

News Releases

THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY HOSTS FIRST IN-PERSON QUALITY, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ITEMS PROCUREMENT CONFERENCE WITH IOM-UN MIGRATION AGENCY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IIHA, Fordham University, Manhattan, New York

12th Floor Lounge

June 10-11, 2024

THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY HOSTS FIRST IN-PERSON QUALITY, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ITEMS PROCUREMENT CONFERENCE WITH IOM-UN MIGRATION AGENCY

For two days, sixty-five representatives from interagencies, INGOs, and NGOs gathered to share updates on relief items such as tarpaulins, jerry cans, and mosquito nets - all essential shelter items for those displaced by a crisis. These items are not only necessary for survival but need to be sustainable in order to limit waste. In 2021, it was determined that NFI (non-food items) were only distributed to 32% of the 47.8 million people in need, mainly due to underfunding. The QSE Sub Group sets out to find solutions to this ever growing need that is worldwide.

"We are using our research and development capacity to design new products that are more sustainable by having a different approach on the technical specification, trying to use less resources, adjust our product specification to the result, and to extend the durability of the product to achieve better results." - Patrick Oger, head of QSE Sub Group and ICRC Project Manager.

Since its founding in 2010, the QSE Sub Group has expanded to six interagencies: ICRC, IFRC, IOM, MSF, UNHCR, and UNICEF. The reason for coming together originated from a factory visit in China by UNHCR and ICRC.

Mr. Oger recalls the visit, *"we found out that we were doing the same job. And we concluded that this requires more collaboration. So, we started this group as a collaborative approach of the supply chain together, UNHCR and ICRC. Then rapidly we included our colleagues. The ICRC stands for the International Committee of the Red Cross and the IFRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent and UNICEF. After some years, we extended the group to MSF, Doctors Without Borders, and IOM, the International Office for Migration, because they were also doing the same work as us with the same type of product."*

The first-of-its-kind-conference included presentations by representatives from the QSE Sub Group, USAID, and Oxfam with a special introduction by Brendan Cahill, Executive Director of the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) at Fordham University. In December of 2023, Mr. Cahill and Joseph Ashmore, head of QSE Sub Group and Head Preparedness and Response Coordination Support Unit at IOM, met to discuss the possibility of working together on the topic of shelter and hosting a conference this spring. One of the goals of the Sub Group is to involve academia and students, and the IIHA was ultimately selected as an academic partner. Mr. Cahill, expressed the institute's interest in shelter in his opening remarks, *"At the heart of standards is equal dignity. Human dignity. We're talking about human rights. We're talking about protection in all of its forms and that sits at the very center of the Institute's mission."*

Although summer break has kicked off for Fordham University's almost 17,000 students, a group of ten students, alumni, and faculty attended the conference like Lauren Larsen, an International Political Economy and Humanitarian Studies Senior:

"This week, I was privileged to attend "Twenty-five years of Experimentation and Innovation: Quality, Social, and Environmental Concerns in Relief Items Procurement. I learned a tremendous amount about technical specification and harmonization, emerging research and development of new products (like the geodesic tent), sustainability and social considerations to goods manufacturing, benefits and challenges of local purchase, and the importance of quality inspection services. I was grateful for the chance to speak directly with people from various organizations, including those outside of the working group like Catholic Relief Services, USAID, and CARE who have a wealth of experience in the humanitarian sector."

Throughout the two-day conference, the agenda highlighted unified technical specifications, research and development, sustainability, local purchase, and also five breakout sessions for sharing updates and knowledge and brainstorming solutions to common procurement issues.

While the conference has concluded with many takeaways, the work has yet to finish. A report based on the conference presentations and discussions as well as a video with interviews will be disseminated within the next two weeks.



Brendan Cahill, gives opening remarks Monday, June 10, 2024



Lauren Larsen, Connor Larson, and Ruby Schloss are current Fordham students who attended the conference. Mr. Larson served as the note taker for the QSE report.



Stella Rose, International studies and theology student at Fordham University and Intern at the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

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The Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) acts as a bridge between academia and humanitarian practice, hosts lectures and symposia on a regular basis, and regularly participates in and publishes research on today's global humanitarian issues. The IIHA at 2546 Belmont Ave, Bronx, New York also provides space for undergrad and graduate students and gallery showings. [IG](#) | [FB](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [X](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Humanitarian Fault Lines](#) | [Podcast](#) | [Read: A Skein of Thought](#) | [Media Inquiries: S. Lily Egan](#).