



# BUILDING A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE: RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

## HUMANITARIAN REFORM AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

Humanitarian Advisory Group is undertaking action research which aims to provide an evidence base for progressing transformative change to the humanitarian system at the country level. The research is currently focused on Indonesia, in partnership with the Pujiono Centre.

This project is part of the Humanitarian Horizons Research Program | 2019-2021

### Why explore humanitarian reform again?

Global humanitarian reform initiatives, such as the World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain, have failed to deliver the transformative change required to make a real difference for people affected by crisis.<sup>1</sup> While there is global agreement on the need to change, reform efforts are too complex and dispersed.<sup>2</sup> They tend to be approached separately, commitment by commitment or organisation by organisation. Incentives in the system do not support many of the required changes. We are yet to find an approach that successfully delivers meaningful humanitarian reform.

### What is different about this research?

***Building a Blueprint for Change aims to catalyse action for country-level reform. It is underpinned by four hypotheses:***

- 1.** The humanitarian system required in each country is different. Governments and affected populations have different priorities, needs and capacities; countries have different crisis or disaster profiles; national and international NGOs have different footprints; donors engage differently.
- 2.** It is easier to achieve system change at a country level rather than globally. A smaller, more defined system and configuration of stakeholders increases the likelihood of shared priorities and interests.
- 3.** In order to achieve transformative change to humanitarian action the whole system must change together, with all stakeholders working towards a manageable number of agreed priorities at the same time.
- 4.** A process that successfully delivers humanitarian reform at the country level could be adapted and replicated.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/five-takeaways-future-humanitarian-reform>; <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12735.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Re the Grand Bargain: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12735.pdf>. 3,500 commitments were made at the World Humanitarian Summit, and 51 commitments under the Grand Bargain with 9 different workstreams. The Grand Bargain can be found at: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/summit> and <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc/>



## Process

*Building a Blueprint for Change works with stakeholders in the humanitarian system to:*

- ▶ Select countries with momentum for change
- ▶ Map the humanitarian system at the country level
- ▶ Apply systems thinking methodologies to prioritise desired changes which will catalyse systemic humanitarian reform
- ▶ Identify what change would look like in practice, and progress multiple change priorities across the system at once rather than address individual priorities in isolation
- ▶ Develop a roadmap to achieve the desired change, and methodology for this research
- ▶ Provide the evidence to support stakeholders to implement change.

Should it be appropriate to the context, we propose that the research culminate in a blueprint for humanitarian reform that could be implemented and piloted in a response.

## Want to know more? Please get in touch with Humanitarian Advisory Group or Pujiono Centre:

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## Approach

**Localised research** – Humanitarian Advisory Group works in partnership with local organisations and in support of national governments.

**Build on existing national momentum** – The research supports priorities and processes for change already in place. We propose country-level change based on global reform thinking and experiences, rather than the other way around.

**Participatory action research** – this research is being conducted with implementation in mind, and thus involves regular stakeholder engagement to obtain their buy-in and guidance. It adapts to the independent goals of the stakeholders leading the process to ensure that outcomes are relevant for end users. The process itself aims to help stakeholders produce the impetus for humanitarian reform.

**Systems practice** – this research recognises that humanitarian systems are complex, and that transformative change requires deep understanding of the relationships and incentives in order to identify and implement the most catalytic change. We draw inspiration from the Omidyar Systems Practice methodology and work with systems thinking experts.

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that can contribute to excellence in humanitarian practice.

Pujiono Centre's mission is to build effective multidisciplinary and intersectional knowledge by expanding the capacities of practitioners and learners via innovation, tools and services. The Pujiono Centre promotes evidence-based policymaking in disaster management and climate risk reduction through the provision of credible information.

Humanitarian Horizons is a three-year research initiative. The program adds unique value to humanitarian action in Asian and Pacific contexts by generating evidence-based research and creating conversation for change. The program is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.