HUMANITARIAN ACADEMY · HUMANITAIRES JOBS

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

Course handout · Week 11 : Leading the team, ensuring quality, working with partners and closing

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-11/

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Week 11 : Leading the team, ensuring quality, working with partners and closing

Objectives

- Lead a humanitarian project team: servant leadership, team development, conflict, wellbeing.
- Manage quality (plan, assure, control) and work with local partners in a localisation approach.
- Close a project completely: acceptance, handover, administrative and financial closure, lessons learned.

The project manager's leadership

Recent frameworks (PMBOK, PRINCE2 7, Scrum) stress **servant leadership**: removing obstacles, clarifying priorities, protecting the team from interruptions, developing skills, rather than commanding and controlling every task.

Tuckman's model describes the stages of team development: **forming** (politeness, uncertainty), **storming** (conflict over roles and methods), **norming** (shared rules), **performing**, then **adjourning** at the end of the project. The project manager adapts their style: directive at the start, more delegating later.

In humanitarian work, add: the diversity of statuses (national and international staff, volunteers, partners), high staff turnover, stress and exposure to trauma. **Duty of care** includes security, mental health, sustainable working hours and fair treatment.

Managing conflict and negotiating

Five conflict modes (Thomas-Kilmann model): **collaborating** (seeking a solution that satisfies both parties, preferred for important issues), **compromising**, **competing** (emergency, security), **accommodating** (low stakes for yourself), **avoiding** (temporarily, to let tension subside).

The PMP exam values one approach: first understand the cause, in private, with the people concerned, before escalating. Example: the logistics manager and the field coordinator disagree on distribution dates. The project manager brings them together, has each set out their constraints (truck availability, families' farming calendar), looks for a common option (two distribution waves), then formalises the decision.

Quality: plan, assure, control

Quality is conformance to requirements and fitness for use. Three levels:

- **Plan**: applicable standards (Sphere, national technical standards, donor requirements), acceptance criteria for each deliverable, inspection plan;

- **Assure**: check that processes enable quality (team training, procedures, internal audits);
- **Control**: inspect deliverables (sampling, tests, post-distribution monitoring) and correct.

The **cost of quality** includes the cost of conformance (prevention, inspection) and the cost of non-conformance (rework, rejects, loss of trust). Preventing is almost always cheaper than correcting. The **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)** sets nine commitments on quality and accountability to affected people, useful as a checklist for the whole project.

Working with local partners

Many projects are implemented with or by **local and national organisations**. Localisation commitments (Grand Bargain) aim to strengthen their role, their direct funding and their decision-making power.

Good project management practice in partnership:

- design the project and budget **together**, including a share of indirect costs for the partner;
- a proportionate **partner assessment**, followed by a mutual capacity-strengthening plan rather than a simple list of requirements;
- **clear roles** (RACI) and shared governance (joint steering committee);
- fair **risk sharing**, including security: do not transfer risk to the partner without the means;
- **simplified and harmonised** reporting when possible.

Closing the project

Closure is often rushed, yet it determines sustainability and the final payment. Checklist:

- **Acceptance** of deliverables with beneficiaries, authorities or management committees (signed minutes);
- **Handover**: technical documents, committee training, maintenance plan, transfer or disposal of equipment according to donor rules;
- **Administrative closure**: supplier and staff contracts, archiving for the required period (often 5 to 10 years after the end), closing accounts;
- **Financial closure**: last eligible expenditure before the end date, reconciliations, refund of unused funds, audit preparation;
- **Communication** to communities about the end of the project and the remaining avenues of recourse;
- **Final report**, final evaluation if planned, and a **lessons-learned workshop**.

An **exit strategy** is prepared from the design stage: who maintains what after the project, with what resources?

AI for the team, quality and closure

Useful uses: preparing the agenda of a difficult meeting, practising a delicate conversation (AI plays the unhappy colleague), drafting quality control procedures, generating a closure

checklist adapted to the donor, synthesising lessons learned from several reports into themes, finding what past evaluations recommended.

Limits: do not use AI to assess the individual performance of a team member or draft a sanction based on personal information; do not paste HR or medical files; conduct, harassment and PSEA matters follow the organisation's confidential procedures.

Exercise: cost of quality

Situation. The fictitious NGO Bina is building 300 latrines. At the first inspection, 12% have defects (cracked slab, pit too shallow); each repair costs EUR 180. Additional training for masons and a mid-site inspection would cost EUR 2,000 and bring the defect rate down to 4%.

Task. 1) Cost of repairs without training? 2) Total cost with training? 3) Saving? 4) What other, non-quantified benefit should be mentioned?

Answer. 1) 12% × 300 = 36 latrines; 36 × 180 = EUR 6,480. 2) 4% × 300 = 12 latrines; 12 × 180 = EUR 2,160; plus EUR 2,000 for training and inspection = EUR 4,160. 3) 6,480 − 4,160 = EUR 2,320 saved. 4) Fewer health and accident risks for families, greater community trust, deadlines met, and better-trained masons for future projects.

Key takeaways

- Servant leadership; adapt your style to the team's stage of development (Tuckman).
- Conflict: understand the cause in private and seek a collaborative solution before escalating.
- Quality: plan, assure, control; prevention costs less than correction; CHS as a framework.
- Local partnerships: joint design, indirect costs, shared risks, shared governance.
- Closure includes acceptance, handover, administrative and financial closure, and lessons learned.

Quiz

1. In Tuckman's model, the stage where conflict over roles appears is:
   A. Performing
   B. Storming
   C. Adjourning
   D. Norming

2. For an important conflict between two managers, the mode to favour is:
   A. Avoiding permanently
   B. Competing
   C. Collaborating
   D. Accommodating

3. The cost of non-conformance includes:
   A. Rework and rejects
   B. Preventive training
   C. Internal audits
   D. The quality plan

4. The exit strategy is prepared:
   A. In the last month
   B. After the audit
   C. Never
   D. From the design stage

5. Which of these uses of AI must be excluded?
   A. Preparing a meeting agenda
   B. Assessing a colleague's performance from their HR file
   C. Drafting a closure checklist
   D. Synthesising lessons learned

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