

*NOHA Graduates
2016-17 Survey Report*

NETWORK ON HUMANITARIAN ACTION
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES



*NOHA Graduates
2016-17 Survey Report*

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Foreword

The NOHA Joint Master's Programme in International Humanitarian Action, currently run by eight out of the twelve member universities, was launched in 1994 and has evolved over time, from an initial 60 ECTS (1 year) programme to 120 ECTS (2 years). More recently, the NOHA Master's integrated a new component in the curriculum, addressing the needs expressed by both the NOHA graduates (2013 survey) and the humanitarian sector at large. It has taken the shape of an additional contextualisation semester, offering both different regional perspectives on humanitarian action delivered by global partner universities and work placements with humanitarian organisations. Both opportunities aim to improve the employability and facilitate the integration of NOHA students within the labour market.

This was not the end of the quest for excellence. In the run up to NOHA's 25th anniversary in 2018, a follow-up survey of the NOHA graduates was conducted in 2016-2017. Its aim was to obtain information from graduates with regards to their learning experience during their studies and their career paths after graduation in order to strengthen both, the NOHA Master's in International Humanitarian Action so that it effectively responds to the evolving needs of the humanitarian sector and the NOHA *esprit de corps*. The survey results will be used to feed into NOHA's future strategies, particularly with regards to NOHA's educational and training initiatives and the development of future activities.

The survey targeted all graduates of the NOHA Master's programme since its inception in 1994, that is, a total estimated population size of 3,500 graduates. Of the estimated population size, 1,401 email addresses were available and working, and an additional 300 graduates were reached via either social media or direct communication from the NOHA member universities. The total actual respondent-population size is therefore estimated at 1,701. A total of 236 valid responses were received between November 2016 and February 2017, representing 13,87 percent of the actual respondent-population size.

This report presents key findings from the NOHA Graduates 2016-2017 Survey.

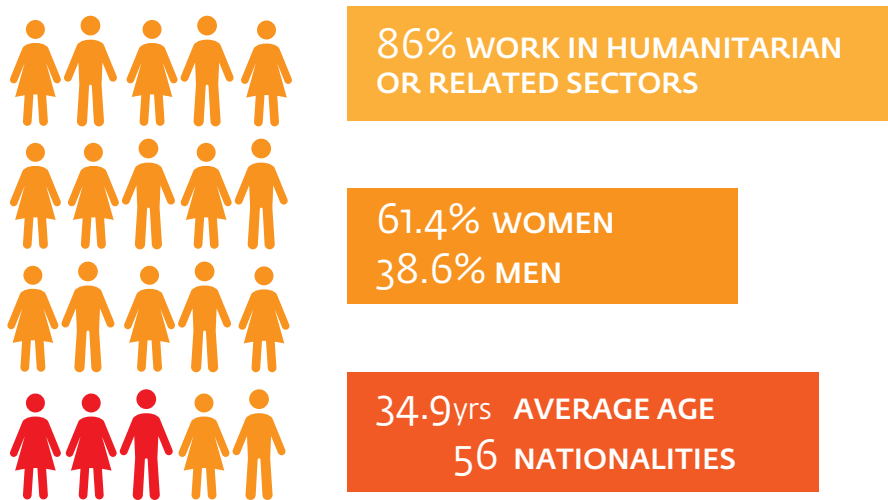
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1 Basic information about respondents

Of the 236 respondents, 61.44% were female and 38.56% were male. Their average age at the moment of completing the survey was 34.9 years, with the youngest respondent being 22 years old and the oldest 64.

Chart 1 – Demographic information about the respondents



The respondents originated from a wide variety of countries, with a total of 56 different nationalities being represented in the survey. Most respondents originated from Europe, namely the Netherlands (15.25%), France (14.41%), Germany (12.28%), and Spain (7.63%). In total, 166 respondents (70.34%) originated from a country within the European Union. Of the 70 respondents from outside Europe, the three nationalities most represented were American (18.57%), Canadian (10.00%), and Colombian (7.14%).

The above more or less corresponds with the information obtained from the student registration data over the past 6 years. Indeed, according to NOHA records, 75.24 percent of the students from cohorts 2011-12 through 2015-16 who graduated until January 2017 were citizens of the EU countries, primarily Spain (14.60%), Germany (13.97%), the Netherlands (12.70%) and France (10.16%). Similarly, of the 78 graduates from outside the EU, the three nationalities most represented were American (15.38%), Colombian (11.54%) and Canadian (6.41%).

2 Study path of respondents

Of the 236 respondents, 65.68 percent undertook mobility, while 34.32 percent did the entire programme in one university only. This reflects the fact that mobility only became a compulsory requirement as of 2009 for Erasmus Mundus grantees. In addition, some universities continue to offer a Masters in Humanitarian Action as a national course without mobility in parallel to the NOHA Master's in International Humanitarian Action. Thus, for example, of the 37 respondents who undertook their first semester in AMU, 26 continued in AMU and did their entire programme there while only 11 undertook the mobility track.

Table 1 below shows the breakdown of respondents by home and host universities as well as those who chose to do the whole programme in a single location.

Table 1 – Mobility of the NOHA graduates

A. Respondents who undertook mobility: 155 (66%)

Home university	No.	%	Host university	No.	%
RUG	42	27%	RUG	21	14%
UD	23	15%	UD	22	14%
UCD	24	15%	UCD	26	17%
AMU	11	7%	AMU	10	6%
UcL	7	5%	UcL	14	9%
RUB	25	16%	RUB	31	20%
UW	0	0%	UW	3	2%
UU	23	15%	UU	24	15%
Oxford	0	0%	Oxford	4	3%
La Sapienza	0	0%	La Sapienza	0	0%
Total	155	100%		155	100%

B. Respondents who did not undertake mobility: 81 (34%)

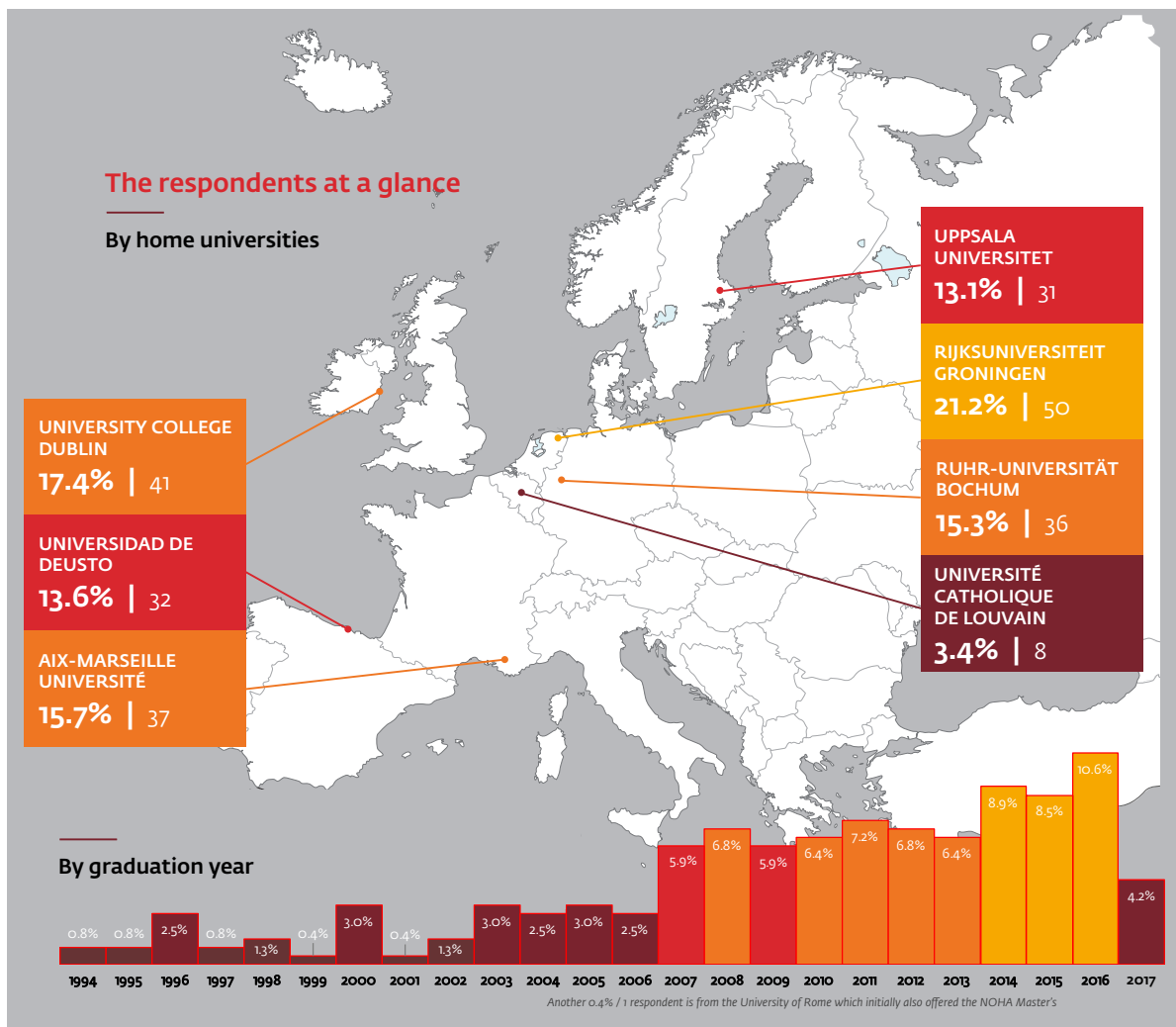
University	No.	%
RUG	8	10%
UD	9	11%
UCD	17	21%
AMU	26	32%
UcL	1	1%
RUB	11	14%
UW	0	0%
UU	8	10%
La Sapienza	1	1%
Total	81	100%

Table 2 below shows the number of respondents per year. As can be seen, most respondents graduated between 2012-2017, followed by the period between 2006-2011. Detailed breakdown between home universities and graduation years is presented on the map below.

Table 2 – Respondents per graduation year

Year of graduation	No. of respondents	%
1994-1999	16	7%
2000-2005	31	13%
2006-2011	82	35%
2012-2017	107	45%
Total	236	100%

Chart 2 – The respondents at a glance



3 Career paths of respondents

Career paths were determined based on the UN OCHA cluster system. Using the cluster system enabled to identify the specific areas of specialisation graduates may have focused on during their careers. However, it also led respondents who did not feel they worked or had worked in a cluster to select 0 years in terms of the time spent working in the humanitarian sector even if, through their position and organisation, it is evident that they have been or are working in the sector. The cluster system may have equally excluded all generalist positions and research and education specialisations within the humanitarian sector. Taking the above into account, graduates working or having worked in the humanitarian sector were identified as those who either (a) selected one or more clusters and/or (b) defined a humanitarian organisation as their current employer (even if they stated to have worked 0 years in a cluster) and described their work as humanitarian, and/or (c) stated they had worked more than one year in the humanitarian sector.

Thus, of the 236 respondents, 86,02 percent (203) are working / have worked at least one year in the humanitarian or a related sector. Eleven percent (23) of these did not specify the exact number years. In the 2013 NOHA Graduates survey, the corresponding number amounted to 72 percent of respondents working in humanitarian or related sectors at the time. The breakdown per year of graduation and number of years in the sector can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Work experience in the humanitarian sector

Year of graduation	No. of years in the humanitarian or related sector					Total	Not working in the sector	Total no. of respondents
	1-5	6-11	12-16	≥ 17	Not specified			
1994-1999	-	3	2	9	2	16	-	16
2000-2005	7	10	10	-	1	28	3	31
2006-2011	40	30	-	-	5	75	7	82
2012-2017	67	-	2	-	15	84	23	107
Total	114	43	14	9	23	203	33	236

Type of work

Of the 203 respondents who stated they are working or have worked in the humanitarian sector, 143 respondents indicated one or more specialisations based on the cluster options provided. Of these, 95 indicated working in 1-2 clusters while 48 indicated being involved with three clusters or more. Most respondents stated they were involved with the protection cluster (65), followed by health (56), education (35), water, sanitation and hygiene (34), food security (33), nutrition (32), emergency shelter (30), camp management and coordination (25), early recovery (25), logistics (24), and emergency IT (8).

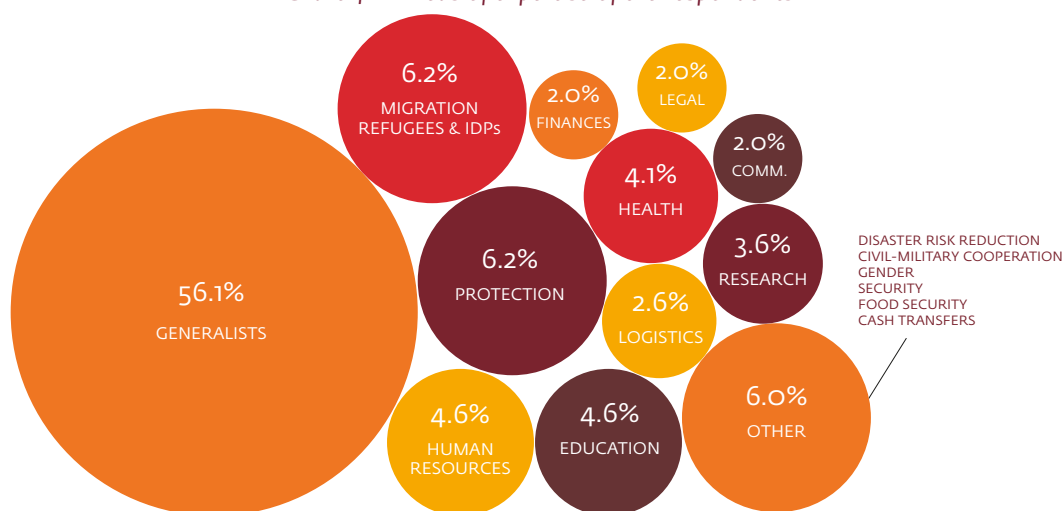
Chart 3 – UN cluster specialisation of the respondents



* Based on 143 responses. Multiple clusters could be selected by one respondent

Information on the current area(s) of work was also gleaned from the positions provided and descriptions of respondents' current work. Such information was available for 194 respondents. A large majority, 56,19 percent (109), can be categorised as generalists, as they stated they occupy a general management or coordination function. The remainder, 43,81 percent (94), specified a specific expertise, as follows:

Chart 4 – Areas of expertise of the respondents



* Data available for 194 respondents

From the answers provided, respondents can also be categorised according to their position level within an organisation. Information was available for 185 respondents who stated they were working in the humanitarian sector. The categorisation has been established according to the descriptions provided of the positions and roles described, as well as the number of years worked in the sector. Thus, for example, senior management roles included heads and deputy heads of mission, country directors, executive directors, senior advisors, heads of department, senior project officers. Junior positions included project managers, programme support staff and project officers.

Table 4 – Position level within an organisation

Level	No. of respondents
Junior positions	99
Senior positions	59 of whom 8 are working at a senior level with less than 5 years of experience in the sector
Volunteers	2
Consultants	10
Interns	7

The fact that most respondents currently occupy junior positions is due to a large majority of them being more recent graduates.

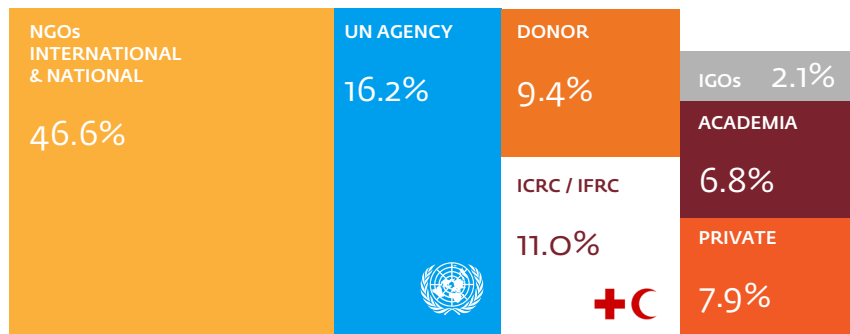
Type of organisation

As shown in the table below, the majority of graduates work with non-governmental organisations (46,6%). This is followed by the UN agencies and the ICRC (16% and 11 percent respectively). The remainder work either with governmental organisations and institutions, international organisations, the private sector or academia.

Table 5 – Types of organisations

Type of organisation	Organisation	No.	% of total
NGO	MSF	10	
	Save the Children	3	
	ACTED	2	
	Other	74	
	Total	89	46.6%
UN family	UNHCR	11	
	WFP	3	
	UNICEF	3	
	Other	14	
	Total	31	16.2%
Red Cross Red Crescent Family	ICRC	11	
	Other (IFRC, national RC/RC organisations)	10	
	Total	21	11.0%
Ministry / Embassy / Government		18	9.4%
Private Sector		15	7.9%
Academia		13	6,8%
International Organisations	OSCE, ECHO, EC, IOM	4	2.1%
		191	100

Chart 5 – Current employers of the respondents



* Data available for 191 respondents

The NOHA Master's programme and the Needs of the Sector

To get an idea of whether the Master's programme prepares graduates effectively for the needs of the sector, respondents were asked to reflect on the knowledge and skills that they obtained or did not obtain during their studies. A first set of questions addressed the perception of respondents with regards to the quality of the Masters. Perceptions on quality and labour market compatibility were based on the ratings provided to three statements:

- ① *The knowledge and skills I obtained during the Master's programme matched those I needed for the labour market.*
- ② *How likely is it that you would recommend the NOHA Master's programme to a friend or colleague?*
- ③ *I would be willing to accept NOHA students as interns within my organisation.*

The above were close-ended with a rating from 1-7, with 1 being negative and 7 being positive. An additional open-ended question addressed what skills and/or knowledge acquired during the NOHA Master's programme had been most beneficial in respondents' careers.

Table 6 – The labour market & knowledge and skills

The knowledge and skills I obtained during the Masters programme matched those I needed for the labour market:

Graduation year	1-3		4		5-7		Total responses
	Disagree	%	Unsure / average	%	Agree	%	
1994-99	1	6%	4	25%	11	69%	16
2000-05	6	19%	6	19%	19	61%	31
2006-11	16	20%	24	29%	42	51%	82
2012-17	33	31%	24	22%	50	47%	107
Total	56		58		122		236

In terms of knowledge and skills, most respondents (51.69 percent) stated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that knowledge and skills matched those needed for the labour market. 23.73 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while 24.58 percent were either unsure or believed that the programme matched the needs only averagely.

The periods 1994-1999 shows the highest level of satisfaction amongst graduates with regards to the match between the Master's programme and the needs of the labour market. This may be because the Master's programme was highly innovative at the time, with very little, if any, similar programmes being offered whether in Europe or elsewhere. During the following years, there is a steady decline in the perception of the match between the Master's and the labour market, with a decrease of about 10% per year. For the 2012-17 period, only 47 percent of the graduates feel that the Master's matches the need of the labour market. This could, in part, be attributed to the proliferation of Master's programmes around the world and the concomitant increase in competition and the increase in the price of the Master's (and therefore of the expectations of the students). It will be interesting to analyse whether such perceptions change over the coming years with the establishment of the new Master's programme as 2017.

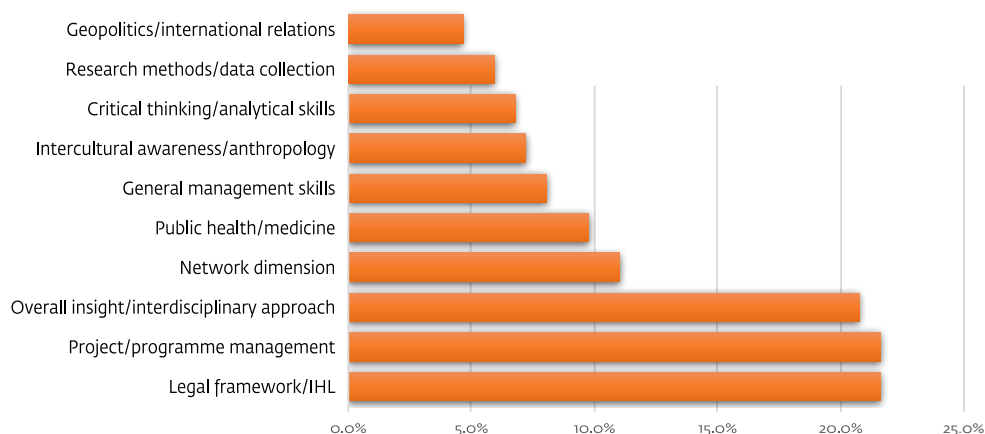
Table 7 – Recommending the Master's programme

How likely it is that you would recommend the NOHA Master's programme to a friend or colleague?

Graduation year	1-3	%	4	5-7	Total
1994-99	2	13%	1	6%	16
2000-05	2	6%	4	13%	31
2006-11	9	11%	13	16%	82
2012-17	24	22%	19	18%	107
Total	37		37	162	236

When comparing the perceptions on the match between the Master's programme and the labour market with whether graduates would recommend the Master's to a colleague or friend, the perceptions are more positive. For the 1994-1999 cohorts, the perception is very positive, with 81 percent of the respondents stating that they would recommend it. The following years witness a decline, to 60 percent for the period 2012-2017. However, the overall perception remains positive with 68,64 percent stating that they would recommend the programme, while 15,68 percent state they are either unsure or did not feel strongly about this statement, and another 15,68 percent state that it was either unlikely or highly unlikely that they would do so. No open-ended question was included to obtain further information as to why they would not recommend the programme, but responses can be obtained from the answers provided to why they do not feel a part of the network.

Chart 6 – The most beneficial elements of the NOHA Master's according to respondents



The subject areas, approaches and/or elements which were deemed as the most beneficial during the NOHA Master's were also indicated by respondents (Chart 6). Three components seem to stand apart: legal framework, project and programme management as well as interdisciplinary approach allowing for an overall insight into humanitarian action.

Note that in most cases respondents mentioned more than one subject area and that some of the respondents who did not agree with the statement that knowledge and skills matched those needed for the labour market nevertheless mentioned the areas which they had perceived as most beneficial. Indeed, 90 percent of respondents filled this part of the questionnaire in. The above lists the areas which were deemed as beneficial by the most significant number of respondents. Other subject areas were mentioned but by less than 4 percent of respondents and are therefore not deemed significant enough to be included in the list.

A final question was asked concerning whether graduates would accept interns within their organisations. A large majority (73,82 percent) stated that they would. The percentage of those who agreed or strongly agreed with whether they would take in interns or not is the highest amongst UN and NGO graduates (80,65% and 77,53% respectively).

Table 8 – Willingness to receive NOHA Interns

I would be willing to accept NOHA students as interns in my organisation

	1-3	%	4	%	5-7	%	Total
NGOs	6	6,74%	14	15,73%	69	77,53%	89
UN	3	9,68%	3	9,68%	25	80,65%	31
RCRC family (incl. ICRC,IFRC)	2	9,52%	4	19,05%	15	71,43%	21
Ministries/government	3	16,67%	4	22,22%	11	61,11%	18
IOs (incl. EC/ECHO)	0	0,00%	1	25,00%	3	75,00%	4
Academia	1	7,69%	2	15,38%	10	76,92%	13
Private sector	5	33,33%	2	13,33%	8	53,33%	15
Total	20	10,47%	30	15,71%	141	73,82%	191

All respondents provided answers to this question regardless of whether they are working in the sector or not. Answers can be taken as an additional indicator as to the quality of the Masters programme.

4 Respondents perceptions of the network

To fulfil its objectives, one of the priorities for NOHA is to maintain and strengthen the NOHA esprit de corps and foster a life-long community of NOHA graduates. As such, it was important to gather views from current graduates with regards to whether they felt part of the network and their willingness to participate in NOHA activities.

Table 9 – Feeling of being part of the network

	No	Average	Yes
1994-1999	31%	38%	31%
2000-2005	42%	26%	32%
2006-2011	29%	23%	48%
2012-2017	30%	15%	55%
Total	33%	26%	42%

As can be seen in the collected data, there is a steady increase in the percentage of respondents who feel part of the network, from 31 and 32 percent between 1994-1999 and 2000-2005 respectively, to 48 percent for the 2006-2011 cohorts and 55 percent for the 2012-2017 period. The percentage of graduates who stated they do not feel part of the network, however, remains approximately the same, ranging between 29 to 31 percent for all periods, except for the 2000-2005 period where it stands at 42 percent.

The NOHA network has been a very important part of my professional career, for the wide range of contacts all over the world and many opportunities that have emerged since I did my master.

'09

The progression in the number of graduates who feel part of the network is positive and may be the results of the work and investment made by NOHA in the areas of visibility, social media and outreach that has been undertaken, especially over the last 3 years. It is also due to the informal NOHA Facebook group (NOHA Past, Present and Future) which

has been very active recently and is being followed by 1,531 persons (as of the 28 February 2018).

I believe NOHA network is more than the academic circle and if you follow a humanitarian career after the university, you start really understanding the added value of belonging to it.

'11

However, the fact that there is still as many graduates who do not feel part of the network, indicates that efforts should still be made to

improve the situation. One important point to be noted is that a high proportion of graduates who do not feel part of the network are those who did not undertake mobility. Of the 81 respondents who did not undertake mobility, 38,27 percent stated they do not feel part of the network.

When asked why they do feel or do not feel part of the network, responses varied widely. In terms of feeling part of the network, the network of NOHA graduates, the family feeling, and/or the NOHA identity were cited most often, followed by the efforts made by NOHA to communicate with graduates, including via its social media outlets.

Table 10 – Reasons for self-identification as a part of the network

Main reasons why they feel part of the network	% of respondents*
Network of fellow graduates / family / identity	86,73%
Communication from NOHA / Facebook / Social Media	33,63%
Network meetings / NOHA activities	6,19%
Alumni activities	5,31%
The quality of the Masters	4,42%
The NOHA name / brand	3,54%

* As a percentage of respondents who felt a part of NOHA

I know that wherever I might go during the next few years, there will always be some NOHA there, ready to help or meet up.

'13

For those who did not feel they were a part of the network, the limited information received from NOHA and the fact that they were not working in the sector were cited most often as the main reasons. A summary of the responses is provided below.

Table 11 – Reasons for lack of self-identification as a part of the network

Main reasons why they do not feel part of the network	% of respondents*
Limited information about / from NOHA	20,27%
I am not working in the sector	18,92%
I am not on social media / I have no contact	14,86%
I do not make the effort	10,81%
Not interested in being involved / I do not see the value	10,81%
It's been a long time since I graduated	8,11%
I did not like the course	5,41%

* As a percentage of those who did not feel a part of NOHA

Whether or not they feel part of the network, a large majority of all respondents (70,34 percent) stated they would be willing to be involved in activities organised by NOHA and the NOHA graduates. 93,44 percent of all respondents gave examples of the kinds of activities they would like to be involved in.

This includes respondents that stated they were not willing to be involved in any activities or who were unsure or only averagely interested.

I believe we are people with the same mind-set, same ideas about our world and same goals to reach. NOHA for me in general was a very strong bonding experience.

'16

In terms of the types of activities, the main ones cited are shown below.

Table 12 – NOHA activities of interest to respondents

Activities	% of respondents
Networking events, strengthening the network, network gatherings, reunions, social gatherings	92%
Conferences / seminars / workshops	39%
Mentoring, coaching, supporting students with careers, job fairs	36%
Refresher courses / specialised courses	21%

5 Conclusions

Graduates form an essential part of the success of any university; in NOHA's case, they are an essential part of the entire NOHA network. They function as advocates of the NOHA Master's programme, they act as natural intermediaries between the network and the humanitarian sector, their experiences after graduation are used to reflect upon and strengthen education, training and research in the sector. In addition, many graduates return as trainers, lecturers and researchers within the network thus providing the students with the opportunity to interact with their peers. Likewise, the sense of community created by and among them confirms the importance of formal and informal networks around the world.

The rapid growth of the network of graduates, by ca. 100-130 annually in the last decade, has made it difficult to keep track of the whereabouts and, concomitantly, to nurture a close relationship with everyone. Nevertheless, a number of initiatives organised by the NOHA network and by individual member universities, supplemented by numerous spontaneous activities of the graduates themselves, has allowed to maintain communication channels between the NOHA family at large.

As of 2017, the functioning, networking and activities linked with the NOHA graduates were formally integrated within the NOHA Association structure, under the coordination of the General Secretariat. After intensive work, the new online portal – NOHA Graduates Platform, <https://graduates.nohanet.org/> – was launched in June 2017. In its restructured format, the Graduates Platform aims to (a) foster and strengthen an *esprit de corps* amongst NOHA graduates worldwide, (b) facilitate the exchange of reflections on humanitarian issues, (c) share valuable experiences both in the field and within academic settings, (d) support and foster learning and professional development opportunities for NOHA graduates, and (e) facilitate interactions and exchange amongst NOHA graduates. The Mentoring Programme, one of its key activities, links students and graduates. It will be officially launched in the Spring 2018, but is already available as of today.

Thanks to all who have responded to the survey, the results will be and have already been used in NOHA's quest to constantly strengthen its research and education initiatives, in particular the NOHA Joint Master's Programme in International Humanitarian Action. They will also support the network in planning future activities and enable NOHA, its students and graduates to maintain their relevance and efficiency for disaster affected people and humanitarian organisations world-wide, and to nurture the NOHA *esprit de corps*.

#beNOHA

In preparation to the NOHA25 celebrations - by itself an opportunity to showcase the importance of the work undertaken by NOHA graduates - a series of focus groups will be organised throughout 2018 in major humanitarian hubs to follow up on the survey results and to jointly seek solutions to address the needs of the humanitarian sector.

Annex 1 - Evolution of the NOHA Master's

Length of the programme:

- 60 ECTS (2 semesters) - 1994-2004
- 90 ECTS (3 semesters) - 2004-2017
- 120 ECTS (4 semesters) - since 2017

Delivering universities:

- **Aix-Marseille Université** (France) - since 1994
- **Universidad de Deusto** (Spain) - since 1994
- **Ruhr-Universität Bochum** (Germany) - since 1994
- **University College Dublin** (Ireland) - since 1997
- **Uppsala universitet** (Sweden) - since 1997
- **Rijksuniversiteit Groningen** (The Netherlands) - since 2000
- **Uniwersytet Warszawski** (Poland) - since 2015
- **University of Malta** (Malta) - since 2017
- **Université catholique de Louvain** (Belgium) - 1994-2017
- **University of Oxford** (UK) - 1994-1997
- **Sapienza Università di Roma** (Italy) - 1997-2000

Erasmus Mundus status:

- 2004-2015 for the 90 ECTS programme
- 2017-2020 for the 120 ECTS programme

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