

Human-Centered Crisis Management (HCCM) For Municipal Leaders Navigating Crisis in Wartime



Introduction: What is Human-Centered Crisis Management?

In a crisis situation, local governments are expected to keep people safe, services running, and some form of order. But city administrators/staff are often working with damaged infrastructure, scared populations, exhausted teams, and very limited resources.

Human-Centered Crisis Management (HCCM) is a practical approach to helping city administrations lead during extreme crisis conditions. It is built for cities operating in complex, high-pressure environments, and is grounded in the realities of limited resources, shifting risks, and the need to maintain public trust and internal coordination during prolonged periods of crisis or disruption.

HCCM training provides tools and capacity to give local teams the structure, strategies, and shared understanding they need to act quickly and effectively under pressure. Training in HCCM principles can strengthen how municipalities plan, decide, coordinate, and most importantly, recover in times of crisis.

How HCCM Works in Practice

Cities in wartime must lead with what they have: people, trust, and local knowledge. When national systems are delayed, or when communications fail, local governments are the first and last line of response.

HCCM focuses on helping municipal administrations coordinating crisis response stay organized and focused even when things are uncertain. It offers step-by-step guidance on how

to make decisions under pressure, how to include community voices, and how to protect staff from burnout. It also shows cities how to document what works so they can improve after each crisis and enable long term improvement. The approach helps keep local governments visible, responsive, and trusted by the people they serve.

These are 2- or 3-day sessions that include practical tools, peer learning, and real-world simulations. It will strengthen work across municipal departments working on crisis- and disaster risk management to build crisis plans, assign roles, set up coordination systems, and practice leadership under stress. Sessions include topics such as:

- Building a simple but effective coordination center
- Mapping local risks and vulnerable communities
- Improving staff communication and decision-making
- Managing fatigue and mental strain on your team

Each module is grounded in experience from other conflict-affected cities, and include exercises that simulate war-disrupted environments and give teams space to test their ideas. Your staff will leave not only with new skills, but with plans, tools, and templates they can use immediately.

Who This Is For—and What You Get

This approach is designed for municipal teams working in difficult and often unstable conditions. That includes:

- Mayors and deputy mayors responsible for citywide leadership
- Crisis managers and department heads trying to coordinate across departments
- Local government staff who need better tools to respond effectively
- Depending on the training modules also first responders, operators of critical infrastructure and others can be involved

HCCM supports these actors by building a shared understanding of how to manage emergencies under pressure. It helps cities build systems that can adapt and continue functioning under stress. Participating municipalities will leave HCCM training with:

- A realistic crisis playbook tailored to their context
- More clarity on who does what during an emergency
- Stronger collaboration across internal departments and external partners
- Practical tools for identifying needs, mapping risks, and coordinating response
- Improved morale and confidence in the city's leadership team

Why Your City Should Get Involved

HCCM is structured to support the difficult work you're already doing and make it more manageable, more coordinated, and more sustainable.

No matter what the level your city's crisis response mechanisms, HCCM training can further help you to:

- Understand what your current system looks like
- Build what's missing in a way that fits your reality
- Keep your team together and your residents informed
- Recover stronger than before

Even under highly volatile circumstances, HCCM gives your team the tools to stay coordinated, make faster decisions, keep your city functioning, and even prepare to build back better in the recovery phase.