Demand for global and local humanitarian logisticians continues to grow, due to the severity of protracted, complex emergencies and the increasing impact of natural disasters. This is reflected in the growth of the Humanitarian Logistics Association (HLA), a member organisation formed in 2009 with the mission to empower humanitarian logisticians to deliver emergency relief more effectively.

HLA achieves this by building a community of practice for advancing the profession, through the promotion of cross-organisation knowledge sharing, training and collaboration.

Our membership stands at over 2,000, with representatives at all levels of the profession across the world, but principally in the UK, US, Africa and Asia.

What do members want?
In 2017, we surveyed our members on what they think of HLA and what they want in the future. Feedback was positive, with 83% saying their membership was valuable. Members wanted more knowledge sharing, more training, access to jobs and chances to network globally.

HLA plans a range of activities in each of the areas outlined below:
- Training and education: via global workshops and seminars, and online webinars.
- Professionalism: via lobbying and collaboration with accredited training partnerships.
- Fostering a global networking community: through social media and events, such as general assemblies (planned in Nairobi and Bangkok for Spring 2018).
- Research and knowledge-sharing: further developing our Hum-Log Portal, which is a collection of over 100 pieces (and growing) of valuable knowledge on humanitarian logistics practice and partnering with academics to produce original research (we are currently planning two research projects with Griffith University, Australia and the University of Toronto, Canada).

Funding our work
Apart from modest grants, HLA relies on donations, but primarily on the extensive volunteering of a few key people. This year we are introducing paid memberships for the first time in an effort to help raise funds to meet member demand for activities.

We are asking those individuals that can afford to, to pay a modest annual subscription and supplier companies/aid organisations to pay in bands, according to turnover. We hope that this, together with further grant funding, will enable us to push ahead with our plans.

Looking to the future
Key sector issues on our radar are improving private/aid sector collaboration, digital cash transfers/market-based assistance, and innovations for last mile delivery.

We welcome the profile-raising of the humanitarian logistics sector that this issue of Focus provides and thank CILT for its past and continued support of HLA and its aims.

Those interested in becoming an individual or corporate member of HLA should visit: www.humanitarianlogistics.org/members

If you are interested in volunteering to help our efforts, whether by conducting research, helping with networking or training events, or writing content for our website and newsletters, please contact George Fenton, Trustee and Chief Executive, Humanitarian Logistics Association.

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