

2026

# People-centred programming:

## Tools and strategies for inclusive humanitarian action



### Credits

3 ECTS



### Dates

16 February – 20 March 2026



### Format

Online (combination of self-study and live sessions). Live sessions are scheduled once a week. All live sessions are in group and mandatory – Usually in early afternoon CEST.

*Online course requires app. 15 hours of dedicated work per week. We recommend that participants allow at least 25% of their time for the course and adapt their professional activity accordingly and with flexibility on working hours.*



### Language

English



### Fees

- **Full price:** CHF 1'700
- **Partner rate (MSF, ICRC, UNICEF, IOM):** CHF 1'360 (20% discount)
- **Special Rate for Government and NGO/CBO Staff:** CHF 850. Available exclusively to staff from local and national NGOs, CBOs, and government employees in low/middle-income countries. Proof of local employment and salary required.



### Lecturer

Dr Erna Burai – [erna.burai@unige.ch](mailto:erna.burai@unige.ch)



### Short description

How can organisations move beyond token participation to genuine co-creation and shared leadership? This executive course explores people-centred approaches as a foundation for inclusive and sustainable action across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding contexts. Participants will learn the principles and practices of people-centred programming to include affected communities at every step of the programme cycle. The course combines practical tools and soft skills with critical reflection on the ethics and politics of participation, inclusion, and care. These include identifying and working with local power structures, designing participatory mechanisms, and supporting community-led initiatives (including marginalised groups with specific needs).

This is a 5-week online course that can be taken as a stand-alone or as part of the Certificate of Advanced Studies in Accountability to Affected People (CAS AAP).

## Learning outcomes of the course

**At the end of the course, participants will be able to:**

- Explain the principles and ethics of people-centred approaches and their relevance across sectors
- Identify barriers and enablers of meaningful participation, particularly for marginalised or underrepresented groups
- Apply participatory methods and facilitation tools to co-design projects with communities, rather than for them
- Analyse decision-making mechanisms and intersectional dynamics in programme design and implementation
- Develop an inclusion strategy or participatory framework adapted to their organisation or context

## Workload

**Around 75 hours of work overall, including:**

1. Synchronous live sessions (once per week)
2. Asynchronous self-study activities (individual or group work activities such as readings, interviews, podcasts, videos, in-class presentations, self-tests, case studies and simulation exercises, reflexive analysis, forum discussions etc.)

## Structure of the course

- **Week 1:** The ethics and practice of people-centered approaches (rationale and methods)
- **Week 2:** Mapping communities and power relations (community structures, networks, and influencers)
- **Week 3:** Inclusive design and intersectionality (engagement with diverse groups and their needs)
- **Week 4:** Localisation and shifting power (obstacles, partnerships, co-leadership)
- **Week 5:** Supporting survivor and community-led initiatives (strategies and projects)

## Audience

- Professionals in the humanitarian, development or social sector looking to improve the provision of humanitarian assistance through people-centred approaches
- Professionals from any other sectors (donors, policy-makers, civil servants, culture and arts) who wish to understand mechanisms for more inclusive participation

## Admission requirements

1. A university qualification (Bachelor's degree or equivalent)
2. At least three years of relevant professional experience
3. Excellent command of English



**Application deadline and registration:**