

HHR 2019  
CONFERENCE REPORT

# Building Trust in People, in Organisations and in the Sector

2-4 October | Antwerp, Belgium



Join the conversation #HHR2019



**CHS Alliance**  
MAKING AID WORK BETTER FOR PEOPLE

# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

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# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## > Tweets of the conference #HHR2019



**Val Flynn**  
@flynn\_vall

Placing Human Resources at the heart of strategic challenges to allow #AidSector organisations/workers to thrive and be committed #Cigna @CHS\_Alliance @dutyofcareint @CSDworldwide #HHR2019 Antwerp



**Ishbel McWha-Hermann**  
@IshbelMcWha

A great pleasure to speak on fair reward in international NGOs at the Humanitarian HR conference in Antwerp today! #HHR2019



**Institut Bioforce**  
@Bioforce\_edu

Excited to be part of #HHR2019! "How can affected populations trust aid workers to be professional?" Help our L&D Director answer this question tomorrow at 1.30pm & get a chance to learn more about #SoHP2020, our ongoing study on humanitarian professions



**Chris Hoffman**  
@CMHDRM

Another great day at #HHR2019 in #Antwerp. I have been surprised and challenged by the discussions on #dutyofcare and #reward structures for #NGOs. A bunch of work to do, but the willingness and drive is there. Tomorrow our session on #contemplativeres...



**Kathryn Gordon**  
@KGHRDVSO

Building trust in People, in Organisations and in the sector @CHS\_Alliance @humentum\_org @Cigna - excited to be in Antwerp #HHR2019 discussing making aid work better for the people we serve and the people who serve them



**Em Lacroix**  
@lacroixem

#HHR2019 nuggets of #wisdom about #trust and being #trustworthy from @tinev - « dropping the judgment » is so key at all levels and this is where #trust can start and grow, within us and between each other



**Frances Longley**  
@frances\_longley

On my way to Antwerp to give the closing keynote at the @CHS\_Alliance Humanitarian HR Conference. I'll be opening the conversation by talking about #trust, betrayal and how everyone can take a lead on building a trustworthy #culture. Looking forward to the discussion. #HHR2019



**Tim Boyes-Watson**  
@tim4mango

Feeling the buzz at #HHR2019 thanks @CHS\_Alliance @humentum\_org @Cigna

## > Introduction

This report is designed to summarise the HHR 2019 conference and outline what happened throughout the event.

## > Conference theme and objectives

Today, many aid organisations recognise the importance of accountability to affected populations, to staff and to donors. Yet in practice this is not always easy to achieve.

*“How can we, as humanitarian HR professionals, be at the forefront of driving positive culture change within our organisation?”*

This question was at the heart of this year’s HHR and the conference focused on building trust in people, in organisations and in the sector.

### **Together we looked at:**

- Understanding the concept, principles and benefits of “High Trust” workplaces for the humanitarian aid sector;
- Sharing case studies and lessons on how organisations build and repair trust levels;
- Discovering the role that leaders and HR should play in the creation of open, transparent, honest and dialogue-centred cultures;
- Exploring the incorporation of Code of Conduct and other people management policies as a way to sustain trust;
- Developing actions to build team awareness and alignment around the value of trust.

### **The conference was designed so that participants would be able to:**

- Understand and use good people management practices as foundational elements of their organisation;
- Define key steps that HR professionals and leaders can take for re-wiring their organisations to build accountability and trust.

## > Conference speakers

- **Christine Williamson**, Director of Duty of Care International
- **Faye Ekong**, Managing director and co-founder of RavelWorks Africa
- **Frances Longley**, Executive Director for Programmes and Policy, CARE
- **Gozel Baltaeva**, People Management Adviser, CHS Alliance
- **Rosa Argent**, Head of Communications and Membership, CHS Alliance
- **Tanya Wood**, Executive Director, CHS Alliance
- **Tim Boyes-Watson**, Global Director for Alliances and Advocacy, Humentum

# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## > Day 1 - Welcome to Humanitarian HR conference 2019

### OPENING REMARKS

A total of 75 people participated to HHR2019 Conference in Antwerp, Belgium, including 35 participants representing CHS Alliance members organisations.

Participants were welcomed by Tanya Wood and Tim Boyes-Watson, who shared their perspectives on the conference theme and invited participants to reflect on their personal experiences, share their challenges, as well as expectations for the conference.

After introducing the CHS Alliance and giving a short history of HHR Conferences, both Tanya and Tim highlighted the importance and relevance of the theme for HR professionals and the humanitarian sector.

### KEYNOTE BY CHRISTINE WILLIAMSON



Christine's keynote focused on "Interpreting Trust". Drawing on her experience as a Humanitarian HR and senior HR professional, she provided insights and inspiration for interpreting trust from a personal perspective and why it mattered in HR roles.

According to Christine, trusting someone means that you think they are Reliable. You have confidence in them, and you feel safe with them physically and emotionally. Trust is something that two people in a relationship can build together when they decide to trust each other. As a result, trust is fundamental to sustainable and effective relationships. She cited David Grossman, saying building trust is ultimately about "*Aligning your words with your actions*".

### KEYNOTE BY FAYE EKONG



Faye's keynote addressed the importance of trust and civility at the workplace and looked at 10 criteria for building trust in diverse teams. During her keynote, participants learnt about the benefits of high trust teams and work environments and the signs of low trust environments that need to be watched for.

Faye outlined concrete criteria that help build trust in diverse teams: **swift trust** criteria that could be easily and quickly established and **deep trust** criteria that take more time to create. According to Faye, one thing for us to acknowledge is that trust can always be improved and worked on. Using these criteria as an assessment tool could be a good starting point to prioritise areas that need to be strengthened.

## > Facts and figures - did you know?

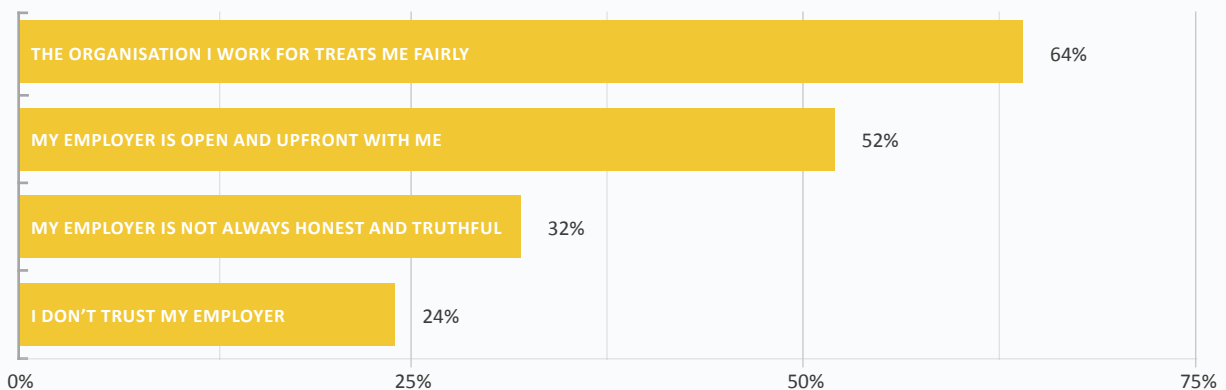


A Recently published discussion paper on **Engaging with People Affected by Armed Conflicts and Other Situations of Violence: Recommendations for Humanitarian Organizations and Donors in the Digital Era** found that **Trust is central to Engagement** and cuts across all programmes.

## TRUST IN THE WORKPLACE



Source: [APA Center for Organisational Excellence](#)



## HOW MIGHT TRUST IMPACT TEAM PERFORMANCE?



Source: [Science For Work](#)



## INGREDIENTS FOR FOSTERING TRUST IN A WORKPLACE

Source: [Level Up Leadership](#)



# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## > Day 2 - Sharing and learning from experiences

Aiming to make the conference more interactive and engaging, the second day of the conference was dedicated to sharing and learning from participants' experiences in 12 workshops, all linked to the overall HHR2019 theme.



### SUMMARY OF EACH SESSION

#### Staying trustworthy

Christine Williamson  
Hannah Scott



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Key times at which trust is kept and lost
- Triggers that make us feel unsafe, physically and emotionally
- How HR is uniquely placed to enhance the value of Human Capital

#### ACTION POINTS

- Dare” to say no to your management
- Take time to understand and analyse the situation
- Experiment with staff surveys to assess trust levels

#### Trust at the core: the role of operations staff in building trust

Tim Boyes-Watson



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Be explicit about boundaries and norms
- Skills are needed to enable critical conversations
- Make people more aware of the value of things that are not measurable in economic terms: relationships, flowers, compliments...

#### ACTION POINTS

- Experiment with communication
- Make people feel safe to speak
- Online practice sharing – the CHS Alliance will relaunch its People Management Community of Practice to keep the conversation going

## SUMMARY OF EACH SESSION

### Are we listening? Exploring the power of transparent conversations

Cameron Hall



#### TAKEAWAYS

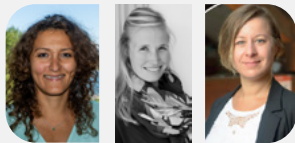
- Engage team members in different topics and be brave and open yourself
- Have regular engagement surveys
- Focus on your team member, work on this relationship and their experiences

#### ACTION POINTS

- More resources for managers to have different conversations
- We need information to be available and shareable

### Code of Conduct: paper in the drawer, or a living document to increase trust?

Gozel Baltaeva  
Vanessa De Malmazet  
Estelle Robert  
Caroline Paoli



#### TAKEAWAYS

- A clear purpose is key before reviewing a Code of Conduct (CoC)
- Involving staff and those we serve is crucial to success during a review
- Management commitment is key for a successful review

#### ACTION POINTS

- Invest more in monitoring and accountability phases
- Open the dialogue now by using surveys, discussion groups, etc... (Humanitalents can share their recommendations)
- CoC needs to be on leadership agenda

### Building trust through fair reward

Shana O'Brien  
Ishbel McWha



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Have a clear strategy underpinning how you pay staff
- Be pragmatic, flexible and consistent at the same time
- Importance of transparency and communication about pay when building trust

#### ACTION POINTS

- Use the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) to design benchmarking guidelines for humanitarian sector?
- Connect with Principles and Standards of Fair INGO Reward and see if it is applicable to your organisation

### Building a conscious culture of trust and trustworthiness

Smruti Patel



#### TAKEAWAYS

- You can be the spark
- Honest conversations
- Tune it and get it out

#### ACTION POINTS

- Focus on the positive
- Be the change you expect
- Organisations need soul



# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## SUMMARY OF EACH SESSION

### Building trust through better integration of HR and Security Risk Management

Lisa Reilly



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Important that there is collaboration between HR and Security in every HR process
- Agree on 'safe'-information sharing between SRM and HR
- Work out the terms of engagement for staff and consultants

#### ACTION POINTS

- HR & Security to reach out to each other - initiate dialogue
- Carry on conversations facilitated by EISF / CHS Alliance
- Refer to 13 security tips (EISF) of employee cycle

### Let's start with ourselves: building trust through caring and compassion

Mary Ann Clements

Melissa Pittoti



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Important to share vulnerabilities
- Need to manage boundaries
- Awareness is a first step

#### ACTION POINTS

- Create peer support groups
- CHS Alliance members to focus on staff wellbeing
- Accept imperfection



## SUMMARY OF EACH SESSION

### Trust: in the search of the holy grail

Guillermo Rogel



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Curiosity is key
- The power of conversation is with the listener
- Think about what's at play and the intended impact
- May need a shift of perspective, drop the judgement, an openness (put yourself in the other person's shoes)

#### ACTION POINTS

- Commit to have at least one conversation when back home using the demonstrated method
- Be thoughtful /sufficiently prepared for live/active conversation by anticipating various scenarios, don't assume it will be easy
- Take a pause if you become ungrounded

### Communities, Corporate social network – A tool for enhancing Trust

Florence Sarret



#### TAKEAWAYS

- The community mindset is the one for trust, that creates goodwill, empathy, humility and helps grow respect
- Authenticity is compulsory
- Communities that don't matter, don't exist

#### ACTION POINTS

- Pick different tools for different work activities
- Use the topic that is at the heart of the organisation to launch the community
- Evaluate the readiness of organisation to embrace communities and corporate social media

### Improved Individual Self-Management

Hitendra Solanki



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Mindfulness helps create a sense of "we"
- It starts with us at individual level
- It is a long lasting sustainable approach linked to long term vision and common goals. Not a tick box, mindfulness is an investment

#### ACTION POINTS

- Go into governance – your board needs to understand the importance of wellbeing (mindfulness is an element of wellbeing)
- Leadership training is a way in

### How can affected populations trust aid workers to be professional in an unprofessional sector?

Rory Downham



#### TAKEAWAYS

- Distinctive KSB (knowledge, skills and behaviours) for humanitarian professions
- Hope for career development and transition

#### ACTION POINTS

- Develop a framework for KSB and share them with the community
- Report, plan and attend the SOHP (State of Humanitarian Professions) Conference

# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## > Day 3 - Workshop learning and conclusions

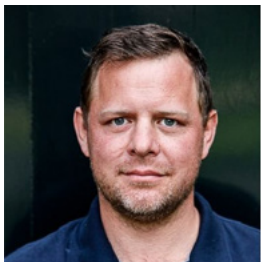
Day 3 started with a campfire session. Three speakers presented their idea, concept, good practice or a success story to participants, followed by a working groups feedback session and a closing keynote.

### CAMPFIRE SESSION

Similar to lightning talks, every campfire presenter had 10 minutes to make their presentation and 5 minutes for comments, insights and question from the audience. The speakers and their presentations are summarised below:



**Magnus Bucht**, Chief Executive Officer of Impact Pool, shared how Impact Pool have successfully supported UNHCR staff redundancy and relocation process. By ensuring every affected employee got the best possible (and equal) support to handle the process, they helped UNHCR to manage change effectively. The objective of this presentation was to show how a usually painful process of reorganisation or downsizing can create a powerful lasting benefit if handled professionally.



**Chris Hoffman**, Managing Director of Garrison Institute International, presented the idea that to serve well, one needs to be well. Chris outlined contemplative-based approaches which, when applied, enhance the resilience of humanitarian staff. These approaches can also support the creation of compassionate organisational cultures. His presentation aimed to show how enhancing **awareness, balance and connection** amongst humanitarian staff can have a remarkable impact, not only on their personal resilience, but also on the wider organisational culture and environment.

**Alex Farrington**, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives and **Don Present**, Learning Consultant, from Humanitarian Leadership Academy used the campfire session to introduce HPass: a new platform dedicated to improving transparency and consistency in humanitarian learning and professional development. HPass is a collaborative initiative led by eight organisations with expertise in humanitarian learning. The initiative offers Digital badging and HPass Quality standards as key services.

You will find relevant links and resources at the end of the report to learn more about these projects.



## WAY FORWARD AND ACTION PLANNING

After the campfire session, participants were invited to reflect in groups on what they had learned at HHR2019 and suggest some tangible actions to follow up. This feedback was extremely helpful for the CHS Alliance to gauge the value of HHR conferences, to plan future events, and to shape the CHS Alliance's People Management work for coming years.

It was interesting to see that most suggestions and pieces of feedback were very similar between the different working groups.

A summary of these discussions is listed below:

Topic	Feedback
<p><b>Value of HHR2019</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking and collaboration</li> <li>• Sharing challenges and problems, but also solutions and resources</li> <li>• Understanding trends in the sector</li> <li>• Learning from each other and other sectors</li> <li>• Idea taking for future actions</li> <li>• Exchange of best practice, innovations and new concepts</li> <li>• Wide range of topics</li> <li>• Workshops with case studies and specific challenges to work on together</li> <li>• Change accelerator</li> <li>• Diversity of big and small organisations</li> <li>• Safe place for HR experts</li> <li>• Support cross-sector initiatives (security, SOHP, etc..)</li> <li>• Possibility to broaden perspectives and develop methodologies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggestions and recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regular face-to-face HHR conferences and rotate the location</li> <li>• A follow up (online) community to co-create and exchange on different HR topics (equity in benefits, well-being, duty of care, localisation, good and harmful practices)</li> <li>• Organise more trainings / workshops / webinars</li> <li>• Collectively address "hot" topics</li> <li>• Contextualisation – topics common to all</li> <li>• More time for debates</li> <li>• Articulate a coherent strategy</li> <li>• Invite external actors (private sector) to challenge and provoke debate</li> <li>• Increase diversity (region, context)</li> <li>• Develop national HR capacity</li> <li>• Pick-up NGO staff well-being platform</li> <li>• Mapping of HR events and networks</li> <li>• Connect to other CHS Alliance commitments where relevant</li> <li>• Consider individual CHS Alliance membership to get access to exclusive resources</li> <li>• Mentoring scheme across organisations</li> <li>• Share participant lists in advance as part of the conference pack</li> </ul>

# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## CLOSING KEYNOTE BY FRANCES LONGLEY



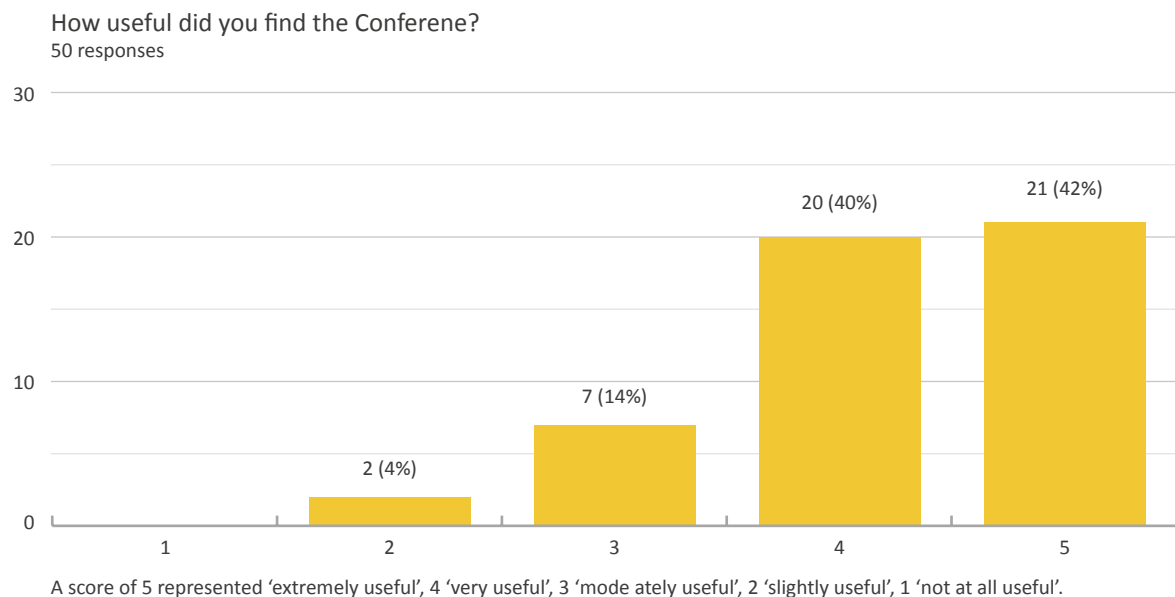
In her keynote, Frances shared her views on how to build back trust in our organisations and work in a post-truth era of fake news and political mistruths. She presented her reflections on the importance of trust in current unsettling times, and the role everyone can play as a leader and HR specialist. Capitalising on her experience as a CEO and senior leader, and building on work she led as Co-Chair of the UK NGO sector's working group on Leadership and Culture in Safeguarding, Frances explored the role of culture, behaviour and role models in building trust.

### > Impact: did the conference deliver?

**YES!**

Attendees who responded to the online survey gave the conference extremely high marks.

More than 82% of the respondents to a post-HHR conference survey said they found the conference very or extremely useful and considered the event to be value for money



Most respondents said that HHR2019 gave them valuable insight into the sector and provided them with information they would not have got elsewhere. New connections was the number one reason participants valued attending the conference, and in many written comments attendees asked for continuous networking activities.

## > Behind the scenes at HHR2019

### HHR2019 STEERING GROUP

- **Christine Williamson**, Director, Duty of Care International, UK
- **Emmanuelle Lacroix**, Partnership Development Manager for Europe the Middle East and Africa for Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation
- **Flora Blythe**, HR Business Partner, Global Humanitarian Team, Oxfam, UK
- **Hannah Scott**, Senior HR Adviser, Global Humanitarian Team, Oxfam, UK
- **Katie Barnett**, International HR Manager, British Red Cross, UK
- **Lena Bheeroo**, Events and Programmes Manager, Bond, UK
- **Meritxell Seuba**, People and Culture Global Team, Educo, Spain
- **Rory Downham**, Director of Learning of Development, Bioforce Institute, France
- **Tim Boyes-Watson**, Global Director, Alliances & Advocacy, Humentum

We want to take this opportunity to send out a huge thanks to the HHR 2019 Steering Group, for taking time out of their busy schedules to help us plan, organise and oversee this year's event. Their work and energy made a difference and we could not do the HHR2019 without them. *(If you would like to get involved in HHR2020 Steering Group, please contact us at [hhr@chsalliance.org](mailto:hhr@chsalliance.org))*

A special vote of thanks goes to HHR2019 keynotes, session facilitators and speakers for their enlightening and entertaining presentations, for sharing their interesting journeys and useful recommendations.

We also owe much gratitude to our sponsor CIGNA for suggesting Lindner hotel in Antwerp as the venue for the HHR 2019 and for organising fabulous networking activities for each evening of the conference.

Last but not least, a big thank you to each participant for your active participation and inputs, for bringing your expertise and the know-how around the table. Your presence helped to make this year's HHR conference a great success and your enthusiasm and positive spirit allowed to make our time together both productive and fun. We wish you all the best and hope that you continue to be engaged with the HHR and the CHS Alliance. Stay tuned for upcoming events by visiting [www.chsalliance.org](http://www.chsalliance.org)



# HHR 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

## CONFERENCE RESOURCES

- HHR2019 [Conference Programme](#)
- Building Trust through Fair Reward -> [www.project-fair.org](http://www.project-fair.org)
- Join and follow the [SOHP](#) (State of Humanitarian Professions) project led by Bioforce
- Discover and experiment the power of surveys with [Humanitalents](#)
- Interpreting Trust with [Duty of Care International](#)
- Building trust and civility in the workplace by [RavelWorks](#) Africa
- Building a conscious culture of trust and trustworthiness -> [www.beingatfullpotential.com](http://www.beingatfullpotential.com)
- Building Trust through better Integration of Security Risk Management and HR -> [eisf.eu](http://eisf.eu)
- For more information on Humanitarian Pass, please visit [www.hpass.org](http://www.hpass.org)

## AND SOME MORE

- CHS Alliance [post-HHR2019 article](#)
- CIGNA's link to [stress test](#) and [HHR2019 Cigna pictures](#)
- The CHS Alliance [Duty of Care page](#)
- Read more about mindfulness and wellbeing from Hitendra Solanki [here](#)
- Video in French with English sub-titles on role modelling and security management [here](#)
- Cultivating compassion on World Mental Health Day [article](#)

