



Final Report

Evaluation of Humanitarian Innovation
and Evidence Programme:
Summative Phase Two

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Submitted by Itad

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Disclaimer

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List of acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected People
ACF	Action Contre Faim
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADRRN	Asia Disaster Reduction and Response Network
AKLDP	Agriculture Knowledge, Learning, Documentation and Policy Project
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ARD	Africa Regional Department
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
BRCS	British Red Cross Society
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CAR	Central African Republic
CDAC	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CHASE	Conflict, Humanitarian and Security
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management system
CRC	Canadian Red Cross
CS	Case Study
DEPP	Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme
DEVCO	[European Union's development instrument]
DFID	Department For International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRCE	Disaster Response Capacity Enhancement
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ELRHA	Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance Project
ENN	Emergency Nutrition Network
EQUALS	DFID Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FC	Funding Committee
FIC	Feinstein International Center

FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAHI	Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation
GASI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GoP	Government of Pakistan
GPPI	Global Public Policy Institution
HDX	Humanitarian Data Exchange Project
HEP	Humanitarian Evidence Programme
HERR	Humanitarian Emergency Response Review
HESC	Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication
HEW	Humanitarian Evidence Week
HIE	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence
HIEP	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme
HIES	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy
HIF	Humanitarian Innovation Fund
HO	Humanitarian Outcomes
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
HRI	Humanitarian Research and Innovation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Volunteer Agencies
IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IT	Information Technology
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAINTAINS	Maintaining Essential Services After Natural Disasters
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

MENARH	Middle East and North Africa Research Hub
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MYF	Multi-Year Financing
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NDPRM	National Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism
NDRMF	National Disaster Risk Management Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRSC	Nutrition Research Steering Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PHAP	Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection
PSNP	Productive Social Safety Net
QA	Quality Assurance
R2HC	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises
RAG	Research Advisory Group
RCS	Red Cross/Red Crescent Society
RED	Research and Evidence Division
REFANI	Research on Food Assistance for Nutritional Impact
RESET	ECHO's resilience programme
SAVE	Secure Access in Volatile Environments
SCI	Save the Children International
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPHERE	Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response
SRPS	Shock-Responsive social Protection Systems
SRSP	Shock-Responsive Social Protection
SSUC	South Sudan Urban Water Corporation
START	A network of 42 international and national aid agencies
TdH	Terre des Hommes
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of reference
TPM	Third-Party monitoring

TWG	Technical Working Group
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
UCL	University College London
UEA	University of East Anglia
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
URCS	Uganda Red Cross Society
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VfM	Value for Money
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEDC	Water, Engineering and Development Centre
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
YARID	Young African Refugees for Integral Development (Uganda)

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Executive Summary

The Department for International Development (DFID) invested £54.6 million into a humanitarian innovation and evidence programme which began in 2013 for initially five years and now runs to 2022.

This report presents evaluation findings on its relevance, effectiveness, impact and value for money.

The Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) was designed to have an impact on humanitarian actors' capacity to deliver improved response and resilience programmes that are effective at supporting vulnerable people. It works towards three specific outcomes:



Credit: Russell Watkins/DFID

Outcome 1

International donors, including DFID, develop funding instruments and frameworks for investment into evidence, innovation, and its applications.

Outcome 2

Humanitarian actors change skills, behaviours, relationships, cultures and systems to promote the regular integration of evidence into humanitarian and disaster risk management (DRM) interventions.

Outcome 3

Policy and practice actors invest in social, economic and political innovations that focus on benefits for poor people in humanitarian crises.

The **summative** evaluation conducted by Itad, the fourth report in a five-year evaluation of HIEP that started in 2013, aims to provide both an independent assessment of progress and also to produce learning and recommendations on humanitarian evidence and innovation for DFID and the sector.

Background to HIEP

HIEP is part of DFID's response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) to make humanitarian research and innovation a core part of DFID's research and evidence work and to use innovative techniques and technologies more routinely in humanitarian response.

It addresses four problems affecting humanitarian action, detailed in DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy (HIES), that evidence and innovation can address:

Problem 1

Decision makers have inadequate access to reliable and tailored information about risk, especially as it affects the poorest

Problem 2

Inadequate synthesis and generation of evidence on which humanitarian interventions work best, and new ways to tackle humanitarian problems

Problem 3

Insufficient capture and systematic analysis of how to work with national and local institutions to manage disasters, especially in insecure settings

Problem 4

Inadequate systems and incentives to integrate evidence production and use it routinely in humanitarian decisions and actions

Evaluation key facts



Over 600
documents were
reviewed



5
years duration



8
case studies
followed by the
evaluation team from
2013 to 2018



611
persons were interviewed



5 countries
visited

Pakistan, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia

HIEP comprises 30 projects that seek to generate new evidence or synthesise existing evidence on what works in humanitarian action in key areas including health in emergencies, protracted displacement, disaster risk reduction, scaling up cash-based responses, humanitarian assistance in volatile environments and urban risk. Within the HIEP portfolio there are projects focused on support to innovation in the humanitarian sector.

HIEP projects are implemented with partners and through a range of approaches including the development of specific funds such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) and Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC), which between them have made well over 120 grants. HIEP has a particular focus on working through partnerships between operational and academic organisations.

HIEP was set up as an innovative programme in DFID, implemented through cooperation across three departments: Research and Evidence Division (RED), Conflict, Humanitarian and Security (CHASE) and Africa Regional Department (ARD). However, since 2015, RED has been the sole financier of the DFID programme and the principle body responsible for management of HIEP, although with close cooperation across DFID, including through an inter-departmental advisory group.

The HIEP timeframe has been extended from its initial five-year plan and the final project now runs to 2022. The structure overseeing HIEP is now named the Humanitarian Research and Innovation team (HRI team), which is also generating new projects outside of the HIEP framework. Much of the learning from HIEP is relevant to the new phase of work by the HRI team.

A theory of change (ToC) was developed by the evaluation team with DFID in the inception phase, which is summarised in Box 1.



Credit: Vicki Francis/DFID

HIEP projects are implemented with partners and through a range of approaches including the development of specific funds such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) and Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC), which between them have made well over 120 grants. HIEP has a particular focus on working through partnerships between operational and academic organisations.

Methodology

The evaluation addresses questions of HIEP's relevance, effectiveness, impact and value for money. Findings are based on the data collected across the four stages of the evaluation: inception (2013), formative (2014), first summative (2015) and final (2017).

The evaluation is theory-based with judgement criteria linked to the ToC. The ToC details a process for how HIEP projects travel from production of high-quality outputs to contributing to HIEP outcomes. The theory envisages that DFID has a key role at programme level through its donor, networking and influencing roles in the sector.

At the heart of the evaluation is a case study approach in which the evaluation team followed eight of the HIEP projects from 2013 to 2018. The evaluation included country visits to Uganda, Pakistan and Jordan in this phase, and earlier also to Kenya and Ethiopia, which enabled the inclusion of more country-level stakeholder perspectives. The evaluation considered project quality assurance processes; assessed value for money using the 4E framework (which considers economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity) and conducted a gender and social inclusion (GASI) audit of the programme. We drew on contribution analysis to assess projects and HIEP's contribution to identified results.

We experienced some constraints, notably the lack of a finalised HIEP-influencing strategy detailing more specific anticipated results, access to some data and access to country-level stakeholders, particularly where projects had closed.

Overall, the HIEP portfolio focuses well on the first three problems identified by the HIES relating to access to, and production and synthesis of, evidence but has not substantially addressed the fourth problem which relates to lack of incentives and blockages to use of evidence .



Key findings

HIEP has achieved considerable success in its five years of implementation. It has established a high profile and level of respect for DFID's role in supporting evidence and innovation. External stakeholders perceive DFID as having distinctive advantages among donors because it has the potential to work across functions in research and operations, and across sectors, to bring together a range of expertise, and is able to balance openness to taking risks, essential in research and innovation, with achieving results.



Relevance

HIEP is a highly relevant initiative addressing key issues affecting humanitarian action and people impacted by humanitarian crises. HIEP's responsive approach, which includes bringing on new projects over its lifetime, has ensured it is focused on key humanitarian issues and evidence needs, both identified in HERR and emerging since – such as the Ebola crisis, Syria response, escalating food insecurity and new sudden-onset disasters. HIEP projects' design has dealt well with the challenges of research in humanitarian contexts, showing that a range of methods are feasible and can produce high-quality evidence. Strong quality assurance processes throughout the projects' durations have been important particularly when new methods are being designed to cope with humanitarian contexts. But some challenges remain, including gaining access to data and the quality of existing data. Overall, the HIEP portfolio focuses well on the first three problems identified by the HIES relating to access to, and production and synthesis of, evidence but has not substantially addressed the fourth problem which relates to lack of incentives and blockages to use of evidence.



Effectiveness

HIEP has been highly effective in its production of high-quality evidence and promotion of project findings to relevant humanitarian debates and processes that have reached a wide audience of policymakers, practitioners and researchers at national and international levels. HIEP, particularly through partner activity, has linked to some key initiatives at national level on cash, nutrition, social protection and healthcare, providing opportunities to influence important programme, policy and strategy development processes. HIEP is also well aligned with DFID humanitarian policy priorities and has engaged with some key issues globally, including those that feature in the Grand Bargain and the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Agenda for Humanity, such as multi-year funding, localisation and cooperation on innovation.

HIEP's engagement with other humanitarian actors, as well as policy and practice, has been primarily through partner activities and initiative. The effectiveness of partners' promotion of their project's evidence and final recommendations has been greatest when

- (a) contact has been sustained throughout a project allowing relationships and credibility to be built; and
- (b) when communication processes were resourced sufficiently to continue for at least 6–12 months after project conclusions and recommendations are drawn and products produced. Other important factors have been resourcing, in terms of time and money, for national and international events and processes; producing a wide range of customised products; and linking individual project findings to a broader body of evidence. Direct briefings for individual agencies tailored to their interest to help consider the practical implications of applying new evidence, while resource intensive, have been an effective strategy in supporting research take-up.

HIEP's partnership model has been particularly effective in bringing together operational and academic stakeholders for the benefit of the programme. Partnerships have enabled access to humanitarian contexts for data collection, ensured operational relevance and provided access to a wider range of networks through which the project findings can be shared.

Within DFID, the relationship with the humanitarian cadre has been positive with active promotion of research to humanitarian advisers, but more variable across DFID. However, HIEP's profile was extremely limited at country level in DFID offices. The original vision for HIEP saw DFID playing an active role drawing on its different capabilities as donor, influencer and networker. This has been challenged by a lack of clarity in HIEP around the responsibilities of different parts of DFID, particularly in relation to promoting action based on its findings, and acting in support of the overall HIEP agenda at outcome level. Capacity constraints and the lack of an influencing strategy detailing more specific aims and departmental roles, within and outside of the HRI team and mechanisms, has impeded this. The programme's focus on the production and synthesis of evidence, rather than also addressing the lack of incentives and other obstacles (beyond supply) to the use evidence in the sector, means that HIEP does not fully address the range of problems identified in the HIES.

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Gender and social inclusion

HIEP is based on a strong commitment to address gender and inclusion. The portfolio directly addresses issues relevant to women and girls in humanitarian crises. This includes projects relevant to addressing violence against women and girls, sexual reproductive health, innovations for supporting management of menstrual hygiene during emergencies and disasters, methodologies for identifying vulnerable people affected by urban humanitarian emergencies and for promoting data collection on disability and practical support for people with disabilities. HIEP's flexible approach has aided projects to develop and adapt methods that more effectively reach women, girls and marginalised groups during research. This can be by recruiting and training researchers from targeted communities to reduce the social distance between respondents and researchers; working with women's groups and community-based organisations; remote surveying and the use of a woman's voice on automated surveys to reach isolated vulnerable communities and individuals; and bringing research study participants into discussions about emerging findings (e.g. the inclusion of vulnerable youth and families in Jordan). Some projects have found a focus on power dynamics, social difference and vulnerabilities enhances consideration of gender and inclusion issues. The availability, collection and analysis of disaggregated gender-sensitive and inclusive data remains a persistent challenge, resulting in data gaps that HIEP has only been partially successful in addressing.

HIEP was slow to translate its strong gender and inclusion principles into systems and mechanisms for management until late in the programme (2016–17). There is still a need for HIEP and partners to be clearer about what level of socially disaggregated data is expected, and what is meant by integrating a gender and inclusion perspective in research processes.

Third, HIEP had produced new evidence and innovations which some agencies have applied to their policy and practice, and others have built upon in further research.



Impact

HIEP is working towards three outcomes which relate to systemic changes in

- (a) donor funding instruments and frameworks for investment into humanitarian evidence and innovation;
- (b) humanitarian actors' capabilities and relationships to integrate evidence routinely into policy and practice; and
- (c) policy and practice actors' investment into innovation which focuses benefit on poor people in humanitarian crises.

HIEP has made important contributions to some early and emerging changes in relation to all three planned outcomes. First, HIEP has developed new multi-donor funds for innovation (HIF) and health research in emergencies (R2HC). Second, HIEP partners have developed methodologies for humanitarian research, built relationships between operational and academic agencies and increased debate on key evidence issues such as quality of data. Third, HIEP had produced new evidence and innovations which some agencies have applied to their policy and practice, and others have built upon in further research. Finally, HIEP has strengthened the evidence and innovation system, notably contributing to the establishment of the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI). These are early-stage changes and there are sustainability questions in some areas, but HIEP has made significant contributions proportionate to its original five-year time span. HIEP has made only a limited contribution to building southern capacity to produce and use evidence and innovation. This is a shortfall given humanitarian research needs good local researchers and the key users of HIEP products are local.

Value for money

HIEP offers good value for money (VfM) in terms of its economy, enabled by its lean management costs, inter-departmental cooperation, partnerships between academic and humanitarian institutions and selection of appropriate partners. Partners' level of activity in HIEP projects has often been over and above contractual agreements to ensure quality of products and their active communication. Management of VfM has improved with the introduction of a VfM framework being applied systematically across HIEP in 2017.

But there is a trade-off between the lean management costs of HIEP and the programme's overall effectiveness and impact. There have been some drawbacks including staff turnover and capacity issues in DFID's HIEP team. HIEP would have benefited from more investment into activities to pull together learning and findings across the HIEP portfolio, to link them to broader bodies of evidence, and develop a strategy to guide and encourage activities that promote the use of HIEP findings, both in DFID and externally. These could have drawn on DFID's influencing potential through its role as donor, convenor and influential stakeholder in the sector.

Theory of change (ToC)

The HIEP ToC has largely held true and, when applied, shown that projects can contribute to impact. The value of the theory to DFID would have been strengthened by more active engagement with the theory by the HIEP management and governance teams. Also, with attention to some of the areas identified in the ToC as potential blocks, such as political economy of inter-agency competition and challenges for new actors entering into the humanitarian community. However, if DFID does not plan to take on the full institutional role envisaged in the HIEP ToC of it drawing on its networking, influencing and donor roles, then alternative strategies to achieve change at the system level need to be developed. Even then the ToC provides a good basis to understand the relationship between evidence, innovation and change.



Factors supporting success of HIEP

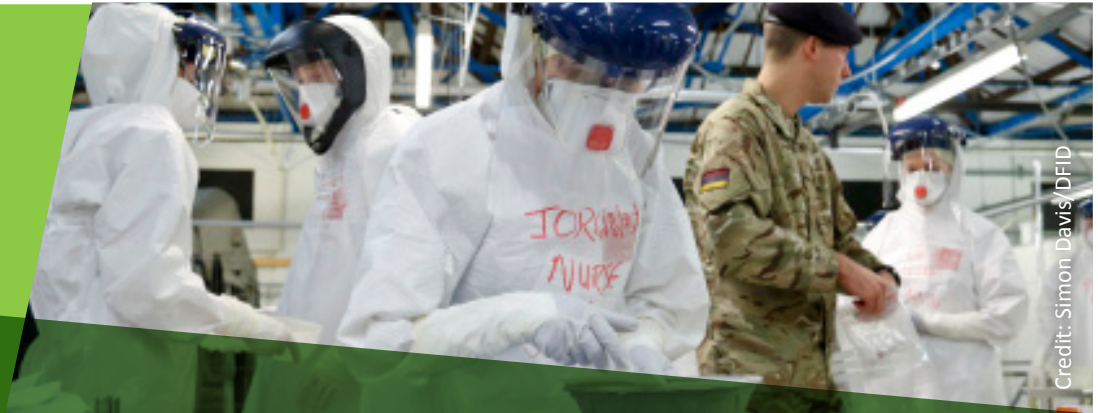
We observed a number of common features in areas where HIEP has made the most impact. Evidence so far suggests HIEP is having impact when

- (a) HIEP projects build on and contribute to areas where there is existing momentum towards change in the system, e.g. a consensus on the need for a new approach such as scaling up cash and innovation;
- (b) when HIEP produces a large body of evidence such as the 11 studies on mental health and psychosocial support by R2HC, or links HIEP projects to other existing research and promotes it with decision makers;
- (c) when the implications of new evidence are made explicit for people in their different policy and practice roles and provide support to its application, e.g. through tools, customised briefings and hands-on support; and
- (d) when HIEP makes long-term commitment to themes so projects can build on earlier findings and the theme evolves, e.g. in education in emergencies, scaling up cash.

However, the level of ambition originally set out for HIEP was beyond the reach of any one agency and requires contributions of others including donors and humanitarian organisations. DFID is well placed with a respected position as a supporter of evidence and innovation, as well as through its experience to date in HIEP and its strong network of partners to continue to work towards these outcomes. The lessons laid out below for the sector provide an initial agenda for DFID to take forward to build the sector's support for and use of evidence and innovation with peers and allies. Adequate resourcing for DFID roles in support of this agenda in the HRI team and other relevant roles is necessary.

Lessons







We identified six lessons for taking forward humanitarian evidence and innovation.






- 1** **Humanitarian research needs to be funded alongside operational funding.** Funding for each process tends to be agreed separately, often quickly and for short-term periods in operations, while research needs longer lead time and duration for data collection. This lack of alignment makes it difficult to set up robust data collection systems that also work for operational monitoring, and vice versa. Joint planning benefits both the research and operation. Integration of larger-scale research into operations with separate research teams working alongside the project is an approach that shows potential.
- 2** **The sector needs to increase its focus on understanding and developing strategies to overcome obstacles to the scale-up and application of evidence and innovation.** Much of the sector activity currently focuses on pilot stages of innovation and production of evidence as single case studies. Changes in use of evidence are often limited to the boundaries of organisations involved in these pilot projects. We need to understand better how to overcome these obstacles to support change on a greater scale.
- 3** **Operational agencies can make significant improvements in the quality of evidence through modification of their routine systems for evidence collection, as well as through much greater transparency and sharing of data.** But data transparency remains a challenge due to reasons including data sensitivities and political constraints (e.g. when it reflects badly on government programmes and inter-agency competition).
- 4** **Project designs benefit from broad processes that go beyond evidence-gap mapping and consultation with international expert groups, but also include consultation with a range of local perspectives to define the problem and design the projects.** This helps overcome sectoral siloed thinking and to integrate a user perspective.
- 5** **Effective communication of new evidence and innovation needs to take place throughout the project and be long-term, extending beyond the production and initial promotion and communication around the evidence reports and other products.** It also needs to be customised to specific audiences to draw out the practical implications for their role.
- 6** **Issues of exclusion and marginalisation need to be consistently addressed for robust humanitarian research.**


Recommendations

Recommendations to DFID Humanitarian Research and Innovation Team

Recommendation	
	Strengthen DFID's support to the scaling up and application of evidence and innovation, including to increase understanding of better ways to address obstacles and to demonstrate the benefits of applying evidence to the quality of responses.
	Clarify processes and expectations for effective inter-departmental cooperation in DFID throughout the humanitarian evidence and innovation processes. Also, draw on DFID channels, including the evaluation unit and operations, to improve the quality of data and evidence produced in DFID-funded humanitarian evaluations.
	Increase and sustain awareness of, and easy access to HIEP findings and products for all DFID advisers involved in humanitarian action through improved processes and more accessible products and mechanisms.
	Develop processes to ensure a consistent and learning approach to GASI in DFID humanitarian research and innovation.
	Share methodological learning from HIEP in the sector and within DFID, including on (a) humanitarian research challenges and effective methodologies in humanitarian practice; (b) mainstreaming GASI in humanitarian research; and (c) effective communication of humanitarian evidence including at local and national levels.
	Enhance the value of using or drawing on the HIEP ToC for future programmes through clarification of DFID's role, more active management engagement with it, and consideration of key links and obstacles it identifies for evidence use.

Recommendation	
	Increase the timescale and consistency of HIEP/HRI project partners' monitoring of impact to last for at least two years after final conclusions and products are produced.
	Increase support for and learn from HIEP/HRI team communication and stakeholder engagement processes, in particular planning and resourcing influencing work beyond the period of partners' research and outputs production. Increase HIEP/HRI team's level of engagement in steering DFID's influencing work at programme level.
	Strengthen the HRI portfolio by ensuring it balances its emerging more focused approach with maintaining mechanisms to enable flexibility to respond to newly identified needs and opportunities while undertaking focused long-term projects.

Recommendation to DFID senior management

	Regularly review the resourcing of DFID's humanitarian research and innovation capacity including that of the HRI team to ensure it matches stated ambitions and is sufficient to enable it to steer DFID's potential influencing role in the sector to enhance the humanitarian community's support for and use of evidence and innovation in humanitarian action.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

DFID has invested £54.6 million into humanitarian research and innovation since 2013 through the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP), with the final grant ending in 2022. This report presents evaluation findings on the relevance, effectiveness, impact and value for money (VfM) of that investment. It presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the second summative evaluation of HIEP – the fourth and final stage of an evaluation process conducted by Itad between 2013 and 2018. So far, the evaluation has included an inception phase, formative and first summative evaluation.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the delivery of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy (HIES) implemented through HIEP. It aims to ascertain to what extent the Department for International Development (DFID) has fulfilled the government's commitment in the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) to make humanitarian research and innovation a core part of DFID's work in research and humanitarian response, and the impact of the strategy, on DFID's own practice, and more broadly.¹ The evaluation has both learning and accountability objectives: aiming to provide learning for DFID and the wider humanitarian community, as well as to provide evidence on accountability for external scrutiny.

The evaluation addresses questions of HIEP's relevance, effectiveness, impact and VfM. The evaluation focuses on eight projects as case studies along with thematic analysis across the programme, which considers VfM and gender and social inclusion (GASI). Data collection was carried out between September and December 2017 with draft case study reports shared with DFID lead advisers and partners in December 2017.

The primary audiences for the report are DFID including the Humanitarian Research and Innovation Team and advisory group, as well as the wider humanitarian community including research organisations and HIEP partners.

The report is organised in eight sections:

- **Section 2** outlines the methodology for the summative evaluation.
- **Sections 3–7** present findings on relevance, effectiveness, GASI, impact and VfM. Each section includes findings at the project and programme levels and considers learning for the future. Case study scorings are included for relevance, effectiveness, impact and VfM. More detail on case studies is included in the case study reports (Annex 2).
- **Section 8** concludes and makes final recommendations.

¹ HIEP evaluation terms of reference.

1.2 Background to the evaluation

What is HIEP?

HIEP responds to the UK government's HERR undertaken in 2011. HIEP aims to make humanitarian research and innovation a core part of DFID's research and evidence work and use innovative techniques and technologies more routinely in humanitarian response.

Following the HERR, DFID developed the HIES, which identified four key problems that evidence and innovation could address:

- **Problem 1:** Decision makers have inadequate access to reliable and tailored information about risk, especially as it affects the poorest
- **Problem 2:** Inadequate synthesis and generation of evidence on which humanitarian interventions work best, and new ways to tackle humanitarian problems
- **Problem 3:** Insufficient capture and systematic analysis of how to work with national and local institutions to manage disasters, especially in insecure settings
- **Problem 4:** Inadequate systems and incentives to integrate evidence production and use it routinely in humanitarian decisions and actions

HIEP aims to address these problems and ultimately intends to have an impact on humanitarian actors' capacities to deliver improved response and resilience programmes that support vulnerable people. HIEP is working towards three specific outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** International donors, including DFID, develop funding instruments and frameworks for investment into evidence, innovation and its applications
- **Outcome 2:** Humanitarian actors change skills, behaviours, relationships, cultures and systems to promote the regular integration of evidence into humanitarian and DRM interventions
- **Outcome 3:** Policy and practice actors invest in social, economic and political innovations that focus on benefits for poor people in humanitarian crises

A theory of change (ToC) was developed by the evaluation team with DFID in the inception phase. A summary of the ToC is in Box 1 below. The fuller diagram of the ToC follows in Figure 1.²

² The fuller narrative for the ToC was included in the HIEP formative phase reports, <https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/evaluation-of-the-humanitarian-innovation-and-evidence-programme-hiep-formative-phase-report>.

Box 1: HIEP theory of change

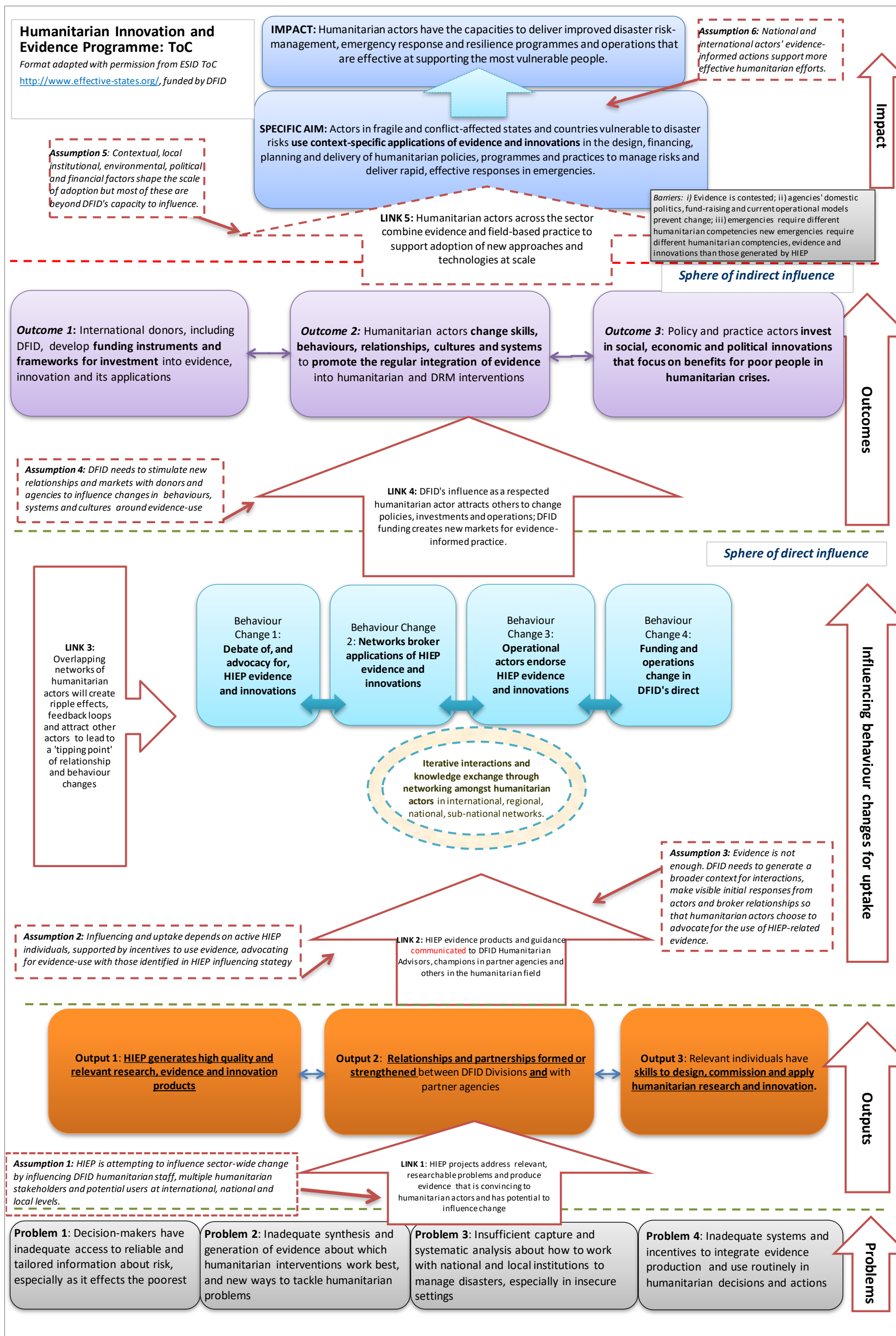
Through its operations, networking, influencing and funding, *alongside* coherent and convincing evidence products, DFID will attract other humanitarian funders and practitioners to invest in new technologies, evidence-informed operational approaches and systems that HIEP will produce.

This will influence skills, behaviours, cultures and systems among humanitarian actors to promote the routine integration of evidence into the financing, design and implementation of humanitarian interventions.

In turn, these enabling conditions, capacities and systems will support international agencies, national governments, public sector actors, civil society, and private actors in fragile and conflict-affected states, and countries vulnerable to disaster risks, to use context-specific applications of evidence and innovations in their design, financing, planning and delivery of humanitarian policies, programmes and practices to manage risks and deliver rapid, effective responses in emergencies.

This will improve programmes so that lives are saved and communities recover quickly from economic and livelihood losses that arise from humanitarian crises.

Figure 1: Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme Theory of change



1.3 How is HIEP structured?

HIEP is an innovative programme in DFID being supported and implemented initially through cooperation across three departments: Research and Evidence Division (RED), Conflict, Humanitarian and Security (CHASE), and Africa Regional Department (ARD). The structure of HIEP is a new departure in the management of humanitarian research in DFID. It was set up as the most integrated programme to date in DFID's efforts to pool funding and involve lead adviser and programme management resources from different DFID departments. It is based on the assumption that, by including skills from across DFID departments, the programme will produce more high-quality, relevant and used research.

DFID approved an initial budget of £48.3 million for HIEP – this was raised to £50.2 million and later to £54.6 million in 2017, with the final project grant ending in 2022. The programme is funded through three business cases. Thirty projects have been developed and approved by the HIEP Management Committee on a rolling basis.³ Since the previous evaluation data collection phase, two new projects were agreed under HIEP, namely a Global Prioritisation Process implemented by Elrha; and Education in Emergencies Humanitarian Education Accelerator, a partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). At the time of the last phase of evaluation, 14 projects were still 'live'; two closed in 2017 – Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) and Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC) – and final products were being produced for two of the projects – Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems (SRPS) and Research on Food Assistance for Nutritional Impact (REFANI). Other projects closed before 2017. New projects managed by the HRI team fall outside of HIEP being based on separate business cases. They are (a) Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement – a multi-stakeholder partnership; (b) Maintaining Essential Services After Natural Disasters (MAINTAINS). They both build on the findings of earlier HIEP-implemented projects and are within the remit of the HRI/HIEP team and its advisory group. A full list of projects is attached in Annex 6. Projects are implemented by a wide range of partners from civil society, universities and research institutes, with a focus on partnerships between academic and operational organisations.

Originally HIEP was organised on a 'hub and spoke' model, with a Humanitarian Research and Innovation (HRI) team (previously called HIEP Secretariat) acting as a hub; with the lead advisers and programme managers in a number of departments acting as spokes that manage projects and advocate for the uptake of research. Together creating a virtual team for HIEP. Since 2015, the programme has been managed, reviewed and evaluated as a single entity. The three business cases that underlie HIEP's funding within DFID were brought together into one internal administrative framework (the evaluation has always treated the programme as one entity since the single, unifying ToC and logframe were drawn up in the evaluation inception phase). Responsibility for HIEP delivery sits with RED, working with RED teams across the division and with CHASE, policy teams, humanitarian advisers and country teams. A management committee drawn from across the departments involved in HIEP was restructured in 2016 and is now an advisory group with roles more related to strategy, advice and championing. Unlike the former management committee, the advisory group is no longer accountable for management or financial oversight of HIEP, or directly accountable for new research and innovation programmes launched. Accountability now sits with the relevant senior responsible owner and with the head of humanitarian research and innovation team. The advisory group is chaired by the head of HRIT and membership includes the chief scientific adviser, chief economist, humanitarian head of profession and representatives from CHASE and some regional departments.

The HRI team is now made up of four full-time staff including a head, humanitarian research and innovation manager (80%), humanitarian adviser (a new position since September 2017), and programme manager. In addition, an education adviser works in the HRI team including on relevant HIEP projects (30%). There have been changes with an interim head of HIEP covering maternity leave for 12 months to

³ Extensions to projects budgets such as increases for R2HC and HIF are counted as one project each.

September 2017 and the programme officer/manager was on secondment within DFID for surge purposes for part of 2017. In this report, we use the term HRI team to refer to this team but readers should note this is distinct from the group involving the lead advisers who make up the virtual team of HIEP.⁴

1.4 The wider context

There have been a number of key changes in the wider context in which HIEP is operating since the previous phase of the evaluation. These include:

- a) New and escalating humanitarian crises including the Syria response, severe food insecurity in Nigeria, Yemen, Somali and South Sudan, and major Rohingya population displacement from Burma. At the same time, the migration response in Europe evolved into a predominantly domestic response in most countries with the exceptions of Turkey, Greece and to some extent Italy where international organisations are still active
- b) The first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was held and subsequent Grand Bargain agreed
- c) New ways of working including the increase towards remote management by agencies due to insecurity in affected areas and more cross-sector approaches e.g. cash-based approaches
- d) Policy developments in DFID including the development of a new humanitarian reform policy and a research review

These developments all have implications for HIEP. The increasing gap between resources and needs in escalating crises is building interest in innovation in the sector as organisations seek ways to meet the growing humanitarian needs. The crises, particularly the more protracted crises in the Middle East, are presenting opportunities for research over long time periods as well as demand for new ways of working, both to deal with the resource constraints and access challenges in insecure environments where remote management is being employed, e.g. parts of Syria. The responses have also seen the trialling of major cash responses, e.g. in Lebanon by UNICEF as well as many other agencies.

The first ever WHS provided a focus for debate regarding the challenges and opportunities available to the humanitarian community. While there was strong criticism by some for it not addressing some of the key issues relating to tensions, competition and cooperation in the system, it provided an opportunity to raise issues emerging in HIEP (it was a focus for HIEP's influencing work at programme level described in the previous phase of the evaluation). At the summit, leaders made over 3,700 commitments to advance the Agenda for Humanity. Commitments included a focus on bringing together humanitarian and development approaches – partly in response to trends of increasing areas affected by climate change contributing to protracted crises which demand more than a short-term humanitarian response – and also commitments to women and girls in the Leave No One Behind agenda. Maybe the agenda emerging with most energy behind it – at least from donors, including DFID – is the Grand Bargain in which commitments are organised in ten work streams, each co-led by a donor and international organisation. Many workstreams relate to HIEP work areas such as cash (link to CS2), multi-year funding (CS8), localisation (CS1 and CS7) and the participation revolution (CS6). DFID is playing a key role in the Grand Bargain, e.g. co-leading the cash workstream. This provides an opportunity to scale up the influence of HIEP work into the sector.

At national level, the 2015 Aid Strategy continued to be the key framework for DFID. It emphasises the inter-linkage of humanitarian crises, poverty and climate change, the commitment to building resilience to address these, reiterates the UK ambition to maintain a leading role in rapid humanitarian response and that international aid is in the national interest. Since the previous phase of the evaluation, the Humanitarian Reform Policy was developed in which DFID's role as thought-leader has also gained

⁴ The virtual team was renamed the virtual network in 2016/17. Virtual team is used here in this report.

prominence.⁵ A Research Review was published in 2016 in which DFID committed to double its funding of humanitarian research and innovation by 2020⁶. In addition, the HIEP/HRI team gained a project officer (50%) to support with administrative functions and invoice processing. The evaluation considers the relevance and contribution of HIEP in light of this context.

1.5 Timing of the summative evaluation phase

This summative evaluation is taking place in Year 5 of the programme. It is the final of four phases of the evaluation:

- The inception phase was completed over summer 2013
- Formative phase: January to May 2014
- Summative phase: short-term outcomes and learning from September 2015 to February 2016
- Summative phase: intermediate outcomes and learning from September 2017 to March 2018

This final summative evaluation was timed to coincide with a point where a significant number of projects have been completed, so effectiveness and impact may be possible to identify. It was also timed to enable findings to feed into the planning of both the ongoing projects and future humanitarian research and innovation programmes. Finally, the evaluation was sequenced to be complementary to DFID's internal annual review.⁷

A team from Itad undertook the evaluation. The team included lead evaluators for each case study. The full team and their roles are detailed below:

- Teresa Hanley – team leader, lead on case studies 4 and 6, lead on outcomes 1 and 2
- Anna Paterson – lead on case study 3
- Gregory Gleed – lead on case studies 1 and 2
- Isabel Vogel – lead on case studies 5 and 8, lead on outcome 3
- MaryAnn Brocklesby – specialist adviser on gender
- Valsa Shah – specialist adviser on VfM
- Genevieve Groom – lead on quality assurance assessment and support on case study 7
- Roger Few – quality assurance adviser (external)⁸
- Julian Barr – quality assurance adviser (internal Itad)
- Rob Lloyd – project manager and quality assurance (internal Itad) and lead on case study 7

In addition, three national consultants, Ahmed Nofal (Jordan), Hope Kabuchu (Uganda) and Hanin Hamzeh (Jordan) who also supported data collection at country level for case studies 3, 5 and 6 respectively.

⁵ Saving Lives, Building Resilience, Reforming the System: the UK Government's Humanitarian Reform Policy, September 2017.

⁶ DFID Research Review, October 2016.

⁷ However, DFID experienced delays in finalising products from the 2017 Annual Review so this review was not accessible to the evaluation.

⁸ In this phase of the evaluation, Roger Few quality assured the methodology and evaluation tools to avoid any conflict of interest. The findings and report were quality assured by Itad processes.

1.6 Update on recommendations from first summative phase

The last phase of the evaluation concluded that HIEP was on track to meet the outputs detailed in the ToC and to promote awareness of its evidence and new innovations, particularly in the international community. However, the programme's potential to achieve results further up the ToC was being restricted by a number of factors that have arisen consistently throughout the evaluation so far. These include:

- The need for greater levels of investment of resources beyond the production of evidence
- Resourcing of the Secretariat (HRI team) and limitations on time of virtual team members for HIEP
- Lack of development of important support tools, including an influencing strategy which states key priorities and could guide virtual team initiatives in the interest of HIEP collective outcomes and better maximise the potential impact of the full resources of HIEP
- The need to ensure GASI is considered more consistently

The recommendations from the previous evaluation undertaken in 2017 are below in summary with the DFID response. The extent to which there has been progress in relation to each recommendation is discussed in the relevant section of this report.

Table 1: Recommendations from HIEP summative evaluation one and DFID response

Recommendation		DFID Response
1	Revisit partner communication and research uptake plans and consider increases in budgets and extending contracts for longer-term communication.	Agreed
2	Schedule, develop and resource specific strategies to guide virtual team actions to support each HIEP outcome.	Agreed need for an influencing strategy
3	Extend partner contracts for at least one year beyond their current end point to ensure they track and maintain monitoring data on research uptake essential to be able to see the medium-term results of HIE.	Partially accepted – to be reviewed on a case by case basis
4	Set up systems for better monitoring of VfM within HIEP.	Agreed
5	Develop and contract out a HIEP communication project or set of projects to promote uptake and application of HIEP findings particularly at the <u>national and regional levels</u> .	Partially agreed – to be considered in the influencing strategy
6	Strengthen HIEP's approach to implementing its commitments to GASI.	Agreed
7	Strengthen systems for ring-fencing, managing and rewarding adviser and programme manager time spent on HIEP project management.	Agreed but early consultations indicated it was not viable. Will seek alternative ways

Recommendation		DFID Response
8	Consider a specific project to build research capacity in priority humanitarian countries.	Not accepted – DFID noted it is needed but is beyond the scope of HIEP
9	Respond to case study recommendations through lead adviser and project team meetings. HIEP Secretariat should log and track responses.	Agreed

2 Methodology

2.1 Overview

The HIEP evaluation is theory based. It uses the HIEP ToC as the framework to assess progress and implementation strategies. The evaluation is organised around the four evaluation questions agreed at inception:

- **Relevance:** How well has HIEP identified and responded to evolving priority needs and opportunities for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation?
- **Effectiveness:** Which approaches have been more effective in enabling HIEP to ensure the creation, support and application of high-quality and relevant humanitarian evidence?
- **Impact:** What contributions has HIEP made to building and sustaining evidence-aware policy and practice by humanitarian organisations?
- **Value for money:** Which management and implementation approaches have enabled HIEP to deliver better VfM?

The formative and first summative phases of the evaluation provided a means to test and refine aspects of the evaluation framework and the ToC.⁹ The ToC for HIEP remained largely unchanged. An evaluation matrix that is aligned with the ToC guides the evaluation. Judgement criteria and indicators for each evaluation question draw on the ToC to ensure coherence between these two frameworks. The evaluation matrix in Annex 5 details the full list of judgement criteria and indicators used.

At the heart of the evaluation is a case study approach. The following section describes the case study methodology in more detail, and this is followed with sections describing the methodology used to assess the HIEP VfM, HIEP's approach to GASi, and its overall relevance, effectiveness and impact.

2.2 Case study approach

2.2.1 The case studies

Eight HIEP projects were identified at the inception phase as case studies.¹⁰ The previous phases tested the appropriateness and feasibility of this selection. The following criteria guided the selection of case studies that were decided upon in consultation with DFID. The range selected aim to:

- Represent major financial investments from HIEP (though not be confined to where the biggest expenditure lies). Altogether the selected case studies represent 66% of the HIEP budget
- Represent new ways of working for DFID
- Enable focus on some key countries
- Enable focus on some key stakeholders, e.g. key donors and implementing agencies

⁹ Both reports available at <https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/evaluation-of-the-humanitarian-innovation-and-evidence-programme-hiep-summative-evaluation-phase-1>

¹⁰ See methodology section of the formative report and inception report for details of the selection criteria. Some case studies include more than one HIEP projects e.g. different rounds of grants to R2HC, HIF and also a group of projects approved under the Scaling up Cash project so actually represent ten HIEP projects from the list of 30.

- Represent a range of starting points in the HIEP timescale with an emphasis on projects which start early in the programme lifecycle
- Enable the evaluation process to examine the contribution of the projects to the overall programme aims and outcomes (i.e. levels of the ToC)
- Represent a range of different research types (primary, secondary, research, evaluation, operational etc.)
- Represent a range of different types of project structure/partnership, e.g. narrow by contract or broad partnerships

The first summative phase in 2015–16 focused particularly on relevance questions and progress and strategies for effectiveness and, where appropriate, impact questions. In this phase, more emphasis was put on effectiveness and contributions to HIEP impact. VfM of HIEP was considered through a separate process and it included a focus on a sample of four case studies. The case studies are listed in Table 2 below with the most up-to-date budget and end-dates.

Table 2: HIEP evaluation case study projects¹¹

Case Study number	Project	Partner	DFID budget UK £	Dates	VfM focus-summative 2
CS1	Scaling up innovation in disaster risk management in Pakistan (SI-DRM) ¹²	GFDRR	1.55M	8/13–8/15	No
CS2	Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response. A set of projects including:		5.5M total	3/14-1/18	No
	Preventing acute under nutrition using food and cash-based approaches (REFANI)	Consortium ¹³	3.18M		
	Enabling the diffusion of cash-based approaches to emergencies: the role of social protection (SRSP)	OPM	998,500		
	Improving understanding of the institutional framework for delivering cash in emergencies at scale (CaLP)	CaLP	95,000		

¹¹ Based on data submitted by HIEP for project extension in June 2017 and HIEP delivery plan, latest version received 09/17.

¹² Formerly entitled 'Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management'.

¹³ Consortium members are Action Against Hunger, Concern Worldwide, the Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) and the University College London (UCL).

Case Study number	Project	Partner	DFID budget UK £	Dates	VfM focus-summative 2
CS3	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC) – Over 40 grants	Wellcome Trust	13.51M ¹⁴	6/13–12/22	Yes
CS4	Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication ¹⁵	Oxfam and FIC	1.08M	6/13–10/17	No
CS5	Innovation: testing to proof of concept – Humanitarian Innovation Fund – Over 80 grants awarded	Elrha	12.14M	12/12–03/19	Yes
CS6	Secure Access in Volatile Environments	Humanitarian Outcomes	1.6M	9/13–5/17	Yes
CS7	Improving the evidence base on how to work with national and local authorities to improve disaster risk management	IFRC and OPM	1.2M	3/14–12/15	Yes
CS8	Resilience Thematic Evaluation	VALID	2.3M	6/14–15	No

2.2.2 Case study process

Each evaluation case study lead undertook update meetings with DFID and partners in early 2017. Evaluation activities began in earnest from September 2017, including start up meetings with DFID and partners; data collection through document review and interviews¹⁶ with a range of stakeholders; and data analysis against ToC, evaluation questions and criteria and using contribution analysis where appropriate. Draft case study reports were shared with the project partner and DFID lead adviser in December 2017 for feedback, also peer review by an evaluation team member and team leader, and finalised by the end of December.

A ‘lighter touch’ case study process was agreed with DFID for case study 7, for this phase, due to resource constraints of the evaluation team. Data collection and analysis focused on questions that would enable a VfM assessment. The report for this case study is included in Annex 2.

Two of the case studies are funds – CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF – which together have supported more than 120 projects. Both of these have undergone an independent review and evaluation respectively since the last phase of the HIEP evaluation.¹⁷ The evaluation avoided duplicating these processes. A sample of projects was selected in consultation with the project partners to represent (a) a broad range of the fund and different phases/rounds of each funds; (b) a geographical spread; (c) projects where the project team

¹⁴ This represents DFID’s HIEP contribution, not the match funding by Wellcome Trust or an additional contribution of £4 million from Department of Health to be made from April 2018. See Case Study 3 for further details.

¹⁵ HESC has been launched by the implementing partners as the Humanitarian Evidence Programme (HEP) and so may be known externally by this name. In this report the original name agreed internally for DFID allocation of funds is used to avoid confusion with the wider programme, HIEP.

¹⁶ Interview questionnaires were based on the template included in Annex 5 which build on experience of the questionnaires used in the first summative phase.

¹⁷ The R2HC Operational Review is an internal document so has been seen and discussed by the HIEP evaluation team with R2HC but is not explicitly quoted in this evaluation.

can identify results which the HIEP evaluation team will explore through contribution analysis to validate or challenge; and (d) include countries to be visited for the case study.

2.2.3 Country visits

A key component of the summative evaluation was the four country visits to allow more in-depth discussion with national stakeholders. In the first summative phase, the team visited Kenya, Ethiopia and Pakistan. In this phase, each country visit focused on one case study but was also used as an opportunity to explore programme-wide questions and/or a second project. Team members visited Pakistan (CS1 and CS2), Uganda (CS5) and undertook two separate visits to Jordan (CS3 and CS6). These countries were selected in consultation with DFID and project partners based on consideration of a number of factors: first, they are relevant to more than one HIEP project and therefore key to HIEP; second, the projects were at a stage in their implementation where it was appropriate and not disruptive to host an evaluation visit; and third, sufficient stakeholders were likely to be available to meet in a relatively short period of time, usually five days. Logistical issues meant that country visits originally planned for Kenya (unrest due to elections) and Ethiopia and Lebanon (logistical issues) were not made but instead interviews with stakeholders in these countries were carried out by phone/Skype. Some projects were not analysed in depth through a country visit – CS4, CS7 and CS8. In the case of CS4, there was not a country focus to the project as it produced systematic reviews targeting a global audience. In CS7 and CS8, sufficient data could be collected via alternative methods, and in the case of CS8, a country visit to Ethiopia in the first summative phase assisted in this through relationships and contacts made – so the lack of country visits have not had a significant impact on these cases.

2.2.4 Data analysis frameworks

The case studies used a number of frameworks to support analysis of data outlined below. Templates and tools to support analysis are attached in Annex 5.

i) Analysis of quality assurance

A quality assurance (QA) assessment was undertaken using mainly documentary evidence to assess case study projects' QA processes. This was further developed at the start of the second summative phase. The framework draws upon the Social Research Association guidelines '*What is high-quality social research?*',¹⁸ the Government Statistical Service guidelines on statistical quality dimensions,¹⁹ and takes account of the humanitarian context in which the case studies operated. Quality criteria considered were: independent validation; accuracy; comparability; relevance; timeliness and punctuality; accessibility and clarity; and finally, ethics. A Red-Amber-Green rating was assigned to each area of quality along with a brief explanation. The QA assessments were made available to case study leads to draw on during the case study reports. It was agreed with DFID that a full QA assessment would not be done for CS3 and CS5 because they had undergone independent evaluations recently.²⁰ There is a more detailed description of the methodology in Annex 5 and the report for each case study is in Annex 2. Key points were drawn on during the case study reports.

ii) Contribution analysis

Contribution analysis was used to assess project and programme results at outcome level. The process included interviews with DFID personnel and key stakeholders (internal and external) relevant to the reported change and document review to assess:

- a) The validity of the reported change – has it happened?

¹⁸ <http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/what-is-high-quality-social-research.pdf>

¹⁹ https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/docs-nqaf/UK-Guidelines_Subject.pdf

²⁰ In CS3, a full evaluation of quality is yet to be conducted, but will be commissioned by Wellcome.

- b) What did DFID/HIEP do that might have contributed to it?
- c) What other factors contributed to this change?
- d) The strength of the evidence to demonstrate the reported change
- e) The significance of HIEP's contribution

When possible, contribution stories – which are a more in-depth assessment of particular changes or results – were developed in line with a common template and consistent scoring system that took account of the strength of the evidence for the change that had occurred, the significance of the change, and HIEP's contribution to it. These are included in the relevant case study reports (CS3, CS4, CS5 and CS6). Where data was insufficient for a full contribution story, then the logic of contribution analysis was applied to findings on emerging results at outcome level.

Contribution analysis proved a relevant structure to inform data collection and analysis. However, the evaluation was challenged in its full use. This was due to factors including (a) the range of types of change that HIEP contributes to at different levels (in individual organisations, different sub-sectors, national and international); (b) the large number of informants that would ideally be required to interrogate the range of factors influencing any one change; and (c) the wide range of stakeholders the evaluation needed to engage with to cover all the evaluation questions. As a result, the team adapted the methodology and, while drawing heavily on its logic and structure to ensure a systematic and consistent approach across case studies and outcome level, used a more light-touch approach.

iii) Analysis against the ToC

Each case study was analysed against the HIEP ToC. This assessed the results of each case study against each level of the ToC detailing (a) the outputs (research and innovation products), skills development and partnerships; (b) behaviour changes of debate, advocacy, operational endorsement and changes in DFID funding stimulated by the project; and c) contributions to HIEP's three outcomes in relation to funding instruments, humanitarian actor skills and relationships for regular integration of evidence, and by policy and practice actors into innovations that benefit poor people affected by humanitarian crises.

iv) Case study scoring

Case studies were scored against each of the evaluation questions using the scoring system developed and trialled in earlier phases of the evaluation. This methodology facilitates comparison across the case studies and helps to identify patterns. This was the first phase that scoring was used at the impact level and more projects were well into the stages where aspects of effectiveness could be judged. Based on experience, some adjustments were made to the scoring system to ensure its consistency and robustness, e.g. the weighting of different evidence criteria. These are detailed in the relevant section in the tables summarising findings and scores for each case study (effectiveness and impact).

v) Social network analysis

The original evaluation plan envisaged using social network analysis but earlier phases found it difficult to use. The challenges to hold HIEP project team workshops at inception – given project teams' dispersal across many countries and later lack of success with the stakeholder diary tool at DFID adviser and HRI team level – made this difficult. Instead, the evaluation undertook stakeholder analysis in earlier phases of the evaluation and aimed for coverage of these types of stakeholder in interviews.

2.3 Thematic analysis

We considered the evaluation against two themes running through the case study projects and wider programme. These were VfM and HIEP's consideration of GASI.

2.3.1 Value for money

The evaluation used the 4E framework (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity) to evaluate VfM. We carried out the analysis through detailed work on four case studies – CS3, CS5, CS6, and CS7 – as well as analysis of programme-level data. The four projects represent a range of ways of working and include the two large funds (R2HC and HIF) supported by HIEP, and represent their largest grants, one project with a key capacity-building element (CS7), and a multi-country research project working in some of the most inaccessible humanitarian environments (CS6). The selected projects allow for analysis and learning from the different models of management and implementation that was applied across HIEP and an assessment of their relative VfM.

The formative phase had a focus on the procurement process and the use of VfM criteria in selecting HIEP projects. In the first summative phase, there was a focus on the monitoring and management of VfM including a comparison of its costs to another model.

In this phase, we consider at programme level (a) developments in how VfM is monitored across the programme; (b) revisit the comparison in costs made with another programme in the previous evaluation phase; and (c) leveraging and additionality – we consider the additional funds that HIEP is able to leverage from other donors.

2.3.2 Gender and social inclusion (GASI)

GASI was assessed through an audit of the extent to which HIEP:

- Incorporates a gendered understanding of the needs and interests of targeted social groups, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, in the design and implementation of the research
- Ensures the intended/actual research outputs captured and reported on the differentiated interests of women, men and marginalised groups
- Promotes the GASI dimensions of their partnerships and networks and, where appropriate, the gendered dimensions of capacity building southern actors

The GASI evaluation methodology comprised three components:

- **Mainstreaming of GASI issues through all aspects of the final summative evaluation.** Specific and targeted GASI judgement criteria and indicators were integrated into the evaluation frameworks for the case studies and programmatic evaluation
- **Refresh and revision of the GASI audit matrix** developed and implemented during the first summative evaluation through harvesting data from the case study documentation, management meetings reports, quarterly reports, annual reviews and other relevant HIEP/case study internal documents
- **Ground-truthing of findings through** team discussions, tele-interviews and email exchanges with case study leads and HRI team using interview checklists to assess the extent to which, and how, strategies, mechanisms and processes used to address GASI more effectively had evolved across HIEP and the case studies

The GASI audit is an adapted gender audit²¹ and has been designed to evaluate the implementation of GASI issues into the policies, strategies, processes and outputs of HIEP. The formative phase enabled the refinement of the audit matrix to be appropriate to HIEP through an initial GASI assessment at that phase of case study and programme design and progress. The first summative phase completed an audit of projects and HIEP at the programme level and this was updated in this summative phase.

2.3.3 Impact

The evaluation assesses impact by considering HIEP's contribution to its intended outcomes laid out in the HIEP ToC. A lead team member undertook the following process to assess progress towards each of the three HIEP outcomes.

Step 1 – Interviews with the HRI team to identify key changes they identified at the outcome level

Step 2 – Mapped data from case studies and interviews against outcomes using an evidence table

Step 3 – Environment scanning – We undertook interviews with external and, where relevant, internal stakeholders to assess key trends relevant to HIEP. We also explored their perspective on some of the changes that could be identified in relation to HIEP outcomes. This included exploring alternative explanations for the change as well as perspectives on DFID's contribution to the change

Step 4 – Identified trends and patterns in how the HIEP projects and programme contributed to each outcome. Based on our evidence we assessed (a) the extent of change; (b) scale of HIEP contribution; and we (c) considered alternative arguments for the change and factors which enabled or inhibited the change, as well as the strength of evidence supporting our assessments. Definitions of the assessment scales used are below in Box 2

Step 5 – Validation of case study scoring through team discussions at evaluation team meeting and evaluation outcome leads cross-referencing

Step 6 – Development of narrative considering HIEP activities and strategies to achieve outcome-level change; evidence of change and HIEP's contribution; external trends and factors enabling or inhibiting change (including counter-arguments to HIEP's contribution) and overall assessment of progress towards the anticipated changes (outcomes) and HIEP's contribution

Box 2: Definitions of scale of change and contribution

Assessment definition – change:

Significant change – evidence that change has scale, depth and sustainability

Established change – evidence of change at scale and sustainability of change

Emerging change – evidence of pockets of change, but not widespread

Early change – evidence of limited examples of change

No evidence of change

Assessment of the significance of DFID's contribution

Assessment definition:

1: Evidence that programme made a crucial contribution

²¹ 'Gender audit' is a generic term for a process used to identify organisational as well as programmatic strengths and challenges in integrating gender in an organisation's systems and operations, and in programmes and projects. There is no standardised methodology or tools for a gender audit, although approaches and processes used to conduct an audit are broadly similar. See Moser (2005).

- 2: Evidence that HIEP made an important contribution alongside other factors and initiatives
- 3: Evidence that HIEP made some/moderate contribution
- 4: Evidence that the HIEP intervention made very little or no contribution

2.4 Data analysis and conclusions

The evaluation team used a number of tools to support our analysis of data. We:

- Used information grids to collate case study data around the evaluation matrix questions and analyse it against the judgement criteria
- Undertook additional analysis of case studies against the ToC levels and separately identified factors which contributed to, or constrained, the case study's relevance, effectiveness and impact, and identified lessons for other projects
- Considered the results of the case study analyses across evaluation questions, levels of the ToC and factors contributing/constraining success to identify patterns, trends and stand-out examples for closer review for lessons
- Assessed outcomes by mapping case study and other reported changes against the theory of change and assessing them by the scale of the change, the scale of HIEP's contribution based on judgements of the extent of documentation and interview evidence to support them, and also the strength of the evidence was weighted
- Peer reviewed judgements and conclusions at both case study and outcome level and discussed as a team to ensure consistency




2.5 Selection of evaluation interviewees

Interviews with internal and external stakeholders formed a major part of data gathering for HIEP both for case studies and also programme-level analysis. In this phase, we interviewed 277 individuals making a total of 612 across the three phases of formative and two summative evaluation phases (see Table 3 for a distribution of interviews and a full list in Annex 3). Interviewees included DFID lead advisers, partners, advisory group members, participants in HIEP workshops or consultation processes, and relevant stakeholders that use HIEP evidence and products. Interviewees were also included as key informants and experts in aspects relevant to HIEP such as in evidence, innovation and humanitarian sector trends. Interviewees for each case study included people able to provide methodological, operational, and national as well as international perspectives. This range was important given the programme's desire to produce robust evidence and also to achieve change in operational policy and practice.

Stakeholders were identified through initial consultation with DFID and project partners; through review of HIEP documentation, e.g. attendance lists for workshops and consultations; and then through a snowball effect based on recommendations and the evaluation team's knowledge of the sector. The previous evaluation phase included an emphasis on people with knowledge of HIEP, which meant there was potential for a positive bias in evaluation findings. In this phase, a greater proportion of interviewees had limited, if any, contact with HIEP, though this also presented challenges to assess HIEP's contribution to identified changes. Country visits enabled a much larger spread of national stakeholders.

The original plan outlined in the inception phase envisaged a constant key informant group for interviews at outcome level. Instead, the evaluation found it more useful to identify a set of key informants at each round that related to areas we were exploring. This also allowed us to cope with change in personnel within the sector over the five-year time of the evaluation.

Table 3: HIEP evaluation schedule and key components²²

HIEP evaluation schedule and key components			
	 Document reviews	 Interviewees	 Country visit
Inception phase 2013 and project	Formative 2014	Summative phase 1 2015-16	Summative phase 2 2017-18
CS1 - SI-DRM Scaling up Innovation in Disaster Risk Management in Pakistan	● Document review ● 13 Interviewees	● Document review ● 35 Interviewees ● Country visit Pakistan	● Document review ● 15 Interviewees ● Country visit Pakistan
CS2 Scaling up cash responses Expanding the Use of Cash Transfers in Emergency Response	● Document review ● 11 Interviewees	● Document review ● 38 Interviewees	● Document review ● 36 Interviewees ● Country visit Pakistan
CS3 R2HC Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises	● Document review ● 9 interviewees	● Document review ● 25 Interviewees	● Document review ● 55 Interviewees ● Country visit Jordan (Syria response)
CS4 HESC Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication	● Document review ● 6 Interviewees	● Document review ● 22 Interviewees	● Document review ● 31 Interviewees
CS5 HIF Innovation: Testing to Proof of Concept	● Document review ● 10 Interviewees	● Document review ● 22 Interviewees ● Country visit Kenya	● Document review ● 40 Interviewees ● Country visit Uganda
CS6 SAVE Secure access in volatile environments	● Document review ● 15 Interviewees	● Document review ● 31 Interviewees ● Country visit Kenya (Somalia response)	● Document review ● 30 Interviewees ● Country visit Jordan (Syria response)
CS7 DRM Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	● Document review ● 4 Interviewees	● Document review ● 19 Interviewees	● Document review ● 17 Interviewees
CS8 Multi-year financing Resilience thematic evaluation	● Document review ● 4 Interviewees	● Document review ● 21 Interviewees ● Country visit Ethiopia	● Document review ● 24 Interviewees
Programme level Inception phase included: • 2 theory of change workshops with DFID • 4 meetings with Secretariat • plus meetings with 4 project team leads and advisory group members	● 23 Interviewees • Outcome-level change • GASi assessment • VfM • HIEP programme management	● 30 Interviewees • Outcome-level change • GASi audit • VfM assessment • Programme management	● 29 Interviewees • Outcome-level change • GASi audit • VfM assessment • Programme management
Total interviewees per phase	95	243	277

²² Interviewee numbers refer to individuals – a number of people were interviewed more than once in each phase but are only counted once.

2.6 Evaluation management and quality assurance

The methodology for the final summative evaluation was finalised in June 2017. This was quality assured by both the external QA adviser Roger Few and the Itad project manager Rob Lloyd. The final methodology was signed off by the DFID evaluation adviser following consultation with the evaluation steering committee in September 2017. The evaluation team leader kept close contact with DFID's evaluation adviser and HRI team to update on developments including any challenges encountered in the evaluation, e.g. changes to country visit plan.

Before the start of data collection, the evaluation team worked together to develop common templates and tools for the case studies and the different components of the thematic analysis. The evaluation team leader was in regular contact with all team members and reviewed the draft reports from case study and thematic leads during the course of the evaluation. Draft case study narrative reports were reviewed by DFID lead advisers and project partners as well as an evaluation team member peer reviewer and the team leader, who additionally reviewed the case study scorings and analysis (e.g. against the ToC). Changes were made to case study scorings when required to ensure consistency in approach. The overall draft report and annexes was reviewed by the DFID evaluation adviser, HIEP evaluation steering committee, HRI team and within the DFID Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service (EQUALS).

2.7 Constraints

The evaluation faced three key constraints.

a) Outcomes are defined in broad terms making impact hard to identify

The HIEP outcomes are not defined in very specific or focused terms, e.g. with geographical, sectoral or organisational priority areas. The ToC describes change at outcome level in very broad terms and this has not been further defined in any influencing strategy yet, despite recommendations made by the evaluation team which were accepted. At least two strategies have been drafted over the five years but not finalised. A draft strategy is being worked on in HRI team at the time of this final summative phase.

At the same time, HIEP's portfolio is wide in scope with country-based activities in more than 34 countries, and across multiple sectors including: health, WASH, nutrition, shelter, financing of humanitarian assistance and risk management, innovation, education, energy, and protracted crises, to name some at the policy and practice levels. HIEP aims to produce findings relevant to global, regional, national and local humanitarian actors. Research uptake strategies for many projects are ambitious – but often not very specific; encompassing local, national and international actors in a range of different policy and practice roles. This makes it difficult to identify where to focus the evaluation data gathering to analyse DFID's contribution to change.

To address the challenge, the team undertook interviews with case study project leads and the HRI team to identify results at outcome level which they had observed. A number of these reported changes were at early stages and also spread across many countries making primary data gathering difficult; furthermore some were not at the ToC outcome level. The evaluation team did consider reported changes where feasible (12 in total were shared), but as they were provided only after country visits had been organised and largely did not align with countries selected, we were not able to probe any in detail at country level. To a large extent the evaluation, therefore, had to rely on results that the evaluation team could identify directly during the case studies as well as collected through documentary evidence and related other processes (e.g. HIF evaluation of 2017), but this limited our ability to conduct a systematic contribution analysis of reported changes as planned and wide data gathering to validate the reported changes and scale of HIEP contribution.

b) Lack of data relating to outcome-level change and DFID influencing activities

A second challenge was accessing some data required for the evaluation methodology. At the case study level, project partners' systems for capturing outcome level data varied, e.g. citations of reports. Some had very good systems with detailed impact logs (e.g. CS2–SRPS and CS6). Others did not (notably CS1 and CS5). But partners who maintained detailed documentation sustained this only during their contract period. This was an issue flagged by the evaluation at earlier phases of the evaluation. For example, a recommendation was made in the summative phase 1 that DFID should extend partners' contracts for at least 12 months for them to continue to monitor impact. While a number of project contracts were extended, these have been mainly used to complete project activities including some uptake activities, not for continuing to monitor impact after completion. It should be noted that project extensions have become increasingly difficult within DFID now needing 12 months notice of an extension.

There was also limited data covering DFID's own activities, a key part of the ToC that the evaluation explores. We trialled stakeholder diaries with DFID advisers earlier in the evaluation process, but this was not successful, and there is no regular HIEP reporting of advisers influencing activity linked to HIEP. The evaluation, therefore, had to rely on adviser recall, though this was further challenged by the level of turnover of advisers in quite a number of projects. Some anticipated programme-level data was also not available to the evaluation or made available late in the process after the main data gathering and analysis took place. This included DFID reporting against the HIEP logframe for 2017 (which was only against outputs, not outcomes), and we had no access to any draft or final annual Review for 2017 or minutes of the 2017 advisory group meeting. However, 2017 project reports were made available and were useful.

c) Challenges to VfM analysis

Assessing value for money in research and innovation is challenging due in particular to the long-term nature of research and innovation processes to achieve change and so also presenting challenges when making judgements on effectiveness, necessary when using the 4E framework. Particular challenges faced in this evaluation included that (a) HIEP project budgets are not constructed against a common template so making it difficult to compare costs across projects, e.g. CS7 included some research uptake costs in its administration budget lines; and (b) constructing an accurate model of HIEP costs proved difficult. We had challenges throughout the process to access data on time inputs of the virtual team to HIEP. We tried to collect virtual team time data through questionnaires and group meetings in earlier phases of the evaluation but with very limited success, so we did not repeat these methods. Furthermore, turnover in advisers and closure of half of HIEP's projects (at least in terms of partner contracts) made this data gathering even more difficult in this phase. When we did receive input on time spent on HIEP it was very approximate based on team recall. Turnover of advisers combined with changes in the management of HIEP projects over time, e.g. with the HRI team taking on additional roles in directly managing HIEP projects and later non-HIEP projects, made it difficult to construct an accurate model of costs to compare with a similar project. We urge caution in how these figures are used but they do provide a useful indication of the level of investment into HIEP management in relation to its scale.

d) Challenges to access country-level stakeholders when projects have closed

Accessing country-level stakeholders was challenging particularly when projects had finished. A number of the HIEP projects had ended along with partners' contracts. While many of the partners were extremely helpful in facilitating contacts (e.g. for CS2 and CS6), at least one partner provided notably limited support (CS1) and in this case the evaluation was not able to access key stakeholders in the government of Pakistan and the World Bank itself (project partner), which limited the evaluation team's ability to validate reported results. High levels of turnover at national level meant that many key stakeholders particularly in international organisations (but also government and local roles) had moved on. Successors sometimes provided interviews but were less able to comment on HIEP's direct contributions to their work. We did manage to identify a large number of relevant interviewees active in the areas addressed by HIEP projects who could comment on change and factors leading to this.

2.8 Lessons

a) Theory-based approach

The theory-based approach worked well. This was aided by alignment of the ToC and the evaluation matrix, i.e. judgement criteria draw on the ToC. In addition, the HIEP logframe and ToC were aligned to some extent. Projects that began later in the life of HIEP used a template based on the logframe, which helped provide data relevant to the HIEP evaluation, although mainly against the output rather than the outcome level. However, the factor that was probably most supportive was that by and large the ToC was found to be relevant and robust. If the theory had major shortcomings it is likely the theory-based approach would have needed to change. The phased approach to the evaluation was useful as a chance to check this.

b) Case study approach

The case study approach worked well as a means to look in depth at aspects of HIEP. This was important given the wide range of subjects and approaches it tackles. But it limited the resources available to look at HIEP more broadly, including at new projects coming on board. The methodology could have been strengthened by having more rotation of case studies. For example, while following over time projects with a large allocation of resources (e.g. the two funds CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF), other projects could have been rotated through each of the summative phases. This would have had resource implications because there were efficiencies in cumulative learning in the evaluation team (enabled by a high level of continuity in the evaluation team) but it would have provided a greater spread.

An advantage of the case study approach was the ability of the evaluation to provide direct feedback to individual projects that supported its learning role. Building on learning from the formative phase a new step was introduced into both summative phases to share case study findings and recommendations at the draft stage. These both provided an opportunity for the evaluation to validate its findings as well as an opportunity to feedback to project partners and DFID on the individual projects. There is some anecdotal evidence that this was appreciated (CS6 and CS4 feedback, reference to the HIEP evaluation in CS5 and its use in the later more in-depth evaluation they commissioned).

c) Timing

The evaluation was made up of four phases with the final phase taking place during what had been intended to be the final year of the programme, with the original business cases scheduled to end by November 2018. Due to the combination of a slow start to HIEP fund disbursement and the increase in its budget, the final phase of the evaluation took place when 14 HIEP projects were still underway and it was too early to identify impact. At the same time half of the projects had closed, some by more than two years, and the team faced difficulties in accessing data and interviewees for these projects. Consequently, on reflection, the timing of this phase was appropriate; but DFID may wish to consider how best to capture the overall impact of HIEP with the results and learning yet to come in the remaining years of its implementation and beyond. Some evaluation team recommendations are in the final chapter of the report on conclusions and recommendations.

3 Relevance



How well has HIEP identified and responded to evolving priority needs and opportunities for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation?

Key findings: HIEP is a highly relevant initiative addressing key issues affecting humanitarian action and people impacted by humanitarian crises. The responsive approach taken in HIEP, which has included bringing on new projects over its lifetime and adapting project methodologies when necessary, has ensured it is focused on important challenges and evidence needs both identified in HERR and emerging since as crises evolved. HIEP projects have demonstrated that a range of methods are feasible and can produce high-quality evidence. Flexibility and strong QA processes at design phase have been important, particularly when new methods are being devised to cope with humanitarian contexts. But some challenges remain, including gaining access to data and due to the quality of existing data. Overall, the HIEP portfolio focuses well on the first three problems identified by the HIES relating to the generation, accessibility and synthesis of relevant evidence, but it has not substantially addressed the fourth problem which relates to the lack of incentives and blockages to use of evidence in the sector.

3.1 Introduction

The summative evaluation considers the relevance of HIEP and its projects in relation to needs, opportunities and its alignment with other initiatives. The judgement criteria are listed below.²³

Judgement criteria

- Extent to which HIEP programme and projects responded to needs identified in HERR and HIES, and other emerging needs and opportunities to invest in humanitarian evidence and innovation
- Extent to which the programme and project design is appropriate to address needs and opportunities
- Extent to which HIEP harmonises with other relevant institutional, sectoral and country-based initiatives and opportunities

In this section we present the key findings from the case studies, drawing from these and wider considerations of HIEP to reflect on its performance in relation to the judgement criteria. We also identify learning strategies to ensure the relevance of humanitarian research and innovation. We end with our conclusions.

²³ The evaluation matrix in Annex 3 has details of indicators that guide assessment and use of the judgement criteria.



3.2 Findings

3.2.1 Summary of case study findings

Table 4 below summarises the findings from each of the eight case studies. In each case study, the evidence collected was analysed and an overall performance score for ‘relevance’ was assigned in a process detailed in section 2.2.4. Final scores are also listed in the table. Further detail on each of the case studies can be found in the individual case reports (Annex 2).

Table 4: Summary of case study findings: relevance

*Explanation of scoring scale: ²⁴	
High	There is strong evidence of progress to demonstrate relevance against all criteria
Medium	There is some evidence of progress to demonstrate relevance against two or more criteria
Low	There is some but limited evidence to demonstrate relevance
None	No strategy or evidence in place

Case study	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
CS1. Scaling up Innovation in Disaster Risk Management in Pakistan²⁵	Medium	The project applied a risk assessment methodology and process already developed by the World Bank in Indonesia into this more fragile context of Pakistan. It is highly appropriate for a country experiencing recurrent shocks and which needs a system to assess risks and finance preparedness measures. The project design of a participatory process was suitable to support change in the country context, though the time required for data collection was underestimated so the timeframe was extended. Its consideration of GASl issues in risk was not developed. Changes in government positions undermined the sustainability of some outputs.
CS2. Expanding the Use of Cash Transfers in Emergency Response	Medium	This set of projects focused on approaches to and impacts of scaling up cash approaches in humanitarian response – a key debate in the sector evidenced for instance in the WHS and Grand Bargain discussions. The needs for evidence on scaling cash approaches for nutrition (REFANI) and social protection (SRPS) was confirmed in the two projects’ own evidence review processes. A challenge faced in the design of the projects was to be able to compare data between countries – due in part to efforts to adapt to country context priorities and needs. SRPS outputs, both in terms of recommendations (which target decision makers) and range of products (animation, toolkit, reports and policy briefs) are relevant to a range of audience and decision makers. REFANI findings are less conclusive partly due to the design challenges so are of less relevance to operational decision makers and some outputs are more technical and academic in orientation. Projects have made good

²⁴ Detailed explanation of the scoring system is in the methodology section in Annex 3.

²⁵ Formerly known as Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management.

Case study	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
		links with national initiatives in countries of research and globally, particularly through cluster structures, with access to these aided for REFANI by the consortium approach.
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	High	R2HC remains squarely focused on the health evidence problems and gaps identified in the evidence reviews that were carried out in 2013 and updated in 2015. Good relationships with key actors including WASH, Health and Nutrition clusters and World Health Organization (WHO) help keep these up to date. R2HC has not yet addressed some areas of need due to lack of high-quality proposals, e.g. communicable and non-communicable diseases (beyond Ebola). Targeted calls (Ebola and nutrition/food security) and processes to build a more linked set of projects (e.g. Jordan research forum) have been a positive development responding to current humanitarian priorities. R2HC is proactively harmonising with relevant institutional, sectoral initiatives, for example with the WHO on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions, and in the prioritisation work with the WASH cluster. Harmonisation with needs and initiatives within DFID has been a continued challenge.
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	High	The eight systematic reviews/evidence syntheses respond to questions identified in the sector in the 3ie gap and prioritisation process and through sector-specific consultations. The reviews methodology was appropriately adapted to the humanitarian sector, e.g. to incorporate grey literature and judged as high quality by key informants including academics. There was some connection to other initiatives in the sector including those in the 'evidence community', e.g. processes leading to and following on from WHS to raise awareness of evidence needs and challenges. Some links were made with sectoral initiatives too, particularly Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) structures (e.g. WASH, shelter and protection clusters). Products are accessible (evidence brief, executive summary and report).
CS5. Innovation: Testing to Proof of Concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	Medium	HIF projects and outputs are operationally relevant, although more incremental than transformative. The lack of portfolio-level learning in the core grants limits overall learning on humanitarian challenge. In contrast, the WASH portfolio addresses specific challenges and produces structured research on these. The HIF as a whole has continued relevance but has been slow to adapt to new trends including the growth in the number of other innovation funds, although HIF has caught up with a new strategy in 2017, following its own evaluation. However, recommendations made at the first summative phase to ramp up the synthesis of portfolio lessons and to implement a systematic approach to GASI have not yet been acted on. HIF complements other initiatives, e.g. R2HC, and is moving towards more collaboration, e.g. with Asia Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN).

Case study	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	High	SAVE addresses priority issues. Stakeholders note the growing profile and scale of issues addressed by SAVE of challenges to humanitarian access, coverage and quality in conflict areas. It responded to emerging needs and opportunities, e.g. in accountability and country stakeholder requests. A strong project design was aided by the inception phase, methodology conference and adaptability during the project. SAVE maintained good links with other initiatives and tailored products to different audiences.
CS7. Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	High	The project produced important and relevant evidence on what works and why when building the capacity of national and local institutions to manage disaster risk in a range of contexts, aligning well with identified gaps and needs. The study design was robust though lacked some quantitative data. Links were made with other initiatives including the debate that emerged around localisation in the lead up to the WHS and processes in the IFRC to develop a common approach to capacity development. However, to remain relevant to current policy debates the research could be reframed to focus on humanitarian preparedness and response, rather than DRM.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	High	There is strong evidence that the evaluation of DFID's multi-year financing instrument and study of people's resilience in protracted crises retains relevance and has adjusted its design in response to the changing context. Regular stakeholder engagement and interim products have supported adaptation and relevance.

3.2.2 Responsiveness to need and opportunity

HIEP portfolio focuses on key humanitarian issues and evidence both those identified initially in HERR and others emerging since as crises evolved. Previous evaluation phases confirmed that HIEP projects all responded to needs identified by HERR and research questions were further refined within projects through evidence reviews and consultation processes. A number of HIEP project focus areas have grown in importance in the sector. These include the increased range of humanitarian contexts which have limited access due to insecurity (CS6), an increase in the number of protracted crises (CS8 and HIEP's work on protracted displacement) and escalating food insecurity in Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan and East Africa (CS2 and CS3). The focus of newer projects in the HIEP portfolio responds to more specific aspects of some of these trends' needs, notably the Moving Energy Initiative and a set of education-related projects in displacement contexts. HRI Team has also initiated work as part of HIEP in areas before they became high profile, e.g. with work relevant to the localisation agenda (CS7), multi-year financing (CS8), scaling up of cash-based responses (CS2), protracted crises (CS8 and protracted displacement project) indicating a strong 'finger on the pulse'. This has been aided by a responsive approach with new projects coming on board over the lifetime of HIEP and a wide-ranging programme portfolio.

HIEP portfolio focuses well on the first three problems identified by the HIES but has not designed measures that significantly address the fourth problem relating to use of evidence. HIEP projects have focused on the production and synthesis of evidence relating to risk, what works in humanitarian action and to synthesis of evidence, i.e. on addressing problems of evidence gaps, availability and access. This is valuable but overlooks the original problem identified by HIES of the lack of incentives in humanitarian agencies to use evidence. Other parts of DFID have undertaken some work to explore this resistance to

change and found institutional or political economy barriers to change in DFID partners, e.g. as they protect their ‘territory’ and established ways of working.²⁶ These obstacles are identified in the HIEP ToC and reflect findings of HIEP projects encountering obstacles blocking greater scaling up and application of research due to competition between agencies, obstacles to newcomers entering into humanitarian assistance, and agency ‘territory’ being protected as well as practical impediments due to different internal processes and procedures in agencies. The HIEP portfolio does not include activities to address the fourth problem highlighted in the original strategy or in the ToC relating to the inadequate systems for the regular integration and lack of incentives to use evidence in the sector. This shows a HIEP design that focuses on the production of research and making it accessible – an approach which emphasises supply. This is an issue that we will discuss further in the sections on effectiveness and impact. However, it is a noticeable gap in the overall design of the programme as it has evolved.

HIEP projects’ design has on the whole been robust and dealt well with the challenges of research in humanitarian contexts, demonstrating a range of methods are feasible and can produce robust evidence. Some key factors that have aided project design have been an appropriate selection of countries in which to carry out primary research, robust protocols and close support to field teams during data gathering and analysis (summarised in Box 3 below). Inception phases that enabled detailed development of methodologies, their piloting and refinement, along with strong QA process and input from methodological experts have been important (e.g. CS2–SRPS, CS4 and CS7). HIEP projects have demonstrated that research in humanitarian contexts can reach standards set for other types of context including the use of randomised control trials and approaches to systematic reviews (adapted to the challenges of data availability on humanitarian contexts and therefore including grey literature). However, they have also shown that other research methods can produce robust findings (e.g. CS8 and CS6), opening up acceptance to more qualitative and adapted processes as a means of generating systematic and robust evidence.

Box 3: Factors which support design of robust research in humanitarian settings

- Robust protocols to guide data collection teams and support an ethical and secure approach
- Close support to field teams through training and during data gathering and analysis to help with dilemmas faced in the field
- Inception phases which include piloting of methods
- Strong quality assurance processes including input from methodological experts
- Flexibility to adapt to changes in context

HIEP projects have benefited from flexible project responses as humanitarian crises evolved. Some contextual changes have had a direct impact on HIEP projects requiring project design adaptations. For example, there has been a growth in multi-year financing by more donors, partly due to the increased debate about the humanitarian-development nexus, particularly in protracted crises. In response, CS8, which was originally exploring the benefit of multi-year financing for a community’s resilience, adapted to have more focus on understanding affected people’s experience of crisis and resilience and how financing can better support this. In another example, CS3 responded to donor requests for evidence in relation to specific crises with focused calls for proposals relating to the East Africa food insecurity and by encouraging proposals on the Syria crises in an open call. The flexibility in CS6 project design allowed the project to adjust schedules for data collection in response to changes in levels of security in-country.

²⁶ Research commissioned by CHASE Humanitarian Partnerships and Policy Department into barriers to change.

HIEP project teams strengthened their research designs through adaptation and learning. This has been key in the introduction of gender or inclusion specific research themes in relation to emerging data gaps. For example, VALID (CS8), in response to emerging data on the differential impacts of climatic and economic shocks in Sudan and Pakistan, developed a gender-specific research theme, and CS7 introduced a gender dimension to its methodology following the inception phase, and identified shortcomings. HIEP funds (R2HC and HIF) have benefited from a learning approach with an evaluation of CS5 HIF in 2017, catalysing the development of a new strategy in response to weaknesses identified, including a number flagged by HIEP evaluation in earlier phases. Both CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF have evolved their approaches to calls for proposals to increase the potential of more clustering of projects around specific themes. For instance, through focused calls or encouraging particular questions or issues to be addressed, e.g. WASH in HIF. Activities like a research forum, such as that held by CS3 R2HC in Jordan, have proved effective at generating more proposals from the region. Both funds also reviewed the structure and nature of their staffing and have made changes to this over time.

HIEP projects have prepared valuable learning pieces on methodology for research in humanitarian contexts, though so far these have not been drawn together across the programme. Examples include CS3 work on health research ethics for humanitarian contexts including a guide and review of ethical challenges faced by 26 of its grantees. This will provide a practical resource with learning on methodological challenges. Also, significant are the project products from CS4 with reflections on methodological challenges and solutions for systematic reviews in the humanitarian sector and an 3ie learning brief for conducting impact evaluations in humanitarian settings. These have often been additional outputs produced by partners, but not necessarily a planned output. There is an opportunity for the HRI team to pull together the different learning pieces already produced as well as to gather other learning not documented from across all HIEP partners. Some key products are summarised in Box 4 below.

Box 4: Learning products on research on humanitarian evidence

- Research ethics tools – R2HC²⁷
- Methodological challenges and learning on systematic reviews²⁸
- 3ie learning brief on impact evaluations²⁹
- There is potential to draw together learning from other HIEP partners including from their field experience on issues including (a) GASI and (b) addressing perceptions of extractive processes through feedback

A strength of some HIEP projects is their long-term study of communities but there is some evidence this can cause community frustration. In one case study (CS8) we found research teams had to adapt their longitudinal panel methodology which involved repeated visits to communities over time. The team faced hostility when returning for repeat visits because the communities argued no change in humanitarian assistance – or other measures – had occurred due to their participation in the research, and they were frustrated to be asked similar questions again. In response, the team adjusted their methodology to focus on different aspects. However, this project is a good response to the lack of long-term research in humanitarian contexts.³⁰ Projects that were directly linked to ongoing operations (e.g. CS2–REFANI, most of CS3 and CS5 grantees) do not seem to have faced this issue, nor of course those

²⁷ <http://www.elrha.org/r2hc/research/other-research/ethics-review/>

²⁸ Kyrstal, R. et al. *Improving humanitarian evidence: reflecting on systemic reviews in the humanitarian field* – (working titles) Unpublished paper submitted to Disasters for publication.

²⁹ <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/briefs/learning-briefs/details/early-implementation-lessons-from-3ie-supported-impact-evaluations-of-humanitarian-assistance/>

³⁰ Global Prioritisation Report, ELRHA, 2017.

using secondary data (CS2-SRPS and CS4), but they had their own challenges. Challenges of community frustrations with research and other learning processes is an area where the sector would benefit from shared reflection among partners and HIEP virtual team.

HIEP projects experienced data challenges due to access difficulties and poor quality of existing documentation. Some projects faced difficulties in accessing necessary data from humanitarian actors owing to sensitivities around it. For example, CS6 had difficulties to secure agency details on coverage of their operations in highly insecure and politically charged environments; CS7 could not access data on agencies financing of DRM; and CS8 highlighted the constraints placed by governments around collecting and publishing data on humanitarian programmes in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Ethiopia. These issues are linked partly to agencies' protectiveness of the security of their operations but also reveal a lack of transparency – exacerbated in some situations by competition between agencies for funding and government sensitivities to data, which may reflect badly on their performance. Other projects were limited by the existing secondary data in terms of its quality and/or comparability for aggregation (CS2–SRPS and CS4). There were also significant challenges to producing and analysing gender and socially diverse disaggregated sets of data when reliant on secondary data sets from humanitarian programmes or existing research. HIEP projects highlighted that available data on vulnerable populations is often from a geographical rather than a gender perspective. REFANI (CS2), for example, highlighted the lack of available gender and socially disaggregated data because support is directed at households, not individuals. HESC (CS4) found that there was often inadequate data available to make gendered finding or synthesise learning in relation to specific targeted populations which was a hindrance in its evidence syntheses.

3.2.3 Alignment

HIEP projects have made good links with other relevant initiatives at the global and sectoral levels and in countries when there has been focused in-country research. These relationships provided channels for emerging and final evidence to be considered in the development of agency – and sometimes government – policy and strategy. HIEP projects were well connected to external processes in advance of the WHS, e.g. on use of cash, localisation, evidence, insecurity and financing (CS2, CS4, CS7 and CS8). DFID remains a key actor in the Grand Bargain processes. HIEP operational partners are often well connected to relevant IASC clusters. At national level when projects have undertaken direct in-country research, and particularly when they have had a country base, there have been good links made with relevant national and sometimes regional initiatives, e.g. both CS2 projects have fed into discussions around the Pakistan Benazir Social Protection Programme. These links have usually been facilitated by HIEP partners rather than DFID country offices, something that is discussed in the following section.

At the overall programme level of HIEP, the HRI team have made contacts with some key global research initiatives. These include the Global Resilience Partnership, Global Challenges Research Fund and Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (also funded by HIEP) and evidence initiatives such as Humanitarian Evidence Week, which are discussed later.

HIEP aligns well with key DFID priorities. The HRI team contributed to the DFID Research Review produced in 2016 and the development of the Humanitarian Reform Policy produced in 2017. HIEP projects are largely aligned with DFID wider humanitarian policy. These include the protection of people in crises; upholding humanitarian norms and principles; better risk management; and developing new approaches to protracted crises. Analysis of HIEP's portfolio shows that health-related issues including WASH and nutrition receive the largest proportion of HIEP resources through R2HC, as well as a focus in many of the other projects, e.g. REFANI, three of the systematic reviews, a focus in the 3ie impact evaluation portfolio,³¹ and some HIF projects among others. This matches a priority area for DFID research. However, Elrha's evidence prioritisation which maps donor research funding found health is already the area most highly funded and focused on in the humanitarian sector's current evidence and innovation.

³¹ HIEP annual review 2016–17.

HIEP health-related projects relate to existing needs, but this trend is one to consider for future strategy, e.g. in relation to future partnerships and alliances to develop globally. Other issues highlighted in the DFID humanitarian policy and also by evaluation interviewees, which have so far had less attention in the HIEP portfolio, are those relating to challenges in how the international humanitarian system works particularly in cooperation, coordination and transparency between agencies as well as relations between the international, national and local levels.



3.3 Conclusions and learning

There is emerging learning that broader scoping processes beyond evidence-gap mapping and expert consultation benefit project and programme design. CS5 found that consultations led to a focus on technical solutions in WASH and gender-based violence (GBV) portfolios inadvertently reflecting the siloed nature and ‘blind spots’ of humanitarian sectors. Some CS4 projects found consultations tended to focus on issues raised in the most recent crisis which might not reflect the next issues, e.g. the focus on shelter self-recovery, driven to some extent by the Haiyan response in the Philippines, was not so relevant to urban shelter problems of mass displacement such as seen in the Syria crisis. HIF has moved from piloting of products and services that improve current strategies (sometimes called ‘single loop learning’) towards innovation projects that convene a range of actors to tackle deeper and more complex problems and systemic challenges, exploring root causes and questioning assumptions, with the potential for greater transformation of humanitarian assistance.³² This approach has potential for other areas. HIEP’s evolutionary approach – that is, use of earlier projects to inform later projects – is also a good approach to avoid risks of a narrow, technical focus. For example, the HIEP project on protracted displacement has informed the new HRI team project on forced displacement; the new MAINTAINS business case includes learning from CS2 SRPS; and the education emergencies mini-portfolio in HIEP has evolved over time.

Other important factors supporting relevance have been:

- Strong quality assurance processes throughout projects including engagement with methodology experts in the design of projects, particularly to address complex issues in challenging contexts – be that due to security or issues such as poor quality data
- Building in flexibility to projects to deal with humanitarian contextual challenges and opportunities – which might require, for instance, changes in location, timing or additional training for research teams to deal with methodological adaptations

In conclusion, HIEP is a highly relevant initiative, well designed to address key issues relating to access, production and synthesis of humanitarian evidence. The responsive approach taken in HIEP, which has included bringing on new projects over its lifetime and adapting project methodologies when necessary, has ensured it is focused on evidence needs both identified in HERR and those which have emerged more recently. HIEP projects’ design have dealt well with the challenges of research in humanitarian contexts and produced considerable learning about humanitarian research design. However, HIEP’s portfolio has focused more on the production of evidence; an approach which emphasises the supply of evidence, rather than activities, to understand and address the fourth problem identified by HIES of the lack of incentives to use evidence.

³² ‘Single loop’ and ‘double loop’ learning are concepts that come from the theoretical and empirical work of Argyris and Schön (1978) on reflexive practice and learning in social systems. ‘Single loop’ learning seeks new approaches or solutions within existing norms and systems, while ‘double loop’ learning critically questions existing norms and systems in a process of reframing problems and shifting systems as part of solutions. In rapidly changing contexts where new challenges are constantly emerging, the authors argued that it is only by interrogating and changing the governing systems that it becomes possible to produce new actions and strategies that can address changing circumstances, as seen in the example of cash-based responses, which has shifted humanitarian supply chains and opened up the space for local service delivery. See Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1978) *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, or for an accessible summary of this body of work, see Smith, M. K. (2001, 2013). Chris Argyris: *Theories of action, double-loop learning and organizational learning*, *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*, <http://infed.org/mobi/chris-argyris-theories-of-action-double-loop-learning-and-organizational-learning/>

4 Effectiveness



Which approaches have been more effective in enabling HIEP to ensure the creation, support and application of high-quality and relevant humanitarian evidence and innovation?

Key findings: HIEP projects have produced a substantial body of high-quality evidence and promoted findings to relevant audiences, humanitarian debates and processes. Partnerships between operational and academic organisations have been a key strength of HIEP. They have enabled access to humanitarian contexts for data collection, ensured operational relevance and provided access to a wider range of networks through which the project findings have been shared.

Within DFID, the relationship with the humanitarian cadre has been excellent. However, HIEP's profile was extremely limited at country level in DFID offices and also with key stakeholders such as innovation players. Roles and responsibilities are unclear for different parts of DFID in setting the HIEP agenda and promoting action based on its findings in DFID and externally. The absence of any shared influencing strategy detailing more specific aims and departmental roles and mechanisms has been a limitation. HIEP partners have been effective during the project in promoting debate, awareness and endorsement of its evidence in the sector. But without a longer-term communication process, this may compromise the effectiveness of HIEP in the future to respond to opportunities and support the application of its evidence.

4.1 Introduction

This section considers the progress of HIEP in achieving effectiveness against the judgement criteria below.

Effectiveness judgement criteria

- Extent to which progress has been made towards achieving outputs
- Extent to which progress has been made to bring about HIEP planned behavioural changes and contribute to outcomes
- Extent to which the HIEP management model accelerates/inhibits the achievement of results
- Extent to which the programme maximises the potential impact of its component parts

In this section we present the key findings from the case studies and go on to draw from these, and wider consideration of HIEP, to reflect on HIEP's performance in relation to the judgement criteria. We draw out learning on strategies to ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian research and innovation and end with our conclusions.



4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Summary of case study findings

Table 5 below summarises the findings from each of the eight case studies. In each case study, the evidence collected was analysed and an overall performance score for ‘effectiveness’ was assigned in a process detailed in section 2.2.4. Final scores are listed below. Further detail on each of the case studies can be found in the individual case study reports (Annex 2).

Table 5: Summary of case study findings: effectiveness

*Scoring system:	
High	The project has performed strongly in relation to the first and second judgement criteria and at least moderately against all criteria (the third and fourth judgement criteria have lower weighting because outside of control of project)
Medium	Projects have performed well against only judgement criteria 3.1 or 3.2 and/or moderately against all criteria
Low	The project has performed well against only one judgement criteria or fewer
Not able to judge	There is insufficient evidence

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on effectiveness
CS1. Scaling up Innovation in Disaster Risk Management in Pakistan³³	Medium	The project successfully produced outputs of a risk assessment framework applied and has proven feasibility of use of the framework in a fragile context and raised debate about risk management and financing in Pakistan. Good contact internationally initially through the Political Champions of Resilience Group provided positive connections to donors. Sustainability of some outputs was not maintained, e.g. relationships and in-government capacities built and external access to platforms established for sharing information in Pakistan. There has been limited debate and promotion of findings outside the World Bank though it has used the project experience widely. There was little sustained contact between HIEP and DFID country offices.
CS2. Expanding the Use of Cash Transfers in Emergency Response^{34,35}	Medium	CS2 achieved good engagement with key organisations internationally and linkage with relevant national-level debates during the project enabling emerging findings to be considered in relevant national strategy processes (final products not finalised at the time of evaluation data collection). Challenges in the REFANI consortium working relationships and also a focus on publication in academic journals which proved difficult has caused delays so final research

³³ Formerly known as *Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management*.

³⁴ REFANI products available at <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/refani>

³⁵ SRPS products available at <http://www.opml.co.uk/projects/shock-responsive-social-protection-systems>

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on effectiveness
		uptake is not taking place at international level. A focus on a wider range of products in SRPS has been more effective. Contact between DFID lead advisers on these cash-related projects has been beneficial to the cluster of projects' coherence but HIEP contact with country offices has remained weak.
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)³⁶	High	R2HC has produced high-quality research outputs (57 peer reviewed publications so far) sharing health-related research as well as learning products (ethics and methodology). R2HC strengthened partnerships between academic and humanitarian organisations though mainly in pre-existing relationships rather than new actors coming into the fund despite R2HC efforts. Good relations have been established with key actors including WHO and the WASH, health and nutrition clusters which, together with R2HC-convened events, enabled sector engagement with R2HC research. A cohort of research on mental health helped generate interest and an influential community of practice. Links within DFID have been weaker.
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)³⁷	Medium	HESC produced 24 high-quality products based on eight systematic reviews and evidence syntheses as well as learning products on methodology. The reviews themselves produced limited 'new knowledge' for technical application but rather provided robust exposure of evidence gaps and quality issues. HESC has contributed to the development of some skills of staff in partners directly involved in producing the systematic reviews as well as strengthened relationships between operational and academic partners. HESC has contributed to debate about quality issues in evidence though this has engaged audiences mainly in the Global North. Brokering by key organisations such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and IASC groups has been beneficial to increase awareness of the reviews. The project experienced some challenges in efficiency due to the informal nature of cross-departmental links in DFID.
CS5. Innovation: Testing to Proof of Concept Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF)³⁸	Medium	HIF has produced good quality innovation <i>projects</i> that are relevant and target key humanitarian challenges. Quality of the outputs is inconsistent – smaller projects produce light-touch reports, while larger projects produce more systematic evidence. However, the lack of a fund-wide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system means that evidence production depends on grantees' own approaches rather than a systematic approach from HIF. HIF's new strategy aims to address this. There are some notable examples of HIF-supported innovations progressing to development and scaling stages, but as a whole, effective innovations coming out of the HIF face a range of

³⁶ Further details of projects and Fund at <http://www.elrha.org/r2hc/home/>

³⁷ HESC products available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/humanitarian/humanitarian-evidence-programme> and also <http://fic.tufts.edu/research-item/the-humanitarian-evidence-program/>

³⁸ Further details of projects and Fund at <http://www.elrha.org/hif/home/>

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on effectiveness
		barriers to uptake, including a lack of follow-on financing and barriers for new business models and organisations to enter the humanitarian system. However, HIF has not organised nor resourced its influencing and advocacy at the fund/portfolio level to tackle barriers to behaviour change, impeding further scaling up of innovations, though a focused approach on the WASH sector is showing more promising signs. The HIF is now aiming to tackle these barriers more systematically in the new strategy through an uptake and advocacy plan.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)³⁹	High	SAVE produced high-quality outputs and undertook wide dissemination and communication activities at national, international and individual agency levels. Brokers such as ALNAP and IASC mechanisms have also engaged with and promoted its work. SAVE engaged well with current debates regarding the quality of humanitarian assistance in conflict and issues impacting on it. Its evidence and recommendations – particularly on accountability and community engagement – has been actively used up by a wide range of agencies and initiatives. Take-up at national level is challenged by turnover in humanitarian organisations. There are challenges to secure action on some issues, especially those needing sector-wide engagement and inter-agency cooperation, e.g. transparency findings. The project was well promoted within DFID where awareness of it is high.
CS7. Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management (DRM)⁴⁰	Medium	CS7 produced high-quality and relevant research. The project has contributed to IFRC's capacity and internal discussion on research, e.g. through the establishment of an IFRC working group which has continued beyond the life of the project. There are some concerns regarding the sustainability of learning gained in the project. The project identified multiple champions and networks to advocate for and broker the research findings. The success of the project in using these effectively is mixed. The high rotation on the advisory and learning groups meant that despite a number of learning and advisory group members describing themselves as champions in the 2015 case study, few in fact championed the research once it was completed. DFID's role has been less active particularly since the WHS.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation⁴¹	Medium	The project is on track to produce planned, high-quality outputs to timetable. Interim reports around specific themes emerging during the research have been well received and generated interest in DFID and other stakeholders, e.g. UNICEF in Ethiopia. Strong QA processes for the research will also need to be in place for final products in the absence of an advisory group. There is a risk that the full value of the

³⁹ All SAVE products available at <http://www.saveresearch.net/>

⁴⁰ All project products available at <http://www.ifrc.org/en/get-involved/learning-education-training/research/capacity-building-for-disaster-risk-management/>

⁴¹ Project still under way – final products not available at time of writing.

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on effectiveness
		investment may not be realised unless a systematic uptake strategy (recommended previous evaluation phase) is developed to guide formulation of operational recommendations, products and outreach activities, given the political economy constraints in governments and operational settings around accepting challenging findings.

4.2.2 HIEP outputs

HIEP aims to produce three types of output: (a) high-quality and relevant evidence and innovation products; (b) cross-divisional and institutional relationships and partnerships; and (c) skills in design, commissioning and application of evidence and innovation. The section considers HIEP performance in relation to each of these outputs in turn.

Evidence and innovation products

HIEP projects have produced a significant body of high-quality evidence and innovation products that are readily accessible to the wider humanitarian sector. By the end of 2017, HIEP reportings shows the production of 76 primary papers in open access format, seven evaluations, eight systematic reviews, 13 literature reviews, three M&E toolkits, five risk models, and 59 peer reviewed publications which comply with DFID open access policy,⁴² and significantly has contributed to 5,914 data sets openly available on HDX platform, an OCHA data centre which was created with input and learning from a HIEP-supported pilot project.⁴³ Strong QA mechanisms and access to expert methodological advice assisted research design and these mechanisms, as well as peer review processes, continued to be important to ensure the quality of final products. HIEP products are notable for their accessibility. The focus on open access format is welcome given that sharing data and transparency is a key issue facing both humanitarian research and decision making.

HIEP projects had robust QA processes to assure high-quality products. The assessment investigated the extent to which the case studies had assurance processes in place that ensured each aspect of quality was considered and upheld by considering seven areas of quality. Through review of 70 documents, on the whole, the assessment found HIEP projects to have consistently high standards of QA mechanisms assuring the quality of final products. In most cases reviewed there were very good levels of user engagement, peer review, strong ethical codes and good consideration to rigour, consistency and the utility and comparability of data collected, analysed and presented.

But some projects (e.g. CS5 HIF) have produced reports of variable quality and not always communicated clearly the innovation and learning from the project. This is due, in part, to differences in grantees' M&E capacity and culture and also to some extent the fund's focus for quality being on the project rather than the resultant report. Across HIEP, project partners have often produced additional reports over and above those planned. These have been in response to emerging themes in research and requests from national stakeholders, e.g. CS8 reports relating to the economic case for early responses,

⁴² Background data to the HIEP logframe reporting was not available to explore the relationship between the primary papers and peer review papers which may be the same.

⁴³ HIEP 2017 logframe monitoring at output level, received 18 January 2018.

gender and health-focused reports and in CS6 reports requested by national stakeholders.⁴⁴ Others have been learning on research methodology.

HIEP projects have achieved good levels of engagement with key stakeholders and in relevant sector discussions. HIEP projects secured greatest traction when they created tailored products for different audiences. Projects that have seen most discussion and uptake of their findings outside of the partners directly involved in the project are those which have produced a range of outputs. This includes: toolkits, policy briefs, full research reports, protocols and workshops, briefings, events, and blogs (CS2–SRPS and CS6, CS8). Interestingly, a number of projects have trialled new types of products including animations (CS6 and CS8) to showcase headline findings. Download figures indicate these are popular.

The extent to which projects are able to make robust recommendations for policy and practice varies and affects their uptake. Projects that could be translated into very practical products, like toolkits, were well received and used in the sector, e.g. CS6 and CS3. CS6 SAVE’s practical guidance on humanitarian principles, negotiating access including with armed non-state actors, has been used in work by Médecins sans Frontières, Norwegian Refugee Council and World Food Programme (WFP). Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including Tearfund, Oxfam and Mercy Corps are drawing on other SAVE products including the ‘functional checklist for humanitarian access negotiation policies’ set out in the SAVE Resource Paper: *Humanitarian Access Negotiations with Non-State Armed Groups. Internal guidance gaps and emerging good practice*.⁴⁵ Humanitarian actors, particularly in policy and technical operational roles, report wanting more explicit detail of the operational implications of the findings from HIEP projects. This included DFID advisers who, even when aware of HIEP projects, were less clear about what it meant for their role. Briefings, webinars, workshops and organisation-specific briefings were useful for this. But we found from projects we reviewed that those with less conclusive recommendations struggled to gain an audience among operational audiences, e.g. some of the systematic reviews in CS4 and CS2 REFANI.

A challenge to HIEP is to locate project products within the larger body of evidence. Individual project products are high quality but users of products are keen to see project findings brought together with other work from inside and outside of HIEP to assess the implications for their work. For example, CS4 systematic reviews were reported to be of more limited value as stand-alone products but would benefit from being connected to other work in the relevant sector. CS3 has seen more engagement by the health community when it has produced a cohort of studies such as that on mental health and psychosocial issues detailed in Box 5.

⁴⁴ For example, Steets, J. & Caccavale, J. (2016) *Overview of Context Constraints and Mitigation Options for Aid Monitoring in South Sudan*, Resource Paper, *The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism of the Common Humanitarian Fund in South Sudan*, Resource Paper, and *Inventory of Global M&E Training Options*, Resource Paper, all from the Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) research programme; Steets, J. & Caccavale, J. (2016).

⁴⁵ SAVE 2015–16 Annual Report.

Box 5: Larger bodies of evidence and links to wider research support uptake experience from CS3 R2HC

R2HC's cohort of 11 studies on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions has turned into an influential thematic community of practice. R2HC research on MHPSS has gained significant traction and is well positioned for uptake at the national policymaking level with the National Mental Health Programme in the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health.

What did R2HC do that contributed to the change?

The WHO and Elrha convened a meeting in October 2017 of approximately 40 participants – comprising R2HC grantees and their partners, plus key members of the humanitarian mental health practitioner community – coming together to discuss the portfolio of MHPSS research funded through the programme, identify research gaps and discuss research uptake strategies. This was made possible because of the cohort of studies funded by R2HC in this area, and R2HC has found that research uptake is easier where there is a critical mass of funded evidence.

What other factors contributed to this change?

The R2HC contribution comes at a time of greater interest in researching and delivering interventions addressing the mental and psychosocial support needs of people affected by humanitarian crises, interventions that are increasingly seen as a critical component in any humanitarian aid response. There have been a number of studies funded by other donors, and a broader interest in reviewing the evidence base for MHPSS and its implications for programming. In Lebanon, wider research on the mental health needs of, and MHPSS interventions for, Syrian refugees helped to highlight the alarmingly low levels of awareness, provision, and rates of help-seeking behaviour for mental healthcare services by Lebanese people with mental disorders. This was one factor spurring the substantial reform of Lebanon's mental health system and interest in the R2HC findings.

Cross-divisional and institutional relationships and partnerships

HIEP projects have benefited substantially from cooperation between academic and operational organisations either in formal consortia as project partners or through arrangements such as learning partners, advisory group and special advisers. Six of the case study projects supported partnerships. For example, both funds (R2HC and HIF) target proposals which prioritise academic-operational cooperation (CS2 and CS5), CS4 was implemented by a partnership between Oxfam and Feinstein International Centre, and four of the systematic reviews it produced were authored through partnerships between people in operational and academic organisations. Interviewees reported benefits from these in building skills and experience. Also, some projects have successfully generated increased cooperation between organisations that had previously often worked relatively independently. For example, DFID's support for the Innovation in Learning and Education in Protracted Crises (Amplify and Humanitarian Education Accelerator) provided opportunities for greater collaboration between UNICEF and UNHCR. The Moving Energy Initiative also seeks to bring together different types of stakeholder including the private sector. However, there have been challenges to partnerships when roles, relationships and resource division are not clearly established from the outset. In one project reviewed, partners had extended discussions to establish roles and relationships, and in particular their accountability to each other, in relation to outputs which caused delays (CS2–REFANI).

HIEP overall has been less successful at stimulating new partnerships and bringing in many new actors particularly from the south to the 'evidence world.' HIEP's own monitoring indicates that across the entire HIEP portfolio, only four projects are under the remit of organisations managing research for the first time. While a number of projects sought to prioritise new partnerships and/or inclusion of southern organisations (CS4, CS3 and CS5), in reality, they struggled. In CS3 for example, the project found that

even brokering events in Delhi and Nairobi and a research forum in Jordan, were not sufficient to stimulate new partnerships and high-quality proposals. Instead, it has tended to be organisations with established relationships that have been successful. This may also reflect the time that such partnerships require to mature skills and incentives deficits. An interesting development is in CS5 where HIF has a new partnership with the Asia network of ADRRN, which aims to facilitate more support to local innovation and actors.

Skills in design, commissioning and application of evidence and innovation

Most HIEP projects did not include an explicit skills development component but have had some limited results. Projects often found it necessary to provide training for in-country research teams, particularly at national level in research methodologies. Training included methodological training in longitudinal panel research in CS8, on ethics and gender issues in CS2 and systematic review methods in CS4. CS5 HIF also provided on-the-spot support to projects. We found examples of operational organisations in five of our case study projects reporting increased skills due to their exposure to research in their partnerships for projects (CS1, CS3, CS4, CS6 and CS7). This would be a beneficial area for routine reporting within HIEP. Within DFID, there has been less direct management of projects outside of RED, originally envisaged by HIEP as a way to build skills, with more than half of the current HIEP portfolio now managed by the HRI team. But DFID staff outside of RED have been involved in HIEP projects in advisory capacities and have provided technical input and review of reports which has increased their exposure to research, and in some limited cases, to new types of product and methodology, such as systematic reviews (CS4). There is also now a wider range of departments involved in HIEP than the original three partners with, for instance, connections to DFID departments working on education, climate change and innovations.

Building skills was a key component of two case study projects but there are sustainability challenges to their effectiveness. CS1 has an explicit capacity-building focus in use of risk data, though the training was very much at an introductory level, and we found staff turnover reduced its effectiveness because training was not institutionalised. CS7, although not reflected in the terms of reference for the project, was to build the capacity of IFRC in research including its management. Evaluation interviewees credited the project as contributing to this, given that the IFRC and national societies were more involved in the research process when usually external consultants would be recruited. In addition, this learning was shared with a number of national societies through a learning group which later evolved into an IFRC research working group. However, key people involved in the project have moved on which raises questions about the sustainability of skills built at the organisational level.

4.2.3 Promotion of HIEP evidence and innovation

The HIEP ToC lays out how HIEP projects aim to increase use of evidence and innovation by working with intermediary organisations. Intermediaries will help to link evidence to practitioners, networks and key operational agencies by promoting debate, through endorsing their findings and through advocacy for findings. In addition, a key mechanism foreseen is that DFID will use the evidence as the basis for funding decisions. Contributions to HIEP outcomes are discussed in the impact section of the report. Below we discuss how effectively HIEP promoted its evidence and innovations through these intermediary mechanisms.

Promoting change through intermediary organisations and networks

HIEP projects have largely had excellent relationships with key operational organisations, relevant academic organisations and a number of intermediary organisations and networks. All HIEP case study projects developed good relationships with key intermediaries. Project partners cited ALNAP, START networks, SPHERE and PHAP as key channels to make their products accessible (e.g. CS4, CS6 and CS7). Relationships with IASC structures and clusters, in particular, have been important for projects' communication and have been able to take advantage of the operational member's participation in these or established relationships with them, e.g. CS3, CS4 and CS6. Work with clusters had led them to debate

quality of research (CS4 in shelter and protection inter-agency groups) and to establish working groups on research (e.g. WASH as a result of R2HC activity). Partnerships with key organisations, such as that between R2HC with the WHO, have been productive. In this case they enabled the co-facilitation of focused events attracting key decision makers from policy and practice communities (see Box 5 above). CS1 had more limited links but early contact with the Political Champions for Resilience Group proved crucial to the project being supported by the EU for further development in other countries. Identifying the exact reach of products is almost impossible given the myriad channels used, but available data show high numbers of people accessing products directly from partner websites, events and via intermediaries' outlets such as ALNAP website and via inter-agency working groups. For examples, CS4 found that based on downloads from the Oxfam Policy and Practice website alone, in the first 10 months of 2017 there was a total of 6,827 downloads of review summaries, reports and briefs. Also, a high level of downloads of protocols (8,145) since they were published in 2016, though use of these (impact) was more difficult to identify. CS6 found that more than 2,000 hard copies of SAVE products were distributed in dissemination events and a new dedicated website with summary findings and research outputs launched on 9 November 2016 had over 7,000 visits in the first six months.

Ongoing promotion of outputs has been important. Social media was a key mechanism used by partners to promote awareness of their research. In particular, ongoing engagement during projects, both through social media but also directly in national and international events, has effectively increased interest in them and achieved some uptake of interim products. The evaluation's assessment of projects' contributions to debate have been aided by projects own data collection. In some cases partners kept an 'impact log' which detailed examples of their work being cited (e.g. CS2-SRPS, CS4 and CS6). Not all projects have this (e.g. CS8) and it is a useful addition to project reporting – and something for DFID to consider requesting that all projects do.

HIEP projects have been included in relevant policy and operational developments supported by ongoing stakeholder engagement during projects and building on emerging opportunities. We found evidence of their consideration in all case study projects. For examples, CS2 projects SRPS and REFANI both actively involved stakeholders in Pakistan throughout the projects, which is reflected in citations of their work. This work includes initial frameworks for analysis in the Asia Regional Cash Working Group discussions, in drafts of *Guidelines for Cash Transfer in Disaster Management* developed by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with the National Disaster Management Association (NDMA) and by WFP in the design of the 2018–22 Country Strategy Programme. CS3 R2HC worked closely with SPHERE, taking advantage of its revision of the SPHERE handbook to raise awareness of evidence behind SPHERE indicators, and commissioned a review of research underpinning the indicators used, which has evolved into a formalised partnership. CS4 worked closely with Evidence Aid and was active in the Humanitarian Evidence Week in 2016 and 2017 which has seen growing interest in evidence debates. The experience of IFRC, a key partner in CS7 and uptake by its member societies is summarised in Box 6 below.

Box 6: Operational partners' take-up of evidence – example of IFRC

IFRC member national societies have demonstrated good levels of use of findings and recommendations of the Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) it undertook with OPM. Examples include its use in:

- the revision of the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism Guidelines and the Disaster Response Capacity Enhancement tool
- Canadian Red Cross strategy development and programming on DRM capacity building including in securing funding for new programmes
- British Red Cross and IFRC's inputs to the WHS and the debate on localisation
- The British Red Cross Society's support to DRM capacity building in Kenya

Further details are in Annex 2 (CS7)

Adequate funding for communication has been important in supporting its effectiveness and the HRI team and HIEP partners have made adjustments to this. In terms of post-research communication, CS3 R2HC adjusted its system and requires projects to undertake a minimum of 12 months communication work upon completion. Other projects such as CS6 SAVE, Humanitarian Outcomes and Global Public Policy Institution (GPPI) were supported for a six-month process to promote findings nationally and internationally, which proved effective. HIEP's support to communication was assisted by its budget extension in 2017 that included approximately £200,000 for communication.

However, there is some evidence that once project funding ends and the more active promotion of evidence tails off so does external awareness of it, suggesting access to high-quality evidence is not sufficient to ensure its uptake. In three of the projects reviewed there was evidence of external interest in the research tailing off once active communication activities ended. For example, in CS7 there was limited promotion of the project by the advisory group after project completion. This is not uncommon but shows the limitations of strategies that do not go beyond the timescale of partner funding. It may help to consider projects to have a longer timespan with extended time beyond presentation of findings. We heard from CS7 interviewees that a repackaging of its findings would maintain their relevance to current debates as language and frameworks for DRM evolve, but this has not happened since the project ended. In CS6 the website downloads reduced significantly once active promotion of reports and outputs through workshops and social media ended. Such promotion takes time. In CS4 we found that authors of systematic reviews had limited capacity to promote their work once project funding had ended. This suggests longer time periods for communication as part of projects would be beneficial to increase research uptake.

The HRI Team prioritised WHS as a key influencing forum and made effective contributions to its processes on some specific sectors and issues. HIEP project findings were promoted at WHS processes and the event itself through partner activities and DFID. Both partners and DFID were well connected to some key discussions in advance of WHS including those on innovation (CS5), multi-year financing (CS8) and localisation (CS7). DFID chief scientific adviser chaired a side event on 'Making Evidence Count' and HIEP projects were presented at a number of events including on humanitarian programmes in conflict areas. Given that a number of these issues are now reflected in commitments made at the WHS in its final statement and the Grand Bargain, this reflects some success.

HIEP projects that provided tailored briefings to specific agencies, processes and stakeholder helped support uptake of the findings. CS4 partners' presentation of systematic reviews at inter-agency events to consider future inter-agency priorities sparked discussion in the shelter and child protection inter-agency group about methodology, quality criteria and evidence. CS2 and CS8 found significant interest

and debate around findings generated by the project partners even before final production by presenting emerging findings when organisations were making future plans. Two of the case study projects had further examples where organisation-specific briefings led to organisations using their evidence. In CS6 Humanitarian Outcomes' presentations to International Rescue Committee (IRC), ICRC, IASC inter-agency group on accountability, among others, led to each of these agencies using its work in their own activities. The VALID team's briefing to UNICEF and DFID on the economic benefits of early response stimulated discussion in UNICEF regarding its WASH and infrastructure work; and influenced a business plan that was being developed by DFID (CS8). DFID advisers noted their appreciation of being able to access the research teams informally when considering some operational dilemmas. This access to teams could be a useful area to formalise in projects.

There is some evidence that without focused national activities audiences are often predominantly northern and from international organisations. Most HIEP projects included national level activities at least during the research gathering stage. But evidence from the one project (CS4), which was predominantly northern based and used only general global dissemination channels (webinars) to communicate findings, attracted a predominantly northern audience. Other projects engaged to a greater extent directly at national level and thus reached national stakeholders.

Operational organisations active involvement in projects has increased their own use of evidence produced in the project. An illustrative example is with R2HC who supported research on managing menstrual hygiene in humanitarian crises and produced a toolkit. The toolkit gave practical, streamlined guidance to humanitarian workers and was co-published by 27 leading organisations who are taking this guidance on internally too.⁴⁶ In CS6, an approach of participatory workshops to gather data, share and test emerging findings, as well as through a learning partner approach for parts of its work, paid off in terms of agency take-up.

However, it is noticeable that results have sometimes been limited to participating organisations. Examples of limited uptake include: CS1 – where we found evidence of uptake mainly by the World Bank itself which built on Pakistan (and previous Indonesia) work to expand the risk assessment approach to 10 more countries with EU funding; and CS7 where most follow-on actions identified have been within the Red Cross Movement. This experience supports a finding from CS5 that projects face challenges to build other agencies' interest in applying their learning because of competition between agencies, lack of time and administrative challenges to application and take-up. For example, the use of the HIF-supported innovative network of Translators Without Borders faced challenges initially because agencies reported they did not have translation budget lines to access and use the network.

There is evidence requiring senior management, cross agency and multi-sector responses to face more challenges to secure follow-up action. HIEP projects with a clear sector focus have been able to focus their communication on a more streamlined range of organisations, e.g. in health, WASH and nutrition and related structures such as IASC mechanisms. However, findings and recommendations of projects that are system-wide and require an inter-agency response struggled for these to lead to follow-up action, perhaps highlighting the limitations of HIEP's reliance on partners to promote its findings. SAVE's findings on issues such as aid diversion and negative impact of donor strategies, including some counter-terrorism regulations, or ones requiring more inter-agency action (e.g. towards more transparency in sharing data), were met with wide interest but have not so far generated some of the changes recommended. Challenges included (a) decentralised international organisations needed multiple strands of communication to ensure reach to multiple decision-making points in them; (b) a need to engage across departments; and (c) lack of clear 'homes' for responsibility to take findings forward. However, findings can take advantage of any existing processes that gain momentum, such as CS8's engagement with the WHS discussions leading to commitments to multi-year funding and new ways of working.

Change within DFID

⁴⁶ See <https://www.rescue.org/resource/menstrual-hygiene-management-mhm-emergencies-toolkit>.

The level of DFID’s activity in the promotion of HIEP’s reports has been variable. The HRI team prioritised time into WHS processes and supporting the establishment of the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI). The HRI team has shared research with other inter-agency and research initiatives such as the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Global Resilience Partnership, and responded to internal requests for updates, findings and learning from HIEP. A small number of humanitarian advisers at country level reported actively sharing reports of projects they have been involved with, but many projects were affected by turnover of DFID advisers, which has contributed to the reduced role of DFID in promoting the research findings to its partners (CS1 and CS7). Furthermore, we heard from humanitarian and other technical advisers that expectations of their responsibility to promote this work were not clear. While relevant DFID supported research is well promoted to advisers notably by the head of profession there is not a managed process for how advisers then use this in either their own decision making or in promoting the work externally. Furthermore, humanitarian advisers who have had the most exposure to HIEP, for instance in cadre events, reported finding it difficult to keep track of the latest DFID research on different issues and challenges in finding products on internal systems. The HRI team reported an assumption that advisers would take research out to their partners and into their working practice, while advisers considered the HRI team responsible for promoting the findings externally.

It is also difficult to track how DFID has used HIEP evidence itself in relation to operational funding decisions. The HRI team do include data on use of HIEP evidence in business cases but this is not collected and reported systematically as part of logframe reporting. While there are clear links between HIEP projects and further research programmes taken on by DFID (MAINTAINS protracted crisis work) – and also new initiatives such as the Global Centre for Disaster Protection build on HIEP work (HIEP Sovereign Risk project and CS1) – there is less evidence of it being used in decisions related to DFID’s support for operations. The evaluation found some, but limited examples of, country office engagement with projects and it affecting their business plans. Where there was evidence of this happening, it tended to be a result of the project engaging with them directly (CS8 and CS2). Informants advise the need for senior management involvement to secure change in DFID. We found limited examples of HIEP project findings being taken to senior management for consideration of DFID’s own response. One example was the presentation of SAVE findings which have implications for DFID funding in highly insecure environments. It shows that this is a slow process (the head of profession is currently tasked with writing a paper on implications and next steps) so needs sustained energy behind it.

4.3 Extent to which the HIEP management model accelerates/inhibits the achievement of results

Management and governance of HIEP

The structure of HIEP is an innovative approach that has worked relatively well to bring together expertise from across DFID. HIEP was established as a cooperative initiative co-funded and managed by three DFID departments of RED, CHASE and Africa. The previous phase of the evaluation found that the HIEP cross-departmental model was proving an effective way to bring together skills and expertise across DFID, and the management committee and virtual team structures are valued by their members. It saw that the HIEP model lays a strong foundation for DFID to contribute to a significant transformation in the sector but also ongoing challenges in terms of capacity and formalisation of links between departments. While the management of HIEP is now firmly held by RED, inter-departmental oversight and involvement continues via the HRI advisory group (formerly HIEP management group) and networks of advisers being established for projects.

HIEP governance has now been restructured from a management group to an advisory group that should meet twice a year. It is too early to make an assessment as to whether this new structure will result in an increased role in championing HIEP findings as envisaged in its terms of reference. However, in 2017 there

was only one meeting, indicating there has been limited discussion of this role despite many HIEP projects completing at this point. No minutes were available for the meeting.

The new Humanitarian Research and Innovation Team is now directly managing more than half of the current HIEP projects as well as the new large-scale programmes on protracted displacements, shocks and potentially innovation. RED is responsible for 100% of the funding of the HIEP budget. This is a significant move away from the model originally set up by HIEP of other departments managing projects, but supported by the HIEP Secretariat. In addition, the financial links of co-funding by CHASE, ARD and RED of the HIEP budget ended in 2015, with RED now responsible for all. That said, the cooperation between the departments is the key issue to ensuring an appropriate portfolio, technical engagement and harnessing DFID's potential in the sector to influence and act on project findings and recommendations. (Learning on this is discussed later.) However, the scale of direct management of projects now undertaken by the HRI team also has implications for the feasibility of the wider roles of this team to facilitate the links and steps detailed in the ToC without greater resources.

This phase found five major challenges facing HIEP in its linkage across DFID.

1. Our country visits and interviews revealed that project connections with DFID country offices have depended mainly on partner direct contact with them. A number of offices have been extremely helpful, e.g. in CS8 where country advisers helped facilitate partners' access to research sites and in CS6 where advisers participated in national workshops in some countries with reported noticeable impact on other agency engagement. But other case studies found country offices had very low level, or no awareness, of the projects, seeing them as centrally managed e.g. CS1, CS2 in Pakistan and CS5 in Uganda. Most offices did not know of any projects other than the ones with which they had direct contact. The new MAINTAINS addresses this to some extent because the project has a specific role for country offices. But country office awareness of the HRI Programme Portfolio/HIEP agenda, their potential for DFID work and also country office roles in promoting research to partners, are less well known.
2. HIEP projects and HRI team have struggled at times to secure a speedy engagement with technical advisers, e.g. for sign-off of HIEP products due to their heavy workloads and it being based on informal links and goodwill. Following the last phase of the evaluation, the HRI team had discussions to formalise the input of advisers but this was not successful. Projects have reported delays due to the informal nature of such links as well as challenges when individuals involved in the early stages of projects move on (CS1, CS4 and CS7). An exception is the role of an education advisor in HIEP where 30% of the role is within the HRI team (though this includes work beyond HIEP projects) and is an interesting model for future projects.
3. As described above, the roles and responsibilities of different individuals and departments to take forward HIEP findings within DFID and externally, particularly after projects end, are unclear. A workplan could be developed for the advisory networks now being developed for specific projects as well as for the HRI team advisory group as a step forward.
4. There is more that can be done to bring together themes emerging from HIEP so they can progress within DFID and through DFID into the sector. Although HIEP evidence and innovation outputs were communicated regularly to DFID humanitarian advisers and other humanitarian actors, this was done on an ad hoc and piecemeal basis, i.e. single projects rather than a body of work, compounded by the challenges of engaging CHASE OT/contracted staff outside the humanitarian cadre. There have been some efforts to draw out common themes from across projects in ad hoc presentations but the time allocated to this has so far been limited. Previous rounds of the evaluation heard of plans to cluster projects and draw out emerging themes but this has not happened yet. HIEP's current draft influencing strategy has begun analysis of its portfolio by theme, country and stakeholder. This is a welcome development but remains a draft strategy.

5. DFID advisers reported their struggle to keep up with the range of outputs from inside and outside of HIEP and to be able to access them when needed citing the challenges of some internal platforms. They recommended developing new ways of promoting them, e.g. in the regular newsletter that reaches all advisers involved in humanitarian work regardless of status and department. There are challenges to this. For instance, the HRI team only recently secured permission to update the humanitarian cadre website with key findings.



4.4 Conclusions and learning

There are three key areas for learning from the experience of HIEP to date for high-quality research that engages with key humanitarian actors and processes.

a) Investment into customised, multiple products and processes made relevant locally and opportunistically to current debate and decisions works. Decision makers engage with new evidence when projects (i) produce customised products for different audiences; (ii) link with existing bodies of evidence; and (iii) are explicit about implications for different roles.

b) Partnerships strengthen research quality, promotion strategies and uptake of findings and innovation. Partnerships and constructive relationships between academic and operational organisations are effective in producing relevant research, providing access to humanitarian crises and engaging with operational agencies. But there is a need to understand better how to break out of these boundaries for wider engagement.

c) Research uptake involves building relationships, supporting application as well as communication. HIEP shows the value of (i) participation in research; and (ii) face-to-face customised briefings to take-up and application of findings. These both build trust and acceptance. While this is a time consuming and potentially costly approach to sharing findings it clearly achieves far greater impact and take-up of findings in organisations.

In conclusion, HIEP projects have been highly effective in the production of a substantial quantity of high-quality research on relevant subjects, which has reached a wide audience of policymakers, practitioners and researchers at national and international levels. The partnership approach between operational and organisation has been a key strength of HIEP. It has enabled access to humanitarian contexts for data collection, ensured operational relevance and provided access to a wider range of networks through which the project findings can be shared. Where quality of products has been challenged, it has been due to inconsistent requirements for monitoring, e.g. in HIF in earlier phases and challenges in using existing data that is either poor quality or difficult to use for synthesis and comparison.

HIEP's evidence and innovations have reached stakeholders through their direct participation in projects and primarily through partner activities activating their networks and communication capacity. These have been most effective when engagement has been sustained, direct and customised to different contexts and stakeholders.

HIEP's relationship with the humanitarian cadre has been positive. Humanitarian advisers are aware of some HIEP projects but not always clear about what are their implications for their own roles.

Furthermore, the expectations and roles of different DFID departments in taking forward the HIEP agenda and supporting its effectiveness are unclear, particularly in relation to the promotion of HIEP products, findings and recommendations within DFID and externally. HIEP learning highlights the long-term nature of change that needs to be supported beyond research projects and thus flags a complex process that needs to be planned for within DFID, and externally, to ensure projects go beyond being just the supply of evidence and influencing those directly involved. Without further investment into this process, there is a risk that HIEP and future HRI team programmes purely supply evidence, a valuable but not sufficient role to achieve its full potential for change.

5 Gender and social inclusion



To what extent and how, did HIEP and its projects address gender and social inclusion issues?

Key findings: HIEP is based on strong principles of gender and inclusion. The portfolio directly addresses issues relevant to women and girls in humanitarian crises and a flexible approach has aided projects to be responsive. Some partners adopted approaches that incorporated good gender and social inclusion strategies as well as adapting projects to address relevant emerging GASI themes. But the strong principles were not translated into systems and mechanisms for management and oversight of GASI until late in the programme. The availability, collection and analysis of disaggregated gender-sensitive and inclusive data remain a persistent challenge. HIEP and its projects have only been partially successful in reducing these data deficits. There is also a need for HIEP/HRI team and partners to be clearer about what level of socially disaggregated data is expected in humanitarian research projects and what is meant by integrating a gender and inclusion perspective in research processes. There remains significant learning to be drawn from the HIEP portfolio with emerging lessons and evidence relating to mainstreaming GASI in humanitarian research relevant to share in the sector.

5.1 Introduction

This section discusses how HIEP has considered issues of GASI. It presents the key findings from the GASI audit of HIEP and considers key learning from the HIEP experience and, in the final concluding section, its implications for future HRI. Earlier phases of the evaluation found that HIEP was based on strong principles of GASI but that the HRI team had limited capacity to ensure GASI has been mainstreamed across the portfolio and that there are distinct differences in how HIEP partners were addressing gender and the allied – but potentially methodologically different – range of social, economic and cultural differences facing women and girls, and other excluded groups, within research areas. Across the portfolio, less systematic attention was given to inclusion and the full range of social diversity than to the gender dimensions of research.

DFID's response to the formative and summative evaluations was positive. Measures were taken for a more systematic approach but given the limited time since these were introduced, it is too early to assess the extent to which these actions have been effective. The recommendation to share lessons learnt across the portfolio through internal and external processes has not yet been taken up.



5.2 Findings

HIEP evidence has closed some important evidence gaps relevant to women, girls and to some extent vulnerable groups in humanitarian contexts. This is evidenced by a mixed portfolio of projects including some which directly address specific GASI issues, e.g. violence against women and girls, sexual reproductive health (CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF), innovations for supporting management of menstrual hygiene during emergencies and disasters (CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF), identifying and prioritising vulnerable populations affected by urban humanitarian emergencies (CS4 HESC) and promoting disability data and practical support for people with disabilities.

Some HIEP project partners have developed methods to ensure the inclusion of GASI considerations. Some but not all HIEP projects over the course of the research developed innovative approaches to reaching out and engaging more effectively with hard to reach and vulnerable groups and these are detailed in Box 7 below.

Box 7: HIEP project methods to support consideration of GASI factors

- Recruiting and training enumerators and researchers from targeted communities (CS6 and CS8) to reduce the social distance between respondents and researchers
- Working with and through women's groups and community-based organisations to identify and target more vulnerable women and hard to reach social groups (CS8 and some grantees in CS5)
- Remote surveying and the use of a woman's voice on automated surveys to reach isolated vulnerable communities and individuals (CS6)
- Bringing research study participants into discussions about emerging findings, for example, the inclusion of vulnerable youth and families in Jordan (C3 R2HC – research on refugee health)
- Focusing explicitly on power dynamics, social difference and vulnerabilities of individuals within and across researched communities worked well (CS8)

HIEP projects are producing an emerging body of evidence around the methodological challenge and effective approaches to ensure a gender and inclusion dimension in research in humanitarian contexts.

This is evidenced by examples such as the R2HC guide on ethics; and individual projects (CS2, CS4, CS6 and CS8) that have highlighted their own research challenges and the methods used to overcome them. These are currently largely within internal project reports and not accessible to a wider community of interested stakeholders within and external to DFID.

HIEP-supported projects that integrate a focus on gender are often producing research outputs that potentially have tangible benefits for, and impacts on women, girls and vulnerable populations. For example, research supported by R2HC (CS3) on managing menstrual hygiene in humanitarian crises produced a toolkit giving practical, streamlined guidance to humanitarian actors; HIF funded projects on ensuring supply of appropriate and affordable emergency wheelchairs in humanitarian responses; and other projects targeted the gendered risks involved in toilet use in refugee camps and developed new ways to address these. Other projects have responded to emerging themes in their findings as a result of a GASI-sensitive approach and produced reports on these.

The HRI team has increased its integration of GASI expertise into programme development. While the Humanitarian and Innovation advisory board (established in October 2017) does not have a social development adviser or specific GASI expertise within its membership, there is some relevant inclusion of expertise (e.g. the chief scientific advisor and chair's experience in protection and psychosocial interventions to support children in crisis). New projects have been developed in collaboration with teams which include GASI expertise across DFID.

Mechanisms established in 2016 by the HRI team to track GASI at programme level have considerably improved the extent to which gender has been integrated into the collection, analysis and reporting of research findings. This has strengthened the programme-wide focus on gender and to some extent social inclusion, and enabled the HRI team, to a degree, to add value and influence to the GASI approaches within the current portfolio. For example, the requirement for annual reports to include a section on gender and social inclusion led CS3 R2HC to enhance its focus on GASI across its portfolio; and since 2017 has required grantees to report against gender and social inclusion outcomes in their final reports. A very positive initiative was in CS3 R2HC which commissioned a review of methods for GBV research in humanitarian contexts, for example, which was presented to the GBV Area of Responsibility group under the humanitarian protection cluster.

Major new initiatives of HRI team now have GASI as a key objective with mechanisms in place to ensure compliance. Both MAINTAINS and Protracted Displacement Research have integrated findings and lessons from previous evaluations and research to ensure that social inclusion is highlighted as an evidence gap, and that there are clear targets and requirements, including an extraordinary compliance review and lesson learning for the whole work stream to be carried out after nine months.

5.3 Ongoing challenges

There is need for greater clarity on what level of socially disaggregated data is expected from projects and what is meant by integrating a gender and inclusion perspective in research processes. A finding from the retrospective gender analysis of eight systematic reviews carried out by HESC highlighted a sometimes limited shared understanding of gender perspective in research over and above collecting sex and age disaggregated data – echoed in this assessment (CS4).

There are significant challenges to producing and analysing gender and socially diverse disaggregated sets of data when reliant on secondary data sets from humanitarian projects or existing research. HIEP projects highlighted that the data available on vulnerable populations is often from a geographical rather than a gender perspective. CS2 for example, highlighted the lack of availability of gender and socially disaggregated data because support is directed at households, not individuals. HESC (CS4), which undertook eight evidence syntheses and systematic reviews, found that there was often inadequate data available to make gendered findings or to synthesise learning in relation to specific targeted populations.

Inconsistent patterns of disaggregated data, especially for excluded populations, suggests that the synthesis and generation of evidence identifying what works in reaching socially excluded groups – women and other marginalised people – will not necessarily be robust. This issue was raised in the summative evaluation phase 1 and remains a concern. More efforts will be needed to ensure social diversity and inclusion data are collected in humanitarian research programmes. Equally, while HIEP and the HRI team does not have direct influence over humanitarian programmes they can, through the wider networks and linkages within and outside of DFID, support progress towards standardised use of disaggregated data in humanitarian programming. The HIEP project on disability data is an important initiative as this is testing a short set of questions by incorporating them into routine data collection. It is a welcome measure seeking to address humanitarian disability data gap.

There were mixed results in the way HIEP projects addressed the gendered and social diversity aspects in their research outputs or in their influencing and uptake strategies. There was limited evidence that influencing strategies had systematically addressed how to communicate the gender and inclusion dimensions of research unless its focus was specifically addressing a GASI issue. HIF (CS5) had no structured outreach and dissemination strategy and did not track the extent to which GASI was reported in research outputs from grantees that did not have a specific gender or inclusion theme. R2HC made no explicit mention of gender and inclusion in its uptake strategy, although there was the expectation that grantees report and publish on the gender and inclusion dimensions of their research. REFANI (CS2) did not consistently report on the GASI dimensions of the research, with only Pakistan producing gender-focused research products. Other projects, as detailed above did produce GASI focused outputs.

Over the course of HIEP, while increasing numbers of southern researchers, including women, were involved in supported research, most projects did not develop clearly defined strategies for working with and building the capacities of southern actors that took into account gender differences and diversity. Before HIEP's introduction of equity guidelines for the reporting and monitoring of VfM in 2017 it was not perceived as a priority by partner projects. CS3 R2HC stood out from 2015 onwards in making consistent efforts to increase the number of southern partners receiving research grants within partnerships, including targeted events, translation of key documents into French and establishing a system for reimbursing costs related to the translation of proposals into English. However, the lack of diversity among grantees is a challenge and addressing gender inequalities is beyond the scope of the R2HC fund.



5.4 Conclusions and learning

There is emerging evidence that collecting and analysing differential data in relation to contextualised vulnerabilities, power dynamics and social differences within targeted communities works well at capturing social inclusion and diversity within targeted communities. In response to challenges in ensuring that GASI was mainstreamed within the research process, during the course of their research projects both VALID (CS8) and SAVE (CS6) adapted their methodologies and refined their data collection and analysis in order to capture a range of context-specific vulnerabilities. HIEP partner VALID explicitly focused on power dynamics in CS8.

Evidence from HIEP projects suggests that targeting a broad constituency in communication strategies enables more inclusive 'reach' of findings. Evidence from some case studies (CS4, CS6, CS8 and some grantees in CS5) suggests that building a broad constituency for research findings during the research process is potentially more effective in developing more inclusive and gender-sensitive uptake/communication strategies, e.g. in reaching local humanitarian actors including those with a specific GASI focus. Effective strategies consider the potential challenges for women and men researchers from the Global South to access and use research findings (CS4, CS6 and CS8), and during the research process developing stakeholder engagement processes that are gender sensitive and socially diverse (some grantees in CS3, and CS5, CS4, CS6 and CS8).

The availability, collection and analysis of disaggregated gender-sensitive and inclusive data continues to be a persistent challenge. HIEP projects have only been partially successful in reducing these data deficits. There is also a need for greater clarity about what level of socially disaggregated data is expected in humanitarian research projects (and operations), and what is meant by integrating a gender and inclusion perspective in research processes. Findings from the evaluation indicate that effective integration of GASI within research projects requires access to gender as well as social inclusion specialists, clear guidance and focused attention within research protocols, longer lead-in time in research processes and realistic research budgets. This had not been anticipated when HIEP began. Guidelines and standardised QA processes both within HIEP and its funded projects are needed to ensure research proposals and projects address these challenges.

Opportunities remain as yet untaken by HIEP, to build on and share its GASI learning across the portfolio and sector. There are many emerging lessons and evidence relating to mainstreaming GASI in humanitarian research.

In conclusion, HIEP is based on strong principles of gender and inclusion. HIEP's portfolio does include projects addressing key GASI issues directly, and some projects are adopting good practice and generating learning on integrating a gender approach to humanitarian research and communication. However, measures to translate the good principles into systematic HIEP management were only brought into operation late in the programme (2016/17). There is evidence that these strengthened commitments to gender and inclusions are now feeding into the commissioning of future research and that inclusion will be treated as a priority.

6 Impact



What contributions has HIEP made to building and sustaining evidence-aware policy and practice by humanitarian organisations?

Key findings: HIEP is working towards three outcomes which relate to systemic changes in (a) *donor* funding instruments and frameworks for investment into humanitarian evidence and innovation; (b) humanitarian actors' capabilities and relationships to integrate evidence routinely into policy and practice; and (c) *policy and practice actors'* investment into innovation which focuses benefit on poor people in humanitarian crises. HIEP has made important contributions to some emerging changes in each of these three areas. First, it has established new funds for innovation (HIF) and health research in emergencies (R2HC). Second, HIEP partners have developed methodologies for humanitarian research, built relationships between operational and academic agencies and increased debate on key evidence issues such as the quality of data. Third, HIEP has produced new evidence and innovations which agencies have applied to their policy and practice, built on through further research. Finally, the sector has been strengthened through greater interaction on evidence and innovation which HIEP partners have contributed to through convening roles and raising issues of gaps in evidence to inform future sector agendas. DFID and partners also made significant contributions to the establishment of a new platform for cooperation, the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI). These are early-stage changes but HIEP has made important contributions proportionate to its five-year time span, considering that many projects are still under way or only recently complete.

HIEP has made only a limited contribution to building southern capacity to produce and use evidence and innovation. This is a shortfall given that agendas need to be globally informed, humanitarian research needs good local researchers, and key users of HIEP products are local. The impacts achieved have been largely owing to individual partners' efforts through HIEP projects rather than a collective effort led by DFID as originally envisaged by the ToC. There is still potential for such a role to harness DFID's influencing, financing and networking roles in the sector to maximise HIEP's impact.

6.1 Introduction

In the context of this evaluation, HIEP impact is taken to mean change at the level of the three HIEP outcomes. These relate to systemic changes in (a) donor funding instruments and frameworks for investment into humanitarian evidence and innovation; (b) humanitarian actors' capabilities and relationships to integrate evidence routinely into policy and practice; and (c) policy and practice actors' investment into innovation which focuses benefit on poor people in humanitarian crises. The programme ultimately intends to have an impact on the capacity of humanitarian actors to deliver improved response and resilience programmes that are effective at supporting vulnerable people, but the evaluation did not follow projects to this stage. The evaluation inception report and evaluation matrix detailed the judgement criteria the evaluation would use which are below.

Judgement criteria

- Extent to which HIEP has achieved change in DFID and key organisations/targets
- Extent to which HIEP has built capacity in southern actors to be able to access funding for research and also to support, produce and apply evidence and innovation.⁴⁷

This section opens with a summary of findings of individual case study projects’ contribution to HIEP outcomes and we then discuss each HIEP outcome in turn considering evidence of change, factors influencing the changes and HIEP’s contribution. The section goes on to discuss key learning that emerges from our analysis and our conclusions.



6.2 Findings

6.2.1 Summary of case study findings

Table 6 below summarises the findings from each of the eight case studies. In each case study, the evidence collected was reviewed and an overall performance score made for ‘impact’ in a process detailed in section 2. Final scores are also listed in the table. Further detail on each of the case studies can be found in the individual case reports (Annex 2).

Table 6: Summary of case study findings: impact

*Explanation of Scoring Scale:

High the project has made a significant (crucial or important) contribution to three HIEP Outcomes

Medium the project has made a significant (crucial or important) contribution to at least one Outcome or Moderate to two or more

Low the project has only made a small contribution to HIEP Outcomes

N/A There is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate performance

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
CS1. Scaling up innovation in Disaster Risk Management	Medium	The risk assessment framework and process approach previously developed in Indonesia, and through this project trialled in the Pakistan context, was later applied by the World Bank in more than 10 further countries with EU funding. The project also made some contribution to the agreement of two World Bank IDA loans in the Pakistan provinces of Punjab and Sindh, and made a small contribution, along with significant input from the HIEP Sovereign Risk project, to DFID’s establishment of the Centre for Global Disaster Protection.

⁴⁷ Not used when scoring case study impact, given that most projects reported this was outside their remit and agreement with DFID, but commented on in the case study and main report narrative, given its implications for wider HIEP impact.

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
CS2. Expanding the Use of Cash Transfers in Emergency Response	N/A	Partner influencing work has led to SRPS framework and typology being widely used including by WFP, World Bank and FAO in planning for shock-responsive protection in Asia. Emerging findings have fed into new DFID programme development (MAINTAINS). REFANI emerging findings have been considered by ECHO and OFDA in Asia planning for cash and social protection. Each of these cash-related projects has tended to influence the sector independently, partly due to their different focus areas, in this case, emergency response and longer-term social protection. Final products from the projects were not complete at the time of case study data collection so a final score was not possible.
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	High	R2HC proved the feasibility of a new model of commissioning high-quality health-related research in humanitarian settings, attracting new donors (Department of Health) and external interest. R2HC work on research ethics, support to academic-operational partnerships and convening of events, e.g. 2017 Health Research Forum, has built skills and relationships in the sector. Some studies such as the cohort of studies on MHPSS have led to investments including by WHO aimed at scaling up the implementation of interventions.
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	Low	HESC contributed to increased debate about the quality of evidence in the humanitarian sector by (a) building awareness of the gaps and poor quality of the existing evidence in the sector and (b) through its protocols, experience and learning product on systematic reviews methodology. HESC has fed into initiatives that are building sector commitment to evidence such as through activities at WHS and its follow-up led by Evidence Aid. There are some examples of reviews being used in training and education in research methods and, to a lesser extent in some policy discussions.
CS5. Innovation: Testing to Proof of Concept Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF)	Medium	HIF has provided a mechanism for other donors to invest in innovation. It made a crucial contribution to the establishment of GAHI as a new, system-level innovation platform. HIF has contributed to changes in skills and capabilities to conduct innovation through the networks and partnerships it has supported between operational actors, NGOs, private sector and research organisations. HIF contributes to the adoption of specific innovations through the uptake of improved products, services and systems it supports with grants, and will be further strengthened when its new uptake strategy is implemented.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	Medium	SAVE has made important contributions to operational organisations' quality of humanitarian assistance by influencing evidence-based risk management, methodologies to calculate humanitarian coverage, application of humanitarian principles and negotiating access. There is good uptake of SAVE research, particularly on accountability

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
		approaches with new inter-agency initiatives building on its work and some DFID advisers referring to it when developing third-party monitoring processes. DFID’s decision on how to respond to some SAVE findings that impact on donor funding is still unclear.
CS7. Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for DRM	Medium	The project has had an impact on humanitarian programmes, tools and policy within the IFRC including IFRC’s internal approach building the capacity of national societies and informed the design of a DRM capacity-building programme in Kenya. Research fed into Red Cross influencing work to shape the WHS commitment to localisation. We found no evidence of the research impacting policy or practice in the humanitarian sector more widely.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	N/A	There is evidence of the project influencing WHS discussions on multi-year financing culminating in commitments in the Grand Bargain. Also at national level CS8 influenced agencies’ through sharing of early reports, e.g. UNICEF and DFID in Ethiopia as well as DFID’s Humanitarian Reform Policy. It is not possible to make a final scoring because final research products have not been produced nor has coordinated dissemination started. There is good theoretical potential for contribution towards HIEP high-level outcomes and impact.

6.2.2 Achievements against outcomes

The section below discusses each outcome in turn although there are overlaps and inter-relationships between outcomes

Outcome 1: International donors, including DFID, develop funding instruments and frameworks for investment into evidence, innovation and its applications

a) Introduction to the outcome and evidence of change

Change: We found evidence of a limited number of important new investment mechanisms and frameworks for evidence and innovation.

Outcome 1 represents changes in donors’ development of funding instruments and mechanisms for investment into evidence and innovation. There is no global monitoring of these trends though data on overall funding of evidence and innovation may improve in coming years if discussions currently taking place in OECD move ahead to track donor contributions to ‘common goods’ including research. HIEP does not monitor change in this area. As part of any routine environment scanning to provide a baseline for HIEP, the 2017 ELRHA Global Prioritisation Exercise, which maps research funding and plans to hold consultation with funders, will be useful.

There is a limited amount of new funding being made available for humanitarian research by some individual donors since HIEP began. Elrha's mapping of the evidence and innovation landscape as part of its current prioritisation process supported by HIEP found 216 actors involved in support of evidence and innovations with government donors support representing 51% of funds. A key supporter of innovation is ECHO with new funding including a €5 million Enhanced Response Capacity Fund for research. A significant entrant into humanitarian research has been the World Bank. Recognising the scale and importance of addressing the poverty of refugees in protracted crises it undertook its first work on research on refugees' poverty in 2015. Another UK-supported initiative relevant to humanitarian funding is the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), a £1.5 billion fund that is a key component of the UK Aid strategy and includes an aim to provide an agile response to emergencies where there is a research need.⁴⁸ Another significant inter-agency initiative, which includes a major component for investment into evidence, is the Global Resilience Partnership which brings together donors, international organisations and the private sector into resilience initiatives. Evaluation interviewees noted as significant donors the governments of Australia, Germany and Sweden.

The Elrha prioritisation process noted more activity in support of innovation rather than humanitarian research in the sector, with a number of small and larger agencies establishing innovation platforms and hubs. However, a key challenge of current research funding is that it is often short term (under 12 months), and small scale, in relation to the humanitarian operations and problems it is exploring. Our interviews also highlighted the difficulty that agencies faced to gain funding for research in timeframes aligned with their operations (CS4).

b) HIEP's contribution

Contribution: We judge the HIEP contribution to changes in investment mechanisms to be moderate.

HIEP has made contributions to the investment landscape for evidence through the establishment of two new multi-donor funds and also some contribution through engagement with other evidence initiatives as well as early approaches to the private sector.

We found three ways that HIEP has contributed to change in investment frameworks:

- Creation of new funds
- Sharing evidence with new initiatives to shape their agendas
- Some engagement with the private sector

HIEP has no explicit strategy for this outcome but a number of projects and activities have made some contribution towards influencing investment funds and mechanisms. HIEP has developed two significant funds – R2HC (CS3) and HIF (CS5) – and both are managed by HIEP partner Elrha. The initial thinking and support to HIF predate the formalisation of HIEP's structure but, nevertheless, HIEP has supported significant scale-up of the funds. HIEP has to date contributed over £25 million to them collectively.

Both funds have secured funding and interest from other donors and demonstrated effective ways to support evidence and innovation. Donors interviewed report they appreciated the existence of well-functioning mechanisms through which to channel some of their resources allocated to evidence and innovation. In addition, the funds provide a channel for other UK government funding. For example, the Department of Health plans a contribution of £4 million to R2HC in 2018, bringing together UK government funding into humanitarian health research.

⁴⁸ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/>

Both funds are largely dependent on HIEP support. Both funds have attracted only a limited number of additional donors. DFID and partners have not so far sought to establish the funds as long-term platforms nor actively sought additional donors to join them.

The HRI Team has had some but limited engagement with new initiatives to fund research but has shared evidence to help shape research agendas. HIEP has shared its research with new initiatives including the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) and also the inter-agency Global Resilience Partnership, which has a strong evidence component. There have been substantive discussions with GCRF regarding priorities and focus areas. HIEP's main contribution to other emerging inter-agency platforms has been through its activity to support the development of GAHI but because this is not a funding platform it is dealt with in relation to outcome 3. That said, GAHI may eventually lead to a new funding mechanisms but it is very early days at this point.

An important approach to investment where HIEP has made some progress is in relation to the private sector. Private sector actors were invited to initial meetings convened by DFID that led to the establishment of GAHI. The HIEP Moving Energy Initiative has some workstreams that aim to develop markets and bring in new investors including private sector actors and a sustainable fund. But delays in the project so far mean there is no evidence of impact at this point. However, we also found in our case studies, notably CS5 and also in other interviews, that there is resistance among some humanitarian actors to work with the private sector. It will be valuable for the HRI team and HIEP partners to document its experience in engaging with the private sector for investment in evidence which could help move forward cooperation in the sector.

Overall, we judge HIEP to have made moderate contributions to the emerging changes in investment mechanisms for evidence and innovation. Developing the funds' sustainability and range of donors together with more proactive sharing of learning about investment into evidence with other investment initiatives and broadening the range of contributors would enhance HIEP's overall contribution.

Outcome 2: Humanitarian actors change skills, behaviours, relationships, cultures and systems to promote the regular integration of evidence into humanitarian and DRM interventions

a) Introduction to the outcome and evidence of change

Change: We found evidence of significant pockets of change in the development of capabilities and relationships which support the production and use of evidence but among a limited number of humanitarian actors.

HIEP's second outcome considers some of the changes needed within humanitarian actors to support the *regular* integration of evidence into their work; this contrasts with a one-off take-up of specific pieces of evidence or innovations, which relates to outcome 3. Like outcome 1, there is no baseline from which to judge change but the initial HIES noted the lack of incentives and systems to support agencies and individuals' use of evidence as crucial problems at that stage.

We found a vigorous debate among some actors in the humanitarian sector regarding evidence. Some debates were catalysed by the HERR and ALNAP's work starting in 2013 to clarify what we mean by evidence and explore various aspects of its use such as in funding decisions. Agencies such as Evidence Aid are dedicated to the provision of evidence for humanitarian decision making and have developed initiatives such as the Humanitarian Evidence Week (HEW) which promotes awareness of evidence availability and issues. There were increased levels of participation in HEW in 2017. In these debates, we found a significant range of views aired on some key evidence issues, notably around what constitutes quality evidence and what level of quality is sufficient for humanitarian decision making. There are

challenges to arguments for evidence-based decision making with a number of evaluation interviewees expressing reservations. This may impede responses to operations when there is not a systematic review or randomised control trial to support interventions and others making arguments for value-based organisations perceiving there to be a tension between this and evidence-based decision making. This latter point is strongly rejected by those in the ‘evidence community’ who argue this is a false tension with values influencing *whether* organisations intervene and evidence supporting decisions about *how* most effectively to intervene. We also experienced fatigue from some respondents in response to new evidence mapping and prioritisation processes that some viewed as proliferating in sectors (CS4). These trends indicate the wide range of issues that are live in the evidence debate.

WHS helped to focus some debate. There were initiatives in advance of and since the WHS to promote awareness of the importance of evidence and produce tools to support it. Following the inter-agency submission to WHS which involved Oxfam, IRC and Evidence Aid and was cited in the WHS Synthesis report, Evidence Aid now is leading the production of an ‘Evidence into Use’ manual.⁴⁹

However, interviewees pointed to the limited range of organisations active in these debates.

Interviewees commented on the northern nature of the evidence debate with the majority of voices being northern based or from international organisations rather than local or southern voices, which is somewhat at odds with the current localisation agenda. There are signs of some change with, for example, events such as the World Humanitarian Studies Conference taking place in 2016 in Ethiopia and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy programmes from Centres in Africa and Asia, and which involve skills development in areas relevant to evidence use.

We found evidence of an increase in humanitarian organisations investments in evidence production and use. However, examples cited tended to be drawn from a recurrent small group of organisations notably IRC, Norwegian Refugee Council, Action Contre Faim (ACF), Mercy Corps, Oxfam and Save the Children. Examples include IRC’s investment into developing an evidence and outcome framework,⁵⁰ its commitment that all its work will be based on evidence by 2020, and ACF’s inter-agency research for action initiative. There is also some evidence of increased collaboration in evidence through inter-agency initiatives. Examples include the shelter sector, which has been building a database of case studies from responses for more than five years. While some organisations are increasing their investment into evidence production and use, and actively taking part in evidence debates, the number is limited. One interviewee commented on the development of ‘Ferraris and bicycles’ as the gap increases between agencies that are changing and others not picking up on opportunities or making these changes.

There are external pressures and trends that encourage changes in organisations’ skills and approaches to evidence. These include demands from donors for evidence in funding proposals, changes in some organisations’ leadership who put more emphasis on evidence, increased levels of education in humanitarian agency staff and the increase in the number of humanitarian professional courses all contributing to increasing humanitarian workers’ familiarity with research and use of data. The sector’s increased attention on accountability to people affected by humanitarian crises has also been a positive pressure for more collection of and use of evidence.⁵¹

⁴⁹ The manual is now published and available at http://www.evidenceaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Evidence_Aid_Practice_Guide_52pp_DIGITAL-FINAL-VERSION-2018-10-22.pdf

⁵⁰ http://oef.rescue.org/#/?_k=nrke2x.

⁵¹ For example see ALNAP’s work <https://www.alnap.org/our-topics/evaluation> and <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

b) HIEP's contribution:

Contribution: We judge that HIEP has made important contributions, alongside other factors, to strengthen capabilities and relationships that support humanitarian actors' regular use of evidence.

HIEP has made important contributions to increasing skills, strengthening relationships and promoting debate which support regular integration of evidence in policy and programmes particularly through its partnership model and provision of funds.

We identified five key ways that HIEP has contributed to the emerging changes in humanitarian skills and behaviour in relation to regular use of evidence.

- Strengthened relationships between operational and academic organisations
- Contributed to debates on quality issues in evidence
- Built skills in innovation and evidence production and management
- Bolstered momentum within some organisations to increase their own investments into evidence
- Created tools which enable the regular integration of evidence

HIEP's design strengthened relationships between operational and academic organisations. Most HIEP projects supported relationships between operational and academic organisation through a range of methods including formal project consortia, learning partnerships and mixed participation on advisory committees and events such as R2HC research forum. Seven out of eight case studies (all except CS1) found these have strengthened relationships and ways of working between operational and academic organisations (including think-tanks and independent research bodies). Elrha's role as host of the two funds and holding expertise in this area has been important to facilitate the partnerships and ensure the quality of their products.

However, many of the relationships supported in HIEP projects predate HIEP. Also, efforts, for instance by the funds HIF and R2HC, to attract new organisations particularly from the south have had limited success so far, though they also note a growth in northern organisations interested in the humanitarian research agenda. HIEP monitoring data for 2017 shows that to date there are just four partners managing research for the first time. The key challenge for new entrants has been the difficulty to achieve the high levels of quality required for robust research when they are entering into this area – newly indicating a need for dedicated support to improve skills and capacity.

HIEP's projects built skills in research and knowledge of how to undertake effective humanitarian research. Two projects included a capacity-building component on use of data (CS1) and management of research (CS7) which have achieved some success (see Box 8 for IFRC example). The CS7 example highlights the cost of this capacity building with its higher administration costs than other projects (see VfM section of the report).

A significant contribution is HIEP projects' documented learning on methodologies for humanitarian research. These could be further built upon through dissemination and also bring in additional learning from other HIEP partners. Increased contact between operational and academic organisations has exposed more humanitarian staff to research skills and approaches, though the impact of this is hard to quantify at present.

At least five of the HIEP case studies included training for individual researchers in research methods for challenging contexts (CS2, CS3, CS4, CS6 and CS8). However, these were small-scale training contributions, limited to single projects and individuals.

HIEP partners and products have made direct and important contributions to debates regarding the quality of evidence produced and needed in the sector. There was evidence in four of the eight HIEP case study projects that they have stimulated debate in clusters and inter-agency forums regarding the quality of evidence and criteria by which quality is judged (CS3, CS4, CS5 and CS6). For example, systematic reviews shared by HESC in shelter and protection clusters sparked debate on this (CS4), as did the process to develop methods, and later the maps on humanitarian coverage shared nationally and internationally by CS6. HIEP partners including Oxfam and Feinstein co-led with IRC and others' activities in advance of WHS and have supported follow-up activities to promote awareness of evidence. Also, at the WHS, DFID chaired events, which raised the profile of its commitment to the evidence agenda. Evaluation interviewees cite the importance of DFID's visible participation at events to build other actors' involvement.

Box 8: Building skills in research management: example of IFRC

Building IFRC capacity to manage research – learning by doing

The approach taken in CS7 to produce 'Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management (DRM)' was seen as innovative by internal stakeholders in IFRC. IFRC had limited experience in commissioning and managing research of this scale, so the partnership with OPM, experienced in this area, was anticipated to build internal skills and systems. While there was a range of other initiatives within the IFRC that were promoting research at the same time (e.g. the Netherlands RCS climate change facility, among others), and therefore contributing to strengthening internal capacity, co-leading this project also build skills. Stakeholders referred to the project as a flagship research project, and because of its size was able to engage people in conversations about research and evidence in the IFRC more broadly. They credited it with helping to advance the conversation and thinking internally on how to do research well, and in a way that supports uptake and use. In addition, it provided a concrete example of how to approach and create a successful partnership with research organisations, which again has helped progress internal thinking. Finally, it contributed to setting up an internal working group that emerged out of the learning group – the IFRC Research Working Group. The purpose of this group is to map the existing research being conducted across the network so as to inform a strategy on how to better coordinate and build on evidence. As well as helping to spark the formation of the group, the project also covered the costs of some member's participation in the group as it got started. As one informant commented: *'The research came along at the right time; there were a number of efforts going on within the IFRC to increase awareness and uptake of research. It was able to dovetail with these and we were able to use it as a test case.'*

HIEP funds and commitment to evidence bolstered existing momentum in organisations to increase their own investments. HIEP projects have supported existing processes such as the revision of the SPHERE handbook, e.g. SPHERE has entered into a formal partnership with R2HC and has drawn on an R2HC-commissioned review of the evidence underpinning the indicators in the handbook, taking on board some of the findings. Other interviewees reported that the existence of HIEP funds such as R2HC and HIF provide valuable funding opportunities and support their internal advocacy for increased attention and investment into evidence-based approaches.⁵²

HIEP projects created new tools and mechanisms to improve the regular use of evidence in humanitarian programming. Some HIEP projects have been able to produce useful tools and guidance that support the regular integration of evidence into aspects of humanitarian action, e.g. CS7 contributed to IFRC capacity-building approaches on DRM, CS1 further developed risk assessment methodologies in

⁵² CS4 and CS6.

Pakistan, and CS6 furthered learning on accountability approaches including third-party monitoring picked up by DFID advisers and inter-agency accountability initiatives. A HIEP project HDX⁵³ contributed to the new establishment of an OCHA centre for humanitarian data where, so far, 5,913 data sets are stored and accessible. It is too early to comment on the use of these data.

Collectively, we judge these to be important contributions by HIEP to supporting organisational capabilities that can support the regular use of evidence. The contribution could be strengthened by broadening the range of organisations HIEP engages with as partners, e.g. to include more from the Global South and those with less evidence experience which might require additional investment to support their participation. Building on the positive experience of work with IRC, HIEP could also increase the extent to which it proactively engages with allies within organisations who are responsible for promoting the evidence and innovation agendas within their own organisations.

Outcome 3: Policy and practice actors invest in social, economic and political innovations that focus on benefits for poor people in humanitarian crises

a) Introduction to the outcome and evidence of change

Change: We identified significant levels of new activity in relation to investment in innovation but it is concentrated in pilot stages of innovation and initiatives are not joined up.

This outcome represents the take-up, application and use of evidence and successful pilot innovations, in order to improve and/or transform humanitarian responses to the benefit of crisis affected communities. It encompasses the direct (instrumental) uses, changes and benefits arising from projects, rather than the system-level changes represented by outcomes 1 (shifts in financing instruments) and 2 (shifts in humanitarian actors' capabilities and partnerships), although some of the use of HIEP outputs also contributes to strengthening innovation and research systems. Innovation is a broad concept. It ranges from (a) incremental change with new products, technology use and service improvement, to (b) more systemic change which may focus on challenges, understanding how to frame problems, innovation processes catalysed at multiple points, and through to (c) paradigm or system shifts – like increased use of cash in response, multi-year funding, a focus on accountability and localisation. In relation to this outcome we have concentrated on following the uptake of HIEP evidence and innovations but below share some observations drawn from the evaluation interviews regarding the nature of change and wider environment.

Globally there is evidence of a greater emphasis on innovation in the humanitarian contexts so now it is no longer a question of *if* it needs to be done but rather now *how* should it be done. The scale of change is difficult to judge partly due to the lack of consistent monitoring of investment across the sector and it is complicated by practices such as re-labelling of activities as innovation as organisations try to access new funds, but there is strong evidence of increased activity in this area. Our evaluation found that interviewees are in agreement that key drivers are the need to find more efficient ways for humanitarian response given that needs are outstripping resources, as well as new technologies opening up new options and ways of working.

We found investment remains focused on pilots and headquarters-led initiatives. Interviewees pointed to innovation investments often being led by headquarters with more limited connection to field and in-country practitioners, thus being supply-driven tapping into new resource sources rather than being primarily informed by needs in the south. The result is that the innovation space ('ecosystem') is now

⁵³ Improving the quality of data used for decision making by the international humanitarian system (HDX) implemented by OCHA.

overpopulated with pilots and labs. The current challenges are how to scale medium-sized pilots and approaches that require actors to come together across organisational boundaries. Currently there is also no way of weeding out weaker initiatives, or duplication of pilots of the same thing, e.g. water filters. There are some early developments in relation to investments into support for local-level innovations, e.g. with new initiatives such as the START network innovation labs supported by DFID, to which the HRI team also contributes lessons.

Challenges to scaling up pilot innovations include the political economy of the humanitarian system.

Interviewees reported that it can be difficult to break out of existing delivery systems. International organisations dominate in humanitarian response with funding mechanisms prioritising them and operational systems well established. While there is space for new entrants to come into the system at the pilot stage of innovations, it is more difficult for them to continue into the next stage because of limits on their own absorptive capacity as well as resistance to new organisations.

A number of issues hold back the scaling up of innovations. Key factors include: the lack of evidence of effectiveness, among other things to help de-risk potential investments; reluctance among some to work with the private sector despite successful examples of cooperation; lack of investment for next-stage funding and technical support for the development of solutions; and a lack of coordination of innovation efforts and financing – a recognised challenge at the 2016 WHS that resulted in the establishment of GAHI (hosted by Elrha), to improve coordination of innovation at the system level.

b) HIEP's contribution

Contribution: We judge HIEP to have made important contributions to emerging changes in investment in innovation by policy and practice actors. This is a good performance given that many HIEP projects are still under way and also given the complexity of the systems for change. HIEP's contributions were made alongside other factors, such as key strategic collaborations and partnerships with humanitarian platforms or other global actors, that accelerated the direct applications of research.

From the case studies and additional data, we identified three ways in which the HIEP projects contributed to outcome 3 through:

- Organisations direct application or take-up of HIEP recommendations and innovations for advocacy, policy and practice development.
- Investments for follow-on research building on the experience of individual HIEP projects.
- Activities that strengthen evidence and innovation systems.

Most of the results relating to outcome 3 have arisen as a result of the HIEP-funded projects' own outreach activities. This reflects the extent to which partners are integrated with operational actors and mobilised their own networks to support take-up of findings or innovations. However, the HIEP ToC had anticipated that DFID would undertake active outreach, clustering and positioning of HIEP outputs for take-up by other actors and funders. This has only happened in an opportunistic way by members of the HRI team, e.g. presentation of findings at events. It seems highly likely that there would be even greater take-up of research and influence achieved if DFID itself played a greater role. For instance, the success of DFID input to GAHI and reported respect and influence it has in the sector emphasised by interviewees in this evaluation strongly suggest it would. HIEP contributions to outcome 3 are further discussed below.

Organisations direct application or take-up of HIEP recommendations and innovations for advocacy, policy and practice development.

There are a large number of examples of HIEP project recommendations and/or frameworks being used in agency guidelines, advocacy and the development of operational approaches. We found examples from six of the eight case studies (CS1, CS2, CS3, CS5, CS6 and CS7). Examples include several NGOs, including Tearfund, Oxfam and Mercy Corps that are drawing on CS6 SAVE functional checklist for humanitarian access negotiation⁵⁴ policies; and SAVE work on accountability has been used by UNICEF (Afghanistan) and OCHA (Turkey/Syria) to help develop their own accountability systems (CS6); CS7 research shaped Canadian Red Cross' strategy on DRM and informed new programming in Kenya and Pakistan. Other examples show HIEP projects frameworks and typologies being used in operational planning, e.g. CS2 SRSP conceptual framework has been used by the World Bank in Asia Cash Working Group discussions as well as by OCHA and Pakistan NDMA in developing '*Guidelines for Cash Transfer in Disaster Management*'. The EU has supported the World Bank to apply the framework and process applied to the Pakistan work to assess risk, part of CS1, in over 10 countries.

HIEP projects have informed advocacy approaches which themselves have achieved commitments in the sector notably through the WHS processes. Examples include British Red Cross use of the CS7 work on capacity building for DRM input to shape its advocacy for the localisation agenda, and the CS8 early studies have been used in concept notes informing Grand Bargain discussion on multi-year funding.

There are a limited number of examples of HIEP projects having a direct influence on operations but given the length of the evidence and innovation process, these are significant. One example is R2HC's work which helped to shape DFID's response to Ebola by commissioning rapid scientific evidence from the field including developing new diagnostics and vaccines to strengthen intervention options, mathematical modelling to map disease trajectories, and social science research on culturally appropriate safe burial practices (CS3). Some innovations that produced tools and kits developed though HIF and R2HC support have been taken up by participating organisations. Three examples are described in Box 9 below.

Box 9: HIEP evidence and innovations being applied: three HIF examples

Examples of HIF innovations being used by operational actors

HIF supported simple, low-cost kit (less than US\$5) to control the bleeding of critically ill, haemorrhaging women. DFID reports that in response to early piloting in Kenya, the Ministry of Health has formally integrated this package into the national policy for post-partum haemorrhage, though impact so far is limited.

The OpenAerialMap was developed with HIF support and first deployed in mid-2015. It is a set of open source tools and an online platform for searching, sharing, and accessing openly licensed satellite and drone imagery for humanitarian response and disaster preparedness. DFID reports that to date, imagery has been made accessible in Tanzania, the Philippines, Nepal, Mongolia and Mexico. Instead of waiting hours, or even weeks, value-added activities (such as using the imagery to create base maps of affected areas, undertaking rapid damage assessments, and other analyses) can begin immediately, leading to more effective decision making during humanitarian crises.

Another HIF project, Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping tool (mVAM), originally tested in DRC and Somalia, has now been rolled out in 28 countries, including Yemen, South Sudan and Sierra Leone. This provides household food security data to be collected remotely, substantially increasing speed, reducing costs and giving access to remote and insecure areas where data collection might otherwise be highly challenging or even impossible. mVAM data is being used by the WFP, USAID, Belgium, the Netherlands, Google.org and the Cisco foundation. It was assessed by the HIF evaluation.

⁵⁴ Set out in the SAVE Resource Paper: *Humanitarian access negotiations with non-state armed groups. Internal guidance gaps and emerging good practice.*

Follow-on investments made for further research or to explore scaling up promising approaches

Follow-on investments that focus on next-stage development, i.e. further research is important to reflect the long journey of individual projects to eventual impact on operations.

HIEP partners have made good use of HIEP evidence to secure funding for additional investment into the scaling up of innovations or expansion of research. HIEP's own logframe monitoring reports that 15 pilot innovations are being scaled up including those from HIF, and education in emergencies work such as the Humanitarian Education Accelerator. HIEP projects have provided robust evidence to secure additional investment from other donors, assured by the HIEP evidence of the likely effectiveness. Examples include the Humanitarian Data Lab being established at the time of the evaluation data collection in The Hague by OCHA and the Netherlands government which builds on the HIEP project HDX implemented by OCHA. In the pilot, OCHA trialled methods to make operational data easily available and accessible for humanitarian decision makers, including during the Ebola crisis, and is now scaling this up in the new Lab. The World Bank reported it used the evidence from its experience in CS1 to successfully influence discussions with the provincial governments in Sind and Punjab Pakistan that disaster risk financing components should be integrated into two IDA loans for US\$254 million (CS1). WFP have funded follow-up to SRSP (CS2); WHO and other partners are funding scale-up of MHPSS approaches they tested in R2HC projects (CS3). The education in emergencies work seems to be spawning a number of scaled-up projects which this evaluation was unable to look at in depth but suggests that the combination of a focus area of intervention, in a current and urgent humanitarian crisis (Syria response), with a strong alliance of organisations helps to speed this process. This warrants further attention and the HRI team's current work with USAID to launch the Humanitarian Grand Challenge, which has a scaling component that is a promising development.

DFID is supporting HIF's scaling up of some projects. With DFID support HIF is assisting the scaling up of three of its projects including: an initiative to increase the manufacturing of humanitarian supplies in the field using design and manufacturing technology such as 3D printers; new platforms and outlets for information and translation services; and also an approach to support healing of traumatised individuals and population through writing and music (HIF reports). New DFID funding will focus on six more projects to be scaled up.

DFID has also used HIEP evidence itself to develop future research projects and other initiatives to explore promising approaches. An example is the new establishment of the Global Centre for Disaster Protection, which was informed by the HIEP project on Sovereign Risk as well as, to a lesser extent, CS1. DFID has also used HIEP work on protracted displacement to inform its funding of a major new programme (£10 million) with World Bank and UNHCR on Forced Displacement, and CS2 (SRPS) has fed into the development of the HRI team's upcoming programme to Maintain Essential Services in Shock Affected Areas (MAINTAINS).

Strengthening the research and innovation system with coordination platforms, convening mechanisms, management support and through brokering

HIEP projects have contributed to strengthening research and innovation systems by influencing the establishment of key inter-agency initiatives as well as through convening roles, bringing together agencies to discuss current and future evidence needs and priorities. A crucial contribution by HIEP has been the establishment of GAHI, an inter-agency initiative that has the potential to make a significant difference to cooperation in the sector on innovation and to address some of the gaps described above. HIF has made a major contribution to the establishment of GAHI. More detail is provided on HIEP's role in Box 10. HIF has also established an alliance with ADRRN sharing its learning on innovation management, and supporting an Asia region innovation hub to catalyse community innovation among national NGOs.

Box 10: Strengthening the evidence and innovation system: Example of GAHI**HIEP's contribution to the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation**

The HIF team, alongside DFID advisers, contributed to platforms for cooperation in innovation through active participation in the innovation theme at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. In advance of the summit, HIF made substantive contributions to various aspects of the innovation theme, convening stakeholder consultations, and drawing on its extensive technical knowledge base about humanitarian innovation management, including studies on the innovation ecosystem, and research-based case studies of successful innovations in its portfolio. Substantive inputs included, for example, shaping and drafting of synthesis reports; membership of steering committees; hosting an event in June 2015 to help formulate a set of humanitarian innovation management principles; and identifying innovative projects to showcase at regional consultations. Through this leadership, coupled with DFID's visible commitment to investing in innovation and evidence through the HIEP, the HIF and HIEP are considered to have made a crucial contribution to the humanitarian innovation ecosystem. HIEP now supports GAHI financially (see CS5).

HIEP has helped to develop and strengthen thematic communities of practice and platforms. We found most evidence for this in the health sector where R2HC has played an important role with events including the Jordan research forum and events to communicate emerging research. For example, R2HC's cohort of 11 studies on MHPSS interventions has turned into an influential thematic community of practice, which involves around 30 organisations making investments aimed at scaling up the implementation of interventions tested in R2HC grants. R2HC convening events have also helped to build sector discussions on research priorities. For example, work with the WASH cluster has led it to take forward actions from this event, including the creation of a WASH cluster technical working group on research.⁵⁵

Taken together, HIEP has made important contributions to these emerging changes in policy and practice actors' investment into innovations to benefit people affected by humanitarian crises. They can be strengthened by sustained attention to support the scaling up of approaches, support to the application of new evidence and to influencing initiatives that require inter-organisational and inter-sectoral cooperation.

6.2.3 Extent to which HIEP has built capacity in southern actors to be able to access funding for research – and to support, produce and apply evidence and innovation.

Capacity building of southern actors is not an explicit aim of HIEP but is a judgement criterion identified by DFID in the initial development of the ToC and logframe linked to RED's then mandatory indicators. This is reported here because it influences the overall impact of HIEP and also has important links now with the current localisation agenda.

We found that from across the eight case study projects at least five had made explicit efforts to reach and be accessible to southern institutions but with limited success (CS1, CS3, CS4, CS5 and CS7). For example, in CS4 HESC encouraged proposals from southern partners to undertake or join partnerships to undertake the systematic reviews but none reached the quality standards needed for a successful application. HIEP funds, R2HC and HIF have encouraged southern participation. Measures included town hall meetings early in the R2HC process in Delhi and Nairobi, and more recently a Jordan research forum had more success generating 12 expressions of interest of which five were invited to submit full proposals.

⁵⁵ Some actors involved emphasised that in order to use this technical working group to generate actionable research that reaches the field, research translation and brokering was also necessary, a point also emphasised in the note of the event. R2HC (2017) *WASH in Emergencies Research Prioritisation Meeting: Briefing Paper*, 29–30 June 2017.

Key challenges have been to reach the quality criteria needed for successful proposals and also absorptive capacity of smaller organisations.

There are compelling reasons to build capacity of southern actors both on principles of equity but also for relevant and effective research production and use. Most other HIEP projects reviewed report that capacity building is not part of their remit but found some level of training was necessary to implement their projects given the reliance on, and added advantages of, working with local researchers for primary research, but also limited experience of some in the methods being used for robust research. Projects have included training on specific methods and issues such as ethics for individual researchers (e.g. CS2, CS4, CS6, CS7 and CS8). However, more is needed given that there are particular needs for humanitarian research, e.g. for rapid deployment and understanding of local contexts to access marginalised groups. We also found the need for specific communication processes to ensure new evidence reaches local actors.

However, initial plans to have a focus on capacity building have since been deprioritised in HIEP. An early project, East Africa Mapping, was not followed up. This was a scoping study to map and conduct a political economy analysis of the humanitarian research and evidence systems in East Africa, and to be undertaken with the intention for follow-on work in both East Africa and South Asia. It was not pursued by HIEP which initiated it, nor at a regional level which had not been involved in the commissioning of the work.

Humanitarian research and innovation needs southern capacity. The previous Evaluation report recommended that HIEP consider developing a capacity-building component but DFID responded that this is now seen as a wider RED responsibility and one that is being taken up in the project “Strengthening Evidence for Development Impact” being piloted in Ghana, Uganda and Pakistan. This is a welcome development. New projects developed by the HRI team such as the Protracted Displacement Research, led by the World Bank with UNHCR, include a small capacity-building element with fellowships available for PhD candidates from Africa and Asia – as does the HIEP project with partner ESRC on urban risk. However, HIEP has significant learning to offer to capacity-building initiatives that relate directly to humanitarian research, e.g. on methodology as well as specific needs to take forward its agenda, so it would benefit from close cooperation with DFID and possibly other external initiatives to take this forward on a greater scale. Such a focus resonates with DFID’s support for the localisation agenda as well.



6.3 Conclusions and learning

Learning

Below, we detail some key factors which have aided or impeded HIEP’s impact. They are relevant for learning for HIEP and future HRI team developments and also to other supporters of evidence and innovation.

6.3.1 Impact is more likely when interventions can build on pre-existing momentum

HIEP projects have achieved success (judged by important contributions to HIEP outcomes) when they build on pre-existing momentum in the sector. This may be that they address areas where there are acknowledged needs, knowledge or implementation gaps.⁵⁶ These are gaps where there is already a broad approach agreed at the policy level, and there may even be formal frameworks, or an issue that is recognised, but the understanding of how to put policies into operation is not fully developed, e.g. because of complex contexts and operational systems. So, in these situations, the HIEP projects were ‘applied research’ in nature, even if they were addressing new questions or using innovation lenses to

⁵⁶ Damien Green coined the term ‘implementation gap’ in his blog, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/importance-implementation-gaps>.

understand problems. Examples include, the cash-based projects exploring how to scale approaches and HIEP's exploration of sovereign insurance.

Similarly, HIEP has contributed to change when it has built on initiatives already under way. For example, HIEP partners proactively seized the opportunities such as that provided by the revision of SPHERE handbook (R2HC and CS4 HESC, via ALNAP, and some lead authors of systematic reviews) and the push from parts of the sector for increased attention to accountability to affected people (CS6). Similarly, the influence of CS3 R2HC projects on MHPSS has been aided by high levels of interest in this area of humanitarian response in the sector. Organisations reported that when they undertake internal advocacy to support the production and use of evidence in decision making, their efforts are bolstered through the HIEP funds and also DFID's profile in this area.

6.3.2 Single projects need to be connected to broader bodies of evidence

HIEP demonstrates that single projects will rarely achieve significant change in how the sector works but rather they can contribute to bodies of work that build the evidence base and argument for change.

The impact of CS5 HIF has been impeded by the limitations of its monitoring, evaluation and synthesis approaches. Also, stand-alone projects have struggled to have an impact across the sector when they were not actively linked with other bodies of evidence, e.g. CS4 systematic reviews are on diverse subjects so need linkage to other work in their area of focus, and CS7 has had limited impact outside of IFRC. On the other hand, CS2 cash projects' influence has been aided by useful platforms such as CaLP to bring together the different projects' findings, and CS3 production of a set of projects on MHPSS and its move to more focused calls, like that in HIF (e.g. on WASH), now too shows the potential of bodies of work.

6.3.3 A long-term commitment is needed to support the journey of new evidence into operational impact

The journey from a research or innovation project to changing how the sector works is very long but HIEP's long-term approach has been helpful. Box 11 below describes the five-year journey that one of the successful HIF projects has followed so far. Another example in the sector is the shift towards the use of cash as a humanitarian response – which is still seen by many as an innovation but began at least 20 years ago with pilots in the sector. Both illustrate the long-term nature of change.

HIEP investments enabled some themes to be explored over a sustained period, up to five years in some instances, e.g. notably through R2HC which is taking projects and convening events, and working with partners to support consideration of how to scale up and apply them. HIEP and the DFID HRI team's increasing support to certain areas is a positive trend, e.g. in relation to education in displacement, on quality of assistance in conflict areas, humanitarian assistance in protracted crises and shock-responsive mechanisms. However, long-term humanitarian research funding and support to communication continues to be unusual – with interviewees commenting on the rarity of communication being funded at all in a research programme, as well as humanitarian research timeframes (unlike development) that can be short-term.

However, even with this timeframe, respondents (internationally and nationally) pointed to the challenges that face innovation pilot and development projects, e.g. financing and barriers to entry. Five years is still a relatively short timeframe for investments in humanitarian innovation to be yielding large-scale solutions and outcomes. A longer time frame of 8–10 years for promising initiatives could be explored initially.

Box 11: The journey to scale: innovation in water treatment

One of the WASH projects reviewed for this evaluation was of a water treatment approach which had progressed through the HIF's stages from development of a prototype to field test. The five-year journey started in 2012 with a HIF grant of £107,341 – with £37,314 in contributions from the project lead, through design and manufacture of the prototype, changes in design, culminating in its first field deployment in Juba to demonstrate effectiveness in 2016, supported by a diffusion grant of £24,193. So, after a period of five years and an investment of £179,000, the innovation has just reached the stage of being successfully tested in an emergency setting, with the notable participation of the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation (SSUC) – the government body that provides water treatment in Juba and is a potential adopter of new water treatment approaches. Participation in the production of evidence and innovations builds commitment and take-up levels.

There is most evidence of take-up by organisations actively involved in the production of new evidence and innovation. The partnership model and underlying assumptions of HIEP have proven successful in supporting this – and there is evidence of active take-up by partners involved in projects, e.g. learning partners of CS6, IFRC in CS7, Government of Pakistan in CS1 have all gone on to apply accountability, capacity-building and disaster risk mechanisms respectively with their own or other donor funds. However, this presents the challenge of how to scale-up initiatives beyond the individual partners, which links back to the need for multiple projects to build up both the body of evidence and the body of organisations supportive of change. Initiatives that encourage cooperation between agencies – not only academic-humanitarian, such as the Education Accelerator (involving UNICEF and UNHCR) and protracted crisis work (with the World Bank and UNHCR) – are a helpful step and should be followed to see whether they have sustainable impact on each other, e.g. in take-up of each other's innovations and research and other signs of cooperation in building evidence and innovation production and use.

Part of the journey from research evidence and innovation into application is the need for 'translation of evidence into operational implications.' HIEP has achieved impact at operational levels where product tools and practical briefing notes are produced, promoted and supported in their application. Interviewees note their desire for the implications for their role to be spelled out. Case studies found that DFID advisers were interested in HIEP research but were not clear on the implications of their own roles (CS6). Not all research is at a stage where operational implications can be drawn out, and it should be noted there is fatigue in the system for toolkits and guidelines, so alternative ways to support application, when evidence is at this stage, may be needed. HIEP could explore what works in this through its network of partners who are experienced in promoting evidence agendas in their organisations.

6.3.4 Evidence that calls for action across sectors and at systemic levels rather than with a clear sector focus presents challenges to translating evidence to change

The journey – from project research to achieving change within the sector – is easier to plan for when there is a clear, sectoral pathway for change. Sector-specific projects have clear routes for sharing evidence, promoting debate and influence strategies – for instance via IASC structures and key international organisations. A sector focus means there are clearly identifiable departments to target influencing activities. HIEP projects faced more challenges in moving agendas forward when they require a new way of working either across a whole organisation or between organisations, e.g. to increase transparency between organisations, to share data and to improve evidence of humanitarian coverage for decision making (CS6). These changes are complex and go beyond the reach of most individual projects and partners, therefore requiring investment by DFID and partners to take it forward. So far, this has not happened in HIEP. However, the sector is moving away from siloed sectoral responses, partly due to responses such as cash-based programming which cut across sectors but also through a recognition that

addressing vulnerability and humanitarian responses need to be based on a more holistic understanding of contexts and people's lives. This needs further work to consider how to take forward these agendas.

Conclusion

In conclusion, HIEP has made important contributions to a significant number of emerging changes in investment into and use of evidence and innovation by donors, policymakers and practitioners. The contributions have been driven partly by the original HIEP design, e.g. creation of funds and partnership approach but largely driven by the HIEP project partners' own efforts in their networks. The contributions demonstrate some ways that HIEP projects collectively contribute to change and highlight some ways this contribution can be further strengthened through more proactive influencing strategies, bringing in a broader range of organisations and through an extended role for DFID beyond support for partner project activities.

The HIEP ToC captured a vision of DFID as the uniquely placed driver of system-wide change using its influencing, donor and convening roles to contribute to change – but this role has only been realised to a limited extent. It envisaged that HIEP would make a significant contribution to changes in these system-level problems. As part of the programme, DFID would play a key part drawing among other capacities on its role as donor and influencer in the sector. Due both to capacity constraints and lack of ownership of the ToC by the leadership of HIEP, the focus of the HRI team has tended to be on portfolio management rather than proactive knowledge mobilisation and influencing. There have been delays in producing (and resourcing) programme-level strategies, e.g. the influencing strategy. HIEP has been successful in many areas, but the question remains of how much more could have been, or could still be, achieved at a system-scale if DFID had played a more proactive role. This could be via mobilising HIEP knowledge and innovation more strategically through its own channels of policy influence and financial incentives as envisioned in the original HIEP ToC. The current level of resourcing of HIEP – both in the HRI team and limited explicit commitments by other parts of DFID – to support and take forward the HIEP agenda have constrained this. Increased capacity in the HRI team with roles focused on: harvesting and communicating learning (operational and methodological) from across projects to internal and external stakeholders; facilitation of discussions to consider implications of findings for DFID and others; networking with like-minded donors and others; convening events and providing support cooperation in the sector; and catalysing action from within DFID as well as building networks externally, would support this.

However, it must be noted that the timescale required to influence widespread change through research and innovation in the complex humanitarian system realistically lies well beyond five years, particularly given the proportion of funding that has been expended only since 2016. Even if DFID had been more proactive in using its global institutional influence, outcome-level changes might only just be emerging at the five-year point.

7 Value for money



Which management and implementation approaches have enabled HIEP to deliver better value for money (VfM)?

Key findings: There is strong evidence that HIEP offers good VfM. Good VfM has been enabled by very lean management costs, the benefits of virtual team model, the partnerships between academic and humanitarian institutions, and the notable examples of relevant and high-quality research products. Moreover, many partners have succeeded in facilitating good discussions and influence in the sector and thus contributing to HIEP outcomes.

There have also been some drawbacks. At the project level there has been varying performance of management and operational efficiency. At the programme level, challenges have included staff attrition which, among other activities, has hindered the development of a strategy to steer the programme at outcome level. Some individuals in DFID have promoted awareness and country office uptake, but the programme would have benefited from an earlier proactive and formalised focus on research uptake, and more attention given to what the findings mean for DFID programming and policy. In terms of portfolio-level contributions to outcome, HIEP would have benefited from a greater investment and focus on strategic cross portfolio learning and activities to support overall programme networking, influence and impact at outcome level. This would have maximised the value of the portfolio as a whole, which would in turn have resulted in a greater contribution to HIEP outcomes.

7.1 Introduction

The evaluation uses the 4E framework of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity, and follows the methodology described in section 2 and detailed in Annex 7. It includes analysis of four selected case studies and analysis at programme level. The judgement criteria used are below.

Judgement criteria:

- Extent to which HIEP has optimised use of resources to achieve results
- Evidence that HIEP decision making considers VfM (4E) at project and programme level
- Evidence of effective (level of detail and timely) budgeting and monitoring processes
- Evidence of additional funds being leveraged for/by HIEP
- Evidence of systems and processes to address gender equality and other equity issues
- Evidence that HIEP management model is cost-effective compared with alternatives (programme level)
- Evidence that budgets are appropriate for range of activities

This section presents our findings, identified learning and conclusions relating to the VfM of HIEP. It begins with a summary of the case study VfM analysis and goes on to present our findings from across the programme in relation to each of the 4Es in the VfM framework in turn. Section 7.3 draws out learning from the findings relevant for future DFID investment into humanitarian evidence and innovation and finally draws conclusions.

7.2 Findings

7.2.1 Case study findings – summary

Four case studies were selected for more in-depth VfM analysis using a 4E framework in this final summative phase. They represent a range of types of HIEP project and management arrangement, such as funds (CS3 and CS5), a project with operational organisations as research partners and capacity-building elements (CS7) and a project undertaking research in highly complex insecure environments (CS6). The overall findings are summarised below along with each case study’s allocated scoring.

Table 7: Summary of case study analysis-VfM

<p>Explanation of scoring:</p> <p>High strong performance against all 4E</p> <p>Medium strong performance against 2E and moderate for all</p> <p>Low weak performance against two criteria or more</p>

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good economy performance – Reasonable cost structure – 88% expenditure to grants and 79% in phase 2. Good management of costs. Reasonable efficiency – but some internal and external approval processes delaying start of grants. Effectiveness – strong performance in relation to relevance, effectiveness and equity. Partnerships have worked well. Potential to do more on policy ‘translation’ of findings for operational use and strategic learning- some measures recently begun, e.g. on learning on methodology. Some focused projects on equity/gender issues. Fund measures for reporting and managing gender made more systematic from 2017.
CS5. Innovation: Testing to Proof of Concept – Humanitarian	Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost structure is reasonable. There is a relatively high allocation of budget lines on non-grant activities (33%) such as scoping, gap analysis and targeting, though this has potential advantages in terms of more effective

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
Innovation Fund (HIF)		<p>targeting of grants and future synthesis. Good grant scrutiny.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficiency has been problematic with grant administration taking time, detracting from time for synthesis and dissemination. Staffing still stretched. ▪ Lack of a M&E system so limited synthesis and learning. ▪ Effectiveness has been satisfactory, more incremental than transformative. Now there is significant duplication with new innovation funds in the sector. Partnerships have worked well and there is good access to global expertise. New partnership with ADRRN will aid engagement in southern innovation initiatives. New strategy should address some issues relating to learning, synthesis and uptake though DFID funding timeline relatively short to 3/19. ▪ Equity is reasonable with appropriate budgets to work with vulnerable communities and also a GBV focus strand.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good cost economy, good examples of economies of scale, resource sharing and learning, leveraging goodwill networks and resources from other Humanitarian Outcome projects and partners. ▪ Clear efficiencies associated with milestone- based contract, good operational and management arrangements, staff continuity and high quality. ▪ High-quality relevant outputs and with high level of project-led research uptake. Some contributions to HIEP outcomes. ▪ Strong approach to equity in research methodology, learning and tracking in engagement events.
CS7. Strategic Research into National and Local Capacity Building for DRM	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High cost structure, but includes capacity-building objectives. DFID staff attrition and IFRC staff with limited research experience hindered efficiency. ▪ The OPM IFRC research partnership was innovative and supported cross-organisational learning plus an increase in IFRC own research capacity. ▪ Quality of research has been high, with some good examples of global uptake. Some champions and drivers of the uptake of the research have left, and there does not appear to be a strategy for driving uptake now.

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity considerations initially weak but then built into project design after inception. Gender issues considered in outputs.

7.2.2 Economy

Project performance

The case studies reviewed showed good levels of economy with partners paying close attention to costs. Overhead and administration costs come in at or under 10%. The exception among the case studies is CS7, which has high overhead costs of roughly 25%, but it included some research uptake functions and capacity-building objectives which were largely achieved so are justified. Low overhead costs were also replicated in grants awarded by the two funds (CS3 and CS5) where overhead grant costs average 7%.

Economies in case studies were particularly aided by partners securing cost-sharing benefits from their networks as well as through low transaction costs enabled by milestone contracts. Advisory groups have proved a good way to bring in expertise and a wide range of experience at low cost to projects.

In the funds (CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF) there are good levels of resources being awarded to projects (rather than used on administration). There are some differences with CS5 HIF using higher levels of funds for grant scoping and targeting activity (23% of budget), which reduced the proportion of the budget being allocated to grants (67%) but which arguably has had benefits for targeting of grants. Its allocation of funds for staff costs remains lean at 10%. R2HC has allocated 79% of its budget to grants with staff and grant management costs at 9%. The remaining 12% of costs are overheads.

On the whole, budget costs for undertaking research in challenging, humanitarian conditions have been adequate. Budgets have been tight but the flexibility of milestone-based contracts and experience of most of the organisations undertaking the research meant their original budgeting has been adequate (e.g. CS8 and CS6). However, there have been exceptions when projects have been under-budgeted, such as for systematic reviews in CS4. Furthermore, time allocations for some activities have been short; with for instance (a) the extension to CS2 REFANI only enabling the completion of outputs to be produced rather than implementing fully its research uptake strategy; and (b) extensions to CS5 HIF and CS4 HESC having limited time for communication and (in the case of CS5 HIF) synthesis activities. HIEP's recent work to consider costs across projects has provided the HRI team with better information on average costs for key activities.

Management costs

The management costs of HIEP are difficult to establish precisely because DFID staff, both within HRI and wider HIEP teams, do not track their time against individual programmes or projects and have been involved in a changing portfolio over the duration of HIEP. That said, it was possible for the evaluation team to analyse and draw conclusions from the available data and to consider these in relation to another DFID programme, the Raising Learning Outcome education programme. This programme was identified with the HRI team during the evaluation inception phase. It provided an interesting comparator because it has a different management model.

In this phase of the evaluation we updated estimates for HIEP management costs and its shows a strong performance in terms of HIEP economy. Given the challenges in securing accurate data for staff inputs to HIEP over its duration (see methodology section for more detail), we undertook a sensitivity analysis to consider how costs of HIEP would vary under different sets of assumptions related to how programme

managers and advisers time spent on HIEP projects. Two scenarios are presented here: of (a) all programme managers and advisers spend 5% of their time on HIEP for six years, (b) 10% for six years. The results are shown below in Table 8. HRI team feedback of time allocated to HIEP by the wider team suggests that the first set of assumptions is more accurate. As such, over a six year timeframe, we estimate that management costs add up to £2.2 million,⁵⁷ which is equivalent to 4% of the total programme budget. However, even this might over-estimate time allocated beyond the three-year time span of some projects. i.e. it is not clear that all programme managers and lead advisers will be working on projects for the full six years (as envisaged by the evaluation in the inception phase and theory of change as DFID would continue to use findings in its influencing activities in the sector after research activities end), so this is a conservative (higher end) estimate of cost. Importantly, a note of caution is urged in relation to these figures: they are only crude estimates and have not been able to build in the evolution of HIEP, e.g. with more management responsibilities returning to the HRI team and the HRI team’s developing portfolio which increases the workload beyond the HIEP portfolio as discussed earlier. Also, it must be noted that this figure does not include extra office overheads and corporate support costs, or research uptake costs undertaken by DFID.

Table 8: Sensitivity analysis taking account of different rates of time spent on HIEP by programme managers and advisers (virtual team)⁵⁸

Sensitivity for the HIEP virtual team members time on HIEP projects (22 advisers and 20 programme managers)	Administrative overhead as a % of total HIEP programme budget
A 5% FTE for 6 years	4.0%
B 10% FTE for 6 years	5.1%

Our estimation of HIEP management costs is low compared with an alternative model – the ESRC education research programme Raising Learning Outcomes (RLO) which is externally managed.⁵⁹ This is similar to HIEP in that it commissions research and evidence, and seeks to influence policy and practice, but in the education sector, through smaller grants. In terms of fund administration, much of HIEP is run by DFID staff.⁶⁰ In contrast to HIEP, in the RLO programme the fund management of the research is fully contracted out by RED to ESRC, so it has lighter involvement of DFID staff focused mainly on strategic level development of the programme. The direct administration costs of RLO programme are also light, estimated at 4.4% of the UK £20 million programme at the time of HIEP evaluation data collection.⁶¹ However it should be noted that the RLO programme has a further two discreet components concerned with the promotion of programme level (as opposed to individual project level) Impact and Learning. These are funded through an investment of £1.4 million. These components are sub-contracted by ESRC to additional parties (Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and the Institute of Development Studies) which have responsibilities to promote communication of cross-project evidence, to facilitate learning between project teams, to ensure research findings reach relevant policymakers and circles, and to promote the

⁵⁷ The total cost includes one full time equivalent (FTE) each for the HRI team leader, adviser, and PM, and two days a year for eight management committee members as well as project advisers and programme managers.

⁵⁸ All analysis includes the HRI team and advisory group costs as described above.

⁵⁹ <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/international-development/esrc-dfid-raising-learning-outcomes-in-education-systems-research-programme/>

⁶⁰ The two funds (CS3 R2HC and CS5 HIF) are an exception as in both cases DFID is contracting out the administration of significant pots of resources.

⁶¹ The estimate of 4.4% is based on the allocation of UK£800,000 to ESRC administration costs of a total UK£20 million programme.

development of a cohort of education researchers.⁶² Furthermore the time inputs to RLO by DFID advisers are also variable and not tracked so the figure of 4.4% is a guiding estimate.

HIEP has low management costs for a portfolio of this size and complexity. HIEP's total value has increased from an initial plan of £48.3 million to £50.2 million, and later in 2017, to £54.6 million with a programme extension to 2022.⁶³ The 2017 increased budget was allocated mainly to three projects (CS3 R2HC, CS4 HESC and CS5 HIF) totalling £4.4 million and there is some additional funding for lesson learning and uptake not yet disbursed. Despite the above notes of caution regarding the management cost calculations, the HIEP evaluation analysis shows that HIEP has particularly low fund management staff costs and potentially offers very good VfM (as does the ESRC model). However, these low administration costs have been at the cost to strategic communication and promotion of learning across the programme towards HIEP outcomes.

To assess VfM holistically it is important to understand not only how economical is the management cost but also how effective is the programme. It is beyond the scope of this paper to comment on the effectiveness of RLO programme but HIEP effectiveness and impact are considered. The RLO programme is an interesting model which is likely to produce relevant learning from the coming years of its implementation and good for the HRI team to be in contact with for mutual learning.

Leveraging funds

HIEP has leveraged significant additional funds to HIEP projects though these are, on the whole, funds already allocated by donors to evidence and innovation. The total leveraged from international partners as of December 2017 is £12.83 million (23.9% of total HIEP approved budget as of 2017 Annual Review).⁶⁴ The HIEP projects that have benefited from the leveraging of partners are R2HC, HIF, Urban Ark, 3ie and GAHI. Leveraged funding includes donor grants from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DANIDA, ECHO, WFP (3ie), Wellcome Trust, Department of Health and SIDA. Evaluation interviews found that donor funds tend to have been already committed to evidence and innovation so are not additional new money leveraged to evidence because of HIEP but rather secured for HIEP projects.

7.2.3 Efficiency

Speed, timeliness and contracting

HIEP is on track to spend its total allocation within the revised budget and timescale. Actual expenditure had a slow start against budgets and revised budgets (as can be seen below). The original business cases for HIEP envisaged the programme and therefore all expenditure would be complete by end of 2018. Current forecasts suggest that the bulk of the original expenditure will be made within that timeframe though some projects will continue, particularly in relation to HIF and R2HC grants and also research uptake and influencing strategies beyond that. The revisions made to the overall HIEP budget and timing have been appropriate.

⁶² The budget for the ESRC RLO programme for impact and learning activities equals UK£1.4 million which together with the £800,000 makes a total administration, learning and communication budget of £2.2 million. Including these resources would take RLO's administration costs over 10% of the total £20 million programme budget. There is an estimated additional £81,000 of costs for DFID time spent on the programme but this may not be accurate and is based on data collected in earlier rounds of the HIEP evaluation of time allocated to ESRC RLO by the two DFID staff involved and clearly this time fluctuates so could be higher.

⁶³ One HIEP projects R2HC extends to March 2022.

⁶⁴ Latest figures provided by DFID in December 2017 for VfM analysis.

HIEP actual expenditure vs. forecast budget (all figures are in millions)

Years	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total
Actual expenditure	£0.8	£4.7	£7	£9.9	£10.2	-	-	-	-	-	£32.6
Forecast budget	-			-	-	£12.1 ⁶⁵	£4.0	£1.9	£2.1	£0.9	£21
										Total	£53.7⁶⁶

There have been delays in projects original timeframe but which have on the whole benefited projects' effectiveness. Examples of delays are below.

- CS1 which was extended for six months partly due to difficulties in data gathering.
- CS2 – all three projects of SRPS, CaLP and REFANI had no-cost extensions. In the case of REFANI delays have limited time for final communication.
- CS6 SAVE was delayed by six months largely due to time for outputs to be approved internally by DFID.
- CS8 – Building Resilience thematic evaluation – some project locations and outputs were changed due to security issues and additional themes were added based on initial data collection (health and gender).
- Protection – Roots of Behaviour/Restraint in War project has an extended timeline, which has allowed for some reframing of the project and appropriate research team to be sub-contracted.
- Moving Energy Initiative – no-cost extension of one year requested (pending) due to delays in data collection and also due to changes in external circumstances, e.g. camp closure in Kenya, government approval in Jordan.
- Urban Africa Risk Knowledge – no-cost extension of six months to mid-2018 due to initial delays in contracting and recruitment and also to take advantage of emerging opportunities for uptake for the project.

Some timeframes could have been better planned for, given the challenges of complex environments in which the projects were taking place and time required for DFID internal processes, particularly when there is a small HRI team. Some delays are to be expected for projects in complex and unpredictable humanitarian contexts but a number could have been prevented through more realistic planning for project implementation. Some were due to delays in DFID's own processes and time needed for input from other departments, e.g. on technical input to products. While some project partners were able to absorb delays (e.g. CS6 and CS4), though not without some cost to the partners, others – maybe those more reliant on consultant contracts – were not, and then have more worrying repercussions when there are knock-on effects on communication phases of projects, e.g. CS2 REFANI. A higher degree of flexibility and contingency time needs to be built into projects given the humanitarian context.

⁶⁵ Expenditure figures for 2017/18 were not provided in 2018.

⁶⁶ Figures provided by DFID.

Funds have hit their milestones but there have been challenges in the speed of grant awards. Challenges have been caused by time required for grant approval (processes within DFID and partners) and due diligence checks, e.g. for child protection and also for financial procedures in some contexts. These particularly impact on rapid response grants but also overall speed of grant allocation. New measures to address these issues are under discussion. There has been flexibility with no-cost extensions agreed for some projects. However, the evaluation team notes that this level of flexibility is becoming more constrained with new procedures being used for extensions and applied to humanitarian research too.

7.2.4 Effectiveness and equity

Investment in activities for effectiveness and equity

HIEP projects have achieved a high level of cost-effectiveness particularly at the project level. The effectiveness levels of projects have, on the whole, been high. Projects have achieved high levels of engagement in relevant humanitarian policy and practice debates reflected in the case study scorings of medium or high across the board, and important contributions to HIEP outcomes detailed in section 6. This has been achieved at a low cost. A key factor contributing to HIEP's effectiveness has been the partnership model which has brought together a range of expertise into projects, strengthening both the quality of the evidence and also enabling projects to draw on wider networks for technical advice, and to support the communication and consideration of findings and recommendations.

At the case study level, effectiveness has been directly affected by the level of resourcing allocated to enable high-quality research and also to support stakeholder engagement processes. HIEP's own monitoring has found that, by the end of 2017, 86% of HIEP projects have adequately resourced research uptake strategies.⁶⁷ This performance was assisted by the increase in the HIEP overall budget allocation for this area as well as projects individual adjustments, e.g. CS6 used savings from some projects' activities to increase the budget for national workshops, assisted by the flexibility of the milestone budget. Engagement is most effective when it takes place both during the course of the project as well as upon completion of outputs to promote discussion of findings and recommendations. This requires investment not only into products and events but also into building relationships. There have been some welcome increases in investment in communication by HIEP overall and projects in this phase, e.g. a £200,000 extension to the HIEP budget for communication costs, which benefited CS4 (approximately £80,000). Also, CS3 R2HC has adjusted its model to require projects spend 12 months following research on communication activities – and this is supported by the Fund. Projects such as CS5 HIF, which have not invested heavily (in terms of time) into synthesis and dissemination activities, are achieving less impact than their potential at this point.

The HIEP resourcing at programme level of outcome level communication and resourcing has been extremely lean and limits the impact of the programme. HIEP resourcing at the programme level has been wrapped up in programme management and administration costs and as the consideration of the RLO programme shows, with significant additional components for communication, impact and learning at programme level as well as higher management costs, HIEP is very low in comparison. The earlier sections of the report on effectiveness and impact have noted the opportunity costs to greater effectiveness and impact.

Equity

There is some evidence of systems to address gender equality and equity issues, which have improved over the time period of HIEP. Equity issues are discussed further in the GASI section. In relation to VfM management, a significant improvement is that the framework has some equity indicators. Indicators consider the authors of the papers being part of a diversified set, e.g. number of southern principal

⁶⁷ HIEP logframe monitoring 2017 accessed 18 January 2018 – output level only.

investigators and co-investigators and also whether papers have a GASI focus. HIEP monitoring now also tracks the proportion of HIEP projects incorporating a GASI analysis.

7.2.5 Management of VfM

A positive change is the implementation of the VfM framework in HIEP’s management. This is being applied across the programme for the first time in 2017. The 2016 HIEP annual review report proposed that key findings from the VfM analysis would be discussed every six months. Experience of 2017 has found this to be ambitious and instead it is planned that there will be an annual review of the VfM analysis to inform the annual review, with space for any key issues to be raised during the quarterly catch up meetings with each component project.⁶⁸

The VfM framework uses RED-wide indicators, which span all four Es. They are a good set of core indicators, which allow cross-comparisons between projects. The evaluation team take the view that going forward, at this stage of maturity of the HIEP or similar future programmes, more indicators can be added to obtain a more comprehensive picture of VfM, using qualitative data which focuses much more on effectiveness and value (see below).



7.3 Conclusions and learning

Learning

a) Management of VfM

The VfM framework is a welcome addition to the programme’s management. We were unable to see it applied in action at the time for data collection but our review of the HIEP VfM suggested some additions that could strengthen it. These indicators detailed below are also relevant to funds such as R2HC and HIF. The indicators are useful for assessing the portfolio as a whole, and using the data for learning and making changes dynamically. However, such analysis needs to take account of the time it can take for projects to demonstrate effectiveness.

Table 9: Extra suggested VfM indicators for the monitoring matrix

Suggested VfM indicator	Comments
Economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of economies of scope and scale within operations and budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economy – e.g. economies of scope through shared overheads across projects – measured by cost savings, or just narrative
Efficiency	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of operational adaptations resulting in better cost-effectiveness or value generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency – semi qualitative, to demonstrate that they kept changing operations on the grounds of VfM; actual number of changes and supporting narrative

⁶⁸ 2017 annual review was unavailable during the time of VfM data collection and analysis.

Suggested VfM indicator	Comments
Effectiveness (more important for strategic decision making)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficiency/effectiveness: partnership quality a key attribute of efficiency – develop a rating system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio-level indicators (for funds such as HIF, R2HC) ▪ Level of diversification of the fund – by size, risk, theme, etc. ▪ Evidence of a clear VfM strategy at the portfolio level to choose projects with the highest returns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effectiveness – the more a fund is diversified by size, risk and theme, the better spread of risk and potential value it has ▪ Such a portfolio is likely to be much more effective in terms of choosing the highest social returns ▪ Various indicators and supporting narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of continued relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Useful to revisit effectiveness at key break points in project narrative and track
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contributions to HIEP programme-level outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effectiveness: To what extent does the project contribute to HIEP programmatic level outcomes? (Highest order VfM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of an exit strategy or other measures in terms of research uptake to ensure sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effectiveness: without sustainability of the research uptake the research’s effectiveness is compromised; i.e. what measures are in place to ensure that research is influential post completion of the research? Explanatory narrative
Equity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence that cost and reaching hard to reach populations is explicitly factored into the budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equity: a key equity point – it is often more expensive to reach vulnerable groups, so this needs conscious budgeting to maintain VfM. Costs and narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of adaptation to address emerging gender and inclusion issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was the budget sufficient for engaging marginalised people including some women and girls (usually higher cost)? If not, were budgets and programmes adjusted over time?

b) Tracking longer-term impact to assess VfM

An observation from the experience of HIEP to date is the need for longer-term tracking of projects and indeed the programme impact over time to have a realistic assessment of these, and to enable VfM judgements to be based on a fuller understanding of change and its sustainability. The HIEP evaluation has found that some projects' outputs have faced sustainability issues (e.g. components of CS1 in Pakistan, such as inter-agency relationships and external access to the information platform). Some projects have achieved greater impact than anticipated two years ago, e.g. in CS7 where there is evidence of increased IFRC research management capacity and uptake of the project outputs. DFID current analysis of VfM in terms of effectiveness and impact depends on own project partners' monitoring. But partners' data collection ends when project contracts end, often shortly after the production of final reports and products detailing conclusions and recommendations. Given the experience in the evaluation to date then tracking this change for at least 24 months after completion of communication activities by partners is recommended, and if partner-led, will need to be resourced. It must be acknowledged, however, that this is difficult and can be very costly in terms of DFID's management time with current processes but is necessary to assess impact better of the projects and programme. Tracking of uptake in DFID is also needed and this needs an internal process.

c) Trade-offs between the 4Es

The experience of HIEP makes explicit the trade-offs particularly between economy factors and effectiveness and impact. DFID's response to the evaluation's last set of recommendations noted the challenge to implement the measures recommended to build HIEP overall effectiveness and impact due to the limited capacity of the HRI team – something the evaluation has previously noted and recommended be addressed. This saving on a lean management budget has costs in terms of effectiveness and impact as described in earlier sections: in effect, a short-term gain for a longer-term opportunity lost. Governance structures of HIEP and similar programmes should have explicit discussion of these trade-offs as part of their annual review.

d) Coherence, risk and flexibility

An initiative such as HIEP is ground-breaking in terms of the research and innovation it supports and the risks it takes, i.e. by its nature research and innovation has unknown results and has implications for its portfolio. The risks associated with such innovative programmes can be addressed by their spread in terms of partners, subjects and projects. This also provides flexibility to take up new opportunities. To some extent HIEP has taken such an approach with a broad-brush portfolio, though with a focus on experienced partners (which itself has a trade-off in terms of expanding the market for providers of research and innovation). The future direction of the Humanitarian Research and Innovation Programme portfolio builds on HIEP projects but is moving towards a smaller set of more focused but larger-scale projects. These may be better placed to demonstrate impact. However, they are also likely to reduce the flexibility and spread of HIEP, which are attributes valued by HIEP stakeholders within and external to DFID. The inclusion of some capacity to respond to new opportunities, including the rapid response capacity being developed in R2HC and considered in HRI team for research opportunities in sudden-onset crises, will be a valuable component to include and also the facility to rapidly respond to new opportunities.

Conclusions

In conclusion, HIEP has provided good value for money though there is some trade-off between its excellent economy in terms of costs of running HIEP versus investment into processes and human resources to increase impact at the programme level. Its optimisation of resource use has been good. The evaluation found positive findings on cost economy, low HIEP fund management costs, and project relevance. Project budgets have generally been economical with some areas tight particularly in relation to communication. Milestone contracts have enabled some projects to reallocate funds to respond flexibly to changing contexts. More generally case studies appear to be cost conscious. They have

generally been performing well on effectiveness and equity – which is clear to see in the high-quality outputs combined with reasonable budgets. In terms of efficiency, management and operational processes, these could be improved in the programme as a whole and in some projects. This would reduce delays, allow better M&E, learning, and better decision making which ultimately leads to better programme design.

A number of measures have enabled HIEP to deliver good VfM. These include good attention to economy, the partnership model, the selection of appropriate partners, adequate support to partners for short-term (6–12 month) communication to support research uptake.

A number of approaches could have increased its VfM. Measures to increase impact include more investment into portfolio learning, supporting promotion of findings and facilitating consideration of their implications for action within DFID and externally; longer-term approaches to research uptake; and monitoring impact; and more active decision making based on VfM data at programme level. The HIEP management is cost-effective in terms of economy and research production but would have benefited from greater investment to increase its impact further on the wider ambitions of HIEP to achieve change at impact level, which evidence to date shows is possible.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

Below we present our conclusions in relation to each of the evaluation dimensions and our analysis of HIEP strategy. We present some lessons from the experience of HIEP for the sector and conclude with recommendations targeting the HRI team, including the advisory group, and also DFID senior management for the final phase of HIEP and future DFID humanitarian research and innovation programmes.

8.1 Conclusions

HIEP has achieved considerable success in its five years to date and established DFID as a key supporter of evidence and innovation. HIEP started from a low base when DFID investment into humanitarian research was largely ad hoc with only one significant recent investment from RED to HIF. Now, DFID is recognised as a leading donor in humanitarian evidence and innovation respected for its (a) scale of investment; (b) flexibility and responsiveness; (c) potential to bring together functions, sectors and range of expertise; and (d) ability to balance an openness to taking some risks, essential in research and innovation, with achieving results. However this set of attributes has, so far, only been partially harnessed by HIEP.

Relevance

HIEP is a highly relevant initiative addressing key issues in the humanitarian sector. It addresses challenges identified by HERR and new issues emerging since as humanitarian crises have evolved. This includes work on questions relating to the scaling up use of cash and its impact, responding to public health crises and escalating food insecurity, providing quality access in the increasing scale of highly insecure humanitarian contexts, developing national management of risk, and supporting innovation. DFID has in later phases appropriately increased its focus on scaling up innovation with for instance, new funding to HIF for this and the development of the Education in Emergencies Humanitarian Education Accelerator.

HIEP has demonstrated that robust research can be undertaken in humanitarian contexts through a range of methods. These include randomised control trials but also other systematic and robust approaches including qualitative methods. HIEP partners have produced a wealth of learning on evidence generation methodologies in humanitarian contexts including documented lessons on approaches to impact evaluations, systematic reviews and ethics. Partners hold yet more knowledge within their teams including, importantly, on approaches and learning on how to reach and engage with women, girls and marginalised people in humanitarian contexts, research challenges in insecure environments and over prolonged periods of time in protracted crises. Strong QA processes throughout projects have been important particularly when new methods are being devised to cope with humanitarian contexts as well as flexibility and strong support to data-gathering teams on the ground. However, challenges remain including access to data and quality of existing data.

A HIEP strength has been its broad portfolio that enabled it to respond to new emerging issues and opportunities. The portfolio focuses well on the first three problems identified by the HIES regarding evidence generation and synthesis on humanitarian approaches that work, but has not addressed the fourth problem to the same extent which relates to lack of incentives and blockages to use of evidence. A strength of HIEP is its rolling allocation of grants responding to new needs and building on early projects' findings, e.g. in education, urban risk and protracted displacement. It has responded well to the

first three problems identified in the HIES and HIEP theory of change, which relate to the production, synthesis and accessibility of evidence.

However, the design of HIEP did not focus significant attention on the fourth problem identified in HIES and the HIEP theory of change which relates to obstacles to increasing the use of evidence. HIEP projects and resources have focused predominantly on the supply of evidence through research and dissemination rather than investing in understanding how to support changes towards greater use of evidence, i.e. translating that increased availability and access into use across the system.

Effectiveness

HIEP has produced a substantial quantity of accessible, high-quality research on relevant subjects, which has reached a wide audience of policymakers, practitioners and researchers at national and international level, and linked to some key humanitarian policy and practice initiatives. HIEP evidence has connected with key processes including those around the WHS on innovation, multi-year funding and localisation, and also others at national level including on cash, nutrition, social protection and healthcare, providing it with channels for new evidence to be part of policy and strategy development processes. A key part of HIEP's design was that the use of evidence and the uptake of innovation would be enabled by debate of the new evidence, endorsement by operational leaders, brokering it to a wide range of groups and active use of it by DFID. We found many examples of HIEP project findings being debated, endorsed and brokered though less data on projects' active and regular use by DFID. We found HIEP partners were effective in supporting uptake of their projects when their engagement with key stakeholders was sustained throughout a project and also for at least a further 6–12 months after production of final products. Strategies which are time consuming and expensive showed their worth, e.g. providing customised briefings for individual agencies, producing a large range of products, and enabling operational people (including DFID advisers) access to researchers who themselves are operationally savvy to discuss implications of new and emerging evidence for their plans and decisions.

Partnership approaches and other ways to bring together research and operational organisations, while sometimes challenging have proven effective for generating high-quality research and supporting take-up of research in those organisations. The partnerships benefit the quality of research by providing access to humanitarian contexts and reducing the perceptions of potentially extractive nature of projects when they are part of an operation. They bring together different types of expertise and access to a range of networks to support project findings' uptake and application.

However, the effectiveness of the partnership approach has been limited by the range of partners involved in HIEP projects. A limited number of operational organisations, usually already with some commitment to production and use of evidence, have been involved in HIEP partnerships. Providing support to new entrants into the 'evidence community', though slower and more expensive in the short term, can support a broadening of the community actively involved in evidence production and use.

HIEP has been well aligned with DFID policy priorities but HIEP's relationships across DFID have been variable. Within DFID the relationship with the humanitarian cadre has been rightly prioritised and enjoyed excellent cooperation; HIEP evidence has been actively promoted to humanitarian advisers. But the roles and process involving different parts of HIEP, particularly in relation to promoting the application of findings internally and externally, have been unclear. Furthermore, HIEP's profile has been very low at country level within DFID and externally.

There have been improvements in HIEP's management of some important issues but severe resource limitations as well as changes in staffing in HIEP have been a constraint on aspects of HIEP's effectiveness. Two areas that have significantly improved in HIEP have been its management of VfM with the introduction of a VfM framework trialled in 2017–18, and its approach to GASi, which has seen more systematic measures introduced to ensure a more consistent approach across projects. However, the HRI team's role has so far tended towards one of managing the HIEP portfolio

rather than a more proactive role of strategising and harnessing the collective power of DFID to contribute to the HIEP aims.

Value for money

HIEP has provided good VfM though there is some trade-off between its excellent economy in terms of the low cost of running HIEP versus investment into processes and human resources to increase impact at the programme level. Approaches that have enabled HIEP to deliver good VfM include its lean management costs, good attention to economy by DFID and partners, the partnership model, the selection of appropriate partners, flexible cooperation with partners, e.g. through milestone contracts and adequate support to communication and research uptake. HIEP management is cost-effective in its research production but would have benefited from greater investment into activities to pull together learning and findings from across the HIEP portfolio, to link them to broader bodies of evidence, to develop and steer a strategy to guide use of HIEP findings in DFID, and externally drawing on DFID's influencing potential through its roles as donor, convenor and influential stakeholder in the sector.

Impact

HIEP is working towards three specific outcomes which aim to (a) increase donor mechanisms for funding for evidence; (b) enhance humanitarian actor capabilities and relations for regular use of evidence; and (c) increase humanitarian actors' investment in innovations for the benefit of people affected by crises. HIEP is making important contributions to emerging changes in all these three areas.

First, it developed new multi-donor funds for investment into innovation (HIF) and health research in emergencies (R2HC). Second, it has helped build skills and develop methodologies for humanitarian research, built relationships between operational and academic agencies and increased debate on key evidence issues such as quality of data and evidence needed for decision making. Third, it has supported an increase in agencies' investment in innovation for the benefit of humanitarian action through the take-up, application and further development of new evidence and innovations generated by HIEP.

Furthermore, these emerging changes, together with HIEP initiatives to bring together interested organisations to discuss research agendas in HIEP projects, have strengthened the overall evidence and innovation system seen, for instance, with the new platform for cooperation, GAHI. These are early-stage changes but HIEP has made important contributions proportionate to its five-year time span, considering that many projects are still under way or only recently complete. Some features which have supported HIEP's contributions have been (a) working in areas where there is pre-existing momentum towards change in parts of the humanitarian sector; (b) creating or linking HIEP evidence to larger bodies of evidence than single projects; and (c) investing in activities to making explicit the implications of new evidence for people in different policy and practice roles. Most of the impact that we have identified has happened under the steam of the HIEP projects themselves aided by their communication activities and the original selection of partners as those with profile, influence and networks.

HIEP has made only a limited contribution to building southern capacity to produce and use evidence and innovation. This is a shortfall given that agendas need to be globally informed, humanitarian research needs good local researchers, and key users of HIEP products are local. HIEP can contribute more given its need for qualified researchers able to undertake research in humanitarian contexts, as well as to increase the focus on engaging with national and local-level users of evidence and innovation products.

Political economy factors and other impediments to organisational change as well as HIEP's lack of strategy to address these have limited the extent of HIEP's impact. Obstacles to take-up and scale-up of innovation and evidence range from organisational administrative challenges impeding change, reaching relevant senior management decision-making circles within organisations and the sector, competition between agencies unwilling to take on other agencies' innovations and challenge for new entrants to come into humanitarian operations at scale, and gaining follow-on funding for pilots. These impediments can affect take-up of evidence and innovation within an organisation, and in particular affect how new evidence and innovation is taken up outside of organisations directly involved in its production. HIEP

portfolio and HRI team have so far not explored in depth how to overcome these obstacles to change but has potential – for instance, through research, or influencing with peers and also learning from DFID’s own experience – to become more evidence based and innovative.

Theory of change

The HIEP ToC has been largely confirmed by the evaluation, and so offers an evidence-based model to guide future humanitarian research and innovation efforts. However, its full realisation is based to some extent on DFID adopting the institutional role it outlines, drawing on its influence in the sector and multiple roles as donor and influencer in operations as well as evidence and innovation arena. If this is not taken up, future programmes will need to review their outcomes or develop new strategies to achieve these. However, the theory of change has held true for the process of individual project’s progress from identifying problems to achieving impact and is a useful basis for future programming.

HIEP strategy to maximise impact

HIEP was originally conceived as an ambitious programme that would galvanise wider change in the humanitarian sector towards evidence and innovation. The HIEP ToC captured a vision of DFID as the uniquely placed driver of system-wide change using its influencing, donor and convening roles to contribute to change, but this has only been realised to a limited extent. Some potential of the innovative inter-departmental model intended to catalyse change – building on the respective networks and areas of influence of CHASE, RED and ARD – was impeded by capacity and resource constraints. The co-financing of HIEP has ended and it is now a RED-funded programme. HIEP so far has not clarified how the roles of different DFID departments, drawing on their different capacities, should take forward the HIEP agenda both in relation to specific research findings and innovations; but also the more ambitious goals laid out in the ToC to support a move towards more support for and use of evidence and innovation across the sector.

The model that HIEP has evolved into is one of a more traditional research programme focused on the supply of evidence, albeit relevant and high-quality evidence, and its short-term communication. HIEP was based on analysis of problems within the humanitarian system that limit investment into and use of evidence and innovation. It envisaged that HIEP would make a significant contribution to changes in these system-level problems. As part of the programme, DFID would play a key part drawing on, among other capacities, its role as donor and influencer in the sector. This shift to a less ambitious role for DFID may better match HIEP/HRI team resources but loses opportunities for the programme to achieve greater transformative change in the humanitarian system, and also for the ongoing uptake of current evidence and innovation, given that we have seen production and access to high-quality evidence is not always enough to secure uptake.

There are also a number of measures that the HRI team do independently to increase HIEP’s impact. These include drawing learning from across projects, curating evidence to link it to existing and other bodies of work from within and outside of HIEP as well as to engage more actively with the strong network of agencies that have been involved in HIEP. Others steps could be to support the R2HC and HIF funds to develop sustainability plans and support measures to broaden their range of donors. Increased levels of proactive sharing of learning about investment into evidence with other investment initiatives and broadening the range of contributors would enhance HIEP’s overall contribution. This could be through publications as well as direct briefings. In relation to operational organisations’ routine use of evidence, HIEP’s contribution could be strengthened by broadening the range of organisations HIEP engages with which might require additional investment to support their participation.

However, the outcomes towards which HIEP intended to contribute were always highly ambitious and probably beyond the potential of a single organisation or programme to achieve. HIEP has shown it can make significant contributions towards the higher levels of the ToC as detailed in the impacts above. But if HIEP is to go beyond largely project-specific gains and contribute to system-wide changes of increasing

support for and use of evidence, then other organisations, including donors, need to be brought in to work together more on this agenda. The experience of establishing GAHI has shown that while this is slow, DFID can play an influential role in building such cooperation in the sector. Such initiatives are needed for humanitarian research as well as innovation. There are factors which make it a possibility in the current climate with donors such as ECHO, governments of Germany and Australia, as well as the private sector and other new players interested in supporting evidence and innovation, plus OECD interest in tracking support to the area. DFID can consider a role in supporting such cooperation which would make a significant contribution to the HIEP outcomes. The original time schedule of five years, extended now to eight years for HIEP, was short to achieve its ambitious aims. However, there is evidence to suggest that with a longer timeframe and attention to activities beyond the project level greater impact can be achieved. The lessons for the sector drawn from HIEP's experience to date and detailed below are relevant for the HRI team to take forward with others. HIEP could also proactively engage with allies within organisations who are internally promoting the evidence and innovation agendas. HIEP can build on its experience in this regard, with agencies such as IRC, but now expand it to work initially with the network established as partners in HIEP and also work to engage other agencies with less established senior management commitment to evidence and innovation. There are resourcing issues to undertake these roles, as detailed above and originally envisaged in the HIEP ToC, as well as timing. DFID will need to ensure the resourcing of the HRI agenda matches its ambition and allows for an adequate timeframe to see systemic change within and across sectors. The lessons for the sector below provide a potential agenda for DFID to take forward with allies in the sector.

8.2 Learning for the sector

The evaluation identifies six key lessons relevant to the wider humanitarian community as well as DFID.

1. There is a need to increase the focus on overcoming obstacles to scaling up and application of evidence and innovation

There is a welcome increase in the production of evidence, e.g. in evaluations and case studies and trialling of innovations, but there is less support to organisations and initiatives to support the application of evidence, and the necessary organisational and systemic changes this might entail. Application of evidence that entails new ways of working can require a major change process as we have seen in relation to the move to cash-based responses. The sector needs to invest time and energy to understand better how to overcome obstacles to scale up which can include limitations on cooperation between agencies as well as challenges to new entrants in the sector.

Humanitarian research can offer understanding of how to support this change. This has implications for the sector to consider how to overcome organisational change impediments to take-up and scale up of evidence and innovation within and between organisations.

2. Operational agencies can make significant improvements in the quality of evidence produced and available

HIEP projects have highlighted known issues around the poor quality of some humanitarian evidence and also raised additional ones relating to the transparency of data. HIEP projects identified a number of principles that if applied would increase the value of data already being collected by agencies in their monitoring and evaluation. If these are more actively supported this is a valuable step forward (see Box 12 below). However, there are also greater challenges beyond individual agency capacity to change alone. These are linked to the lack of transparency due to factors including political sensitivity of some data, political constraints (e.g. when data shows negative results of government programmes), protection of security of people assisted by humanitarian operations and agency competition for funds.

The sector needs to find ways to overcome these challenges collectively. The Grand Bargain processes linked to New Ways of Working may be one channel to consider this, as well sectorally within clusters and other inter-agency settings. Donors can also play a role in making data sharing a requirement of funding.

Box 12: Minimum standards for operational evaluation reports**Minimum standards for operational evaluation reports**

- ✓ Include collection and documentation of sex and age-disaggregated data and disability disaggregated data
- ✓ Report when and where the project under evaluation took place at a level of temporal and locational specificity that is appropriate to the context
- ✓ State when and where data collection took place at a level of temporal and locational specificity that is appropriate to the context
- ✓ Clarify who collected data (e.g. program staff or external evaluator)
- ✓ Discuss the type of data collection and instrument (e.g. ethnography, survey or interviews)
- ✓ Provide information on the sampling strategy (how were populations identified and recruited)
- ✓ State how many respondents participated in the evaluation or study
- ✓ Discuss any limitations or biases that may have affected the results
- ✓ Include data on cost-effectiveness of different interventions, where possible
- ✓ Include data on implementation opportunities and challenges of different interventions, where possible

Drawn from Krystal, R. et al., (2017) *Improving Humanitarian Evidence: Reflecting on Systemic Reviews in the Humanitarian Field (CS4 HESC)*

3. Humanitarian research needs to be funded alongside operation funding

Evaluation participants noted the challenge to align funding (and thus decision making and design) of research and operations. Humanitarian operations are often funded on a short-term basis while research requires longer-term lead times. More aligned decision making enables research to be set up alongside operations with robust data collection systems, good for operational monitoring and robust research. It provides good access to affected communities, limits issues of perceived 'extractive processes' and helps bring together evidence and operations for the benefit of both. This is an approach that has worked well with initiatives such as research into Kenya Safety Nets, and could be expanded, not only by DFID, but also other donors, by integrating larger-scale research components into programme funding or bringing together planning and decision making around operations, evidence and funding.

There are implications for donor funding strategies and for operational organisations in their humanitarian programme planning. They need to consider whether to bring in research capacity at an early opportunity to identify opportunities for evidence generation.

4. Defining the problem and issues to be addressed through research and innovation benefits from broad scoping processes

HIEP's experience has shown that projects benefit from broad and inclusive processes to define the problems to be addressed in research and innovation. Broad scoping goes beyond scanning for evidence gaps and consultation with sector experts; rather it includes community-level and national actors' perspectives. This can lead to more appropriate project design that overcomes sector-specific blind spots and goes beyond seeking a technical fix to current approaches. This has implications for donors to include funding of more comprehensive scoping processes to enable broader participation and cooperation in developing evidence research and innovation projects. Box 13 below illustrates the point with lessons from a CS5 HIF-supported project.

Box 13: Safer Lighting, Uganda – example of broad scoping process

Broader scoping process leads to better definition of problem and project design – Safer Lighting in Uganda

A HIF project, Safer Lighting, illustrates how taking a user-led focus and considering how differences in gender, age, wealth, social background and power relations affect people's use of facilities. It can help to unpick the complexities of the problem to be explored and is likely to provide a better solution.

The project team felt that some WASH engineers do not routinely consider gender and social dynamics in how people use facilities, while some protection advisers may not routinely consider how the engineering of WASH facilities can be improved to offer more secure areas.

However, bringing these perspectives together in this project has stimulated new insights and approaches. Part of the key to this has been to switch perspectives from technical 'gaps' towards questioning how affected users behave in specific contexts and what are desirable outcomes for them, and convening different perspectives, e.g. refugee communities, field implementers, social development specialists and designers to explore how intended users would interact with proposed solutions to inform innovation processes.

This was reinforced in the Safer Lighting project, where just a few days of action research in the refugee settlement in northern Uganda, led by a small team that combined protection, WASH and research perspectives seem to have yielded a new set of insights that sectoral 'blind spots' had previously overlooked.

5. Effective communication takes place throughout the project, is long-term and customised

Research and innovation projects tend to have relatively short-term communication plans. There have been some welcome extensions to these in some HIEP projects with 6–12 months now encouraged, though sometimes cut down when research overruns. It is clear that communication of evidence and innovation needs to be sustained during, and continue long-term after, research processes end because access to quality evidence alone is not sufficient to ensure it is taken up. In particular it is important to (a) develop relationships with stakeholders at national and international levels during projects; (b) have communication strategies that directly engage with national and international audiences and ideally individual agencies; (c) link individual projects to larger bodies of work; (d) make explicit the implications for different roles and promote these through products and processes that 'speak' to different roles in the sector at policy and in programmes; and (e) support organisational 'intermediaries', e.g. policy and programme advisers who provide on-the-spot advice to their operational decision makers.

There are implications for donors to support communication of evidence and innovation on a much longer and wider scale. It is suggested that a minimum of 24 months after project completion is required for evidence production and support to communication processes. There are implications also for researchers to build in more adequate communication budgets into their plans and include communication experts in their teams.

6. Issues of exclusion and marginalisation need to be consistently addressed for robust humanitarian research

Some organisations have actively embraced GASI agendas and are developing innovative approaches and learning to put them into action. There is a need to continue and promote more learning about how to engage marginalised people in humanitarian research, including in insecure environments, in ways that are ethical and safe. Emerging practice suggests a focus on power relations, rather than just gender, is effective to identify issues of marginalisation.

There is significant learning among the HIEP partners and others on practical methods to reach people. This could be drawn together and should be shared.

8.3 Recommendations to DFID

Most recommendations below relate directly to the HRI team, including the advisory group, and relate both to the final stages of implementation of HIEP as well as the emerging new programmes managed by the same team and group. There is also a crucial recommendation to DFID senior management.

Table 10: Recommendations to the Humanitarian Research and Innovation Team

Recommendation		Recommended actions
1	Strengthen DFID’s support to the scaling up and application of evidence and innovation, including to increase understanding of better ways to address obstacles and to demonstrate the benefits of applying evidence to the quality of responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invest in projects to understand better obstacles to scale up and application of evidence and how to overcome them ▪ Collect and showcase examples of evidence making a difference to the effectiveness of humanitarian programmes and their impact ▪ Explore successful examples that have overcome these obstacles, in particular identifying roles that DFID and others can play in support ▪ Curate thematic ‘bodies of work’, and invest in operational ‘translation’ to help scale up applications ▪ Actively link with the network of active evidence promoters, including those in HIEP partners, driving this agenda forward in their own organisations
2	Clarify processes and expectations for effective inter-departmental cooperation in DFID throughout the humanitarian evidence and innovation processes. Also, draw on DFID channels, including the evaluation unit and operations, to improve the quality of data and evidence produced in DFID-funded humanitarian evaluations.	<p>Clarify relationships with between the HRI team and the roles and responsibilities of DFID departments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical advisory input to HRI team project proposals and products ▪ Creating the HRI programme portfolio/future agenda and contributing to the advisory group discussions on this ▪ Promoting HIEP/future HRI products, findings and lessons within DFID including to senior management ▪ Addressing complex issues raised by HIEP/HRI projects that have direct relevance to DFID humanitarian approaches ▪ Promoting HIEP/HRI products and findings externally with partners and to inform funding decisions ▪ Improving the quality of data and evidence produced in humanitarian evaluations, promoting minimum standards ▪ Participation in evidence debates in the humanitarian sector, e.g. regarding quality requirements and standards of evidence for decision making; linkage with value-based decision making

Recommendation		Recommended actions
3	Increase and sustain awareness of, and easy access to HIEP findings and products for all DFID advisers involved in humanitarian action through improved processes and more accessible products and mechanisms	Further develop processes using existing and potentially new communication products in DFID to share the latest HIEP evidence and innovation learning to all relevant departments and cadres in easy, <i>accessible</i> formats
4	Develop processes to ensure a consistent and learning approach to GASI in DFID humanitarian research and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop guidelines for partners and standardised QA processes in the HRI team to ensure projects have sufficient resourcing in terms of time and money to reach marginalised people – and support their participation in the research including training local researchers ▪ Ensure project and programme advisory groups all have people with GASI expertise ▪ Consider commissioning research to address challenges in closing the GASI data deficits in humanitarian programmes, e.g. in collecting and using data on excluded and hard to reach individuals ▪ Apply the oversight mechanism for an extraordinary compliance review and lesson learning for gender and inclusion to all future research projects within 18 months of start
5	Share methodological learning from HIEP in the sector and within DFID, including on (a) humanitarian research challenges and effective methodologies in humanitarian practice; (b) mainstreaming GASI in humanitarian research; and (c) effective communication of humanitarian evidence including at local and national levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invest further in gathering and sharing methodological learning from HIEP including on (a) humanitarian research challenges and effective methodologies in humanitarian practice; (b) mainstreaming GASI in humanitarian research; and (c) effective communication of humanitarian evidence including at local and national levels ▪ Continue and increase support for DFID research hubs to gather, draw on and promote HIEP learning on humanitarian research and innovation in their regions
6	Enhance the value of using or drawing on the HIEP ToC for future programmes through clarification of DFID’s role, more active management engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarify the extent to which ‘DFID’ is positioned as a main institutional change agent in the ToC, making explicit implications of that for specific departments and divisions ▪ Increase the timeframe to a more realistic 5–8 years than the original 5-year timeframe of HIEP

Recommendation		Recommended actions
	with it, and consideration of key links and obstacles it identifies for evidence use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document an agreed management process for reviewing the ToC as part of the annual review as well as a schedule for the advisory group to review and adjust the ToC to ensure institutional ownership
7	Increase the timescale and consistency of HIEP/HRI project partners' monitoring of impact to last for at least two years after final conclusions and products are produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all partners to have influence and impact logs during implementation, building on tools such as those used in SRPS Make routine in partner contracts the inclusion of a two-year monitoring process of uptake and influence so extending the 'project period' Collect this data regularly and investigate examples of particular success or failure, particularly those that differ from anticipated trajectories to both (a) have better information on impact; and (b) add to understanding of change Revisit methods to collect and document information on DFID's own influencing activities during and after projects end, e.g. as a regular discussion point in quarterly meetings/discussions with the lead advisers for each project
8	Increase support for and learn from HIEP/HRI team communication and stakeholder engagement processes, in particular planning and resourcing influencing work beyond the period of partners' research and outputs production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure projects have funded stakeholder engagement plans throughout their lifetime Include in project partners contracts that researchers can be accessed by DFID offices during the research process Support communication at the project level to promote awareness of individual project findings and innovations for at least one year after completion Include funding for activities through international <i>and</i> relevant national mechanisms including individual briefings at senior level for key agencies Use the advisory networks being developed for each HRI project to develop a workplan for how DFID will take the project findings and recommendations forward, internally and externally, laying out the roles of advisers, country offices, advisory group and HRI team Plan and track the HIEP/HRI advisory group role in championing the HIEP agenda internally and externally Increase the HRI team networks at programme and global level, i.e. with other donors, international organisations, e.g.

Recommendation		Recommended actions
		OECD and agencies supportive to the production and use of evidence in the sector
9	Strengthen the HRI portfolio by ensuring it balances its emerging more focused approach with maintaining mechanisms to enable flexibility to respond to newly identified needs and opportunities while undertaking focused long-term projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build on the success of HIEP’s responsive approach to maintain a capacity for responding to newly identified needs and opportunities as well as developing focused, long-term projects in priority areas

Recommendation to DFID senior management

Recommendation		Recommended actions
10	Regularly review the resourcing of DFID’s humanitarian research and innovation capacity including that of the HRI team to ensure it matches stated ambitions and is sufficient to enable it to steer DFID’s potential influencing role in the sector to enhance the humanitarian community’s support for and use of evidence and innovation in humanitarian action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the resourcing of the HRI team to enable it to fulfil the facilitation of the ambitious influencing, networking and convening roles in the sector – and to help the development of a community of donors and other stakeholders to support a more evidence based sector ▪ Consider ways to formalise the input of departments and individuals from outside of the HRI team to support the fulfilment of the HIEP agenda to increase its impact internally and externally ▪ Regularly review the implications of the HRI team supported evidence and innovation for DFID’s own strategy and activities



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