

## **RESILIENCE, RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES OF HUMANITARIAN AID EDUCATION FOR UNIVERSITIES. THE EXPERIENCE IN *EUPRHA***

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A wide European project, comprising a partnership of 32 institutions from 30 countries around European geographical area challenged the research of educational and action realities on humanitarian aid and civil protection. The *European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action – EUPRHA* - is a Lifelong Learning Programme (Project number 518362-LLP-1-2011-1-ES-ERASMUS-ENW) coordinated by University of Deusto, Spain.

The concept of Humanitarian Aid has been widely debated, trying to comprise the multivariate views coming from different cultural, social and economic spaces and realities. *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid* (2008/C 25/01) helped in reaching a common understanding and vision. For instance, the common objective stated for the European Union vision on HA, described in articles 8 and 9 of the above mentioned document stated that: “The objective of EU humanitarian aid is to provide a needs-based emergency response aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity wherever the need arises if governments and local actors are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act. EU humanitarian aid encompasses assistance, relief and protection operations to save and preserve life in humanitarian crises or their immediate aftermath, but also actions aimed at facilitating or obtaining access to people in need and the free flow of assistance. EU humanitarian assistance is provided in response to man-made crises (including complex emergencies) and to natural disasters as needed.” (art. 8) and “Local response to crisis and disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness and recovery, are essential to saving lives and enabling communities to increase their resilience to emergencies. Capacity building activities to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and to enhance humanitarian response are also part of EU humanitarian aid. (art. 9).

The challenge of mapping the European Humanitarian Action starts on kick of meeting (Bilbao, January 2012) where each partner could choose a focused work package. More than 10 partners have been choose the *Map of HA in Europe*, other engaged to develop A European Qualification Framework, or to intensively look for trends and potentialities of HA in Europe and around the world.

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Having the co-ordination of partners from Oxford Brooks University (OBU) and University College Glasgow (UCD), Glasgow, the group works on: clarifying HA concept, on methodological options and mapping design, on choosing target groups – as educators and actors. The research design of European maps of humanitarian educators and actors included after : 1) Creating the variables to be followed; 2) Designing an Excel table for data gathering; 3) Mapping exercise / pilot study for at least 5 educators and 5 actors from WP2 members; 4) Feedback and adjustments of data for HA Map (Warsaw workshop, September, 2012); 5) Setting the data gathering instruments and process from all Euprha partners.

Partial conclusions and suggestions have been drafted on a next workshop (Dublin workshop, Jan 2013) and the EUPRHA institutional partners have been completing data base. Long and Short Country reports have been assumed (on Vilnius workshop, Sept 2013) and presented on the last conference of the project (Brussels, 2-5 June, Bedford hotel and Conference Centre).<sup>1</sup>

As it is mentioned on the project web page, “The European Map of Humanitarian Action (HA Map) offers a first time insight into the humanitarian sector in Europe”.<sup>2</sup>

During the EUPRHA project, our team have made a literature review on humanitarian Aid (HA) status in Romania, set the scene of national system related to Civil protection and humanitarian aid, performed research and updated the categories of educational services providers and actors on the humanitarian aid, have searched for potentialities on HA education and practice, contributing to qualification framework (QF), quality assurance, dissemination and other specified activities. Main challenges for our team consisted in operationalization of HA concept, in setting the scene of HA actors in our country (national system); in making a comprehensive analyses of the legal framework on HA; selecting educators and actors focused mainly on international HA.

A significant part of humanitarian actors from Romania are focusing on multiple actions: preventing and alleviating human suffering, assistance, relief and protection operations, response to crisis and disaster risk reduction, saving lives and enabling communities to increase their resilience to emergencies. On the regional level, there are multiple actions designated for sustaining development of neighbour countries: Moldova, Serbia, Georgia, Black Sea Region etc. On 2007 the Romanian ODA budget was the highest (2.250.000 Euro, on 2012: 234.602 Euro. On national level there is a special focus on prevention, intervention in natural disasters, organising civil protection sector; training of volunteers and specialists; sustainable development.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, by General Inspectorate of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the main public institutions involved in Humanitarian aid and Civil protection. The activity on this domains is

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://euprha.org/conference/>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://hamap.euprha.org/about/>

sustained by a recent and specific legal framework: the Civil Protection Law (481/2004); Order no. 250 of 22 November 2010 on the organization of training programs on prevention for specialists from voluntary emergency services; Resolution no. 1579 of 8 December 2005 for status approval of the volunteers in volunteer emergency services; ORDER no. 160 of 23 February 2007 regarding activities of preventing emergency situations on local level; Law no. 404/2006 on the financing of development assistance from the national policy of international cooperation for development; Government Decision 1052/2011 on the financing of development assistance from the national policy of international cooperation for development. According to these, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations actions aimed at improving the prevention and management of emergencies, in order to keep risks under control and ensure the normality of life and human communities touched by the many prevention and intervention activities for firefighting, extrication and first medical aid by SMURD service, rescuing people and limiting the damage caused by floods, landslides, earthquakes, epidemics, epizootics, snow, drought, help people in critical situations, intervention technological accidents, radiological, nuclear, biological or other natural disasters or anthropogenic.

On the international level, humanitarian assistance of Romania, offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is an emergency assistance to States in the event of disasters and protracted armed conflicts in order to mitigate the consequences on victims, including assistance in the transition from humanitarian crisis to rehabilitation and reconstruction processes.

In the period 2012-2015 the budget for humanitarian aid represents 10% of the ODA allocated to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Commander for national disasters is from General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations. For international humanitarian and development aid, the main coordination is assured by special experts from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Romania is represented by General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations in the : Working Group of the Council of the EU Civil Protection (PROCIV); Civil Protection of the European Commission; Expert groups in the European Commission; Committee of Competent Authorities responsible for implementing the Seveso II Directive. UNDP Romania has been a partner of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in implementing *National Strategy regarding the National Policy on International Development Cooperation* (2008-2010). The SNIECODA project has been founded by Romanian ODA budget.

During last five years, 6 public and/or private Romanian institutions are involved in networks and partnerships financed by ECHO for intervention and preparedness projects (for training volunteers in cross-border regions - Tisza River, 2013, for “creating a common platform and a web community for sharing information and experience about how to protect the educational environment in case of disaster” 2012 etc.

Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the institution responsible for managing the national policy of international cooperation for development and coordinate: the national policy of international cooperation for national development, Romania's international representation from the perspective of the donor of development assistance; global commitments to achieving the MDGs, the effectiveness of development assistance on policy coherence for development and the other commitments within the framework of international development cooperation commitments as a member of the EU and the UN and Monterrey commitments of the Paris Declaration on aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, budget programming development assistance, employment, settlement and authorization of funds, as required by law; monitoring, evaluation and audit of contributions / project / program financed development assistance budget.

On the civil protection sector, the Management of National System for Emergency Situations (created in 2004, is coordinated by GIES) is organized by: Emergency Committees (national, ministerial, of Bucharest, county and local); General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations – GIES (integrative role - ensure transmission of decisions taken by the Government or by the National Committee to the central government and local authorities); Professional community public services for emergency (emergency county inspectorates); Emergency Operations Center (permanent or temporary - is considered within ministries and other institutions in the system to ensure the flow of information before or at the time of an emergency); Commander action (unit coordinates at exceptional event).

In our search (mainly desk and „snow ball” based) we find that, in our country, on the time of 2012-2013, there were few educational offers for humanitarian aid, but the development of the domain is on course. HA training is partially covered by accredited associations for adult training and civil protection. Masters programs for training of specialist on humanitarian aid are linked with topics as development and emergency rescue. There were some answers hard to find, like: number of students/program, main competences and skills obtained through a certain training course; main type of beneficiaries (most of them being considered vulnerable).

In searching for potentialities, we can look to NOHA master program as European network, balanced with national particularities. An active national network, comprising the core of professional resources in humanitarian aid (teachers, researchers and practitioners etc.) can be developed.

The benefits of working in such a project are sustained by new approaches and practices on our activities, as: becoming familiar with European perspectives on HA; including HA information on our seminars and courses; promoting the professionalization of HA idea among our colleagues; working on Qualification framework of HA; promoting an integrating approach of humanitarian principles.

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