the respondents (M=3.66, SD=0.99) indicated that this particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 78, Appendix J). Seventy-five percent of the respondents (M=3.06, SD=0.89) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency (Figure 79, Appendix J).

Managing Yourself in a Pressured and Changing Environment. Fifth competency area referred to essential personal behaviors required to operate effectively
within a humanitarian context. This competency area included the following specific competencies: resilience and maintaining professionalism.

Resilience competency results reveal that between 91% and 94% of the respondents (M=3.54, SD=1.18) answered that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals. However, recognize stress and take steps to reduce it competency scored 70%, M=3.41, SD=1.53 (Figure 80, Appendix J). Between 50% and 75% of the respondents (M=2.73, SD=0.88) indicated that their new hires demonstrate “well” and “exceptionally” this competency. Though, recognize stress and take steps to reduce it sub-competency scored 44%, M=2.52, SD=0.99 (Figure 81, Appendix J).

Maintaining professionalism competency results revealed that between 94% and 97% of the respondents (M=3.65, SD=0.84) specified that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 82, Appendix J). Between 78% and 85% of the respondents (M=3.10, SD=0.76) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency (Figure 83, Appendix J).

Leadership in Humanitarian Response. Sixth competency area addressed seeing the overall goal within the changing context and taking responsibility to motivate others to work towards it, independent of one’s role, function or seniority. This competency area included the following specific competencies: self-awareness, motivating and influencing others, and critical judgement.

Self-awareness competency results revealed that between 94% and 97% of the respondents (M=3.55, SD=0.82) answered that each particular sub-competency is
applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 84, Appendix J). Between 70% and 77% of the respondents (M=2.85, SD=0.76) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 85, Appendix J).

Motivating and influencing others competency results revealed that between 85% and 94% of the respondents (M=3.65, SD=1.18) agree or strongly agree that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 86, Appendix J). Between 69% and 81% of the respondents (M=2.97, SD=0.88) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency “well” and “exceptionally” (Figure 87, Appendix J).

Critical judgement competency results revealed that between 88% and 97% of the respondents (M=3.61, SD=1.02) agree or strongly agree that each particular sub-competency is applicable to their organization’s needs and goals (Figure 88, Appendix J). Between 66% and 81% of the respondents (M=2.92, SD=0.84) indicated that their new hires demonstrate this competency (Figure 89, Appendix J).

Additional Questions. The employer respondents were also asked to list any competencies not listed in the Core Humanitarian Framework that they felt were important for Master level incoming hires to demonstrate. The responses range from the ability to understand and handle finances, human resources, conflict mitigation, fundraising, safety and security, presentation and reporting, to gender issue awareness and confidence. One of the respondents also highlighted, “I think INTEGRITY, HONESTY and PASSION for humanitarian work are competencies that should be included as a high priority. I find this a lack in humanitarian workers who try to
"swindle" money here and there and only follow money who pays more instead of the real significance of lives being changed for the better - its human to be selfish but working with selfless people brings me so much joy!” (Alumni survey, March 2016).

**Part Three Results**

During the last part of the study, the researcher investigated the third research question that explored the alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the CHCF. The researcher compared results from the alumni responses to “Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master’s program” question to the employer responses for “Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies” question. Appendix K contains the figures on the alignment between the alumni’s feedback on how well the Framework’s specific sub-competencies within each particular competency area were covered in their Master’s program and how well the incoming Master level hires demonstrate them. Table 5 below demonstrates the overall descriptive data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCY AREAS</th>
<th>Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master’s program.</th>
<th>Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK COMPETENCIES</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Mean/SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 1: UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND APPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.28/1.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 The humanitarian context</td>
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</table>
## 1.1 Applying humanitarian standards/principles

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<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>3.12/1.09</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.79/1.22</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>3.25/1.14</td>
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<td>2.94/0.99</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>3.32/1.03</td>
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<td>3.07/1.22</td>
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<td>1.1.4</td>
<td>3.40/1.15</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.12/0.85</td>
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## 1.2 Applying humanitarian standards/principles

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### AREA 2: ACHIEVING RESULTS EFFECTIVELY

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<td>2.1 Program quality</td>
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<td>2.2 Accountability</td>
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<td>2.3 Decision-making</td>
<td>3.34/1.07</td>
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<td>2.3.3</td>
<td>3.41/1.03</td>
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<td>3.12/0.66</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4 Impact</td>
<td>3.46/0.97</td>
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<td>3.03/0.84</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>3.46/0.97</td>
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<td>3.03/0.84</td>
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### AREA 3: DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Listening and dialogue</td>
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<td>3.02/1.00</td>
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<td>3.10/0.86</td>
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<td>3.55/0.86</td>
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### 3.2 Working with others

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### AREA 4: OPERATING SAFELY AND SECURELY IN A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

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### AREA 5: MANAGING YOURSELF IN A PRESSURED AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

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<td>2.55/0.88</td>
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<td>5.1.3</td>
<td>3.41/1.34</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>5.1.4</td>
<td>3.34/1.22</td>
<td>82</td>
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### 5.2 Maintaining professionalism

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<td>5.2.3</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>3.19/0.78</td>
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</table>
**Table 5.** Research question three results.

Understanding of humanitarian contexts and applications of humanitarian principles competency area. The comparison results revealed alumni overall agreement (“agree” and “strongly agree”) at 85% (M=3.27, SD=1.10) that their Master’s program addressed humanitarian context competency. Employers specified that 70% (M=2.98, SD=1.07) of their Master level incoming hires demonstrate (“demonstrate well” and “demonstrate exceptionally”) this competency.
Seventy-nine percent (M=3.29, SD=1.28) of alumni respondents indicated their agreement that applying humanitarian standards/principles competency was addressed during their study. Employers rated at 73% (M=2.91, SD=0.96) how their new hires demonstrate this competency.

Achieving results effectively. Over ninety-seven percent (M=3.68, SD=0.65) of alumni “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that their Master’s program covered program quality competency, while employers indicated that 81% (M=3.16, SD=0.87) of their hires demonstrate it well and exceptionally.

Alumni stated their agreement at 91.5% (M=3.50, SD=1.05) that accountability competency was addressed. Employers reported that 79.5% (M=3.07, SD=0.91) demonstrate this competency. According to 86% (M=3.34, SD=1.07) of alumni, decision-making competency was covered in their Master’s, however 78% (M=2.95, SD=0.80) of employers witness this competency among their new hires. Ninety-three percent (M=3.46, SD=0.97) of alumni stated their agreement in regards to impact competency being covered during their study, while 87% (M=3.03, SD=0.84) of employers indicated seeing it in their master level hires.

Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships. Ninety-five percent (M=3.58, SD=0.85) of alumni indicated their agreement that listening and dialog competency was addressed through their Master’s program. Employers see this competency demonstrated by 74% (M=3.02, SD=1.00) of the new hires. Working with others competency is reported to be demonstrated by 76% (M=2.93, SD=0.83) of new
hires, while 84% (M=3.45, SD=1.07) of alumni indicated that it was addressed during their study.

**Operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response.** Survey data indicated that *security context and analysis* competency is exhibited by 57% (M=2.75, SD=1.16) of the incoming Master level employees, however 87% (M=3.39, SD=1.19) of alumni stated that this competency was covered by their program of study. Over 74% (M=3.35, SD=1.41) of alumni agreed and strongly agreed that *personal safety and security* competency was addressed during their Master’s. However, 68% (M=2.99, SD=1.18) of employers stated that their new hires displayed this competency. In regards to *minimizing risk to communities and partners* competency, alumni indicated 91% of agreement (M=3.53, SD=1.00), while employers stated 75% (M=3.06, SD=0.89).

**Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment.** According to 73% (M=3.24, SD=1.34) of alumni, *resilience* competency was addressed by their Master’s education. Employers indicated that 61% (M=2.73, SD=0.88) of their new hires exhibit this competency. Data indicates that 92.5% (M=3.63, SD=0.90) of alumni reported that *maintaining professionalism* competency was covered in their graduate program, while the number of new hires who demonstrate this competency is at 82% (M=3.10, SD=0.76).

**Leadership in humanitarian response.** *Self-awareness* competency is displayed by 72% (M=2.85, SD=0.76) of the incoming Master level employees, while 83% (M=3.35, SD=1.26) of the alumni indicated that this competency was addressed during their study. *Motivating and influencing others* competency is demonstrated by 75%
(M=2.97, SD=0.88) of the new hires. However, 87% (M=3.52, SD=1.17) of alumni agreed and strongly agreed that it was covered by their Master’s. Critical judgment competency is exhibited by 73% (M=2.92, SD=0.84) of the new hires and 81% (M=3.47, SD=1.30) of alumni indicated that it was addressed through their graduate program.

**Summary of Results**

**Alumni survey.** Major findings from the alumni survey data indicated that 41% of the respondents heard about the CHCF for the first time. Overall, alumni confirmed that most of the Framework’s competencies were covered during their Master’s education. The respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the following competencies were addressed 70% and above through their study program: humanitarian context (80-90%), applying humanitarian standards/principles (70-87%), program quality (97-98%), accountability (90-93%), decision making (83-90%), impact (93%), listening and dialog (94-96%), security context and analysis (87%), personal safety and security (70-78%), minimizing risk to communities and partners (91%), maintaining professionalism (85-100%), self-awareness (81-86%), motivating and influencing others (81-91%), and critical judgment (71-85%).

Overall, working with others competency received positive results of 88% to 91%, however one particular sub-competency, challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct, was marked at 68%. Resilience competency was rated between 65% and 82% with the lowest 3 sub-competencies being recognize stress and take steps to reduce it (65%), remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments (68%) and keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others (68%).
With regard to the second question that alumni respondents were asked, “If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job”, alumni confirmed that they frequently use most of the Framework’s competencies. The respondents indicated that they “always” and “frequently” utilize the following competencies: applying humanitarian standards/principles (76-82%), program quality (77-84%), accountability (76-80%), decision making (76-85%), impact (89%), listening and dialog (72-82%), personal safety and security (73-82%), minimizing risk to communities and partners (92%), resilience (74-92%), maintaining professionalism (94-98%), self-awareness (79-90%), motivating and influencing others (79-90%), and critical judgment (84-88%).

Overall, humanitarian context competency received positive results of 76% to 78%, however one particular sub-competency, demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery, was marked at 63%. Working with others competency was rated between 64% and 90% with the lowest sub-competency being challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct (64%). Security context and analysis competency scored at 68%.

Employer survey. Major findings from the employer survey data indicated that 45% of the NGO employers heard about the CHCF for the first time. Overall, employers confirmed that all of the Framework’s competencies are applicable to their organization’s needs and goals. Approximately, 70% and above of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the following competencies are relevant to their organization: humanitarian
context (80-94%), applying humanitarian standards/principles (83-89%), program quality (94-98%), accountability (90-91%), decision making (91-97%), impact (94%), listening and dialog (84-94%), working with others (82-97%), security context and analysis (85%), personal safety and security (85-88%), minimizing risk to communities and partners (94%), resilience (70-94%), maintaining professionalism (94-97%), self-awareness (94-97%), motivating and influencing others (85-94%), and critical judgment (88-97%).

With regard to the second question that employer respondents were asked, “Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies”, employers confirmed that their new hires demonstrate “well” and “exceptionally” the following competencies: applying humanitarian standards/principles (71-78%), program quality (78-84%), accountability (78-81%), decision making (74-84%), impact (87%), minimizing risk to communities and partners (75%), maintaining professionalism (78-85%), self-awareness (70-77%).

Overall, humanitarian context competency received lower results of 67% to 83%, however one particular sub-competency, demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery, was marked at 56%. Working with others competency was rated between 72% and 94% with the lowest sub-competency being challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct (47%). Security context and analysis competency scored at 57%, listening and dialog (67-81%), personal safety and security (61-72%), resilience (44-75%), motivating and influencing others (69-81%), and critical judgment (66-81%).
Research question three. Major findings from both surveys indicated the gap between the alumni acquisition of the Framework’s skills during their education and employers evaluation of how the incoming hires demonstrate those skills (See Table 6).
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study and important conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter 4. It provides a discussion of implications for action and recommendations for further research.

Overview of the problem. Quality education of international development/humanitarian professionals is of high importance, since the donor governments’ budget cuts, who usually act as main financial contributors, create limited job opportunities for recent graduates thus contributing to the existing competition. Therefore, it is important to assess incoming Master’s level hires job preparedness to ensure that educational programs indeed prepare their alumni for professional success.

There is a strong demand for the professionalization of the humanitarian sector (Walker & Russ, 2010; Johnson et al., 2013). This is a gap in current research literature that this research hopes to fill.

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this survey study is to describe how humanitarian professional alumni think their Master’s program aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF) and how these competencies assist them in their current work. Additionally, the purpose is to describe what NGO employers think of the CHCF competencies and the preparedness of Master level hires aligned with the CHCF competencies. The independent variables will be defined as the competencies of the CHCF. The dependent variables will be defined as (1) the scores of how the humanitarian professional alumni at University X rated the CHCF
competencies, and (2) the scores of how the NGO employers evaluate the extent of employment preparedness of incoming Master level hires.

The research questions for this descriptive survey study are given below:

1. What do University X alumni think is the alignment between their employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

2. What do non-profit employers think is the alignment between incoming hire Master’s level employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

3. Is there alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

**Review of the methodology.** This study surveyed University X alumni from two programs the on-campus Master of Science in Community and International Development and the off-campus Master in International Development Administration as well as the non-profit employers. The researcher inquired about the perceptions on how well the Master’s programs prepare their students to face the workforce benchmarking the CHCF as well as whether the respondents utilize the Core Humanitarian Competencies in their job. The researcher evaluated the frequency of the responses, mean scores, and standard deviation through descriptive statistics.

**Major Findings**
Alumni survey and research question one. As the data demonstrates, 41% of the alumni respondents heard about the CHCF for the first time and only 18% reported being very familiar with the Framework. Even though over 30% of alumni graduated prior to the development of this Framework in 2011, since most of the respondents currently work in the non-profit sector, this result is an indicator of the limited awareness this Framework received up-to-date in both educational institutions that prepare humanitarian professionals as well as NGOs.

Overall, alumni respondents confirmed (mean score ranged from 3.05 to 3.73 on a 0-4 point scale, 0 answers were not counted) that most of the Framework’s competencies were covered well during their Master’s education and that they frequently use (mean score ranged from 2.65 to 3.76 on a 0-4 point scale, 0 answers were counted) most of the Framework’s competencies. This leads to our first research question and a conclusion that according to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework, overall, University X effectively prepared its alumni for the employment in the humanitarian field. Figure 8 displays the detailed comparison followed by the comprehensive discussion.
Figure 8. Alumni survey gap results.

Understanding of humanitarian contexts and applications of humanitarian principles. Between 80% to 90% of alumni indicated that humanitarian context competency was addressed by their graduate degree (M=3.27, SD=1.10) and between 63% to 84% (M=3.18, SD=1.01) utilize this competency in their job. One particular sub-competency, demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery, was marked at 63% (M=2.65, SD=1.13) by how often it is used. One of the speculations for possible low usage might be the type of the NGO that the respondents represented. For example, NGOs working more in the field of development rather than emergency relief might utilize this competency less frequently. Additionally, if there is no major global disaster (e.g. Haiti earthquake) that happened around the time of data collection, it may impact the needs of the NGOs and ultimately the research findings as well (Pittman, Sugawara, Rogers & Bediako, 2015). However, since the Master’s programs prepare their alumni to work for various NGOs, the researcher was pleased to learn that the
overall 85% alumni (M= 3.27, SD=1.10) respondents specified that this sub-competency was addressed during their study. The researcher was more interested in the overall broad usage of the competencies for any NGO and did not intend to differentiate the responses based on the particular NGO field. Interesting to notice that the rating of how humanitarian context competency was addressed during the Master’s degree is 12-17% higher than the rating of how the alumni utilize it in their job. It is an interesting finding because the employers often rate more conservatively.

Between 70% and 87% of the alumni (M=3.34, SD=1.07) respondents indicated that applying humanitarian standards/principles competency was addressed in their Master’s, while 76% to 82% (M=3.08, SD=1.11) use this competency in their workplace. Overall, the gap between how this competency was addressed and how it is used in the workplace was not noteworthy. Only the utilization of one sub-competency, demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms, was rated higher for a combined percentage of “strongly agree” and “agree” responses (82%, M= 3.18) than the assessment of how it was covered by the graduate program (70%, M= 3.22).

Achieving results effectively. Program quality competency received one of the highest scores of between 97% and 98% (M=3.68, SD=0.65) in regards to how it was addressed in the Master’s programs. However, alumni utilize this competency only at 77% to 84% (M=3.16, SD=1.04) which constitutes 14-20% difference gap. It raises a question of the nature of such a substantial difference.

Ninety to ninety-three percent of the respondents (M=3.50, SD=1.05) indicated that accountability competency was addressed in their study, but only 76% to 80%
(M=3.08, SD=0.98) use it in their workplace which indicates a 13-14% gap. It raises a number of questions in regards to whether employers view accountability as a priority and whether they demand it from their employers. This is a very interesting finding. It might be reflective of the separation of monitoring and evaluation jobs within the NGO sector from project management and service delivery. As literature indicates, NGO donors require accountability to ensure continued project funding (Townsend and Townsend, 2004). The key for educational institutions is to graduate humanitarian professionals who not only see themselves as scientist practitioners who are monitoring their practice for accountability to secure funding, but rather professionals who share the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework’s goal of keeping crisis-affected people at the center of any humanitarian intervention (Rutter, 2011).

According to 83% to 90% of alumni (M=3.34, SD=1.07), decision-making competency was covered in their educational curriculum, but only 76% to 85% alumni (M=3.13, SD=1.06) utilize it in their work. Yet again, it shows a small gap in terms of what alumni learned and what they actually utilize in their job. This finding is not surprising and might be reflective of a sense of powerlessness to make decisions among middle managers in some of the developing nations due to cultural and traditional power roles. Even if they were trained abroad and learned the need of decision-making, the working models of development assistance might be hierarchical and staff does not feel empowered to make decisions but rather follow the directions.

Ninety-three percent of alumni (M=3.46, SD=0.97) indicated that impact competency was addressed in their studies and 89% (M=3.37, SD=0.87) actually use it in their workplace.
Developing and maintain collaborative relationships. Between 94-96% of alumni (M=3.58, SD=0.85) specified that listening and dialog competency was addressed in their studies, while only 72% to 82% (M=3.08, SD=1.00) reported utilizing it. Yet again, the gap is 14-22% between what is taught and what is used. Communication skills can be challenging for any field of work, including humanitarian field. NGOs can utilize various team-building activities to assist with the reinforcement of this competency. However, like with the decision-making competency, the issue might be related to the norms and traditions where mid-level managers work in a culture that doesn’t promote listening and dialog.

Working with others competency was scored 68% to 91% (M=3.45, SD=1.07) in terms of being covered by the graduate program. It was only one out of four particular sub-competencies, challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct, which skewed the overall positive feedback of 88-91%. This sub-competency was marked at 68%. However, the mean score for this sub-competency is 3.19 and standard deviation is 1.49. Empowering staff to voice concerns about work-related issues (e.g., ethical issues) is not culturally accepted in many developing nation contexts. It might cause workplace conflict and power grabbing that challenge employee’s professional success.

Similarly, this competency was rated between 64% and 90% (M=3.12, SD=0.97) in terms of being used in the workplace with the same lowest sub-competency being challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct (64%, M=2.66, SD=1.08), while other sub-competencies received a positive 80-90% rating.
The data results indicate that even though the Framework’s founders included it as an important sub-competency needed in the field of humanitarian work, educational institutions do not address it well; therefore the alumni cannot utilize this competency to the fullest capacity in their workplace. One cannot demonstrate the skills that were not prior gained through formal education or informal on-the-job training. Another explanation might be the fact that “challenge decisions and behaviors that breach organization’s Codes of Conduct” is a challenging competency to develop. It requires not only a high degree of critical thinking but also a measure of personal confidence and the “right” organization’s climate. By the “right” climate, the researcher refers to the working situation where the employees are encouraged to provide their opinion even if it goes against mainstream and status quo. It’s an environment when any opinion is taken with respect. However, since many humanitarian NGOs work in many different countries and cultures, it might not be the “right” climate to “challenge decisions” which might explain the low score on this sub-competency.

*Operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response.* Eighty-seven percent of alumni (M=3.39, SD=1.19) agreed on *security context and analysis* competency being covered in school, while only 68% (M=2.92, SD=1.02) utilize it at their workplace. This low rate of utilization of this competency might depend on the type of NGO that the alumni respondents represent. This competency might have a higher priority among the NGOs working in politically unstable environments. However, due to the recent refugee crisis in Europe and heightened overall security in the world, it might be one of the areas that NGOs should consider intentional focus on.
The data indicated that *personal safety and security* competency has been addressed in the Master’s program, however the score of 70-78% (M=3.35, SD=1.41) indicates that it could have been emphasized stronger. Between 73% and 82% of alumni (M=3.15, SD=0.95) utilize it in their work. Two sub-competencies received higher rating in terms of usage vs. coverage in school: *reduce vulnerability by complying with the safety and security protocols set by your organization and contextualize appropriately to local scenarios* (70% coverage vs. 80% usability, M= 3.35 and M=3.14) and *champion the importance of safety and keep the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times* (72% coverage vs. 77% usability, M= 3.38 and M=3.14).

Ninety-one percent of the alumni (M=3.53, SD=1.00) stated that this *minimizing risk to communities and partners* competency was covered in their study and 92% (M=3.37, SD=0.76) actually use it in their work.

**Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment.** Overall, this competency area results indicated no major gaps. *Resilience* competency was rated between 65% and 82% (M=3.24, SD=1.34) with the lowest 3 sub-competencies being *recognize stress and take steps to reduce it* (65%, M=3.05/M=2.94), *remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments* (68%, M=3.16/M=3.21) and *keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others* (68%, M=3.25). Between 74% and 92% of alumni (M=3.23, SD=0.87) utilize *resiliency* competency in their work.

Interesting to highlight that *resilience* competency is one of the only two Framework competencies (the other one is *critical judgment*) that received higher ratings
in terms of use vs. being addressed in the school. The gap is between 9% to 18% depending on each specific competency with the largest gap for *remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments* (18%) and *keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others* (16%) sub-competencies. Since the data indicates that this competency is highly needed and utilized at the workplace, educational programs that prepare humanitarian workers should put higher emphasis on this competency.

Between 85% to 100% alumni (M= 3.63, SD=0.90) indicated *maintaining professionalism* was addressed during their Master’s study, and 94% to 98% (M=3.66, SD=0.57) utilize this competency in their work. *Demonstrate personal integrity* is the only sub-competency that scored 100% (M=3.72, SD=0.45) in terms of being addressed by the graduate programs and 98% of the respondents (M=3.76) reported on using it in their job. Most of the sub-competencies scored slightly higher (3-4%) in terms of usage vs. coverage with only one being 11% higher which is *plan, prioritize and perform tasks well under pressure*. It indicates that this sub-competency is in high demand by the humanitarian job market and any job market in general since it’s transferable to any field of study and work.

**Leadership in humanitarian response.** Between 81-86% of alumni (M=3.35, SD=1.26) stated that *self-awareness* competency was covered by their degree, and similar 79% to 92% of alumni (M=3.41, SD=0.76) respondents utilize *self-awareness* in the workplace. Again, the following two sub-competencies received higher rating by 9-10% in terms of usage vs. coverage: *be aware of your own strength and limitations* and *demonstrate an understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others.*
Between 81% and 91% of alumni (M=3.52, SD=1.17) specified that motivating and influencing others competency was addressed by their graduate studies, and 79-94% (M=3.36, SD=0.82) utilize this competency in their work. Three out of five specific sub-competencies scored 5-11% higher in terms of usability vs. coverage: inspire confidence in others (11%), demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration (5%), and encourage others to achieve program goals (8%). It is interesting to notice that the relational competencies (so called “soft” skills) are the ones that humanitarian professionals (and not only) need to work harder on.

Between 71% to 85% of alumni (M=3.47, SD=1.30) indicated critical judgment competency being covered by their Master’s, while 84% to 88% (M=3.26, SD=0.95) employ it in the workplace. This is the second competency where the researcher can see a difference of up to 13% between the Master’s degree coverage vs. job usability. Analyze and exercise judgment in new situations in the absence of specific guidance sub-competency scored 13% higher in terms of usability.

Alumni respondents were also requested to list any competencies that they felt were not addressed in their Master’s program but would aid them in their current position. The researcher grouped the responses in the following categories: donor relations and humanitarian sector collaboration, NGO marketing and communication, security and disaster risk reduction, conflict management and problem solving, disaster/emergency response and building resilience, gender in international development, creativity in program design, strategic planning, and HR management. Most of the categories coincide with the areas of the Framework.
The last alumni survey question inquired about the characteristics and program components that made their Master’s program exceptional. The respondents highlighted the benefit of networking and diversity of participants’ backgrounds (faculty and students) brought to the program, inspiring faculty with vast field experience and not only academic knowledge, Christian values, Program Cycle Management approach, practical assignments and hands-on instruction, multi-sectoral and cross-sectional scope of topics covered that provided a solid foundation, flexibility to work and study, online courses, exceptional program administration, international site locations. It would be useful for the programs that prepare future humanitarian professionals to consider these program components that benefited MIDA and MSCID alumni.

**Employer survey and research question two.** Major findings from the employer survey data indicate that 45% of the NGO employers heard about the CHCF for the first time which raises the question about the importance of promotion of this unique Framework among the NGO community to ensure that the NGO agencies are on the cutting edge of staff development. It is highly important to carve the time to invest in improved strategies for personnel professional development.

Overall, employers confirmed that all of the Framework’s competencies are applicable to their organization’s needs and goals. Figure 9 displays the detailed comparison followed by the comprehensive discussion.
Seventy percent and above of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the following competencies are relevant to their organization: *humanitarian context* (80-94%, $M=3.47$, $SD=0.97$), *applying humanitarian standards/principles* (83-89%, $M=3.45$, $SD=1.17$), *program quality* (94-98%, $M=3.69$, $SD=0.88$), *accountability* (90-91%, $M=3.54$, $SD=1.09$), *decision-making* (91-97%, $M=3.58$, $SD=0.98$), *impact* (94%, $M=3.59$, $SD=0.99$), *listening and dialog* (84-94%, $M=3.50$, $SD=1.13$), *working with others* (82-97%, $M=3.58$, $SD=1.04$), *security context and analysis* (85%, $M=3.57$, $SD=1.20$), *personal safety and security* (85-88%, $M=3.58$, $SD=1.29$), *minimizing risk to communities and partners* (94, $M=3.66$, $SD=0.99$), *resilience* (70-94%, $M=3.54$, $SD=1.18$), *maintaining professionalism* (94-97%, $M=3.65$, $SD=0.84$), *self-awareness* (94-97%, $M=3.55$, $SD=0.82$), *motivating and influencing others* (85-94%, $M=3.65$, $SD=1.18$), and *critical judgment* (88-97%, $M=3.61$, $SD=1.02$).
With regard to the second question that employer respondents were asked, “Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies”, employers confirmed that their new hires demonstrate “well” and “exceptionally” the following competencies: applying humanitarian standards/principles (71-78%, M=2.91, SD=0.96), program quality (78-84%, M=3.16, SD=0.87), accountability (78-81%, M=3.07, SD=0.91), decision-making (74-84%, M=2.95, SD=0.80), impact (87%, M=3.03, SD=0.84), minimizing risk to communities and partners (75%, M=3.06, SD=0.89), maintaining professionalism (78-85%, M=3.10, SD=0.76), self-awareness (70-77%, M=2.85, SD=0.76).

Overall, humanitarian context competency received lower results of 67% to 83% (M=2.98, SD=1.07), however one particular sub-competency, demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery, was marked at 56% (M=2.79, SD=1.22).

Working with others competency was rated between 72 and 94% (M=2.93, SD=0.93) with the lowest sub-competency being challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct (47%, M=2.52, SD=1.34). Security context and analysis competency scored at 57% (M=2.75, SD=1.16), listening and dialog (67-81%, M=3.02, SD=1.00), personal safety and security (61-72%, M=2.99, SD=1.18), resilience (44-75%, M=2.73, SD=0.88), motivating and influencing others (69-81%, M=2.97, SD=0.88), and critical judgment (66-81%, M=2.92, SD=0.84).

Interesting to highlight that employers’ rating of how well their incoming Master level hires demonstrate the Framework’s competencies is significantly lower for every single competency than employer’s rating on the Framework’s applicability to their
organization’s needs and goals. For example, the employers rated that the humanitarian context competency is 80-94% applicable to their organization, however only 56-83% of their new hires demonstrate it. Similarly, 84-94% of the employers indicated that listening and dialog competency is applicable while only 67-81% of the new Master-level hires demonstrate it. Working with others competency received very low rating. According to 82-97% of the employers, this competency is applicable but only 47-94% demonstrate it. Security context and analysis is applicable to 85% of the employers, while only 57% of the new hires demonstrate it. Personal safety and security was scored at 85-88% in terms of applicability and 61-72% in terms of how it is actually demonstrated by the new hires. Resilience is applicable to 70-94% of the non-profit employers but demonstrated only by 44-75% of the new hires. Motivating and influencing others is applicable to 85-94% of employees and only 69-81% of the new hires exhibit this competency. Similar situation is in regards to critical judgment competency: 88-97% of the employers find it applicable to their organization’s needs and goals but only 66-81% of the new hires demonstrate it. These are very interesting findings that can be linked again to the “softer” relational skills.

Therefore, the data clearly indicates a clear gap in terms of what competencies non-profit organizations need and what competencies incoming Master-level hires actually demonstrate on the job. The employer respondents were also asked to list any competencies not listed in the Core Humanitarian Framework that they felt were important for Master level incoming hires to demonstrate. The responses range from the ability to understand and handle finances, human resources, conflict mitigation,
fundraising, safety and security, presentation and reporting, to gender issue awareness
and confidence.

**Research question three.** During the last part of the study, the researcher
investigated the third research question that explored the alignment between the
perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment
preparedness and the CHCF. The researcher compared results from the alumni responses
to “Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were
addressed in your Master’s program” question to the employer responses for “Rate in
general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies”
question. The results are depicted in Figure 10.

![Figure 10. Research question three gap results.](image)

**Understanding of humanitarian contexts and applications of humanitarian**
principles competency area. The comparison results reveal alumni overall agreement
(“agree” and “strongly agree”) at 80% (M=3.12) and above that their Master’s program
addressed *humanitarian context* competency. However, the employers specified that only 56% (M=2.79) and above of their Master level incoming hires demonstrate (“demonstrate well” and “demonstrate exceptionally”) this competency. It’s interesting to highlight that alumni rating on how well their Master’s program addressed this competency is similar to how the employer’s rated the applicability of this competency at their job. Similarly, the overall rating of the alumni in regards to how frequently they utilize the *humanitarian context* competency coincides pretty close with the rating of how the new hires demonstrate this competency. *Humanitarian context* competency is very encompassing yet ambiguous and may need better delineation if planned to be incorporated in the educational curriculum of future humanitarian professionals.

Seventy percent (M=3.22) and above of alumni respondents indicated their agreement that applying *humanitarian standards/principles* competency was addressed during their study. Employers rated at 71% (M=2.84) and above how their new hires demonstrate this competency.

*Achieving results effectively.* Ninety-seven percent (M=3.62) and above of alumni “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that their Master’s program covered *program quality* competency, while employers indicated that only 78% (M=3.13) and above of their hires demonstrate it well and exceptionally.

Alumni stated their agreement at 90% (M=3.46) and above that *accountability* competency was addressed. Employers reported that 78% (M=3.03) and above demonstrate this competency. According to 83% (M=3.28) and above of alumni, *decision-making* competency was covered in their Master’s, however 74% (M=2.83) and
above of employers witness this competency among their new hires. Ninety-three of alumni (M=3.46) stated their agreement in regards to impact competency being covered during their study, while 87% (M=3.03) of employers indicated seeing it in their master level hires.

**Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships.** Ninety-four (M=3.55) and above of alumni indicated their agreement that listening and dialog competency was addressed through their Master’s program. Employers see this competency demonstrated by 67% (M=2.93) and above of the new hires. Working with others competency is reported to be demonstrated by 47% (M=2.52) and above of new hires, while 68% (M=3.19) and above of alumni indicated that it was addressed during their study.

**Operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response.** Survey data indicated that security context and analysis competency is exhibited by 57% (M=2.75) of the incoming Master level employees, however 87% (M=3.39) of alumni stated that this competency was covered by their program of study. Seventy percent (M=3.32) and above of alumni agree and strongly agree that personal safety and security competency was addressed during their Master’s. However, 61% (M=2.93) and above of employers stated that their new hires displayed this competency. In regards to minimizing risk to communities and partners competency, alumni indicated 91% (M=3.53) of agreement, while employers stated 75% (M=3.06).

**Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment.** According to 65% (M=3.05) and above of alumni, resilience competency was addressed by their Master’s education. Employers indicated that 44% (M=2.52) and above of their new hires
exhibit this competency. Data indicates that 85% (M=3.52) and above of alumni reported that *maintaining professionalism* competency was covered in their graduate program, while the number of new hires who demonstrate this competency is at 78% (M=3.00) and above.

**Leadership in humanitarian response.** *Self-awareness* competency is displayed by 70% (M=2.77) and above of the incoming Master level employees, while 81% (M=3.43) and above of the alumni indicated that this competency was addressed during their study. *Motivating and influencing others* competency is demonstrated by 69% (M=2.84) and above of the new hires. However, 81% (M=3.41) and above of alumni agreed and strongly agreed that it was covered by their Master’s. *Critical judgment* competency is exhibited by 66% (M=2.78) and above of the new hires and 71% (M=3.42) and above of alumni indicated that it was addressed through their graduate program.

**Conclusion**

Based on the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework, the overall results for alumni feedback indicate that University X prepared its graduates well for the employment in non-profit organizations. Only two competencies received a score of below 70%: (1) *working with others*, and (2) *resilience*. However, the non-profit employers reported much lower scores in terms of how their incoming Master-level hires demonstrate the Framework’s competencies. The following competencies scored below 70%: (1) *the humanitarian context*, (2) *listening and dialog*, (3) *working with others*, (4) *security context and analysis*, (5) *personal safety and security*, (6) *resilience*, (7) *motivating and influencing others*, and (8) *critical judgement*. 
The NGO employers hire graduates from various educational institutions, not necessarily University X. Therefore, even though the data indicates that University X addressed well the Framework’s competencies, overall new hire preparedness is below the market needs. There is an obvious gap in terms of the specific competencies’ applicability within the NGO community and actual demonstration of those competencies by the new Master-level hires.

This study also revealed that the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework hasn’t yet received wide publicity among the international NGO community. However, the study depicts that the employers rate high the usability and applicability of the Framework’s competencies within the NGO sector. Additionally, a number of both alumni and the NGO employers contacted the researcher to thank for introducing them to the above mentioned framework since they found it useful for their organizations.

**Implications for Action**

Based on the findings, the researcher suggests the following implications for action: to design common core learning competencies for Master’s programs that educate future humanitarian and international development professionals. These competencies will serve as a foundation and a benchmark to be followed for a standardized core curriculum to be followed by the institutions of higher learning that prepare the workforce for the NGO sector. Furthermore, since the findings of this research validate the Core Humanitarian Framework’s competencies, the researcher recommends its utilization by the schools that educate humanitarian professionals as well as the NGOs for their personnel professional development.
**Recommendations for Further Research**

It would be beneficial to extend this study and survey a sample of all the Master-level alumni from the programs within the United States that prepare international development and humanitarian workers. It would be interesting to increase the sample size and include an additional question in the Employer Survey requesting the respondents to specify whether they are employed by a development or relief NGO and donor or implementing NGO. Further, the results can be compared among the respondents that represent various types of NGOs to analyze a possible correlation of the type of NGO and its needs in terms of specific competencies. This analysis might shed the light on whether the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework is applicable for any type of an NGO or mainly geared to a specific type (for example, relief and emergency response NGOs).

Additionally, more research is needed for building standardized indicators for each of the Framework’s specific competencies. It would be valuable to baseline various Master’s programs that prepare international development workforce, as well as do pre-post studies for students at the beginning of their programs and at the end to measure the exact acquisition of the professional skills and competencies.
References


APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY X ALUMNI SURVEY
Alumni Survey

This study responds to the expressed need to standardize educational programs for humanitarian practitioners. Your input is greatly appreciated and will directly impact the quality and effectiveness of existing and future educational programs for humanitarian practitioners.

This questionnaire is based on the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework developed by the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies in 2011. This framework assesses the core competencies of humanitarian practitioners. This framework covers six competency areas with 30 specific competencies for those who work in the non-profit sector.

This questionnaire contains questions related to your previous educational experience and current employment. Remember that all your responses are confidential and will not be connected to individual respondents.

Thank you for helping to improve education programs for humanitarian workers. We value your opinion and appreciate your willingness to contribute.

General Information

Please indicate the type of organization where you currently work

- National NGO
- International NGO
- Government entity
- Business sector
- Other
- Not employed
Please indicate your position

If currently employed, please indicate the number of employees within your organization

- up to 10
- 11-29
- 30-49
- 50-100
- 100+

How familiar are you with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework?

- Very Familiar
- Familiar
- Somewhat Familiar
- This is my first time hearing about the Framework

INSTRUCTIONS

Read each competency area description. Please select one of the five ratings demonstrating your opinion regarding the acquisition and practical application of each competency.

UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND APPLICATION OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

This competency refers to key issues and practices impacting current and future humanitarian interventions.
**The humanitarian context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.</th>
<th>If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery
- Apply understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crises
- Demonstrate an understanding of the gender and diversity dimensions of humanitarian situations
- Keep vulnerable people at the center of the humanitarian response

**Applying humanitarian standards / principles**
### Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that program goals and activities uphold the principles of the key national and international humanitarian frameworks, codes and commitments under which humanitarian organizations operate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of your role and that of your organization and others within the humanitarian system</td>
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<td>Integrate beneficiary accountability principles into your approach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms</td>
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</table>

### If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
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### Block 1

**ACHIEVING RESULTS EFFECTIVELY**

This competency involves behaviors to use resources efficiently and effectively to achieve results, considering the need for speed, scale, and quality

**Program quality**
### “MIND THE GAP”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master’s program.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Accountability

- Demonstrate an understanding of agency project cycle management
- Participate in the design and implementation of effective projects and programs

#### Decision making

- Collect, analyze, and disseminate information to and from communities and other stakeholders
- Demonstrate accountability to partners and disaster and conflict affected people and communities
### Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.

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<td><strong>Demonstrate flexibility to adapt plans and make decisions in rapidly changing environments</strong></td>
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### Impact

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintain focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

### Block 2

**DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

This competency covers behaviors designed to develop and maintain collaborative, coordinated relationships at times of
heightened complexity and risk

**Listening & dialogue**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Establish and maintain clear communication and dialogue with disaster and conflict affected people and other stakeholders</td>
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**Working with others**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute positively in the team to achieve program objectives</td>
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<td>Actively participate in networks to access and contribute to good practice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Block 3**

**OPERATING SAFELY AND SECURELY IN A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

This competency addressed the behaviors required to take responsibility to operate safely in a high-pressure environment.

Security context and analysis
Qualtrics Survey Software

| Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree |

| If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you used these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Always | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |

Identify and communicate risk and threats and minimize these for you and your agency.

**Personal safety & security**
Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
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<td>Build and maintain a reputation in line with humanitarian standards and acceptance for your work</td>
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<td>Reduce vulnerability by complying with the safety and security protocols set by your organization and contextualize appropriately to local scenarios</td>
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If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you used these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
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</table>

Minimizing risk to communities and partners
"MIND THE GAP"

Take measures to do no harm and to minimize risks for your partners and the communities you work with

Block 4

MANAGING YOURSELF IN A PRESSURE IN A PRESSURED AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENT
This competency refers to essential personal behaviours required to operate effectively within a humanitarian context.

Resilience
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Maintaining professionalism</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize stress and take steps to reduce it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain focused on your objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be able to adapt to changing situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for your own work and for the impact of your actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan, prioritize, and perform tasks well under pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow relevant codes of conduct in maintaining ethical and professional behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate personal integrity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Block 5

**LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

This competency is about seeing the overall goal within the changing context and taking responsibility to motivate others to work towards it, independent of one’s role, function or seniority.

**Self-awareness**
Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job.

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- Be aware of your own strengths and limitations
- Demonstrate an understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others
- Seek and reflect on feedback to improve your performance

**Motivating and influencing others**
| Communicate humanitarian values and motivate others to follow them | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Always | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| Inspire confidence in others | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Clearly advocate organizational beliefs and values | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Encourage others to achieve program goals | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Critical judgement**
Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master's program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>

- Analyze and exercise judgment in new situations in the absence of specific guidance
- Demonstrate initiative and ingenuity
- Demonstrate tenacity to achieve solutions
- Address difficult situations and make tough decisions confidently and calmly
- Suggest creative improvements and different ways of working

If you are currently employed or have been recently working for an NGO, rate how frequently you use/d these Core Humanitarian Framework competencies in your job.

<table>
<thead>
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</table>

Please list any competencies that you feel were not addressed in your Master's program but would aid you in your current position.

Please list any characteristics and program components that made your Master's program exceptional.
Thank you for your participation! Please click the arrows on the right to submit your responses.

Powered by Qualtrics
APPENDIX B: E-MAIL MESSAGE TO ALUMNI RESPONDENTS

Dear alumni,

Did your graduate program prepare you for a career as a humanitarian professional?

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Polina Kadatska, a PhD in Education Candidate at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, under the supervision of Carl Hoagland, Endowed Professor of Technology and Learning.

As an international development professional and an alumnus of Andrews University, Master’s in International Development Administration, your participation in completing the survey below contributes greatly to the quality and effectiveness of existing and future international development programs that educate professionals dedicated to humanitarian work.

Responding to the expressed need to standardize such programs, this study focuses on developing common curricular outcomes for humanitarian/international development professionals. Reaching out to over 550 alumni from graduate programs that prepare humanitarian professionals, as well as 100 NGO employers, this study awaits your generous response.

Please note the following:

- Participation in this survey is voluntary; you may withdraw at any point without penalty and you may skip questions that you do not wish to answer.
- To ensure anonymity, no personal information (e.g., email address, geographic location, etc.) is collected.
- There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
- The collected data will be treated confidentially, and neither the researcher nor the program director will be able to track the actual respondents.
- The study results will be shared in the aggregate form with the program director to be distributed to the original contact list.
On that note, are you ready? Let’s begin. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Follow this link to the Survey:

Take the Alumni Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://umsl.az1.qualtrics.com/SE?Q_DL=40BlvleGMOrz6kt_bqhfqSfILc6ZlODb_MLRP_b93aR7EgWn6Xsx&Q_CHL=email

Lastly, I am conducting a similar study surveying humanitarian practitioners who currently hold or recently held managerial positions that can provide an assessment on their organization’s goals and its success in hiring competent humanitarian practitioners. If you qualify for this Employer study, please click here:

Take the Employer Survey

For questions or comments on the study, please contact the researcher, Polina Kadatska, at pkr38@umsl.edu. You may also contact the Office of Research Administration of the University of Missouri – St. Louis, at (1)314.516.5897 for more information on your rights as a research participant.

Thank you for help in preparing professional humanitarians for today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Polina Kadatska
PhD in Education Candidate, University of Missouri – St. Louis

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
Click here to unsubscribe
APPENDIX C: EMPLOYER SURVEY
Employer Survey

This study responds to the expressed need to standardize educational programs for humanitarian practitioners. Your input is greatly appreciated and will directly impact the quality and effectiveness of existing and future educational programs for humanitarian practitioners.

This questionnaire is based on the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework developed by the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies in 2011. This framework assesses the core competencies of humanitarian practitioners. This framework covers six competency areas with 30 specific competencies for those who work in the non-profit sector.

The questionnaire will ask you to provide an assessment of your organization's goals and its success in hiring competent humanitarian practitioners in comparison to the Core Humanitarian Framework competencies. Remember that all your responses are confidential and will not be connected to individual respondents.

Thank you for helping to improve educational programs for humanitarian workers. We value your opinion and appreciate your willingness to contribute.

General Information

Please name your organization

Please indicate your position
Please indicate whether you represent

- National NGO
- International NGO
- Other

Please indicate the number of employees within your organization

- up to 10
- 11-29
- 30-49
- 50-100
- 100+

Approximately how many Master level graduates do you usually hire annually?

- 0
- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10+
How familiar are you with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework?

- Very Familiar
- Familiar
- Somewhat Familiar
- This is my first time hearing about the Framework

INSTRUCTIONS

Read each competency area description. Please select one of the five ratings demonstrating your opinion.

UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND APPLICATION OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES
This competency refers to key issues and practices impacting current and future humanitarian interventions.

The humanitarian context
Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Somewhat Demonstrate</th>
<th>Do Not Demonstrate</th>
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</table>

- **Demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery**
- **Apply understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crises**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of the gender and diversity dimensions of humanitarian situations**
- **Keep vulnerable people at the center of the humanitarian response**
- **Applying humanitarian standards / principles**

Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.
### Block 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensure that program goals and activities uphold the principles of the key national and international humanitarian frameworks, codes and commitments under which humanitarian organizations operate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of your role and that of your organization and others within the humanitarian system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate beneficiary accountability principles into your approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals.**

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**Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.**

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**ACHIEVING RESULTS EFFECTIVELY**

This competency involves behaviors to use resources efficiently and effectively to achieve results, considering the need for speed, scale, and quality.

**Program quality**

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- Demonstrate an understanding of agency project cycle management
- Participate in the design and implementation of effective projects and programs

**Accountability**
| Collect, analyze, and disseminate information to and from communities and other stakeholders |
| Demonstrate accountability to partners and disaster and conflict affected people and communities |

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Decision making
| Demonstrate flexibility to adapt plans and make decisions in rapidly changing environments | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Demonstrate Exceptionally | Demonstrate Well | N/A | Somewhat Demonstrate | Do Not Demonstrate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demonstrate an understanding of when a decision can be made and when to involve others | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Consider the wider impact of the decisions you make in your work to achieve positive results | | | | | | | | | | |

**Impact**
**Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals.**

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**DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**
This competency covers behaviors designed to develop and maintain collaborative, coordinated relationships at times of heightened complexity and risk

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**Contribute positively in the team to achieve program objectives**

**Share appropriate information and knowledge with colleagues and partners as necessary**

**Actively participate in networks to access and contribute to good practice**

**Challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct**

**Block 3**
OPERATING SAFELY AND SECURELY IN A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
This competency addressed the behaviors required to take responsibility to operate safely in a high-pressure environment.

Security context and analysis

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Identify and communicate risk and threats and minimize these for you and your agency.

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| Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals. |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

| Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies. |
| Demonstrate Exceptionally | Demonstrate Well | N/A | Somewhat | Do Not Demonstrate |
Minimizing risk to communities and partners

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Take measures to do no harm and to minimize risks for your partners and the communities you work with.

Block 4

MANAGING YOURSELF IN A PRESSURED AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENT
This competency refers to essential personal behaviors required to operate effectively within a humanitarian context.

Resilience
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<td>Recognize stress and take steps to reduce it</td>
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<td>Remain focused on your objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment</td>
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<td>Be able to adapt to changing situations</td>
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<td>Keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Maintaining professionalism**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals.</th>
<th>Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for your own work and for the impact of your actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan, prioritize, and perform tasks well under pressure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow relevant codes of conduct in maintaining ethical and professional behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate personal integrity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Block 5

LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
This competency is about seeing the overall goal within the changing context and taking responsibility to motivate others to work towards it, independent of one's role, function or seniority.

Self-awareness
## Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate Exceptionally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Be aware of your own strengths and limitations
- Demonstrate an understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others
- Seek and reflect on feedback to improve your performance

**Motivating and influencing others**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicate humanitarian values and motivate others to follow them</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Demonstrate Exceptionally</th>
<th>Demonstrate Well</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Somewhat Demonstrate</th>
<th>Do Not Demonstrate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspire confidence in others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly advocate organizational beliefs and values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage others to achieve program goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical judgement**
Qualtrics Survey Software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization's needs and goals.</th>
<th>Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Analyze and exercise judgment in new situations in the absence of specific guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Demonstrate initiative and ingenuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Demonstrate tenacity to achieve solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Address difficult situations and make tough decisions confidently and calmly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Suggest creative improvements and different ways of working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list any competencies not listed in the Core Humanitarian Framework that you feel are important for Master level incoming hires to demonstrate.
Thank you for your participation! Please click the arrows on the right to submit your responses.

Powered by Qualtrics
APPENDIX D: E-MAIL MESSAGE TO NGO EMPLOYER RESPONDENTS

Dear international development professional,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Polina Kadatska, a PhD in Education Candidate at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, under the supervision of Carl Hoagland, Endowed Professor of Technology and Learning.

As an international development professional, your participation in completing the survey below contributes greatly to the quality and effectiveness of existing and future international development programs that educate professionals dedicated to humanitarian work.

Responding to the expressed need to standardize such programs, this study focuses on developing common curricular outcomes for humanitarian/international development professionals. Reaching out to over 550 alumni from graduate programs that prepare humanitarian professionals, as well as 100 NGO employers, this study awaits your generous response.

Please note the following:

- Participation in this survey is voluntary; you may withdraw at any point without penalty and you may skip questions that you do not wish to answer.

- To ensure anonymity, no personal information (e.g., email address, geographic location, etc.) is collected.

- The researcher has no access to any of your contact information.

- There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

- The collected data will be treated confidentially, and neither the researcher nor the program director will be able to track the actual respondents.

- The study results will be shared in the aggregate form with the program director to be distributed to the original contact list.
On that note, are you ready? Let’s begin. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

**Follow this link to the Survey:**

[Take the Employer Survey](#)

For questions or comments on the study, please contact the researcher, Polina Kadatska, at pkr38@umsl.edu. You may also contact the Office of Research Administration of the University of Missouri – St. Louis, at (1)314.516.5897 for more information on your rights as a research participant.

Thank you for help in preparing professional humanitarians for today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Polina Kadatska
PhD in Education Candidate, University of Missouri – St. Louis
APPENDIX E: A LIST OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES
SPECIFIC CORE HUMANITARIAN FRAMEWORK COMPETENCIES

(1.1) The humanitarian context

- demonstrate an understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, DRR, response and recovery;
- apply understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis;
- demonstrate understanding of the gender and diversity dimensions of humanitarian situations;
- keep vulnerable people at the center of humanitarian response.

(1.2) Applying humanitarian standards/principles

- ensure that program goals and activities uphold the principles of the key national and international humanitarian frameworks, codes and commitments under which humanitarian organizations operate;
- demonstrate an understanding of your role and that of your organization and others within the humanitarian system;
- integrate beneficiary accountability principles into your approach;
- demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms.

(2.1) Program quality

- demonstrate an understanding of agency project cycle management;
- participate in the design and implementation of effective projects and programs.

(2.2) Accountability
• collect, analyze and disseminate information to and from communities and other stakeholders;
• demonstrate accountability to partners and disaster and conflict affected people and communities.

(2.3) Decision-making
• demonstrate flexibility to adapt plans and make decisions in rapidly changing environments;
• demonstrate an understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others;
• consider the wider impact of the decisions you make in your work to achieve positive results.

(2.4) Impact
• maintain focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources.

(3.1) Listening and dialogue
• actively listen to different perspectives and experiences of stakeholders;
• establish and maintain clear communication and dialogue with disaster and conflict affected people and other stakeholders.

(3.2) Working with others
• contribute positively in the team to achieve program objectives;
• share appropriate information and knowledge with colleagues and partners as and when appropriate;
• actively participate in networks to access and contribute to good practice;
• challenge decisions and behavior which breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct.

(4.1) Security context and analysis

• identify and communicate risk and threats and minimize these for you and your agency.

(4.2) Personal safety and security

• build and maintain a reputation in line with humanitarian standards and acceptance for your work;
• take appropriate, coordinated and consistent action to handle situations of personal risk and situations of risk for others;
• reduce vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by your organization and contextualize appropriately to local scenarios;
• champion the importance of safety and keep the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times.

(4.3) Minimizing risk to communities and partners

• take measures to do no harm and to minimize risks for your partners and the communities you work with.

(5.1) Resilience
• recognize stress and take steps to reduce it; remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments;

• remain focused on your objectives and goal in a rapidly changing environment;

• able to adapt to changing situations; keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others.

(5.2) Maintaining professionalism

• take responsibility for your own work and for the impact of your actions;

• plan, prioritize and perform tasks well under pressure;

• maintain ethical and professional behavior in accordance with relevant codes of conduct;

• demonstrate personal integrity by using one’s position responsibly and fairly;

• be aware of internal and external pressures and how they might impact your effectiveness.

(6.1) Self-awareness

• show awareness of your own strengths and limitations and their impact on others;

• demonstrate an understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others to support team effectiveness;

• seek and reflect on feedback to improve your performance.

(6.2) Motivating and influencing others

• communicate humanitarian values and motivate others towards them;
• inspire confidence in others; speak out clearly for organizational beliefs and values;
• demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration;
• influence others positively to achieve program goals.

(6.3) Critical judgement

• analyze and exercise judgement in new situations in the absence of specific guidance; demonstrate initiative and ingenuity;
• demonstrate tenacity to achieve solutions;
• address difficult situations and make tough decisions confidently and calmly;
• suggest creative improvements and different ways of working.
## APPENDIX F: CORE HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

### Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework

*Keeping crisis-affected people at the centre of what we do*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Domains</th>
<th>Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles</th>
<th>Achieving results</th>
<th>Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships</th>
<th>Operating safely and securely at all times</th>
<th>Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment</th>
<th>Demonstrating leadership in humanitarian response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Understand operating contexts, key stakeholders and practices affecting current and future humanitarian interventions.</td>
<td>Be accountable for your work and use resources effectively to achieve lasting results.</td>
<td>Develop and maintain collaborative and productive relationships with stakeholders and staff.</td>
<td>Operate safely and securely in a pressured and changing environment.</td>
<td>Adapt to pressure and change to operate effectively within humanitarian contexts.</td>
<td>Demonstrate humanitarian values and principles, and motivate others to achieve results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Competencies and Core Behaviours for all staff in humanitarian response, skills and knowledge

- **Understanding the humanitarian context**
  - Demonstrate understanding of the phases of humanitarian response, including preparedness and response, operational activities, and learning and evaluation.
  - Demonstrate understanding of the political and economic context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis.

- **Applying humanitarian standards and principles**
  - Ensure that programs, policies, and staff behavior reflect key humanitarian standards and values, and that your organization has committed to them.
  - Lead by example, in line with accountability principles and standards.
  - Demonstrate understanding of your role and that of your organization and others within the humanitarian system.
  - Demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms.

- **Ensuring programme quality and impact**
  - Demonstrate the implementation of high-quality programs and services that reflect the needs of crisis-affected people and communities.
  - Ensure feedback from crisis-affected people, communities, and other stakeholders is incorporated into program design, implementation, and learning and evaluation.

- **Working with others**
  - Collaborate with stakeholders to achieve shared objectives.
  - Foster effective and accountable partnerships and networks.
  - Work collaboratively with colleagues, partners, and beneficiaries to achieve common goals.

- **Managing personal safety and security**
  - Build and sustain acceptance for your work in line with humanitarian principles and standards.
  - Maintain effective and professional behavior in accordance with relevant codes and standards.
  - Demonstrate personal integrity and effectiveness in managing your position responsibly and fairly.

- **Self-awareness**
  - Demonstrate understanding of your values and how they complement those of others and build greater effectiveness.
  - Seek and provide feedback to improve your performance.

- **Negotiating and influencing others**
  - Communicate humanitarian values and encourage others to share them.
  - Seek feedback to improve your performance.

- **Critical judgment**
  - Analyze and evaluate judgment in challenging situations in a relative and explicit manner.
  - Demonstrate initiative and creative improvements and better ways of working.
  - Demonstrate tenacity to achieve results.

### Additional Behaviours for first level managers in humanitarian response, skills and knowledge

- **Analyzing issues to identify priorities and make informed decisions**
  - In line with humanitarian principles and standards.
  - Participate in the development of organizational capacity building and planning.
  - Actively participate in the development of strategic and operational capacity.
  - The development of capacity and understanding of your organization's perspective and approach.

- **Ensuring programme quality and impact**
  - Set standards and work to follow agreed operating procedures.
  - Work towards results that reflect the needs of crisis-affected people and communities.
  - Provide feedback to ensure quality and impact.

- **Working with others**
  - Promote teamwork and effective collaboration with colleagues, partners, and beneficiaries.
  - Foster a positive working environment.

- **Managing personal safety and security**
  - Follow established protocols to ensure safety and security.
  - Implement effective risk management strategies.
  - Take appropriate action to prevent and manage risks.

- **Self-awareness**
  - Demonstrate understanding of your values in line with humanitarian principles and standards.
  - Seek feedback to improve your performance.

- **Negotiating and influencing others**
  - Communicate humanitarian values and encourage others to share them.
  - Seek feedback to improve your performance.

- **Critical judgment**
  - Analyze and evaluate judgment in challenging situations in a relative and explicit manner.
  - Demonstrate initiative and creative improvements and better ways of working.
  - Demonstrate tenacity to achieve results.
APPENDIX G: DATA RESULTS
### RQ1: What do University X alumni think of their employment preparedness aligned with the CHCF?

### RQ2: What do non-profit employers think of incoming Master’s level hire employment preparedness aligned with the CHCF?

### RQ3: Is there alignment between the perspectives of University X alumni and non-profit employers related to employment preparedness and the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>ALUMNI SURVEY</th>
<th>EMPLOYER SURVEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate if you agree the following Core Humanitarian Framework competencies were addressed in your Master’s program.</td>
<td>Rate if you agree the Core Humanitarian Framework Competencies are applicable to your organization’s needs and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The humanitarian context</td>
<td>Always + Frequently %</td>
<td>Rate in general how well your incoming Master level hires demonstrate these competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12/1.09</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2.65/1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25/1.14</td>
<td>2.98/1.05</td>
<td>3.39/0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the gender and diversity dimensions of humanitarian situations</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>3.32/1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep vulnerable people at the center of humanitarian response</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>3.4/1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying humanitarian standards/principles</td>
<td>70-87</td>
<td>76-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that program goals and activities uphold the principles of the key national and international humanitarian frameworks, codes and commitments under which humanitarian organizations operate</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.29/1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of your role and that of your organization and others within the humanitarian system</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.32/1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate beneficiary accountability principles into your approach</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.34/1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of coordination mechanisms</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.22/1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Achieving Results Effectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program quality</th>
<th>97-98</th>
<th>77-84</th>
<th>94-98</th>
<th>78-84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of agency project cycle management</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3.73/0.77</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.24/0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in the design and implementation</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.62/0.52</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.08/1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of effective projects and programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>90-93</th>
<th>76-80</th>
<th>90-91</th>
<th>78-81</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>collect, analyze and disseminate information to and from communities and other stakeholders</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.53/1.01 (4)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.08/0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate accountability to partners and disaster and conflict affected people and communities</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.46/1.09 (5)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.08/1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-making</th>
<th>83-90</th>
<th>76-85</th>
<th>91-97</th>
<th>74-84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate flexibility to adapt plans and make decisions in rapidly changing environments</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.28/0.98 (3)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.1/1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate an understanding of when a decision can be made and when to involve others</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.34/121 (7)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.1/1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consider the wider impact of the decisions you make in your work to achieve positive results</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.41/1.03 (4)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3.19/1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>93</th>
<th>89</th>
<th>94</th>
<th>87</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maintain focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.46/0.97 (3)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.37/0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

| Listening and dialogue | 94-96 | 72-82 | 84-94 | 67-81 |
actively listen to different perspectives and experiences of stakeholders | 96 | 3.61/0.84 (2) | 82 | 3.22/0.9 | 94 | 3.55/0.99 (2) | 81 | 3.1/0.86 (1) |
| establish and maintain clear communication and dialogue with disaster and conflict affected people and other stakeholders | 94 | 3.55/0.86 (2) | 72 | 2.94/1.09 | 84 | 3.45/1.26 (4) | 67 | 2.93/1.14 (3) |

**Working with others**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>68-91</th>
<th>64-90</th>
<th>82-97</th>
<th>47-94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>contribute positively in the team to achieve program objectives</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.63/0.94 (3)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.42/0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share appropriate information and knowledge with colleagues and partners as necessary</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.55/0.95 (3)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.26/0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actively participate in networks to access and contribute to good practice</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.42/0.91 (2)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.14/1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenge decisions and behaviors that breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.19/1.49 (16)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2.66/1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. OPERATING SAFELY AND SECURELY IN A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security context and analysis</th>
<th>87</th>
<th>68</th>
<th>85</th>
<th>57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>identify and communicate risk and threats and minimize these for you and your agency</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.39/1.19 (7)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.92/1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal safety and security</th>
<th>70-78</th>
<th>73-82</th>
<th>85-88</th>
<th>61-72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>build and maintain a reputation in line with humanitarian standards and acceptance for your work</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.32/1.36 (9)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.12/0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take appropriate, coordinated and consistent action to handle situations of personal risk and situations of risk for others</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.35/1.26 (8)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3.2/0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce vulnerability by complying with the safety and security protocols set by your organization and contextualize appropriately to local scenarios</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.35/1.51 (14)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.14/0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion the importance of safety and keep the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3.38/1.49 (13)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.14/0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimizing risk to communities and partners</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.53/1.76 (4)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.37/0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take measures to do no harm and to minimize risks for your partners and the communities you work with</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.53/1.76 (4)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.37/0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **MANAGING YOURSELF IN A PRESSURED AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resilience</strong></th>
<th><strong>65-82</strong></th>
<th><strong>74-92</strong></th>
<th><strong>70-94</strong></th>
<th><strong>44-75</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize stress and take steps to reduce it</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.05/1.3 (9)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2.94/1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.16/1.38 (10)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3.21/0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain focused on your objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.41/1.34 (8)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.39/0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be able to adapt to changing situations</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.34/1.22</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.37/0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6. LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>61-86</th>
<th>79-90</th>
<th>94-97</th>
<th>70-77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining professionalism</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>94-98</td>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>78-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take responsibility for your own work and for the impact of your actions</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plan, prioritize and perform tasks well under pressure</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow relevant codes of conduct in maintaining ethical and professional behavior</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate personal integrity</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be aware of your own strengths and limitations</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate an understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seek and reflect on feedback to improve your performance</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating and influencing others</td>
<td>81-91</td>
<td>79-90</td>
<td>85-94</td>
<td>69-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicate humanitarian values and motivate others towards them</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3.41/1.15 (6)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3.06/0.91 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspire confidence in others</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.46/1.3 (8)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.38/0.71 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clearly advocate organizational beliefs and values</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.52/1.08 (5)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.35/0.89 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.61/1.14 (5)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3.52/0.74 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourage others to achieve program goals</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3.62/1.2 (6)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3.5/0.83 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical judgment</th>
<th>71-85</th>
<th>84-88</th>
<th>88-97</th>
<th>66-81</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>analyze and exercise judgment in new situations in the absence of specific guidance</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.42/1.55 (14)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.2/1.02 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate initiative and ingenuity</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.49/1.22 (7)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.29/0.87 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate tenacity to achieve solutions</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3.45/1.22 (7)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3.15/0.99 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address difficult situations and make tough decisions confidently and calmly</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.53/1.3 (8)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.37/0.94 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
suggest creative improvements and different ways of working

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<table>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.45/1.19</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.29/0.94</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3.58/0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.87/0.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: There are two kinds of means used here. When the ranges are Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly disagree/Uncertain and Demonstrate Exceptionally/Demonstrate Well/Somewhat Demonstrate/Do Not Demonstrate/N/A, then the responses for “Undecided” and “N/A” are NOT counted, and the other answers are coded 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

**When the range is Always/Frequently/Occasionally/Rarely/Never, then all the answers count, and they are coded 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 respectively.
APPENDIX H: ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS BY SPECIFIC SUB-COMPETENCIES

1. Understanding of Humanitarian Contexts and Applications of Humanitarian Principles

1.1 Humanitarian Context Competency

*Figure 26. Master’s education and humanitarian context competency.*
1.2 Applying Humanitarian Standards/Principles Competency

*Figure 27.* Applicability of humanitarian context competency at workplace.

*Figure 28.* Master’s education and applying humanitarian standards/principles competency.
Figure 29. Applicability of applying humanitarian standards/principles competency at workplace.
2. Achieving Results Effectively

2.1 Program Quality Competency

Figure 30. Master’s education and program quality competency.

Figure 31. Applicability of program quality competency at workplace.
2.2 Accountability Competency

Figure 32. Master’s education and accountability competency.

2.3 Decision-making Competency
Figure 34. Master’s education and decision-making competency.

Figure 35. Applicability of decision-making competency at workplace.

2.4 Impact Competency
Figure 36. Master’s education and impact competency.

Figure 37. Applicability of impact competency at workplace.
3. Developing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships

3.1 Listening and Dialog Competency

Figure 38. Master’s education and listening and dialog competency.

Figure 39. Applicability of listening and dialog competency at workplace.
3.2 Working with Others Competency

Figure 40. Master’s education and working with others competency.

Figure 41. Applicability of working with others competency at workplace.
4. Operating Safely and Securely in a Humanitarian Response

4.1 Security Context and Analysis Competency

*Figure 42.* Master’s education and security context and analysis competency.

*Figure 43.* Applicability of security context and analysis competency at workplace.
4.2 Personal Safety and Security Competency

**Figure 44.** Master’s education and personal safety and security competency.

**Figure 45.** Applicability of personal safety and security competency at workplace.
4.3 Minimizing Risk to Communities and Partners Competency

*Figure 46.* Master’s education and minimizing risk to communities and partners competency.

*Figure 47.* Applicability of minimizing risk to communities and partners competency at workplace.
5. Managing Yourself in a Pressured and Changing Environment

5.1 Resiliency Competency

Figure 48. Master’s education and resiliency competency.

Figure 49. Applicability of resilience competency at workplace.

5.2 Maintaining Professionalism Competency
Figure 50. Master’s Education and maintaining professionalism competency.

Figure 51. Applicability of maintaining professionalism competency at workplace.
6. Leadership in Humanitarian Response

6.1 Self-awareness Competency

Figure 52. Master’s education and self-awareness competency.

Figure 53. Applicability of self-awareness competency at workplace.

6.2 Motivating and Influencing Others Competency
6.3 Critical Judgment Competency

Figure 54. Master’s Education and motivating and influencing others competency.

Figure 55. Applicability of motivating and influencing others competency at workplace.
Figure 56. Master’s Education and critical judgment competency.

Figure 57. Applicability of critical judgment competency at workplace.
APPENDIX I: EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS BY COMPETENCY AREAS

1. Understanding of Humanitarian Contexts and Applications of Humanitarian Principles

1.1 Humanitarian Context Competency

Figure 58. Humanitarian context competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 59. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate humanitarian context competency.
1.2 Applying Humanitarian Standards/Principles Competency

Figure 60. Applying humanitarian standards/principles competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 61. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate applying humanitarian standards/principles competency.
2. Achieving Results Effectively

2.1 Program Quality Competency

Figure 62. Program quality competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 63. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate program quality competency.
2.2 Accountability Competency

*Figure 64.* Accountability competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

*Figure 65.* How incoming master-level hires demonstrate accountability competency.
2.3 Decision-making Competency

*Figure 66.* Decision-making competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

*Figure 67.* How incoming master-level hires demonstrate decision-making competency.
2.4 Impact Competency

**Figure 68.** Impact competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

**Figure 69.** How incoming master-level hires demonstrate impact competency.
3. Developing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships

3.1 Listening and Dialog Competency

![Bar chart showing listening and dialog competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.]

*Figure 70.* Listening and dialog competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

![Bar chart showing how incoming master-level hires demonstrate listening and dialog competency.]

*Figure 71.* How incoming master-level hires demonstrate listening and dialog competency.
a. Working with Others Competency

*Figure 72.* Working with others competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.
Figure 73. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate working with others competency.
4. Operating Safely and Securely in a Humanitarian Response

4.1 Security Context and Analysis Competency

Figure 74. Security context and analysis competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 75. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate security context and analysis competency.
4.2 Personal Safety and Security Competency

Figure 76. Personal safety and security competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 77. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate personal safety and security competency.
4.3 Minimizing Risk to Communities and Partners Competency

*Figure 78.* Minimizing risks to communities and partners competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

*Figure 79.* How incoming master-level hires demonstrate minimizing risk to communities and partners competency.
5. Managing Yourself in a Pressured and Changing Environment

5.1 Resiliency Competency

Figure 80. Resilience competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 81. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate resilience competency.
5.2 Maintaining Professionalism Competency

*Figure 82.* Maintaining professionalism competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

*Figure 83.* How incoming master-level hires demonstrate maintaining professionalism competency.

6. Leadership in Humanitarian Response
b. Self-awareness Competency

Figure 84. Self-awareness competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 85. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate self-awareness competency.

c. Motivating and Influencing Others Competency
Figure 86. Motivating and influencing others competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 87. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate motivating and influencing others competency.

d. Critical Judgment Competency
Figure 88. Critical judgment competency applicability to the organization’s needs and goals.

Figure 89. How incoming master-level hires demonstrate critical judgment competency.
APPENDIX K: RESULTS BY COMPETENCY AREAS

**Figure 90.** Alumni survey results for competency area understanding of humanitarian contexts and applications of humanitarian principles.

**Figure 91.** Alumni survey results for competency area achieving results effectively.
Figure 92. Alumni survey results for competency area developing and maintaining collaborative relationships.

Figure 93. Alumni survey results for competency area operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response.
Figure 94. Alumni survey results for competency area managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment.

Figure 95. Alumni survey results for competency area leadership in humanitarian response.
Figure 96. Employer survey results for competency area understanding of humanitarian contexts and applications of humanitarian principles.

Figure 97. Employer survey results for competency area achieving results effectively.
Figure 98. Employer survey results for competency area developing and maintaining collaborative relationships.

Figure 99. Employer survey results for competency area operating safely and security in a humanitarian response.
Figure 100. Employer survey results for competency area *managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment*.

Figure 101. Employer survey results for competency area *leadership in humanitarian response*.
Figure 102. Research question three results for competency area *understanding of humanitarian contexts and applications of humanitarian principles*.

Figure 103. Research question three results for competency area *achieving results effectively*. 
Figure 104. Research question three results for competency area developing and maintaining collaborative relationships.

Figure 105. Research question three results for competency area operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response.
Figure 106. Research question three results for competency area *managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment*.

Figure 107. Research question three results for competency area *leadership in humanitarian response*.
APPENDIX L: RESULTS BY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
(PERCENTAGES)
Research Question 1: Alumni Survey, using percentages of Strongly Agree + Agree / Always + Frequently
Research Question 2: Employer Survey, using percentages of Strongly Agree + Agree / Extremely + Very Well
Research Question 3: Alumni & Employer Surveys, using percentages of
Strongly Agree + Agree / Extremely Well + Very Well
APPENDIX M: UMSL IRB APPROVAL

Office of Research Administration

One University Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-5089
Fax: 314-516-6759
E-mail: ora@umsl.edu

DATE: February 6, 2016
TO: Polina Kadatska
FROM: University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [790468-1] Standardization of Master-level Education Competencies of Humanitarian/International Development Professionals

REFERENCE #: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: February 6, 2016

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption categories #1, 2

The chairperson of the University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB has APPROVED the above mentioned protocol for research involving human subjects and determined that the project qualifies for exemption from full committee review under Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46.101b. The time period for this approval expires one year from the date listed above. You must notify the University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB in advance of any proposed major changes in your approved protocol, e.g., addition of research sites or research instruments.

You must file an annual report with the committee. This report must indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects to date from start of project, or since last annual report, whichever is more recent.

Any consent or assent forms must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator must retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and they must be available for inspection. If there is an official review of the UM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

If you have any questions, please contact Carl Bassi at 314-516-6029 or bassi@umsl.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.