HUMANITARIAN EVIDENCE PROGRAMME

Ongoing rigorous reviews on
- Shelter and settlement strategies
- Acute malnutrition & relapse/default rates
- Identification in urban settings
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Child protection
- WASH in disease outbreaks
- Pastoralist livelihoods
- Market support interventions

Aim to improve humanitarian policy and practice

PERSONAL THOUGHT EXERCISE...

- When was the last time that you changed your practice and why?

- How can we enable humanitarian policymakers and practitioners to value the evidence produced and change their behaviours depending on the findings?
RESEARCH UPTAKE STRATEGY & IMPORTANCE OF STAKEHOLDERS

TOP SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Survey results:
- Briefing papers
- Conversations with colleagues
- Interviews: individuals act as ‘nodes’ to filter and spread findings

COMPLEXITY / SYSTEMS THINKING
- Social connectivity outperforms intelligence for solutions
- Ongoing learning and adaptation
**UPTAKE STRATEGY**

- Meaningful consultation
- Targeting thought leaders
- Leveraging platforms

**LEARNING FROM THE STRATEGY**

- Mapping & engaging stakeholders is iterative
- Multi-level mapping & consultation
  - Review teams required to do their own research uptake mapping
  - Multiple visions of consultations (e.g. Advisory Boards, interviews)
- Review teams – mix of content and technical expertise
- Appetite in non-traditional systematic review sectors
- Importance of formal relationships, including our Advisory Board, and informal relationships
- Evidence is not currently placed central in broader humanitarian discussions

**DETERMINING REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Survey results: review topics

- Number of respondents: [Bar chart showing distribution of responses across topics]
BROADER POTENTIAL OF EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH UPTAKE

Reshape aid to be more:
- Impartial
- Responsive
- Effective
- Efficient
- Accountable

Ultimately:
- Save lives & improve livelihoods

THANK YOU AND QUESTIONS?

Dr. Eleanor Ott – eott1@ght.oxfam.org
**ONGIONG REVIEWS**

- **Nutrition:** What is the evidence on the relationship between recovery and/or cure rates and relapse, default rates and/or repeated episodes in the treatment of acute malnutrition in humanitarian emergencies?
- **Shelter:** What effects do interventions that support affected populations’ own shelter self-recovery processes have on household level outcomes following humanitarian crises?
- **Mental health:** What are the effects of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions on affected populations in humanitarian emergencies?
- **Child protection:** What is the impact of protection interventions on unaccompanied and separated children, during the period of separation, in humanitarian crises in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs)?
- **Urban action:** What are the different practices to identify populations in need in humanitarian emergencies in urban settings?
- **Pastoralist livelihoods:** What is the impact of food aid on pastoralist livelihoods in humanitarian crises?
- **Markets:** What is the impact of different market support interventions on household food security in humanitarian crises?

**INDIVIDUAL SOURCES**

![Graph showing top sources for human research and news (write-in)]

**WHO WERE THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS?**

![Bar chart showing respondents by role]

**CURRENT POTENTIAL OF EVIDENCE**

- Building and changing programming based on evidence
- Synthesising existing evidence
  - New conclusions
  - Shut down programmes that don’t work & invest in programmes that do
- Improve the quality of evidence
  - ALNAP ‘Insufficient Evidence’: accuracy, representativeness, relevance, generalisability, attribution, & clarity around context and methods
- Improving the use of evidence
Additional Resources

- Systems Thinking: An introduction for Oxfam programme staff
- Margaret Heffernan: better thinking when more cooperative groups (social connective-ness/helpfulness) –
  - https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_why_it_s_time_to_forget_the_pecking_order_at_work#t-11261
  - Bonds, loyalty, and trust – social capital (reliance and interdependency that builds trust)
- Humanitarian Evidence Programme
  - www.oxfam.org.uk/hep

Research Uptake Strategy

- REFANI results and new evidence will be made accessible to both technical and non-technical audiences
- Successful research uptake by key stakeholders in policy and practice
  1. Stakeholder mapping and engagement
  2. Communication strategy
  3. Publications and events
  4. Monitor, evaluate, edit

Research on Food Assistance for Nutritional Impact

The REFANI project aims to strengthen the evidence base on the nutritional impact and cost-effectiveness of cash- and voucher-based food assistance programmes, as well as identify the mechanisms through which this effectiveness is achieved. Country studies in Pakistan, Niger and Somalia.

- Funded by DFID (under the HIEP), and co-financed by ECHO
- Consortium partners: Action Against Hunger, Concern Worldwide, the Emergency Nutrition Network, University College London
**Topic 1: Research and Results**

- Working with research requires a level of confidentiality *consult with team*
- Researchers are fully concentrated on collecting and analysing data *offer support and be organised*
- Results aren’t ready to be shared until well into project implementation *talk about related topics*
- Publications and events may only occur after the project ends *think ahead, plan accordingly*
- Staff moves on, impact is hard to track *generate interest and ownership across partner organisations*

**Topic 2: Local Dissemination**

- Must not impact on-going data collection *focus globally*
- However, results may have most impact on a local level *map and track local organisations*
- May be based remotely from project *good working relations with partners*
- Turn-over of local staff and difficult contexts *plan ahead, be patient, create ownership and interest*
- Language barrier *work with partners, map key stakeholders*

**Topic 3: Stakeholder Fatigue**

- Much time between project implementation and available results *brief overview, talk about stakeholders’ work and interests*
- Key decision and policy makers are very busy and inundated with information *ask what they want to know and how to follow-up*

**Conclusion**

*Research uptake can be challenging and there is no one right way to do it* (DFID’s Research Uptake Guidance, page 1)
Today

Three elements:
- our team
- the tools we have developed
- a capacity building example

Research uptake strategies: capacity building

Jessica Mackenzie
Research Fellow, Research and Policy in Development (RAPID)
Overseas Development Institute
2 February 2016

What do we do in RAPID?
WHAT DO WE DO?

We work to improve the use of research-based evidence and local knowledge in policy-making.

Better decision-making
Better policies

HOW DO WE DO IT?

We work with all actors in the policy process

Researchers
Think tanks
Civil society organisations
Donor organisations
Governments

...but policy processes are complex

Identify the problem
Commission research
Establish the policy
Implement the policy
Evaluation
We need a holistic approach

The RAPID framework

External influences
- Who are the international players? What influence do they have? What are the aid priorities? Are there any economic or social trends? Etc.

The political context
- Who are the policy-makers? What are the political and economic structures? Is there a demand for research and new ideas? What are the policy processes? Etc.

The evidence
- What is the prevailing narrative? How credible is the evidence? How relevant is it? How well is it presented? Who gathered it? Etc.

External influences

HOW DO WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

1. Strengthening country decision-making systems
2. Making development organisations smarter
3. Making research and evaluation more useful

@rapid_odi
1. Strengthening country decision-making systems
2. Making development organisations smarter
3. Making research and evaluation more useful

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy

Nyante Quarmyne/PDA Ghana
Diagnosing the problem

- Identify stakeholders
- Diagnose complexity
- Understand why it persists
- Pinpoint root causes
Developing an engagement strategy

- Identify policy influence objective
- Develop realistic outcomes
- Develop a theory of change
- Develop communications strategy
- Identify activity resources & capacity
- Write engagement strategy

Developing monitoring & learning plan

- Identify what to monitor and why
- Identify how to monitor
- Make sense of learning & decision-making

...Who is ROMA for?

Team leaders | M&E specialists | Researchers and practitioners

Three elements:
- our team
- the tools we have developed
- a capacity building example
Mental Health Innovation Network

Network level (WHO, LSHTM) research
Annual conferences (50 projects) large-scale training
Tailored capacity building to selected teams in-country

Why we work with them

- Great evidence of what works
- Having trouble achieving uptake
- At the crux of programme objectives

Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Exercise: diagnosing what works well, and not so well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>What are project objectives (or challenges) for policy influence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Mapping your stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Mapping your stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Barriers to policy influence – examples from the field (regional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Barriers to policy influence – examples from the field (regional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Barriers to policy influence – examples from the field (regional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE STEPS

1 Diagnosing the problem

2 Develop a strategy
   - STEP 1 – Assess your context
   - STEP 2 – Identify key stakeholders
   - STEP 3 – Identify desired behaviour change
   - STEP 4 – Develop your strategy
   - STEP 5 – Assess organisational capacity
   - STEP 6 – Communications strategy

3 Monitoring & learning plan

Techniques that work well

Potential activities

- Research
- Involving users in research governance
- Developing, joining, strengthening a network(s)
- Building/strengthening partnerships
- Working with the media (online, print, audio, visual)
- Academic research communications (journals and conferences)
- Online communications (blogs, emails)
- Publications (briefing papers, opinion pieces)
- Negotiations
- Events (public and private meetings)
No engagement strategy

Engagement strategy

Activities and outputs

Indicators (accountability)

Don't leave it till the end!

WHAT KNOWLEDGE ROLE DO YOU PLAY?

FIVE STEPS

1. IDENTIFY YOUR POLICY OBJECTIVE
2. MAP YOUR STAKEHOLDERS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
3. INTRODUCE THE TOOLS AVAILABLE
4. UNDERSTAND YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES
5. DEVELOP YOUR COMMS STRATEGY
• Expectations – workshop, not training
• Start at the very beginning
• Expertise lie within the team
• Cannot work as a one-off workshop
• Bringing government into the room
• Structural barriers
What is research uptake?

Research Dissemination
- distributing information to various audiences within the academic community and beyond in forms that are appropriate to their needs, often a one-way process

Research Communication
- communicating research outputs to a range of intermediate and end users, through an iterative, interactive and multi-directional process involving a wide range of stakeholders from planning, through implementation and monitoring and evaluation

Research Uptake
- Purposeful activities to stimulate end users of research to become aware of, access and apply research knowledge, create an enabling environment by mobilising intermediaries, knowledge brokers and the media to contextualise and connect research with end users in policy and practice

Research Uptake Strategy

Monitoring Research Uptake
- Plausible theory of change or pathway to impact
- Assumptions & risks made explicit
- Clear monitoring or results framework
- Logframe: outputs, achievable outcomes, & impact
- Measurable indicators, with baselines, milestones & targets
- Documents progress

Example

- Output 1: High quality, relevant research is carried out
  - Indicator 1.1: Number of peer-reviewed papers published and available open access

- Output 2: Research is accessed and discussed
  - Indicator 2.1: Number of downloads, media mentions, etc.
  - Indicator 2.2.: Number of seminars involving a panel of research experts discussing the latest findings facilitated within X relevant decision making institution.
Some typical problems with uptake monitoring

• Perception of results frameworks: too linear, inflexible, etc.

• Weak indicators and milestones

• Pace and timeframes

• Insufficient funds for uptake

Uptake opportunities in the humanitarian context

• Variety of actors and organisations in this space

• Established platforms and channels

• Willingness to adapt and innovate

Further information available online

• Research Uptake Guidance & checklist  
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-uptake-guidance

• Programmes funded by the EIA Team  

• How to Note on Assessing the Strength of Evidence  

• Open and Enhanced Access Policy  
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-research-open-and-enhanced-access-policy

• Other information about DFID Research  
  https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about/research

• R4D (DFID research portal)  http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/