

Introduction

NOHA Intensive Programme (IP) 2002 – Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, RUG (The Netherlands) /© NOHA/ The Joint European Master's in International Humanitarian Action is an inter-university, multidisciplinary postgraduate programme that provides high quality academic education and professional competencies for personnel working or intending to work in the area of humanitarian action. This European Master's Degree was created in 1993 as result of concerted efforts on the part of the Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA) Universities, working in close collaboration with two Directorates-General of the European Commission: DG for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and DG for Education and Culture. The initiative was a response to a growing need for higher educational qualifications specifically suited to addressing complex humanitarian emergencies. In September 2004, the European Commission awarded the NOHA Master's the status of an Erasmus Mundus Programme. The latter is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that promotes the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world. It provides EU-funded scholarships for a limited number of outstanding third-country nationals participating in Erasmus Mundus Master's Courses. In 2005, NOHA was awarded by the European Commission Erasmus Mundus Partnerships Programme in order to establish and develop a framework for cooperation and student and scholar mobility between the NOHA institutions and the following partner universities: Monash University (Australia), Universidade de Brasilia (Brazil), York University (Canada); Universidad Javeriana (Colombia), Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia), Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (Lebanon), University of the Western Cape (South Africa), and Columbia University (United States). In addition to collaboration and support from the European Union, the NOHA Programme enjoys the backing of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), and other actors of the humanitarian action community with whom the Network has strong collaborative links. More than a decade of experience has proved the NOHA commitment and capacity to educate and train highly committed, interdisciplinary persons who can act at all levels of humanitarian relief operations and who can function in a variety of ways to enhance the delivery of humanitarian assistance and sustainable actions. Some 1500 NOHA-graduated professionals work in the field of humanitarian relief and international co-operation. They hold various positions of responsibility in all kinds of national and international agencies, institutions, and organisations both in the field and at headquarters all around the world. Such positions include project managers, administrators, researchers, evaluators, consultants, and delegates. In 2003, the NOHA Alumni Association was established with a view to enabling both students on the Master's Course and NOHA-graduated professionals to establish and maintain contact and collaboration with the NOHA family and the rest of the world's humanitarian community.