



Reach and Reality: Tracking the impact of our research

January-July 2020

Humanitarian Horizons Research Program

HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Authors: Jesse McCommom and Josie Flint, Humanitarian Advisory Group

Cover photo: Shutterstock

Copy edit: Campbell Aitkin

Graphic design: Jenny Moody, A&J Moody Design

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 positively contribute to excellence in humanitarian practice.

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. This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The views expressed in this publication are the authors' alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

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TRACKING OUR RESEARCH IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

About the program

[Humanitarian Horizons](#) is Humanitarian Advisory Group's three-year strategic research program. It aims to contribute evidence and progress thinking and action towards better humanitarian outcomes for crisis-affected populations in the Asia-Pacific region.

How do we measure research influence?

Our [M&E Framework](#) articulates our research objectives and how we measure the influence of our research. We track this data on a six-monthly basis. This report provides a snapshot of impact and influence data from January to July 2020, according to key indicators in the framework. We have set ourselves the goal of tracking influence for each of the streams, and then overall at the program level. This report is structured into three sections, which show overall program impact measured against reporting indicators, a deep dive into each of the four streams, and a snapshot of key learnings.

Program snapshot

	 streams	 months	 partners	 products	 countries	 forums where research was presented by HAG or partners	 funding to national partners
This reporting period (Jan-Jul 2020)	4	6	22	9	7	14	\$60,503
Total to date (2018-2020)	4	3yrs	29	31	10	67	\$219,163



WHY DO WE TRY TO TRACK THE INFLUENCE OF OUR RESEARCH?

It isn't easy, but it is important. We believe in the importance of conducting and sharing our research in a way that promotes ownership, uptake and use. Tracking the influence and impact of research is notoriously difficult, even for practitioner-oriented research such as ours.¹ Nevertheless, at HAG we believe it is possible to set objectives for influencing humanitarian practice based on the evidence that emerges from our research program.

With the data, we can adapt and strengthen our research. We believe in the power of both ideas and evidence, and understand that research can contribute to change in policy and practice in diverse ways. In this report, we seek to be open about what has worked well and how we could improve and strengthen research influence and uptake. We piloted this approach last year, and used the learning to focus on capturing the breadth and diversity of influence for this reporting period.

To share what we learn. We believe in sharing what is working for us, and what is not, so that others can use and adapt our information as they see fit.

How do we get our data?

METHODOLOGY



Interviews
with
partners



Interviews
with
stream leads



Workshops and
focus groups with
partners and
stakeholders



Webinars and
conferences



Tracking
citations



Social media
analytics

Overall program influence: What we are working towards

Our M&E Framework outlines one whole-of-program outcome and three sub-areas. We've used the Framework to assess our progress towards these outcomes.

Program outcome:



Evidence is used by the right stakeholders and partners to inform actions and change that support effective humanitarian action.

1. Research is responsive to regional needs for effective humanitarian action in the Indo-Pacific
2. Research evolves and is conducted with the right stakeholders and partners using innovative and localised methodologies
3. Evidence is communicated to stakeholders and partners in the right way at the right time.



Outcome 1: Research is responsive to regional needs to support effective humanitarian action in the Indo-Pacific

Strengths: Being responsive to our partners' and the sector's needs in adapting to COVID-19.

Opportunities for improvement: Understanding how responsive research supports effective humanitarian action.

Ensuring our research is responsive to emerging needs is critical, in particular with respect to filling evidence gaps in the Asia-Pacific region in the context of COVID-19. Conversations with partners and across the sector enabled us to test and explore emerging ideas related to the impacts of COVID.

In response to COVID-19, HAG provided a range of pro bono support services to the sector, mostly focused on helping agencies adapt to the pandemic's challenges to their humanitarian programming and organisational functions. Service provision and consultations with partners gave us an overarching awareness of key issues, evidence gaps and the need for research to explore the impacts of COVID-19. This knowledge was then used to adapt and incorporate new research questions and ideas into each stream.

How we achieved this:

1. **Adapting:** Planned research initiatives pivoted and adapted in scope and focus to respond to emerging regional research needs around COVID-19 across all four streams. Discussions with our Research Advisory Committee guided this process. (See individual streams below.)
2. **New ways of working:** We explored how organisations are adapting systems and processes and provided support. The Partnerships and Practice stream launched a new Working Remotely Guidance Note Series² which proposes new ways of working in the COVID-19 era. (See section 2 for the influence of the series.)
3. **Supporting emerging humanitarian practice:** [The 5 ways to support locally led disaster response in the Pacific during COVID-19](#) paper and the [TC Harold Practice Paper](#) outlined thinking and evidence around new ways of working, with evidence of strong uptake across sector stakeholders.
4. **Meeting partners' needs:** We continued to focus on helping our partners to meet their research needs. HAG supported three national partners to develop their own research objectives to meet national and regional research priorities for COVID-19 and humanitarian action.

In numbers:



1 meeting of **7** expert Research Advisory Committee members to guide responsiveness to regional needs



100% of research streams pivoted to respond to regional research requirements on COVID-19



8 new research outputs produced or planned to interrogate and support the global and regional response to the pandemic



2 practice papers and **3** guidance notes launched to respond to regional needs



3 national partners supported to develop their own research objectives to meet regional priorities.



Outcome 2: Research evolves and is conducted with the right stakeholders and partners using innovative and localised methodologies

Strengths: Increasing use of localised and remote methodologies with COVID-19

Opportunities for improvement: Engaging critical stakeholders and decision-makers in the right way at the right time.

From January to July 2020 we continued working with long-term research partners and engaging with ongoing and new key stakeholders, which has supported research uptake and engagement tremendously. The strong investment in partners' ownership of the research process and outputs in previous months has enabled greater national and regional buy-in and allowed the research to continue to progress in the absence of any HAG travel since March 2020. We also fostered important new partnerships with key research stakeholders such as [The Behavioural Architects](#), and piloted several new methodologies to adapt to changing contexts and build on the strengths of our national partners.

How we achieved this:

1. **Continuing to focus on collaborative research design:** All research has been designed and conducted in partnership with national, regional and international partners. This has resulted in uniquely contextualised and practical outputs for the region and global recognition of streams, supporting more uptake and use (see stream sections below).
2. **Multi-year research partnership investments:** The research program currently supports two multi-year partnerships that allow national partners to co-design and implement research in the region. This contributes to mutual capacity-strengthening and supports local leadership, which has directly influenced the reach of our research (see stream section below).
3. **Engaging new partners to broaden reach and influence of work:** This reporting period has seen increased engagement with Australian NGOs and specialist organisations, such as The Behavioural Architects, to complement our own expertise and allow the research to branch out into new areas such as climate change and communications. New partnerships with these organisations have expanded the program to support Australian agencies, as well as internationally through global networks and the complementary engagement plans of partners.

Fresh thinking and new methodologies: We have developed and tested new and innovative methodologies to challenge the sector to think differently. This has included several research outputs designed and conducted entirely remotely with partners, four new tools to measure diversity, inclusion and innovation, contextualised systems thinking methodologies, real-time action research and learning, and the incorporation of behavioural science in [our most recent Practice Paper](#).

In numbers:



Outcome 3: Evidence is communicated to stakeholders and partners in the right way at the right time

Strengths: Research ownership by partners enhancing national communications and advocacy

Opportunities for improvement: Strategic communications and dissemination with key stakeholders

Effective communications are essential for research impact and uptake.³ HAG strives to continually strengthen communications and engagement to increase the reach of our research and ensure findings are presented to stakeholders at the right time to influence change. We have presented research at national, regional and international forums and webinars. While COVID-19 has postponed most conferences and events, it has allowed increased engagement with a wider audience through virtual events and webinar series. National partners have played a critical role in elevating the research and have largely led national communications and advocacy in media and through engagement with government. We are currently working to further strengthen our social media presence and publication launch plans to improve this outcome, and further engage with key stakeholders in multiple ways.

How we achieved this:

- Communicating findings to influence policy:** HAG's [submission to inform Australia's International Development Policy](#) drew directly on findings from the Humanitarian Horizons Program to outline considerations for future policy decisions.
- Sharing findings:** HAG and partners have presented the research at 14 forums. Products have also been shared widely, with over 50 representations across sector websites, conference and academic literature, policy briefs and media outlets over the last 6 months. Our research has also been shared and profiled by key national, regional and global actors on social media across LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, and we continue to measure its influence (including through this report).

3. **Ownership elevating influence and enhancing communication:** National and regional partners have consistently reported strong ownership of products and have delivered critical credibility and buy-in for the research in the region.⁴ Additionally, 75% of research launched nationally has been translated into local languages to increase accessibility and reach.



4 presentations of research by HAG and partners at global, regional and national forums



10 representations by national partners



75% of research launched nationally has been translated



100% of translations completed by a national partner or consultant



50+ representations across sector websites, conference and academic literature, policy briefs and media outlets



70+ retweets, mentions and shares of products on social media.

RESEARCH STREAM INFLUENCE

The objectives of each stream are outlined below. This section provides examples of the influence of each stream across the last six months, in the areas of advocacy, narrative, evidence, policy, practice, partnerships and broader sector influence. An overarching assessment of progress towards the objectives is given at the beginning of each section.

INTENTION TO IMPACT: LOCALISING HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The current momentum for supporting localised humanitarian action will only persist with evidence that demonstrates its impact. This stream addresses the localisation measurement gap. It is exploring and testing approaches to measuring the activity and impact of localised humanitarian action across outcomes and actors. This research is currently in its third year.

What we are working towards



Objective: Humanitarian action in the Pacific is more localised

Self-assessment of progress

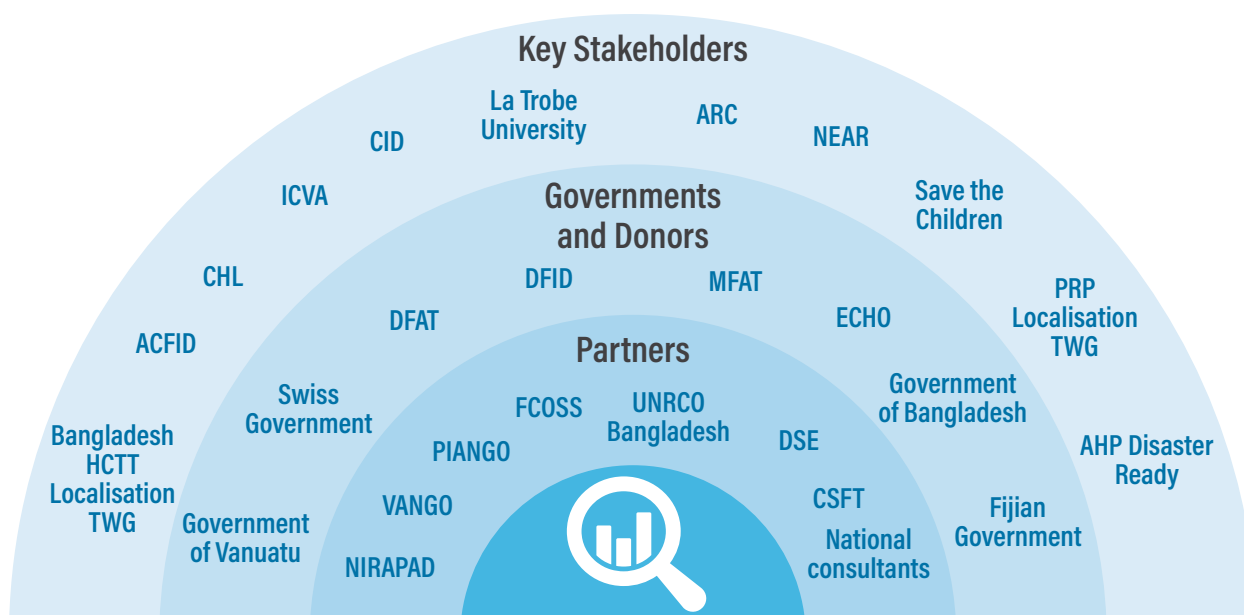


Achievements

2	6	\$33,061	7	3
products	partners	funding to national partners	representations of research by national partners	new research outputs responding to COVID-19

Research influence

This research is being conducted in partnership with national and regional actors. The graphic below demonstrates the reach of the research, including governments and donors which have considered the findings and key stakeholders that have utilised the framework and/or assisted in disseminating or building upon the research.



PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of NGOs
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of NGOs
CFST	Civil Society Forum of Tonga
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid
DFID	UK Department for International Development
CID	Council for International Development

NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
CHL	Centre for Humanitarian Leadership
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
ARC	Australian Red Cross
AHP	Australian Humanitarian Partnership
PRP	Pacific Resilience Partnership
TWG	Technical Working Group
HCTT	Humanitarian Coordination Task Team

Examples of impact

 <p>Advocacy and influence</p>	<p>Local actors have continued to use the findings from the localisation research to advocate for greater opportunity for local actors to be involved in decision-making processes and for increased funding for local organisations. For example, the onset of TC Harold in the midst of COVID-19 restrictions saw increased advocacy by national actors through media and directly with government.</p>
 <p>Narrative and conversations</p>	<p>The research has helped to frame the narrative around localisation in the Pacific. Global perceptions articulated at key regional and global forums and shared by key stakeholders suggest that localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific is leading the way to progress necessary change. This was evident at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Localisation in Jakarta in 2019, and by the establishment of the Technical Working Group on Localisation for the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP).</p>
 <p>Evidence and debate</p>	<p>ICVA used the Measuring Localisation Framework to structure its paper Reinforce, Reinforce, Reinforce: Localization in the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response, published to support effective humanitarian action during the pandemic. The Framework has also been contextualised and adapted to inform NEAR's Localisation Performance Measurement Framework.</p> <p>The research work has been shared on global and regional platforms, including the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Localisation of Aid, at which PIANGO presented the findings from the baselines and shared reports with the Swiss Government and ECHO.</p> <p>All localisation publications have been profiled in Save the Children's Resource Library to expand the reach of the research and inform localisation discussions among INGOs.</p>
 <p>Policy</p>	<p>The research has been discussed extensively with DFAT, including engagement with the Humanitarian Coordinator, and considered in policy development for the Australian Humanitarian Partnership and DFAT humanitarian programming.</p> <p>Our national partners, Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) and Solomon Islands Development Services Exchange (DSE), have used the research as an advocacy tool to engage with government on humanitarian policies.</p>



Practice

After PIANGO who profiled the research at the PRP, a Localisation TWG was established for key Pacific stakeholders. The work of the TWG has drawn directly on the framing and findings of the localisation baselines⁷ and has sought to further progress local leadership. A recent PRP survey designed to map and track partners' localisation activities generated more than 100 responses from across the Pacific.

A localisation TWG will be set up under the HCTT of Bangladesh to track and promote localisation activities in line with recommendations presented in the report: [Elevating Evidence: Localisation in the 2019 Bangladesh Flood Response](#). Our partner, NIRAPAD, was chosen to co-lead this TWG and will be responsible for tracking progress on localisation targets.

The Humanitarian Response Plan for Cyclone Amphan, produced by the Bangladesh HCTT, has referenced our research findings and integrated specific localisation targets under each of the clusters. HAG supported UNRCO in identifying localisation indicators which can be tracked as part of the Cyclone Amphan (and other) responses.



Partnerships

The localisation stream has continued to strengthen our national and regional partnerships, resulting in increased ownership of products and greater dissemination and reach of the research. This has allowed recent outputs to be delivered 100% remotely.

Our partnership with [PIANGO](#) has allowed us access to a broad network of national organisations in the Pacific. It has also elevated PIANGO's profile and positioned it as a leading advocate for localisation in the region. This has led to an expanded network and increased engagement with donors. PIANGO is now leading a Localisation TWG under the PRP Taskforce to further develop a guidance note on localisation in the region.

"HAG could have potentially delivered the research faster on their own. But they were happy to walk together with us. HAG is walking the talk. This has been a journey more than a project." - PIANGO

Our partnership with [NIRAPAD](#) has helped to position the organisation as a leading localisation actor in Bangladesh. NIRAPAD has taken full ownership of the report and presented findings to the HCTT, as well as key development and humanitarian partners in Bangladesh. HAG has continued to support NIRAPAD in its continued work on localisation through the TWG and assessment of the Cyclone Amphan response.

DRAWING ON OUR DIVERSITY: HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

Humanitarian leadership does not currently reflect the broad diversity of talent across gender, age, ethnicity and culture; anecdotal evidence suggests that this hinders humanitarian effectiveness. This stream focuses on understanding the real and potential benefits to organisations and disaster-affected populations of diversifying humanitarian leadership. This research is currently in its second year.

What we're working towards



Objective: Humanitarian organisations in the Indo-Pacific have more diverse leadership


Self-assessment of progress



Achievements



Examples of impact

 Narrative and conversations	<p>The research has opened conversations in the sector designed to improve understanding that diversity extends beyond gender and has a tangible impact on organisational performance. It has sparked interest globally: the research team has regular catch-ups with key global actors including UN OCHA, UNHCR, IFRC, ICRC and CARE International to continue learning and exchange.</p> <p>The research was also adapted for a blog on ALNAP to interrogate the ‘irony of inclusion’ in the sector and help to drive the necessary uncomfortable conversations.</p>
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Evidence and debate

Findings from [Data on Diversity: Humanitarian Leadership Under The Spotlight](#) continued to gain momentum in this reporting period. This report highlighted results from the largest diversity survey conducted in our sector, which reached over 1,400 humanitarian staff, across 115 countries. It allows the sector to reflect on how we recruit and compose leadership teams, how we measure their success, and how we give teams the skills and tools to ensure inclusive leadership.

HAG has presented the research in this reporting period at forums including International Women's Day, GLOW Red and women's networks across the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement. This has helped to understand where the RCRC Movement currently stands in terms of diversity of leadership and to demonstrate the impact of the GLOW Red network on increasing women's leadership.

The research also contributed to [UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Accountability Report 2018-2019](#), highlighting evidence that diverse leadership teams are more likely to adopt inclusive approaches to the communities they serve.



Partnerships

The stream has established partnerships with a number of local and international humanitarian actors across the Philippines and Bangladesh to undertake stage 2 of the in-country research in 2020. This stream also works closely with two national consultants who are currently scoping additional partners, with the aim to develop 12 partnerships in the Philippines and Bangladesh. Existing partnerships have allowed us to understand the diversity and inclusion barriers and enablers in the region to ensure tools are contextualised and appropriate.

This stream has also developed new partnerships with IFRC, ICRC and GLOW Red to support the RCRC Movement's commitment to women in leadership.

BUILDING A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

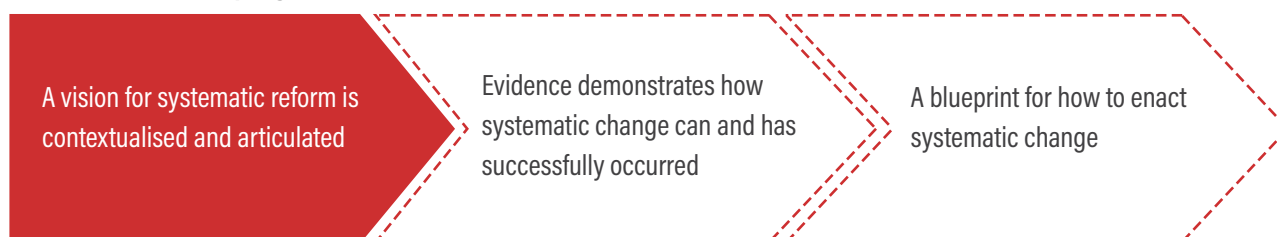
This stream seeks to provide an evidence base to progress transformative systemic change in the humanitarian system at the country level. It is investigating what reform has been possible and how it occurred, and is drawing lessons to support selected national governments to plan for transformative and practical improvements to humanitarian action in the short term. This research is currently focusing on Indonesia, in partnership with the Pujiono Centre, and is in its second year.

What we're working towards

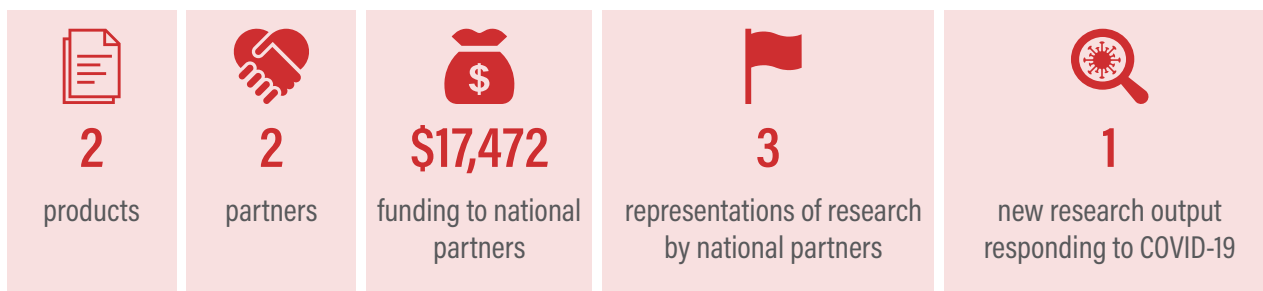


Objective: Humanitarian response at the country level is improved systematically

Self-assessment of progress






Achievements



Examples of impact

	<p>Narrative and conversations</p> <p>Three workshops in Indonesia have engaged more than 60 stakeholders across national NGOs, INGOs, donors, government, UN, RCRC and civil society. The workshops identified four focus areas for reform of the humanitarian sector in Indonesia and produced consensus on what needs to change in the system. This has triggered interest for deeper conversations with key stakeholders, including UN OCHA, Centre for Global Development, DFAT, Humanitarian Forum Indonesia and the HCT.</p> <p>The research was profiled in a blog on the Lowy Interpreter to drive the conversation around country-level reform in Indonesia and highlight the change priorities it identified.</p>
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 <p>Evidence and debate</p>	<p>The research has produced a comprehensive visual map of the humanitarian system in Indonesia. This highlights the linkages, gaps and overlaps in the system and reveals the cause and effect relationships that drive the sector. This map was validated by critical stakeholders in Indonesia and is a valuable tool to fuel debate around country-level reform.</p> <p>The research has been shared on several regional platforms, including the Australasian Aid Conference and multiple webinars hosted by key stakeholders such as ACFID, ICVA and the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.</p>
 <p>Partnerships</p>	<p>The research has supported the organisational and technical capacity development of the Pujiono Centre. Activities and outputs in this stream have boosted the profile and networks of the Centre in Indonesia and regionally. This has led to the awarding of additional research contracts, increased engagement with government actors, an invitation to attend HCT meetings, and the successful establishment of the SEJAJAR network.¹⁰</p> <p><i>“The partnership has allowed us to build confidence, we are becoming an actor at the national stage thanks to this partnership. The willingness of colleagues at HAG to come to Indonesia and come to the organisation headquarters, it boosts what is possible for us.” – Puji Pujiono</i></p> <p>HAG and Pujiono Centre also partnered with CARI, an Indonesia-based data analytics organisation specialising in disaster management. CARI was contracted through Pujiono Centre, in line with HAG’s approach to research and commitment to building Pujiono Centre’s capacity to lead and manage sub-contracting.</p>
 <p>Broader sector</p>	<p>In this period, this research pivoted to support the establishment of the SEJAJAR network in Indonesia. This allowed the research team to work alongside the Pujiono Centre to assist in developing new and innovative ways to improve the effectiveness of the COVID-19 response in Indonesia. The platform has elevated findings from Blueprint stakeholder workshops and developed trainings to fill gaps and build capacity in the sector.</p>

PARTNERSHIPS AND PRACTICE

This research addresses emerging themes at the forefront of humanitarian action. Consistent, rapid analysis of humanitarian action by independent practitioners, taking account of multiple stakeholders and themes, has been rare to date in the Asia-Pacific region. The practice papers respond to this gap, providing a quick turnaround analysis of emerging themes to prompt critical analysis and awareness among responding actors and donors.

What we're working towards



Objective: Contemporary humanitarian issues are debated in a more informed manner

Self-assessment of progress







Achievements





Examples of impact

	<p>Narrative and conversations</p>
<p>Positive Disruption? China's Humanitarian Aid was presented at several regional forums during this reporting period, including the Australasian Aid Conference. This research opened conversations around the engagement of non-traditional humanitarian donors, with China as a particularly important focus for the region. This paper examined China's aid program from a new angle – the operational and policy implications of humanitarian aid.</p> <p>The paper was adapted for a blog on the Lowy Interpreter in response to increasing interest from the sector and to inform the narrative around China's growing impact on the humanitarian sector.</p>	

 <p>Evidence and debate</p>	<p><u>No Turning Back: Local leadership in Vanuatu's response to Tropical Cyclone Harold</u> has generated evidence of the shift towards local leadership in the Pacific, specifically in the context of COVID-19.</p> <p>This research was presented recently on a webinar hosted by the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership and ACFID, “Dealing with a Double Disaster: What happens when disaster strikes during a pandemic,” and was highlighted as being very influential within DFAT in regard to both localisation and COVID strategy.</p>
 <p>Practice</p>	<p><u>Creating Communications that Work: Humanitarians and the climate crisis</u> brought a practice-oriented lens to our Practice Papers series. It was designed to directly inform humanitarian practice in communications strategy. Written in partnership with <u>The Behavioural Architects</u>, this paper offers practical guidance and recommendations to improve humanitarian communication on climate change.</p> <p>This paper was launched in July 2020, but has already been embraced within the sector. Australian Red Cross has indicated that it will use the paper to frame the launch of its 2020 World Disasters Report and to inform the panel discussion of the RCRC conference on climate change.</p>
 <p>Partnerships</p>	<p>The TC Harold Practice Paper built on and leveraged our partnership with the Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO). This was our second publication produced in partnership, which has added to VANGO's publication pool and evidence base. VANGO has used the paper as an advocacy tool to engage with government and to advocate for increased leadership for national civil society.</p> <p>VANGO's lead role and ownership of the research significantly increased national and regional buy-in and increased access and stakeholder engagement. Our partnership allowed this paper to be delivered 100% remotely.</p>
 <p>Broader sector</p>	<p>This reporting period saw the launch of a new Guidance Note Series to respond to the implications of COVID-19. The series was developed in partnership with regional stakeholders to guide the sector in new ways of working remotely.</p> <p>This guidance draws on learnings throughout the research program and has influenced our own and our partners' work outside of Humanitarian Horizons. For example, our partner GLOW in Pakistan has utilised the <u>Remote Monitoring</u> note to position their future work as a remote third-party monitoring agency. Partners such as CARE and Caritas have reported using the guidance notes to prompt discussions about new ways of working.</p>

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT TRACKING INFLUENCE AND IMPACT?

	Lessons learned	Lessons applied
 <p>The importance of time and resource investment in partnership</p>	<p>The research program would not be possible without our strong national and regional partnerships. It has been critical to invest time and resources into maintaining these relationships and empowering partners to lead on decision-making and take ownership of products.</p>	<p>The learning we have gained from our partnership with PIANGO has become the foundation on which we've built all our other partnerships. This partnership has taught us what it means to work collaboratively and support national partners. It has transformed the way we approach our research – how we select partnerships, how we form agreements, how we communicate and how we design methodology.</p>
 <p>Management of remote work</p>	<p>Restrictions on travel due to COVID-19 led to several products being delivered 100% remotely in this reporting period. This presented new challenges to ensure all necessary data was gathered and reflected meaningfully. This process also contributed to our continued learning on effective and efficient management of national consultants.</p>	<p>Learnings from remote management of the localisation work in Bangladesh with NIRAPAD and the RCO were applied to the remote data collection conducted for the TC Harold Practice Paper. This included flexible timelines, contracted regular check-ins with the research team, and all meetings being followed up with action points in writing.</p> <p>Learnings from both projects fed into our Guidance Note Series and have influenced much of our work outside of Humanitarian Horizons.</p>



Shifting priorities with COVID-19

The pandemic presented unique challenges for all four streams as national and regional priorities shifted rapidly and both international and in-country travel halted. This elevated the Localisation stream and significantly altered the Diverse Leadership and Blueprint streams. It has taught us the importance of a flexible and adaptable approach to research timelines and outputs.

All research for the final year of the program was planned in consultation with key regional actors and national partners to ensure its relevance and allow flexibility for uncertainty across diverse contexts. All four streams have produced or planned outputs that directly address the implications of the pandemic in line with identified needs.



Finding the right balance of consultation

The research program has benefited greatly from a strong consultative process throughout design and data collection. However, challenges related to over-consultation have arisen. This was evident in the Blueprint stakeholder workshops, which gained widespread engagement across the sector but struggled to ensure key decision-makers and influencers were targeted at the right time to support and implement change.

Over-consultation also presented challenges for the Diverse Leadership stream in tool development, as organisations differ in their priorities and perceptions of diversity, leading to conflicting feedback.

This learning has been applied in the development of new methodologies and approaches for both streams. The Blueprint research prioritises engagement with government actors and more targeted communications with key decision-makers rather than broad group consultation.

The Diverse Leadership team has also incorporated learnings. These include being more strategic about who is consulted, and setting a very clear scope and template for specific feedback.



Increased focus on communications and engagement

In order to achieve greater impact, we must strengthen our communications strategy. Certain products have not received as much traction as they might due to the lack of a strategic comms plan.

HAG is currently working to upgrade our approach to comms across the entire organisation. We have engaged a consultant to evaluate our comms strategy and processes and recommend improvements. Additionally, each Humanitarian Horizons product now includes a strategic comms plan developed at the initial planning stage of the research.



Strengthened
process for
program
monitoring and
evaluation

Key guidance that emerged from the RAC meeting in this period was the need for improved impact monitoring of the program. A research impact dashboard was piloted in January to capture the first 2.5 years of the program, but struggled to reflect the qualitative impact of the research beyond the quantitative indicators.

This report reflects the RAC's advice to present qualitative data more meaningfully. It offers an in-depth exploration of each stream, with specific examples of impact. This information was collected using semi-structured interviews with stream leads and partners to supplement indicators from the Framework.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Nichole Georgeou and Charles Hawksley, “Enhancing Research Impact in International Development: A practical guide for practitioners and researchers,” Research for Development Impact Network, 2020.
- 2 See [“Remote Humanitarian Management and Programming”](#); [“Remote Humanitarian Monitoring”](#); [“Remote Humanitarian Facilitation”](#)
- 3 Anthony Kung and Melissa Kamp, “Research Communication and Uptake: A snapshot of practice in the Australian-based international development sector,” Research for Development Impact Network, 2018.
- 4 This is evidenced by a forthcoming paper on research impact and partnership with PIANGO, as well as additional interviews with partners.
- 5 See, [“Measuring Localisation: Framework and Tools”](#)
- 6 See four baseline reports measuring localisation against the framework: [“Localisation in Vanuatu: Demonstrating Change”](#); [“Localisation in Tonga: Demonstrating Change”](#); [“Localisation in Fiji: Demonstrating Change”](#); [“Localisation in Solomon Islands: Demonstrating Change”](#)
- 7 This is evidenced by the Terms of Reference for the TWG and recent survey circulated to key actors.
- 8 See [“Diverse and Inclusive Workshop Report”](#)
- 9 See [“Data on Diversity: Humanitarian Leadership Under the Spotlight”](#)
- 10 SEJAJAR is a multi-sectoral network of more than 25 national networks and 600 sub-national organisations, led by the Pujiono Centre, Oxfam and Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre. It provides a platform for collective engagement with government, a periodic webinar series to discuss critical issues, and regular training opportunities for members designed to improve the COVID-19 response in Indonesia.