

Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs | 2546 Belmont Ave | Bronx, NY, 10458 |
718- 817-5734

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 18, 2025,

BRONX, N.Y. - IIHA ALUMNUS HOSTS WEBINAR ADAPTING FOR IMPACT:
ACHIEVING HUMANITARIAN IMPACT DESPITE POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN
CHALLENGES

A topic all too familiar with humanitarian professionals: humanitarian career transition. The topic was discussed by local New York City experts in the field and moderated by IIHA alumnus Rick Fernandez.

In 2013, Rick Fernandez could not have predicted he'd be hosting a webinar to answer the question: How can career humanitarians recontextualize their skills and experiences in other sectors? Fernandez is an alumnus of the 39th cohort of the international diploma in humanitarian assistance in 2013. In response to the recent reduced funding from donor governments, Rick contacted the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University with a great interest in hosting a webinar for the humanitarian community.

Fernandez asked the audience to "listen with two ears. One, how can you take the information and apply that to your organization's next steps? Two, figure out your own next step as a humanitarian."

Guest panelists included Suzan Rosen, Innovation Program Manager, New York City Emergency Management, Zack Hodgson, Emergency Services Director, The Salvation Army, Greater NY Division; Vice Chair, NYCVOAD, Amanda MacArthur, Head of Strategic Partnerships at Nexleaf Analytics; Social Security Impact Advisor, and Erin L. Pierson, Chief Growth Officer, Cause Strategy Partners.

Fernandez asked the four panelists about transitioning from an international career to a domestic career, personal career pathways, AI, corporate social responsibility, and more. These were some tips each panelist gave:

"Adaptation in the field is a necessary skill. I think our sector now is doing what we have always done with crisis. Doing less with more. Lean into partnerships and take advantage of domestic education opportunities." - Zach Hodgson

“My advice on reaching out and networking: be specific on what you want to talk to new connections about, and don’t be afraid to apply for internships.” - Suzan Rosen

“An important skill to have is turning data into stories. I emphasize monitoring and evaluation. With corporate social responsibility, I suggest thinking creatively and being data-driven. Volunteer with organizations you are interested in or see if you can join their board.” On AI: “In our resource-constrained time, AI is critical” - Erin L. Pierson

“Think about areas (in your work) that would benefit from AI (as a tool).” - Amanda MacArthur

To wrap up, Fernandez and the IIHA team announced upcoming IIHA academic and training programs and offered attendees a Career Cluster Table for Career Transitioning Humanitarians.

Interested in viewing the entire presentation? Get more tips and view the recording [on Panopto](#).

The IIHA regularly hosts online webinars in collaboration with alumni and humanitarian practitioners around the world. Consider joining us for the next one coming soon. Our calendar is updated weekly at iihaglobal.org/events/.

###

The [Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs \(IIHA\)](#) acts as a bridge between Fordham University and humanitarian practice, hosts lectures and symposia on a regular basis, and is the US partner for NOHA, a consortium of 12 European universities offering humanitarian education. The IIHA at 2546 Belmont Ave, Bronx, New York, also provides space for undergrad and graduate students to meet and gallery showings. In addition to our courses, the IIHA publishes on a wide range of humanitarian topics, such as A Skein of Thought. Follow: [IG](#) | [FB](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [X](#)
Subscribe: [Humanitarian Fault Lines Podcast](#) Media Inquiries: [S. Lily Egan](#)