



Humanitarian
Leadership
Academy

HLA
Webinar
Series



Humanitarian Careers
Webinar Series

Leadership in emergency settings



25 July 2024



11.00 BST



Thomas Hill
Country Director Nigeria
- NRC



Gita Modgil
Senior Humanitarian Aid Director
- Independent

Host



Ka Man Parkinson

Communications & Marketing Advisor
Humanitarian Leadership Academy

At the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, we strengthen people's skills and capabilities through learning, working with people in the humanitarian sector and beyond to prepare for and respond to crises.



Save the
Children



Humanitarian
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Agenda

- Background to the Humanitarian Careers series & this session
- Shared presentation from Gita and Thomas
- Panel discussion – submit your questions in the Zoom Q&A function





Housekeeping

- This webinar is being recorded: link and slide deck will be shared via post-event email
- Type your questions into the Q&A function, for our discussion at the end
- Use chat for any reflections & reactions
- Kind reminder: please keep questions and comments respectful & on-topic
- You can turn on captions (including translated captions) by clicking 'More' at the bottom of your screen, then  ... and selecting your language
- An HPass digital badge is available for all live webinar attendees

Gita Modgil

Senior Humanitarian Aid
Director/Podcaster
Independent



Gita's Journey from radio jockey to aid worker

Career Switch Route



Thomas Hill

Country Director Nigeria
Norwegian Refugee Council



Thomas' Journey

- I studied poetry. I was going to be a university professor.
- I joined the Peace Corps and discovered that teaching is the hardest job imaginable.
- I very much enjoyed working with local nonprofits.
- I came home, studied management a bit, and kept my sights on returning to the former Soviet Union.
- I returned to Moscow and worked on training/exchange programs, and eventually transitioned to humanitarian work in Chechnya.



Thomas' Journey, cont.

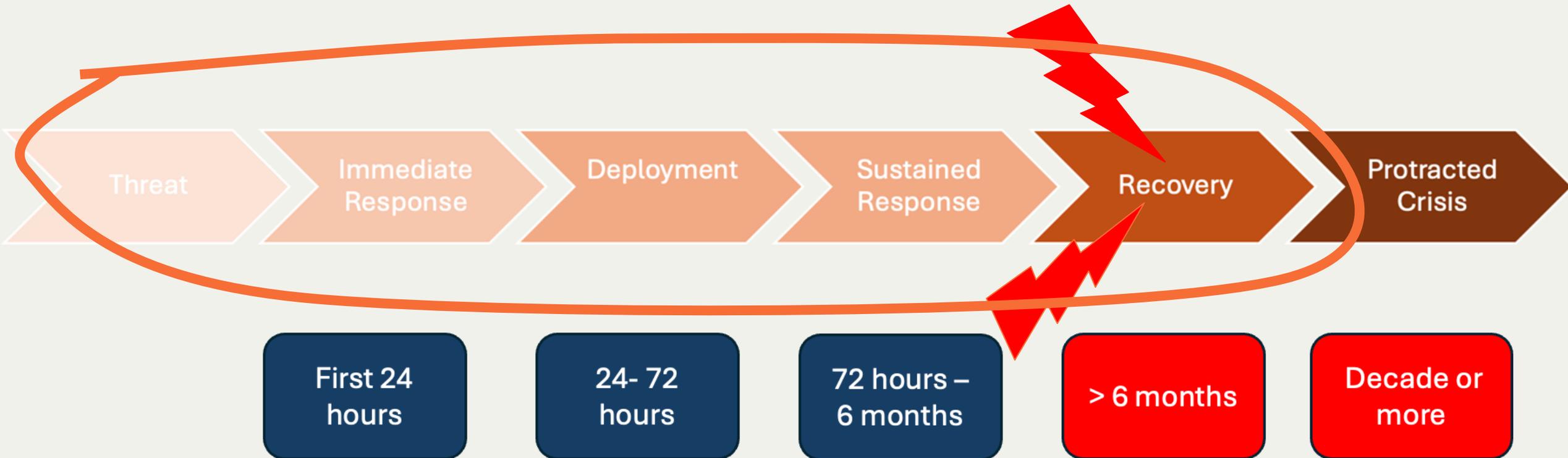


- I've since worked on conflicts in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Palestine, Syria, and Nigeria.
- I've repatriated three times and worked in refugee resettlement and emergency management at home.
- I've gotten married and have two kids.
- I've made some unconventional choices, and my wife and I together have made some unconventional choices, but we are happy.
- I spend a lot of time thinking and reading about good leadership, coaching, and mentoring.
- Being of service to others is a path to happiness for me, and happiness is the purpose of life.

Emergency Response Theory!



Emergency Response as we now know it!



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



What the Media thinks I do



What my Mom thinks I do



What society thinks I do



What LinkedIn thinks I do



What I thought I would do



What I actually do

Immediate Response

- Typically, in 95% of cases, this is going to be a very local affair.
- Consider joining the local chapter of the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement or register with the local municipality as a first responder.
- Localized domestic humanitarian response is how the vast majority of expatriates began their career, either in an emergency or protracted context.
- Even where INGOs are present, state actors have the mandate and resources for immediate response.
- Can volunteer with international and national non-profits.
- Build credibility.

Immediate Response - Skills needed

- CPR, First-Aid
- Disaster Mental Health Support
- Search and Rescue, Fire safety
- Information management, monitoring, planning
- Protection, gender mainstreaming
- Crisis communications
- Logistics and procurement
- Directive / Operations Management, Leadership
- Humanitarian Diplomacy



LOCAL KNOWLEDGE & CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Deployment

- Local capacity overwhelmed.
- Movement of resources into a disaster/conflict affected area.
- Can last days to months - usually shorter-term.
- Remote and on-site.
- Highly specialized skills - bring added value to a challenging context.
- Very north focused in terms of deployment and male-centric. But things are changing.

Deployment - Skills needed

- Access and negotiation
- Operations such as Logistics and Procurement - localized and ability to understand global supply chains
- Technical speciality - WASH, Shelter, Coordination, Public Health
- Team management
- Communications
- Business development, HR - mostly remote or regional
- Monitoring and evaluation



FLEXIBILITY AND AMBIGUITY

Recovery/Protracted Crisis

- This is the most frequent context in which careers are built.
- Building a path into this frequently starts with local NGOs and local jobs.
- You generally cannot volunteer with professionalized international NGOs.
- You might start in a head office as a junior professional, and transition to an expat role.

Protracted Crisis - Skills needed

- There is a broad spectrum of jobs in protracted crisis. From ongoing basic aid to significantly advanced economic and policy development programs.
- Transition is frequent, it is not uncommon for people to change jobs every 12 - 36 months.
- Burnout is common as professionals focus on seemingly intractable problems and recurrent conflicts and most organizations are generally focused on similar problems and doing similar work.
- This is where most people end up in aid.
- Leadership in protracted crisis needs to consider holistic issues from the bottom up, and at its best is not top-down and focuses beyond incidents to entire systems.

Commonalities

- Good leadership is made up of compassion, humility, accountability, empowerment, and balance.
- Management is made up of problem solving, HR, budget, grant, compliance, and technical oversight.
- Often the two get confused. Burnout is common. Often leaders burn out or are never given the tools and opportunities needed to become leaders.
- Emergency management top-down approaches are frequently driven into ongoing protracted situations, which can result in dissatisfaction.
- Different contexts require different leaderships styles, but leaders are always compassionate and care about their people.

Early Career

- Building any relevant experience and educational background is first.
- Volunteering, internships, and site work is all valuable.
- Building your network, if you are hoping to work for INGOs, is the single most important piece of the puzzle.
- Don't spend all your time applying for jobs, spend most of your time building your network.
- International work in particular is hugely competitive, start locally if you can.

Mid-Career Transition

- Mid-career professionals hoping to transition to aid bring valuable skills.
- You have different challenges entering the market.
- You are best placed to focus on making a transition with the skills you have now, instead of trying to do something completely different to start.
- If you want to do something completely different, volunteering is an easier option than a job.

Burnout

- This is the most common challenge for many aid professionals.
- When you are earlier in your career, you work more. This is the case for any career.
- When you get older and have family, you have no choice but to balance.
- Work at 90% most of the time, so you can get up to 120% when you need to.
- Every organization has problems, finding a place with problems you are interested in, or can at least deal with, is key to career happiness.
- Take your vacation. Have a purpose to your career. Have a life outside your job. Take career breaks when you can afford to.
- Don't be a jerk. Learn your own burnout signals and intervene before you burn bridges. The aid world is small.

Gita's Advice

- Know yourself - is this what you really want to do?
- Find a mentor.
- Join emergency rosters.
- Train, train, train - build knowledge and connections.
- Nominate yourself for global initiatives to further build a network.
- Make yourself relevant and present.
- Learn to look after yourself - mentally and physically.

Thomas' Advice

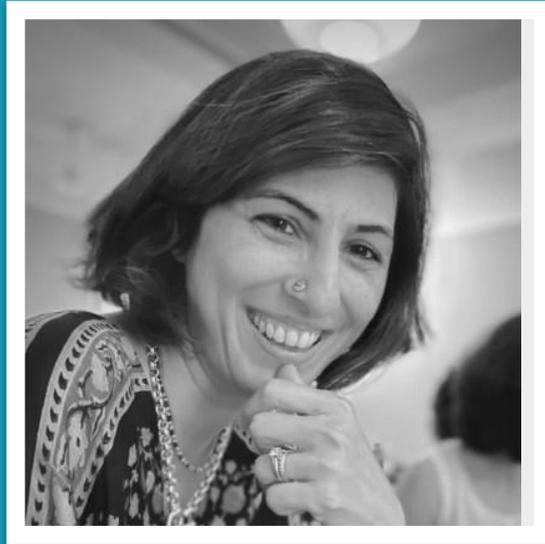
- As a young professional, mid-career professional, and leader, the ability and desire to build a network is likely the single most important thing you can invest in. Build a network.
- For leadership, public speaking and the willingness to get up in front of an audience at a moment's notice and convince the audience of something is the most useful skill you can have.
- Being genuinely interested in the lived experience of others is a key component of being a good humanitarian leader. If you are not interested you should consider a different career path.
- Being able to tell your story and the stories of those you serve is a crucial skill, and will remain crucial, regardless of how AI develops.

Finding your Path

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

- Dalai Lama

Panel discussion & Q&A



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Thank you and next steps

- Please share feedback via quick Zoom survey
- Keep an eye on your inbox: post-event email & HPass badge email
- Share any suggestions for future sessions with us!

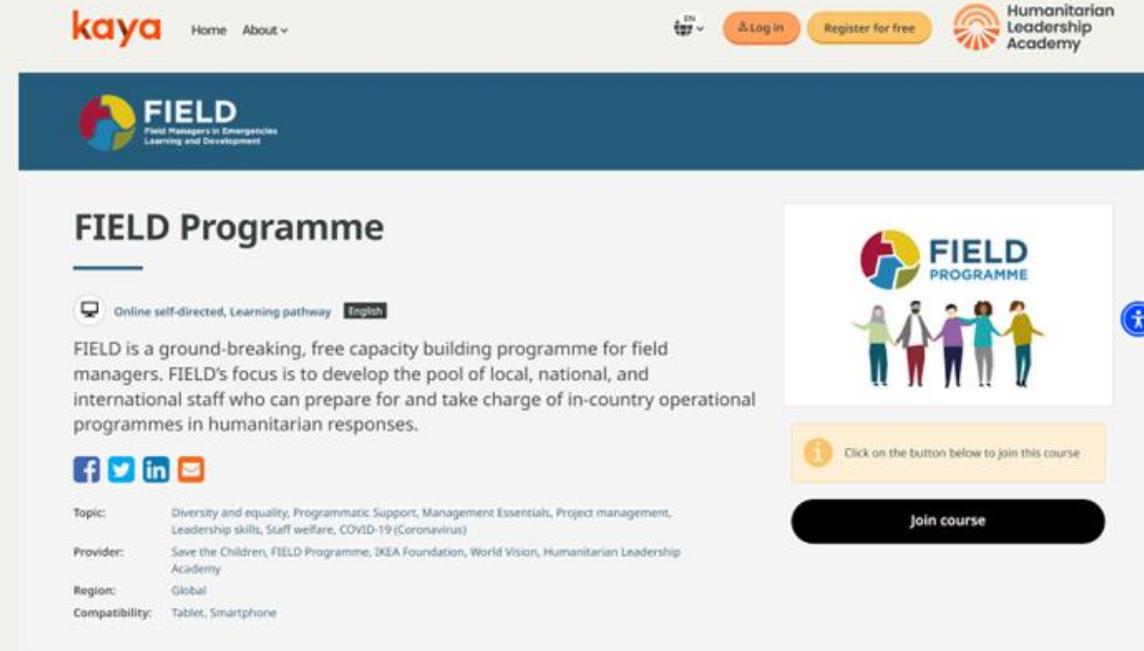
Learning with Kaya: FIELD programme

Free self-paced online course on Kaya

FIELD focuses on building the knowledge, skills and capacity of those undertaking a front-line managerial role.

Available in English and Arabic

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=1141>



The screenshot shows the Kaya website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'kaya' logo, 'Home', and 'About' links. On the right, there are buttons for 'Log in' and 'Register for free', along with the Humanitarian Leadership Academy logo. Below the navigation bar is a blue header with the 'FIELD' logo and the text 'Field Managers in Emergencies Learning and Development'. The main content area features the title 'FIELD Programme' and a description: 'FIELD is a ground-breaking, free capacity building programme for field managers. FIELD's focus is to develop the pool of local, national, and international staff who can prepare for and take charge of in-country operational programmes in humanitarian responses.' There are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email. A table of details is provided:

Topic:	Diversity and equality, Programmatic Support, Management Essentials, Project management, Leadership skills, Staff welfare, COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
Provider:	Save the Children, FIELD Programme, IKEA Foundation, World Vision, Humanitarian Leadership Academy
Region:	Global
Compatibility:	Tablet, Smartphone

On the right side of the page, there is a 'Join course' button and a call to action: 'Click on the button below to join this course'.

Next webinar: Personal perspectives on localisation

Date for your diaries:

Wednesday 21 August
11.00 BST [10.00 UTC]

Thank you!



The Shift Webinar Series

Personal perspectives
on localisation



21 August 2024



11.00 BST

