Bioforce and emlyon launch executive program to Strengthen Humanitarian Leadership

As humanitarian crises grow increasingly complex around the world, leadership and management skills are becoming just as critical as technical expertise. To help humanitarian professionals navigate these challenges, emlyon business school and Bioforce, a leading organization in humanitarian training for over 40 years, have partnered to launch the Executive Programme in Humanitarian Leadership & Strategy. The partnership was officially signed on 18 November in the presence of Alain Mérieux, Chairman of Fondation Mérieux, Bernard Sinou, President of Bioforce, and Isabelle Huault, executive President & Dean of emlyon business school

Humanitarian organizations today operate in an increasingly challenging environment shaped by climate-related disasters, geopolitical instability, economic and social pressures, and rapid technological change. At the same time, they face growing demands for accountability, increasing competition for funding, and more limited access to crisis-affected areas.

To meet these challenges, the sector needs leaders who can combine operational expertise with strategic thinking, strong management capabilities and the ability to lead organizations through uncertainty.

To support this, Bioforce and emlyon have developed the **Executive Programme in Humanitarian Leadership & Strategy**, an online program delivered in English comprising more than 100 hours of learning. The first cohort will begin on 26 November.

“We are delighted to partner with Bioforce on this initiative. It reflects the very essence of emlyon’s mission as a purpose-driven institution: educating responsible leaders and managers who can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future,” said **Isabelle Huault, executive President & Dean of emlyon**.

“This partnership builds on Bioforce’s longstanding mission of strengthening the capacity of those working on the front lines of crises. It gives humanitarian professionals the opportunity to step back, sharpen their strategic thinking and strengthen their ability to lead

organisations in highly demanding environments," said **Bernard Sinou, President of Bioforce**.

Equipping Humanitarian Leaders for Complex Environments

Designed for experienced humanitarian managers, the program helps participants strengthen their ability to analyze complex situations, set strategic priorities, mobilize resources and lead teams and organizations in rapidly evolving contexts.

The curriculum is structured around nine modules grouped into three core themes:

- **Understanding complexity and securing humanitarian access**: stakeholder analysis, security management and humanitarian negotiation;
- **Shaping strategy and leading organizations**: strategy, organizational models and leadership;
- **Mobilizing resources and increasing influence**: fundraising, partnerships, networks and advocacy.

Teaching is grounded in real-world humanitarian case studies, peer learning and the direct application of frameworks and tools to participants' professional challenges. Individual assignments and dedicated support help ensure that learning can be immediately applied in the field.

Scholarships for Humanitarian Professionals in the Middle East and North Africa

The first intake will be supported by a scholarship program for humanitarian professionals from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The initiative is funded by **Fondation Mérieux** and **Community Jameel** through the **Bioforce MENA Mérieux Jameel Hub**.

The scholarships aim to broaden access to leadership training for professionals who are directly involved in humanitarian response efforts across the region.

This support builds on a longstanding relationship between Bioforce and the Mérieux family. In 1983, Dr Charles Mérieux founded Bioforce after recognizing, during international vaccination campaigns, the critical role that logistics, organization and management play in the success of humanitarian operations.

"Good intentions alone are not enough. Responding effectively to today's crises requires skills, leadership and the ability to act. As humanitarian challenges become longer-lasting and more complex, we must empower local actors and break down barriers between fields of expertise. This partnership with emlyon is an important step in that direction," said **Alain Mérieux, Chairman of Fondation Mérieux**.

Program information: https://www.bioforce.org/humanitarian-leadership-programme/

Upcoming cohorts

- 26 November 2026 - 22 April 2027
- 23 March - 16 July 2027
- 14 September - 17 December 2027