HUMANITARIAN ACADEMY · HUMANITAIRES JOBS

Mini MBA Project Management and AI: PMP, PRINCE2, Agile and PMD Pro applied to humanitarian work

Course handout · Week 10 : Donor reporting, change management and communication

A programme of exactly 3 months (12 weeks, 144 hours) to manage humanitarian projects with the main methodologies and artificial intelligence: project cycle, PMBOK and PMP, PRINCE2, Agile (Scrum, Kanban) and hybrid approaches, Project DPro (PMD Pro), logical framework, theory of change and results-based management, planning and critical path, donor budget and earned value, risks and stakeholders, MEAL, donor reporting, change management, leadership and closure. At every step, AI (Claude, Gemini, Copilot and project management tools) is used methodically, protecting the data of the people we serve. Corrected numerical exercises, three monthly exams with case studies, and a verifiable diploma from the Humanitarian Academy. Independent preparation programme: it does not award the PMP, PRINCE2 or PMD Pro certifications, which are obtained through the official exams.

https://humanitairejobs.org/en/academy/mini-mba-gestion-projet-ia/semaine-10/

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Week 10 : Donor reporting, change management and communication

Objectives

- Write accurate, consistent and results-oriented narrative and financial reports, with AI support and systematic checking.
- Manage contractual changes (reallocations, no-cost extensions, amendments) according to donor rules.
- Build a project communication plan and clear messages for each audience.

What a donor expects from a report

An interim or final report answers four questions: **what have we achieved** against the planned results? **Why** the variances? **What have we learned and changed**? **How was the money used**?

Common structure of the narrative report: summary; changes in context; progress by result (indicators with baseline, target, achieved, disaggregation); variances and corrective measures; accountability (feedback and complaints received, responses given); risks; lessons learned; sustainability; annexes (ITT, case studies, photos with consent).

The **financial report** follows the donor's format strictly, by heading, with variances explained. The project manager and finance reconcile narrative and financial: an output announced as "100% achieved" with a budget line 30% spent will raise questions.

Writing accurately: accuracy, honesty, results

Writing rules:

- Every figure has a **source** (database, ITT, distribution list) and a **date**;
- Talk about **outcomes** before activities: "72% of households report an acceptable food consumption score, against 41% at baseline" rather than "we distributed 3,200 vouchers";
- **Do not embellish**: a variance explained and corrected inspires more confidence than a doubtful success; an inaccurate statement may be considered a false declaration;
- Respect **dignity**: no miserabilist stories, no photos of identifiable children without informed consent, no information that could expose a person;
- Correctly **attribute** results shared with partners or other actors.

Writing a report with AI, a safe method

1. **Gather validated sources**: ITT, review minutes, financial report, anonymised community feedback, decision log.
2. **Give the donor's format** and length limits.

3. **Ask for a strictly sourced first draft**: "Write the Result 2 section using only these documents; for each figure, give the source document in square brackets; write [TO BE COMPLETED] if information is missing; do not invent any beneficiary quote."
4. **Check line by line** every figure and statement, then remove the bracketed references.
5. **Ask for a critical review**: "Act as the donor's programme officer: what questions would you ask? What inconsistencies between the narrative and the financial report do you see?"
6. **Final human review** by the project manager, finance and management.

Some donors publish rules on the use of AI in proposals and reports: check them, and be transparent if asked. Donors increasingly spot generic texts and unsourced figures.

Managing contractual changes

The most frequent changes:

- **Budget reallocation** between headings: free below a threshold set by the contract (often 10 to 20% of the heading concerned), subject to written approval above it;
- **No-cost extension**: extending the duration without increasing the budget; to be requested early, often at least one to three months before the end, with a justification and a revised plan;
- **Change of scope**: new sites, new activities, change of targets; almost always requires an amendment;
- **Change of partner or key staff**, if the contract mentions them.

The internal procedure follows integrated change control (week 2) and management by exception (week 3): impact analysis, board decision, request to the donor, baseline update after written approval, traceability in the change log. Expenditure incurred on an unapproved change risks being declared **ineligible**.

The project communication plan

The **communication plan** specifies, for each audience: what information, through which channel, how often, by whom. For example:

- **Steering committee**: one-page monthly highlight report, quarterly meeting;
- **Donor**: contractual reports, rapid alerts in case of significant variance, field visit;
- **Team**: weekly meeting, shared Kanban board;
- **Communities**: meetings, local radio, posters, in local languages, with information on criteria, dates and the complaints mechanism;
- **Authorities and cluster**: coordination meetings, 4W updates.

The number of communication channels in a team grows fast: $n \times (n - 1) \div 2$. A team of 6 people has 15 channels; at 12 people, 66. Hence the value of short meetings, shared minutes and a common tool.

Communicating with AI, for each audience

AI helps adapt the same content: executive summary for management, short message for communities, technical note for the cluster, social media post. Ask for **versions by audience**, with clear constraints: length, register, words to avoid.

For messages to communities: have them reviewed by native speakers and tested with a few people, especially for languages less present on the internet; machine translation can change the meaning of an eligibility criterion. For public posts: check the donor's visibility rules and your organisation's communication policy, and do not use AI-generated images presented as real photos.

Exercise: reallocation and extension

Situation. Project of the fictitious NGO Tamkin, budget EUR 750,000, 18 months. The contract allows each heading to vary by at most 15% of its initial amount without prior approval. The project manager wants to transfer EUR 26,000 from the "Equipment" heading (EUR 200,000) to the "Training" heading (EUR 120,000). Separately, in month 15, 22% of activities remain to be carried out because access was blocked for two months; the contract requires any extension to be requested at least 2 months before the end.

Task. 1) Variance of each heading? 2) Is approval needed? 3) Last month to request the extension? 4) What does the no-cost extension request contain?

Answer. 1) Equipment: −26,000 ÷ 200,000 = −13%; Training: +26,000 ÷ 120,000 ≈ +21.7%. 2) Yes: the Training heading exceeds 15%. Without approval, at most EUR 18,000 (15% of 120,000) could be transferred. 3) End in month 18, request at the latest by the end of month 16: act immediately, in month 15. 4) Justification (blocked access, documented), remaining activities and revised plan, unchanged budget with updated spending pace, requested duration (for example 3 months), risks and measures, impact on indicators and handover.

Key takeaways

- A report says what was achieved, why the variances, what was learned and how the money was used.
- Every figure has a source and a date; never embellish; respect people's dignity.
- With AI: validated sources, sourced first draft, line-by-line checking, human review.
- Reallocations above the threshold, extensions and scope changes require the donor's written approval.
- Communication plan by audience; messages to communities reviewed by native speakers.

Quiz

1. How many communication channels does a team of 8 people have?
   A. 16
   B. 64
   C. 28
   D. 56

2. A no-cost extension consists of:
   A. Extending the duration without increasing the budget
   B. Increasing the budget without extending
   C. Removing activities
   D. Changing donor

3. In a report, a flattering but unverifiable statement must be:
   A. Kept if it sounds good
   B. Moved to an annex
   C. Attributed to AI
   D. Removed or verified

4. Heading of EUR 50,000, threshold 10%. Maximum incoming transfer without approval:
   A. EUR 10,000
   B. EUR 5,000
   C. EUR 500
   D. EUR 50,000

5. An AI-generated image may be published:
   A. As a real photo of the project
   B. Without mention if it looks good
   C. Never presented as a real photo
   D. Only on WhatsApp

Quiz answers : 1. C · 2. A · 3. D · 4. B · 5. C