

# CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

---

2023 ANNUAL  
REPORT







# CONTENTS

- 04 | Welcome
- 04 | Opening messages
- 08 | 2023 in review
- 12 | Develop: Education
- 16 | Discover: Research
- 20 | Dialogue: Partnerships and engagement
- 25 | Challenges
- 26 | Financial statements
- 27 | Our people
- 30 | Partners

The Centre for Humanitarian Leadership acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Country and the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.



Front Cover image: Participants enjoy a discussion during the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership’s CLP Grow program for humanitarian professionals with between 2-8 years’ experience in Bangkok in November, 2023.

This page: CLP Seed participants take part in a group exercise in Krakow, Poland.



## WELCOME

By elevating local actors, centring the agency of affected communities, respecting diverse perspectives and furthering social justice, the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership strives to nurture a new generation of leaders in a world gripped by change and turmoil.

Our 2023 Annual Report is the story of our journey this year, and shares the Centre's 2023 achievements, challenges, and performance with the wider CHL community—especially our funders, partners and stakeholders.

We always welcome your feedback and thoughts – please message us at [info@cfhl.org.au](mailto:info@cfhl.org.au) to get in touch.



## Director's message

**Associate Professor Mary Ana McGlasson, MN, MPP**

Director, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership

### Welcome to the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership's 2023 Annual Report.

2023 ended with a multitude of crises, conflicts and disasters plaguing communities across the world. As people who not only work in the aid and humanitarian space, but often live and breathe it too, it has been a particularly difficult time to hold courage and optimism in our hearts. But I trust we can find strength in our togetherness, our collective humanity and our unceasing efforts towards a brighter and better future.

We can also find strength in celebrating the steps taken towards this better future, and so I have joy in presenting you with this review of the work of the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership over the past year. In 2023 the Centre's hard work through a lean few years came to fruition – and we built more and stronger pathways towards the just and equitable system we all deserve.

This report describes many of these new pathways. The Centre was honoured to win USD \$2 million in funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) to collaborate with Action Against Hunger on the Diverse Leadership in Crises project, which will support much of our core work, including a cohort of the Diplôme d'Études Supérieures en Leadership Humanitaire (DESLH), six cohorts of our francophone Crisis Leadership Program (PLC) and ongoing publication of our flagship bilingual journal, *the Humanitarian Leader/ Leader Humanitaire*.

This journal, published in both French and English for the first time in 2023, was just one of a suite of diversified linguistic offerings extending the Centre's reach to new cadres of humanitarian leaders. The Crisis Leadership Program – our flexible short course designed to strengthen the leadership skills of people providing frontline assistance in crises – was offered in Ukrainian, Polish and French, while CHL research reports and papers were translated into French, Korean and Burmese, allowing the people working in and affected by the situations being discussed to access the studies in their own languages.

These new ways of reaching out to diverse practitioners and thought-leaders extended to our events – including the 2023 Humanitarian Leadership Conference (presented both online and in-person for the first time) and our

inaugural Francophone conference, which brought together over 70 delegates from across western Africa to Dakar to discuss the localisation agenda.

Although 2023 presented its fair share of challenges, these were of a positive kind. The Centre grew very fast in a short time, and it was sometimes difficult for us to keep up—though the team did an outstanding job, as always. The funding environment remains challenging, though we have made great strides towards longer-term security in our financial position, thanks to the determination of the team to discover and cement new partners and new opportunities.

In late November, the Centre was honoured to receive a Deakin University Faculty Award for 'Engagement, Collaboration, and Impact through Research', as well as the prestigious Engagement Australia Excellence Award for our work transforming and improving the humanitarian sector. To me, these awards represent how much our team is growing, our impact is expanding, and our research is deepening – and we eagerly anticipate continuing this vital work to elevate and centre social justice for all as we enter 2024.

**Associate Professor Mary Ana McGlasson, MN, MPP**

**Professor Simon Tormey**

Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Education  
Deakin University



**As I flip through these pages and reflect on my briefings from Mary Ana over the course of the last nine months, I am astonished anew at the depth and breadth of work the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership achieved in 2023. It was a truly remarkable year for the Centre, and I extend my congratulations to the whole team.**

As incoming Executive Dean for the Faculty of Art and Education, it has been a pleasure learning about the work of the CHL and witnessing the dedication and creativity of the staff as they find new ways to extend and diversify the Centre's offering to emerging humanitarian leaders.

It was largely because of these efforts that we were delighted to welcome the Centre of Humanitarian Leadership to the Faculty level in 2023, elevating it from its previous position in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. It was also a joy to present the Centre with the Faculty's Engagement, Collaboration and Impact through Research Award for 2023, recognising its incredible efforts in the research space.

And although 2023 saw the discontinuation of the old Masters of Humanitarian Assistance, it also saw

the beginning of a new postgraduate degree—the Master of Humanitarianism and Development—as well as more record-breaking cohorts of students in Deakin's French-speaking qualification, the Diplôme d'Études Supérieures en Leadership Humanaire (DESLH).

It is with delight that I note that some 52 DESLH graduates completed their degrees in 2023 and are now continuing their lives and careers as humanitarian leaders, supporting their organisations and networks to rethink, redefine and rework the humanitarian system to be more equitable for everyone. On behalf of everyone at Deakin University, I thank the Centre for its contribution to this important work.

**Professor Simon Tormey**

**Mat Tinkler**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Save the Children Australia



**When I sit down to write these reflections it is always with the hope that the year that passed has been a better one for the people of the world. Alas, once again 2023 saw tragedy and turmoil stalk so many communities, in so many places.**

The global disaster response system and the people who work in it are being rocked by catastrophe after crisis after tragedy. Our humanitarian cause has never been more important or more needed. But as the demand for our services constantly outstrips the supply of funding and goodwill to respond, it is clear that the way we work needs rethinking. That old ways are no longer fit for purpose. And that is why the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership is so important.

Over the last year, the Centre's team has worked tirelessly to ensure humanitarian professionals across the world at every level have been granted the opportunity not merely to design, lead and evaluate emergency responses, but to challenge and rethink the aid system itself. Their flexible and accessible training programming, linguistic diversification, and efforts towards unpicking and restitching the humanitarian sector and

its workings through their study and research are all vital steps towards a more robust future.

In an era where catastrophe and crisis are piling on top of each other, and the sector is shuddering under the weight, this interrogation is more important than ever before.

It is, therefore, with great appreciation that I extend my gratitude to Mary Ana and the ever-enthusiastic, innovative and dedicated team at CHL. The new year is bringing so many transformative opportunities to the Centre, I truly cannot wait to how they grasp them with both hands.

**Mat Tinkler**

# 2023 year in review



## March

Centre PhD student Rachel Coghlan is announced a recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (Centre for Humanitarian Health) to further her research into palliative care in humanitarian emergencies.

## May

The IFRC Solferino Academy launches a new research report, 'Humanitarian Leadership for the Future', written with support from Centre Director Mary Ana McGlasson and Acting Director Joshua Hallwright. The report explores the leadership skills and competencies required to navigate contemporary and future challenges, shaped by interviews with senior leaders from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and is published in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.



The first *Leader Humanitaire* (francophone *Humanitarian Leader*) edition is published on Open Journals. Regional Representative for West and Central Africa for NGO Action Contre la Faim, Mamadou Diop, joins the journal's francophone Editorial Board.



The 2023 Humanitarian Leadership Conference was held with 350 delegates from over 65 countries convening both online and in-person. The program features 156 speakers from 37 countries, with sessions held in English and French, and discussions examine why the humanitarian and disaster response system is 'stuck' and explore ambitious and pragmatic ways to reinvigorate change.



Acting Director Josh Hallwright and Senior Communications Advisor Jess Plummer meet with representatives of the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies in Doha, Qatar. Later, CHL and CCH sign a MOU to explore opportunities to develop leadership training and research in Arabic.

We hold talks and a research seminar with staff of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative in Melbourne. Vincenzo Bollettino and Hannah Stoddard, from the Program on Resilient Communities meet with Centre staff to discuss opportunities for collaboration in humanitarian education and the two then present HHI's recent research project on contemporary challenges facing the humanitarian sector to Deakin staff and other invited guests.

## June

## February

## April



# 2023 year in review

## July

The Centre partners with humanitarian professional, researcher and activist Carla Vitantonio to promote her new podcast. Living Decoloniality: Practical experiences of decoloniality throughout the aid sector, is an eight-part podcast series exploring how individuals and groups from around the world are tackling the harmful colonial legacy of the aid and humanitarian sectors.



## September

An upgraded version of Scenario Building in Complex Contexts (SBCC) is unveiled, with improvements to navigation and more interactive features. SBCC, is a free online course, is designed to help aid and development practitioners to make informed decisions when working in complex and changing contexts.

CHL and Deakin are invited by the National Resilience Taskforce of the Department of Home Affairs to two closed-door expert consultation on Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response: one for the Education sector, and the second for the Academic and Research sector.



## November

The Centre is awarded an Excellence in Industry Engagement award at the 2023 Engagement Australia Awards. The Centre is recognised as an outstanding collaboration of mutual benefit that contributes to enhancing the quality and impact of higher education.

A dKin Difference event is held at Deakin's Geelong campus for university supporters to celebrate the Centre's transformative work and international impact. CHL Director, Associate Professor Mary Ana McGlasson, and Deakin Professor Simon Tormey discuss how the Centre's expertise and training is influencing the way humanitarian aid is delivered on a global scale, and underline the Centre's focus on providing stable leadership in an increasingly complex climate.



## August

At Deakin's Burwood campus, 16 students from the Masters-level unit, Applied Humanitarian Assistance: from Theory to Practice undertake a five-day intensive led by teaching staff, Daniel McAvoy and Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings. Students learnt how to use the innovative needs assessment tool KoboToolbox, to plan a humanitarian response.



## October

CHL secures a grant from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance valued at \$2.1m AUD for 18 months to deliver one cohort of DESLH and six PLC short courses (two Seed, two Grow, two Extend).

CHL launches its French language website. The initiative aims to give the francophone community easier access to CHL's growing portfolio of French-language training courses, research and events.



## December

ODI's Global Advisory Group approaches CHL to support the development and delivery of the refreshed Global Executive Leadership Programme, re-branded as Tandem. The first cohort of 30 humanitarian and development leaders commences with a workshop in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.



# DEVELOP: Education



**2023 was a remarkable year of growth and learning for the CHL education team—a year in which we literally went global!**

Our Crisis Leadership Program (CLP) was delivered to hundreds of humanitarian practitioners in six different countries and in four different languages, we secured a grant from USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance valued at \$2.1m AUD to deliver a cohort of the DESLH and six PLC short courses, while back home in Australia, we helped Deakin University to launch a new degree- the Masters of Humanitarianism and Development.

The diversification of our educational offering centred around the CLP; a program intended to strengthen the leadership skills of people providing frontline assistance in crises across the world. Participatory and action-focused, the course provides participants with insights to better understand and navigate the disaster response system, as well as build skills as leaders. This year, we offered multiple intakes of all three levels of the CLP—Seed, Grow and Extend—as well as a youth pilot—all part of our hectic and exciting 2023 schedule, visible in the timeline below.



DESLH  
**52**  
graduates from cohort 6 in 2023



Crisis Leadership Program  
**265**  
graduates for CLP Seed, Grow, Extend and Youth Pilot in 2023 (English, Ukrainian and Polish).



PLC Seed Pilot course  
**30**  
graduates



Mentoring workshops  
**66**  
participants



New Research Affiliates  
**2**

## Scholarships awarded in 2023

**14**  
DESLH  
scholarships

**50%**  
Deakin Student  
Bursaries

MAR

The first CLP Seed of the year is held in Krakow, Poland with 24 English-speaking participants

An ‘Introduction to mentoring’ course is held in Dakar, Senegal for francophone humanitarian professionals.

MAY

The CLP Seed program returns to Krakow, Poland in May with 13 Ukrainian-speaking participants. May also sees 17 CLP Seed participants learning in Polish in Krakow.

JUN

Krakow hosts the first CLP Grow and the first CLP Extend of 2023, with 14 English-speaking participants in the former, and 10 in the latter.

In Brindisi, Italy, Cohort 3 of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Humanitarian Leadership Programme begins, with 27 participants from nine country offices.

The DESLH Unit 4 intensive is held in Thiès, Senegal with 35 students.

JUL

A Polish-language CLP Seed course is held in Warsaw, Poland with 25 participants, while in Bucharest, Romania, 13 participants take part in an English-speaking CLP Seed program. A CLP Young Humanitarians Pilot Program is also held in Bucharest, for 35 participants.

The Massive Online Open Course, Introduction to Humanitarian Aid is launched in [Polish](#) and [Ukrainian](#).

The pilot course for the Programme de Leadership en situations de Crise (PLC) is launched with 30 French-speaking participants in Dakar, Senegal.

AUG

CLP Grow is held in Warsaw, Poland for 12 English-speaking participants.

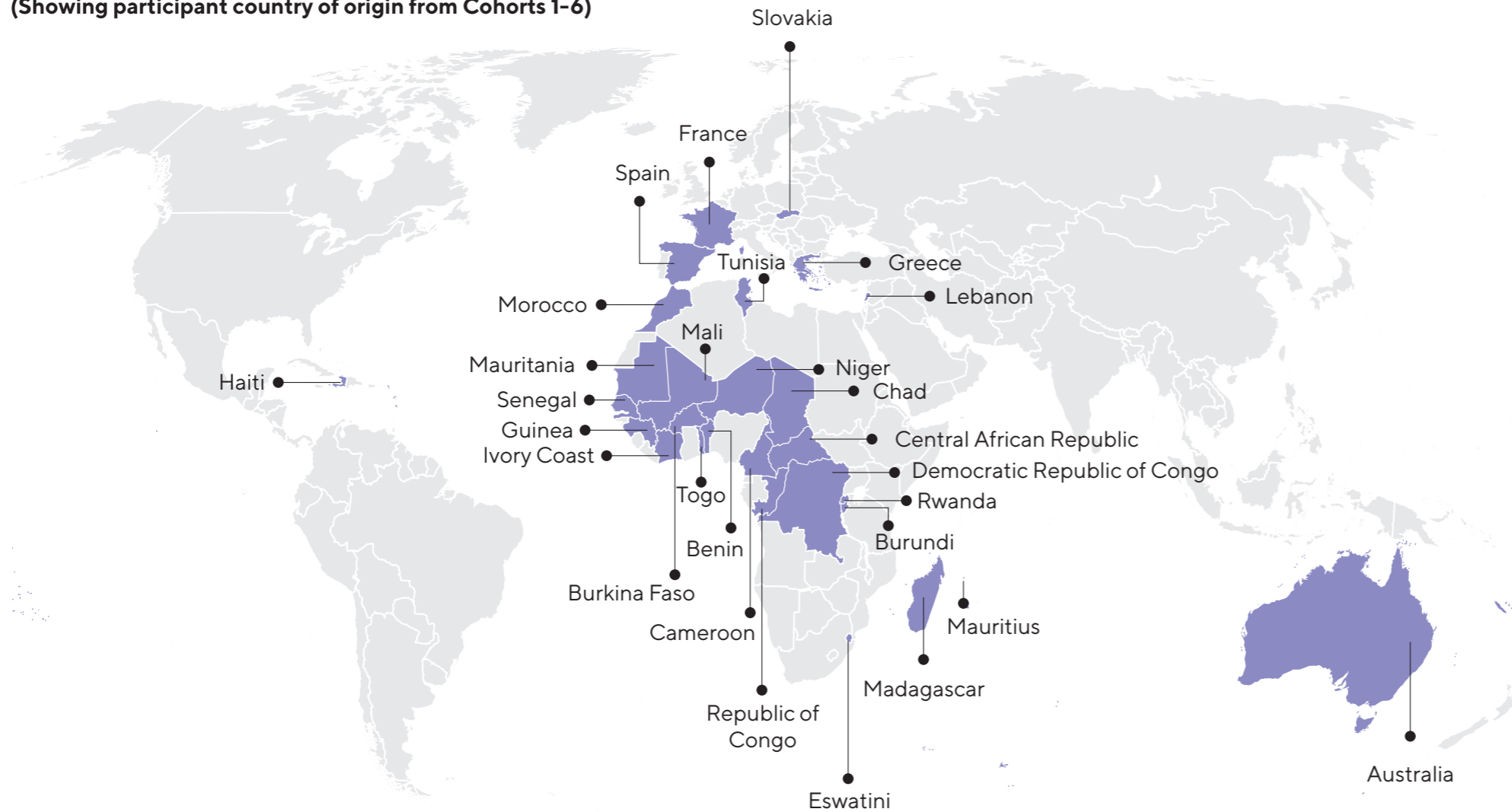
Sixteen Masters of Humanitarian Assistance students take part in a 5-day intensive for their ‘Applied Humanitarian Assistance: from Theory to Practice’ course in Melbourne, Australia.



# DEVELOP: Education

## DESLH students

(Showing participant country of origin from Cohorts 1-6)



### The Abruzzo Leadership Medal

The Abruzzo Leadership Medal is awarded to a CHL student (of the DESLH/GCHL) who has demonstrated the greatest progression in their humanitarian leadership journey. Established through the support of Save the Children Italy, the medal was named in honour of the staff who responded to an earthquake which devastated this region of central Italy, in 2009.

This year, the DESLH Course Director was overjoyed to award the Abruzzo medal to Afiwa Essosolim Amelessodji Soga. Passionate about issues of social justice, inclusion and employability, the Centre's 2023 Abruzzo Medal winner Afiwa Amelessodji Soga demonstrated great managerial courage, and her leadership was clearly acknowledged and recognised by her peers. During the course of the DESLH, Afiwa's leadership bloomed and finally shone through, always human, authentic and yet powerful.

### SEP

The second 'Introduction to Mentoring' workshop for 2023 is held in Dakar, Senegal for francophone humanitarian professionals.

In Krakow, Poland, 16 Ukrainian-speaking participants take part in CLP Seed.

### OCT

CLP Seed is held in Polish for 18 participants in Krakow, while the first CLP Seed in Lviv, Ukraine begins for 28 Ukrainian humanitarian professionals. In Istanbul, Türkiye, 14 experienced practitioners take part in CLP Extend.

### NOV

30 people take part in a 'mini' CLP in partnership with Ashoka and Mercy Corps, while the first CLP held in an Asian country is attended by 14 participants in Bangkok, Thailand.

The new Deakin University Masters of Humanitarianism and Development is launched and applications open for T1, 2024.

### DEC

Bangkok hosts its second CLP course, with 13 participants taking part in an English-speaking Seed program.



## DISCOVER: Research

Aligned with our overarching mission to lead and instigate meaningful change of the humanitarian system, CHL is dedicated to conducting collaborative research that not only informs but also influences real-world leadership in humanitarian contexts.

Our research publications extend beyond academia, delving into how communities, organisations, and individuals can effectively navigate the challenges of the aid system and an ever-evolving world.

The last year has been a busy one for the CHL research community, with our PhD candidates, academic staff, affiliates, and research assistants all actively disseminating their findings through external publications, conferences and webinars, CHL reports, media articles, and stakeholder dialogue. In 2023 this also meant finding new methods to present our research in more accessible ways for more people – including through our newly bi-lingual, diamond open-access journal, our Dakar conference and francophone webinar series, and the two publications that were translated into the Myanmar and Korean languages.

This practice aligns with some of the Centre's fundamental objectives—to anchor our research in practical application, and to work to engage people directly affected by crises and centre their practice and experience. Our efforts in this field were recognised in November, when CHL Director Mary Ana McGlasson accepted a Deakin Faculty of Arts and Education Award for Engagement, Collaboration and Impact through Research.

This award reflects the CHL's core commitment to inform superior humanitarian leadership by offering fresh insights into how aid can and should yield improved outcomes for those affected by crises. In 2023, our research engaged directly with questions surrounding leadership, capacity building, and the future of humanitarian aid, contributing to a more effective and compassionate response to the diverse needs of communities in crisis.

### Academic articles and chapters

Ahmadi, S.J., Musavi, Z., Ahmadi, S., Masha, S., Muradi, N., Samim, N.U., Sarwary, S.A., Sarwary, S.A.A., Shahinzada, S., McAvoy, D\*, Earnest, A. & Jobson, L. (2023). [Examining MEmory Training for Recovery-Adolescent among Afghan adolescent boys: a pilot randomised controlled trial](#), *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*

Kamara, J\*, Mahumu, R.A., Hounsell, H., Renzaho, A. (2023). [Variations in COVID-19 interventions: A systematic review and meta-ethnography of government policy responses and characteristics in eastern Africa](#), *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*. Vol 96.

Kelly, M\*, Pardy, M\*, and McGlasson, M. A. 'The sound of silence? Listening to localisation at the World Humanitarian Summit.' *Disasters*. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12611>

Note: Authors with \* are CHL Research Affiliates.



### In-house and collaborative research reports and inquiry submissions

Khan, T. (2023). [Envisioning an alternative ecosystem for global development and humanitarianism](#), Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.

Wilkinson, C., De Rouck, J. and Downing, P. (2023). *DESLH: Gender and Leadership Study*. Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.

Wilkinson, C., De Rouck, J. and Downing, P. (2023). *Online and residential intensives: perspectives and experiences from DESLH graduates*. Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.

Wilkinson, C., De Rouck, J. and Downing, P. (2023). *DESLH: Impact Study*. Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.

Zadeh-Cummings, N., Janz, K., Banfill, J. (2023). [\(Re\)Engagement with the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea \(DPRK\)](#), Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.

Centre for Humanitarian Leadership and Humanitarian Advisory Group. (2023). *Enhancing Australian National Level Emergency Response Capabilities: Learning From International Humanitarian Response*

JAN

CHL Associate Director of Research Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings appears on the NK News podcast to discuss her paper on disability rights in North Korea, co-authored with Deakin University Associate Professor Danielle Chubb.

MAY

Associate Director of Research Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings hosts the online launch event of the newly formed International Humanitarian Studies Association working group on Education and Pedagogy.

JUN

Director Mary Ana McGlasson was invited to deliver a keynote speech at the Religious Freedom Annual Review event in Provo, Utah, where she spoke about the role of faith based actors in the humanitarian system with about 500 people in attendance.

The Centre holds talks and a research seminar with staff of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative in Melbourne. Vincenzo Bollettino and Hannah Stoddard, from the Program on Resilient Communities meet with Centre staff to discuss opportunities for collaboration in humanitarian education and the two then present HHI's recent research project on contemporary challenges facing the humanitarian sector to Deakin staff and other invited guests.

Emergency Management Victoria awards ABV, Deakin University and CHL AUD \$221,553 from the Disaster Ready fund to conduct research exploring how business volunteering can contribute to community-led disaster preparedness and recovery.



## DISCOVER: Research

### The *Humanitarian Leader/Leader Humanitaire*

The *Humanitarian Leader/Leader Humanitaire*, a bilingual, open-access publication in English and French, is an independent voice for the humanitarian sector. We tell stories that challenge our collective assumptions and present concepts that help make humanitarian aid more just, equitable and effective.

Our authors include researchers, activists, volunteers and humanitarian professionals—anyone with something to say about how aid could and should be better. The journal provides a platform for non-peer-reviewed research and allows authors to test ideas and insight in an accessible academic setting.

In 2023, the *Leader* attracted three new editors-in-chief—Justine De Rouck, Phoebe Downing and Marian Abouzeid—and farewellled long-time editor Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings. Her legacy—the move to ten papers per year and bi-lingual publishing—was welcomed with open arms by our readers, with thousands of papers downloaded in French, and tens of thousands of downloads, galley and abstract views in English.



Access all *Humanitarian Leader/Leader Humanitaire* articles on [Deakin's Open Journals System \(OJS\)](#)

10  
papers published

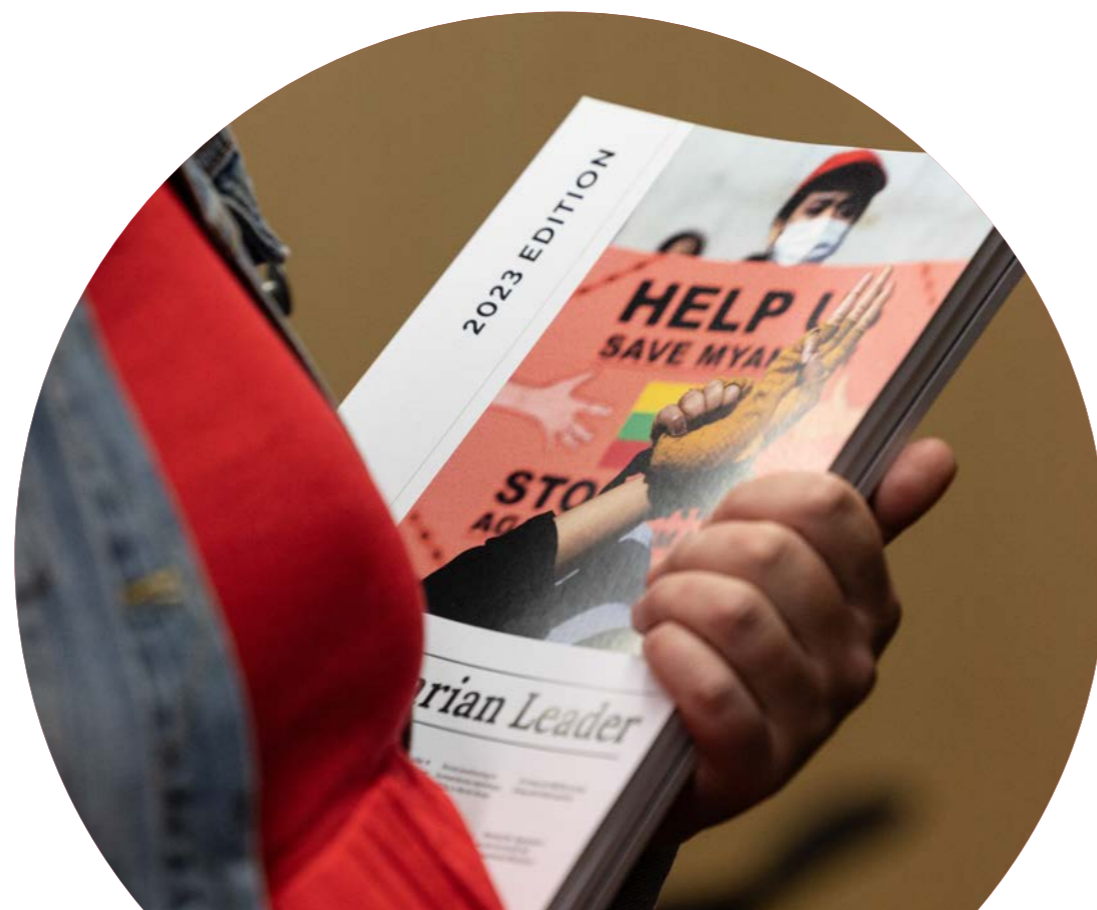


In 2023, the Centre published 10 papers in English and French online, with an annual print and online edition released in December 2023.

32,514  
downloads



*Humanitarian Leader/Leader Humanitaire* paper downloads and abstract views in 2023.



### 2023 *Humanitarian Leader/Leader Humanitaire* papers

- Bahgat, M. (2023). Towards a culturally competent humanitarian assistance. *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Boulanger-Plante, P. (2023). Social positioning in humanitarian diplomacy: INGOs in North Korea. *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Cubas, MA., Hoagland, N., Mudaliar, S. (2023). Migrants' trust in humanitarian action: Local lessons, global insights. *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Hillel, R. (2023). Decolonising mental health interventions in the humanitarian system, *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Kamal, A. (2023). Beyond the 'Egosystem': A case for locally led Humanitarian Resistance. *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Kazouini, A. (2023). Analysing problem-solving in the ICRC's Water and Habitat Department: A humancentric approach. *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Lay, T. (2023). It's time for INGOs to stop living with their parents. *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Miceli, M. (2023). Brain drain in the aid sector: Unpacking the barriers of the dual-salary system, *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Robredo, J., Naguit, R., Mangalili, K. (2023). Bayanihan E-Konsulta: A volunteer-driven response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, *The Humanitarian Leader*
- Sigdel, A., Kharel, U., Ng'ong'a, T. (2023). The role of local government in tackling a global pandemic: A lesson from Nepal. *The Humanitarian Leader*

OCT

Deputy Director Joshua Hallwright appears at the 2023 Australian Council for International Development Conference in Sydney, Australia, to participate in a discussion about whether the humanitarian system is fit for purpose.

To mark International Open Access Week, CHL publishes the 40th edition of *the Humanitarian Leader*, and Publications Editor Cara Schultz speaks on a Deakin University panel discussion exploring the 'diamond model' of open access scholarly publishing.

Deputy Director Joshua Hallwright chairs a panel on the Ukraine conflict, with contributions from Max Kelly, Victor Jakupec and Cai Wilkinson at a Deakin University Polis research network seminar.

NOV

The Centre continues its collaboration with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) by hosting a joint panel on humanitarian leadership curriculum at the 2023 International Humanitarian Studies Association conference.

Deputy Director Joshua Hallwright and Claire Crayzer from the Australian Red Cross present on the ARC's ongoing research project into the value and impact of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) knowledge and training in the Australian humanitarian sector for a Deakin University Polis research network seminar.

DEC

Dr Dre North-Samardzic presents a paper titled "Gender and humanitarian leadership development" based on the CLP at the International Studying Leadership Conference, at the Copenhagen Business School, Denmark.



# DIALOGUE: Partnerships and engagement

The Centre for Humanitarian Leadership maintains a distinctive and unique focus on the catalysts of transformational leadership within the global disaster response system.

During 2023, the Centre’s Engagement team worked hard to bring this focus to the fore across our program of events, conferences, webinars, and online and traditional media outreach.

Our two conferences drew in hundreds of humanitarian practitioners, researchers, and educators from around the world to engage in discussions and analyses of critical issues around system change, energising participants and leading to new charters, commitments and research representing new ideas and real actions to forge a better system—into 2024 and beyond.

## 2023 Humanitarian Leadership Conference: Re-engineering the global disaster response system

Since the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership’s last conference in 2021, we have emerged from the depths of a global pandemic but not from global crisis, disaster and hardship. War and conflict are buffeting South Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East, climatic events are ravaging dozens of countries across the world, and the aid system is besieged by the enormity of people and places needing support and assistance.

2023 was the ideal time then, to focus on re-engineering the global disaster response system to better meet the needs of people now and in the future – and this idea was at the heart of our Humanitarian Leadership Conference. We were honoured to engage with 350 people from over 65 countries from 26-28 April to examine why the system is ‘stuck’ and explore ambitious and pragmatic ways to reinvigorate change. Together, we looked for answers to key questions: what needs to change, how, and who needs to drive the change; across four key areas: funding for

crisis response, organisational models, mandates, and motivations.

Over the course of the three-day conference, delivered for two days online with a final day in-person in Melbourne, we dug into the challenges of decolonising and localising humanitarian assistance and disaster management. We had conversations about whole-of-society emergency responses, including with private sector colleagues. We heard how change is already happening in the Philippines, South Sudan, Thailand, Somalia, and in many other contexts around the world. And we pledged to continue our mission to shift the power and create a more equitable, effective and locally led disaster response system as we approach our next conference in 2025.



Watch selected presentations from the #2023HLC on [YouTube](#)



### At a glance



### The program



### Work category





# DIALOGUE: Partnerships and engagement

## Les enjeux de la localisation de l'aide humanitaire en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre/ The Challenges of Localising Humanitarian Aid in West and Central Africa

Held on 16 March in Dakar, Senegal, the Centre's inaugural francophone Humanitarian Leaders Conference was an opportunity for French-speaking humanitarian aid professionals to discuss the many issues and challenges of the sector, with a focus on localisation.

Attended by 70 participants from a wide range of backgrounds, including INGOs, NGOs, and civil society, the aim of the meeting was to establish the conditions and solutions appropriate for more localised and inclusive humanitarian leadership, and to draw up a Localisation Charter to consolidate the ideas shared in a reference document for all humanitarian actors in the region.

A follow-up webinar to discuss the outcomes of the conference and the new Charter of Dakar on Localisation was held on 26 July. With 130 attendees, this webinar was an opportunity to disseminate the proposed actions, and collectively debate their prioritisation.



## Alumni

The CHL alumni community has more than 350 members sharing connections, news and updates across three LinkedIn groups (in both English and French), fostering networking, professional development opportunities and ongoing engagement with the Centre.



**161** Centre for Humanitarian Leadership Alumni

**49** Crisis Leadership Program Alumni

**150** Les Leaders Humanitaires: les diplômé.e.s du DESLH et PLC



MAR

Around 70 delegates gather in Dakar, Senegal, for the first francophone Humanitarian Leadership Conference. Guest speakers from a range of local, regional and international organisations share their experiences, perspectives and recommendations to tackle the challenges of localisation in West and Central Africa.

CHL's Dr Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings joins the Humanitarian Leadership Academy's (HLA) Ka Man Parkinson and Esther Grieder to discuss humanitarian education on the HLA podcast: Navigating Humanitarian Training Pathways in 2023.

APR

The 2023 Humanitarian Leadership Conference is held with 350 delegates from over 65 countries convening both online and in-person. The program features 156 speakers from 37 countries, with sessions held in English and French, and discussions examine why the humanitarian and disaster response system is 'stuck' and explore ambitious and pragmatic ways to reinvigorate change.

CHL Acting Deputy Director, Rachel Routley, speaks to SBS World News about the drought affecting millions of people in the Horn of Africa.

JUL

Following the Humanitarian Leadership Conference in Dakar in March, the CHL hosts a webinar on the implementation of the Localisation Charter, as part of our commitment to work towards a more localised and inclusive humanitarian system in Central and West Africa. Speakers from local and international NGOs from across the region discuss four themes underpinning the charter and outline practical next steps to consolidate the humanitarian leadership of local actors, with 127 participants online.

SEP

CHL Director Mary Ana McGlasson appears on ABC Radio's [current affairs show, PM](#), to discuss why Morocco has been reluctant to accept offers of humanitarian aid from some countries, after the devastating earthquake in the Atlas Mountains that killed thousands of people.

NOV

CHL and Deakin present a Humanitarianism and Development showcase highlighting the latest research and education offerings spanning international and community development, and the humanitarian and crisis response sectors. The event was an opportunity to launch Deakin's new Master of Humanitarianism and Development and the *Humanitarian Leader/Leader Humanitaire Annual Edition*. 35 guests heard from Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Matthew Clarke, and a panel discussion featuring Deakin Alumna Annalise Ingram, Plan International Australia's Tukatara Tangi and Dr Charles Mphande from Victoria University (See photo above).

CHL PhD student Kathryn Harries features on RedR Australia's [Humanitarian Conversations podcast](#) to discuss her work as a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) engineer and humanitarian leader.

# DIALOGUE: Partnerships and engagement

## Online engagement

Channel	2022	2023
 <b>Website</b> -8% change	<b>65,155</b> users	<b>59,685</b> users
 <b>LinkedIn</b> 22%+ change	<b>24,523</b> followers	<b>30,120</b> followers
 <b>Facebook</b> -0.1% change	<b>45,040</b> followers	<b>44,953</b> followers
 <b>Twitter/X</b> 13%+ change	<b>3,163</b> followers	<b>3,586</b> followers
 <b>YouTube</b> 31%+ change	<b>619</b> subscribers	<b>826</b> subscribers
 <b>Email list</b> 12%+ change	<b>6,208</b> subscribers	<b>7,001</b> subscribers

# 2023 Challenges

This year's significant growth has stretched the Centre's staffing resources in every direction as the organisation experienced rapid expansion following a period of consolidation. This growth tested new operational systems, offering numerous lessons for continuous improvement. The Australian higher education sector faced continued pressures, placing strain on university budgets for yet another year. The anticipation of international student numbers returning to pre-pandemic levels added further stress to the financial landscape, exacerbating existing challenges within the system.

Fortunately, student numbers for the DLESH have resisted this trend, and we have recorded our highest ever student numbers for this course for the third year in a row, while the Centre's efforts to diversify our offerings has allowed us to move from strength to strength as one of the global leaders in humanitarian leadership development.





## Financial statements

Project	2023 Opening Balance	2023 Income	2023 Expenses	2023 Closing Balance
Humanitarian Leadership Training Program (UNFPA)	\$ 38,769.63	\$ 43,286.05	\$ 82,055.68	-
Humanitarian Leadership Training Program (Mercy Corps)	-	\$ 74,250.38	\$ 39,459.91	\$ 34,790.47
Humanitarian Leadership Training Program Curriculum Development (ODI)	-	\$ 120,186.34	\$ 22,528.97	\$ 97,657.37
Crisis Leadership Program Ukraine Response (Save the Children Australia)	-	\$ 130,000.00	-	\$ 130,000.00
Crisis Leadership Program Ukraine Response (Centre for Disaster Philanthropy)	\$ 1,124,830.00	-	\$ 548,228.39	\$ 576,601.61
Changing the way the world responds to humanitarian crises (USAID)	-	\$ 1,399,308.59	\$ 1,399,308.59	-
Diverse Leadership in Crises (USAID)	-	\$ 175,890.92	\$ 175,890.92	-
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ 1,163,599.63	\$ 1,942,922.28	\$ 2,267,472.46	\$ 839,049.45

As founding partners of the Centre, Deakin University and Save the Children Australia support employment costs for CHL's core staff by sharing financial risks related to human resources as well as covering salary gaps that arise. In 2023, CHL successfully recovered 61% of these employment costs from its projects, and our partners contributed \$380,991 to cover the remaining 39%.

## Our people

The Centre Executive Committee (CEC) directs the operations and strategic activities undertaken by the Centre. Meeting monthly, the CEC makes decisions on strategic and financial matters, reviews and monitors financial reports and accounts, monitors compliance of obligations to third-party funding bodies and third-party collaborators and establishes and reviews key performance indicators for the Centre. In 2023, the Centre welcomed Balwant Singh, Adelina Kamal, Melanie Book, Professor Simon Tormey, David Sims, Thea Hilhorst and Matthew Clarke as new members, while Archie Law, Peter Walton, and Andrew Hope stepped down. We thank them for their service.

### Centre Executive Committee

**Chair and Voting member,** Mr Mat Tinkler, CEO, Save the Children Australia

**Voting member,** Professor Simon Tormey, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University

**Voting member,** Mr Archie Law, International Programs Director, Save the Children Australia (until mid-2023)

**Voting member,** Ms Melanie Book, Head of Humanitarian, Save the Children Australia

**Voting member,** Professor Andrew Hope, Head of School, Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University

**Voting member,** Ms Anthea Spinks, Program Director, Oxfam

**Voting member,** Mr Peter Walton, CEO, CARE Australia (until mid-2023)

**Voting member,** Mr Mamadou Diop, Regional Representative (West Africa) - Action Contre la Faim (ACF - Action Against Hunger)

**Voting member,** Balwant Singh, International development and Humanitarian Adviser, facilitator and mentor

**Voting member,** Adelina Kamal, Independent analyst and strategist on international policy development

**Voting member,** David Sims, Director - International Programs and Operations, CARE Australia

**Voting member,** Professor Thea Hilhorst, Professor of Humanitarian Studies, ISS/EUR

**Ex-Officio,** Associate Professor Mary Ana McGlasson, Director, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership

**Ex-Officio,** Mr Josh Hallwright, Deputy Director, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership

**Ex-Officio,** Mr Ashfaq Ali Yacoob Ali, Projects and Grants Manager, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership

**Secretary,** Ms Ursula de Almeida, Operations Coordinator, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership



### Centre for Humanitarian Leadership staff and contributors

Over the course of 2023, the Centre was delighted to welcome a swathe of new staff members to the team, including Rachel Routley, Phoebe Downing, Ash Ali, Perla Escalon, Petra Helal and Ursula De Almeida. We waved a sad farewell to Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings, Bethea Robinson, Judy Robinet, Manika Saha, Nader Jan and Jennifer Mendes.

#### Mary Ana McGlasson

Director

#### Joshua Hallwright

Deputy Director / Acting Director  
(January 2023 - July 2023)

#### Rachel Routley

Programs Director / Deputy  
Director (January 2023 - July  
2023)

#### Operations

##### Jennifer Mendes

Operations Coordinator

##### Ursula De Almeida

Operations Coordinator

#### Education

##### Cai Wilkinson

Associate Professor

##### Justine de Rouck

Course Director, Lecturer,  
Humanitarian studies

#### Perla Escalon

Francophone Programs

Coordinator

#### Camille Lemouchoux

Coaching Lead, Diplôme  
d'Études Supérieures en  
Leadership Humanitaire

#### Daniel McAvoy

Course Director, Masters of  
Humanitarian Assistance

#### Lauren Harris

Strategic Projects Advisor

#### Petra Helal

Crisis Leadership Program  
Coordinator

#### Michael Barrett

DELSH Communications  
Consultant

#### Sonia Brockington

Crisis Leadership Program

#### Judy Robinet

Liaison Officer

#### Research

##### Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings

Associate Director, Research

##### Phoebe Downing

Research Fellow

##### Manika Saha

Research Fellow, Monitoring,  
Evaluation, Research

#### Partnerships and engagement

##### Bethea Robertson

Programs and Grants Manager

##### Ashfaq (Ash) Ali

Project and Grants Manager

##### Jess Plummer

Senior Communications Advisor

##### Nader Jan

Projects and Grants Coordinator

##### Cara Schultz

Publications Editor

#### CHL Associates

Deb Barry

Myriam Baral-Baron

Florence Binh

Dominic Bowen

Paula Brennan

Kiu Coates

Diana De León

Delphine Durand

Sophie Escahier

Esmerelda Garcia Estevez

Jo Goldsmith

Mark Gossage

Joanna Kucharczyk-Jurgielewicz

Themrise Khan

Brigitte Louison

Caitlin MacDonald

Daria Musiienko

Nick Outlaw

Gaby Schembri

Crissy Tatiana Angel

Aurelie Webster

\*Associates who worked less  
than 20 days for CHL in 2023 are  
not listed by name, but we thank  
them for their contribution to  
our work.

#### Research Affiliates (Deakin University)

##### Dr Marian Abouzeid

Senior Research Fellow, Alfred  
Deakin Institute

##### Professor Matthew Clarke

##### Deputy Vice-Chancellor

##### Research and Innovation

Pro-Vice Chancellor Researcher  
Development

##### Dr Tina Daniel

Researcher, School of Education,

##### Dr Zouhir Gabsi

Senior Lecturer, Arabic and  
Islamic Studies

##### A/Prof Radhika Gorur

Associate Professor, Curriculum  
and Pedagogy, School of  
Education

#### Ms. Hedyeh Gamini Esfahani

PhD Candidate, School  
of Architecture and Built  
Environment

#### Dr Joseph Kamara

Honorary Fellow, School of  
Humanities and Social Studies,

#### Dr Leanne Kelly

Postdoctoral Research Fellow,  
Alfred Deakin Institute

#### A/Prof Max Kelly

Associate Professor,  
International and Community  
Development, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### EmPr Sue Kenny

Emeritus Professor, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### Ms Kirstin Kreyscher

PhD Candidate, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### Mr Prahlad Lamichhane

PhD Candidate, School of Life  
and Environmental Sciences,

#### Dr Fiona McKay

Senior Lecturer, School of Health  
and Social Development

#### Dr Tebeje Molla

DECRA Fellow, School of  
Education

#### Dr Andrea North-Samardzic

Senior Lecturer, Deakin Business  
School

#### Prof Yin Paradies

Alfred Deakin Professor and  
Chair in Race Relations, School  
of Humanities and Social  
Sciences

#### Ms Emma Pearce

PhD Candidate, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### Dr Alfred Presbitero

Senior Lecturer, Management,  
Deakin Business School

#### Dr Melisa Rangitakatu

PhD Candidate, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### Ms Adriana Stibral

PhD Candidate, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### Mr Safiullah Taye

PhD Candidate, Alfred Deakin  
Institute

#### Dr David Tittensor

Honorary Fellow, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences

#### A/Prof Anthony Ware

Associate Professor of  
International and Community  
Development, School of  
Humanities and Social Sciences,

#### Dr Vicki-Ann Ware

Senior Lecturer, International  
and Community Development





# Partners

**Collaboration is integral to the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.**

Partnership was fundamental to our founding and continues to influence our ongoing mission to transform the humanitarian system.

Thank you to our partners in 2023.





**CENTRE FOR  
HUMANITARIAN  
LEADERSHIP**

PUBLISHED BY  
The Centre for Humanitarian Leadership  
Deakin University  
2024

[info@cfhl.org.au](mailto:info@cfhl.org.au)  
[centreforhumanitarianleadership.org](http://centreforhumanitarianleadership.org)  
[centreforhumanitarianleadership.org/fr](http://centreforhumanitarianleadership.org/fr)