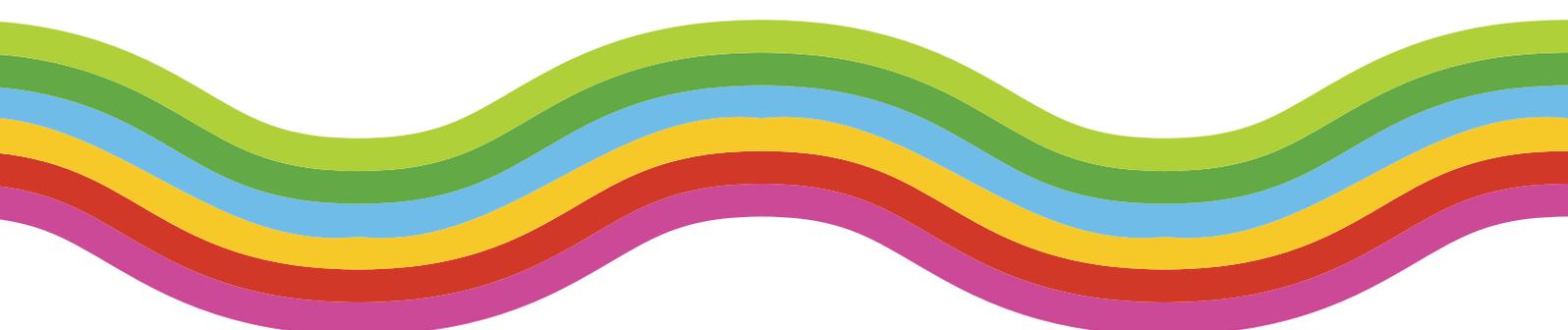




HUMANITARIAN ADVISORY GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP





Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) acknowledges First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present, and recognise and respect their abiding connection to this land, its waterways and community. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Flexibility (n): the quality of bending easily without breaking

It is one thing to set your values. It is quite another to live them and to put them to the test. One of our core values – being ridiculously flexible - is, apparently, defined as bending without breaking. This year we have explored this value to its deepest, darkest and at times most surprising limits. Not broken, but we are a little bent. We would like to think this has made us stronger, but let's not pretend it has been easy.

Bending has come in many forms and has become a highly prized skill set across HAG; no doubt across the sector. But what does it involve?

At a very practical level, bending means working at weird and wonderful hours to get the job done; it means trying out new ways of facilitating workshops and meetings when the traditional approach is not possible and the participants are tired and screen weary; it means shifting and changing project deadlines as we work with fabulous partners trying to adapt to the unpredictability of the world right now.

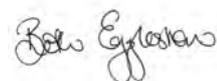
At a deeper level, it means flexing to support each other; and this, of all the bending our team has done, is to be celebrated the most. It is the most complicated sort of bending that starts with caring if someone else is struggling, identifying ways to help that often involve bending our own day or performing contortions to relieve the pressure on another team member. Amazingly, this is done with a smile and reassuring words, no signs of frustration or resentment. For this bending, we say thank you to every member of the team – this is the sort of bending that makes us stronger, stops us breaking and provides depth and brilliance.

At the most important level, bending has defined the year for most of our partners. We have learned the most about this value from them. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact in many of the countries where we conduct research. This is on top of disasters and crises that have added complexity and challenge. Partners in Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Fiji and Lebanon have been hit personally by the pandemic, some have lost family and friends, and all have continued to work day in and day out in the most challenging of circumstances. This letter is really to you. We are so grateful for your partnership and for your extreme flexibility. Thank you, we owe you such a debt of gratitude.

And so, we stand slightly bent, but not broken, and ready for another year. Thank you to all the individuals and organisations that have supported us and trusted us with your big ideas, critical questions and spaces of discussion.



Kate Sutton
Director



Beth Eggleston
Director

HAG (n). From 'hægtesse', a wise female orator, a figure greatly feared and respected
From 'hegge', a foot in two realities – the world of the village (home) and the wild world beyond



INTRODUCTION

On 26 April 2021, after avoiding the worst of the pandemic the year before, health authorities in Fiji discovered a case of community transmission of COVID-19. The capital, Suva, was thrown into a lockdown, inter-island travel was banned, and all international and domestic passenger flights were suspended. At the time, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), which is headquartered in Suva, was working with HAG on the final localisation study of our Humanitarian Horizons research program. Despite the immensely challenging and stressful circumstances for the organisation and their staff, PIANGO went above and beyond to remotely coordinate with their counterparts in the Pacific to complete interviews and workshops. HAG worked with PIANGO to adapt our approaches to support them as best we could.

As this example shows, the pandemic reminded us that many things are out of our control. Yet it has also demonstrated our ability to adapt and – thanks also to the commitment and agility of our partners – to come out of this with stronger partnerships than before. We are delighted to present in this report a summary of HAG’s work over the year, highlights from our research with partners, and some of the key changes we’ve seen as an organisation.

This year we’ve supported the humanitarian sector as it grappled with the challenges of the pandemic. HAG took many events online, learning new skills and tailoring our facilitation and research tools. While closed borders meant that research and data collection went digital, our partners stepped in to perform more of the work ‘on the ground’ (albeit often remotely too). We recognise and show our solidarity with the



Photo: Robert Wagner Photography. Missing from photo, Josie Flint, who was unable to attend the retreat

heightened challenges that our neighbours across the Asia-Pacific region faced due to COVID-19 and other disasters, such as flooding across Indonesia and Timor-Leste and Tropical Cyclone Yasa in Fiji. The pandemic has only added another layer of humanitarian work for many.

Our team continued to grow, with 5 new staff joining in the middle of Melbourne’s hard lockdown during the winter-spring of 2020. Online onboarding, remote relationship building and a move to five days working from home demonstrated HAG’s resilience throughout an extremely challenging year for our staff, communities and partners.

Towards the end of March 2021, the team gathered at Yarra Valley Estate for HAG’s third strategic retreat. Our retreat focused on growth within the team and opening new conversations, initiated by a moving Welcome to Country by Aunty Joy, Senior Wurundjeri Elder of the Kulin Nation.

The last quarter of this financial year also saw the final stages of the 2018-21 iteration of Humanitarian Horizons, HAG’s strategic research program supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). We are proud of the robust research and evidence that Humanitarian Horizons delivered to help improve humanitarian outcomes for crisis-affected peoples. And we are excited to kick off Humanitarian Horizons 2021-24, as events over the past 12 months highlight the increasing fragility of our region and the need for rigorous, relevant and practitioner-focused research.

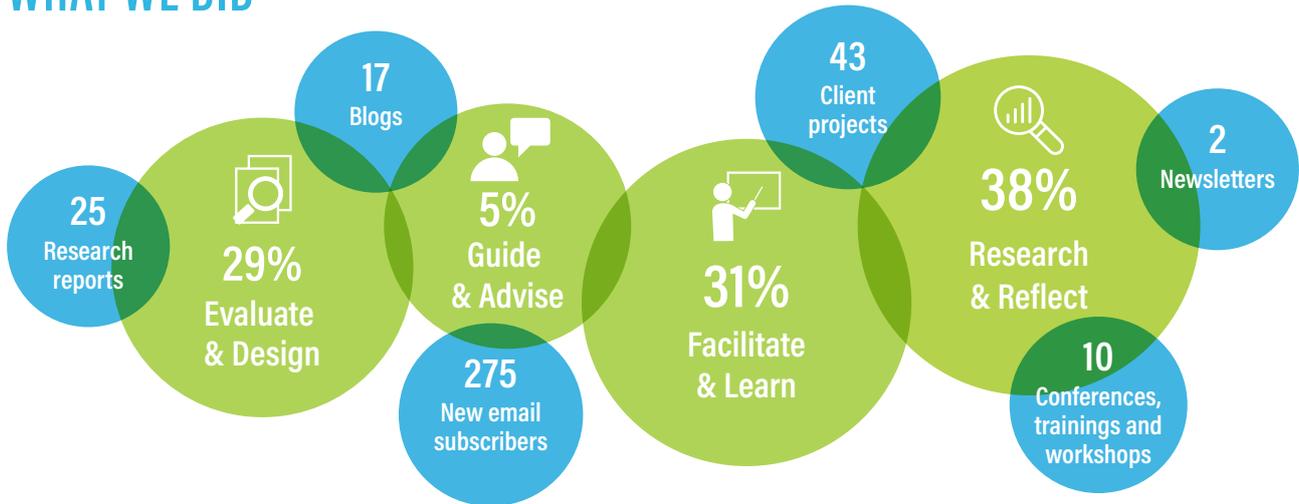
HAG STAFF RETREAT

30-31 March 2021 at Yarra Valley Estate, Dixons Creek

Smoke billowed into the crisp morning air as Aunty Joy welcomed us
to the land of the Wurundjeri people, of the Manna Gum
We were there to press pause on our busy lives
To reflect, to learn, to plan, and (hopefully) have some fun
We were treated to a quiz about our fellow team members
Where we saw people in a whole new light
Uncovered their favourite school subjects, hidden skills and past travels
And discovered who does their best work alongside a pint
After that, we were down to serious business
Getting report writing tips from an editing pro
Planning out workloads, projects, resourcing and teams
Making sure we can manage all the ebbs and the flows
'Confident Communication' was our afternoon session
For some, this caused anxiety from the head to the toes
But we learnt some tricks, like remembering 'it's not about me'
Focusing on breathing or striking a Wonder Woman pose
The next day we delved into some behavioural science
Where we explored how our brains work, humans are predictable, it's true
We learnt that 'what goes first matters', immediate responses are more honest
And if you want to change a person's behaviour, make it easy for them to do!
We workshopped these principles and how we might encourage positive change
In the humanitarian sector and its environmental impact to be specific
We explored ways to reduce carbon emissions, plastic waste and foreign imports
And to create a major shift in practices across Asia and the Pacific
As our time came to a close, we formed a circle
Out on the back deck in the dappled afternoon light
To discuss how we can support reconciliation with First Nations peoples
To 'pay the rent', honour their cultures and do what we can to support the fight
As we packed up our things and prepared to head back to our respective homes
We were glad for the two days we had spent as a team
For reflection, future planning and meals shared together
For celebrating successes and daring to dream
The clean valley air had rejuvenated the body
The wisdom of others had filled the head
As the sun set on the final day of autumn
We were excited for the year ahead!



WHAT WE DID



WHERE WE DID IT

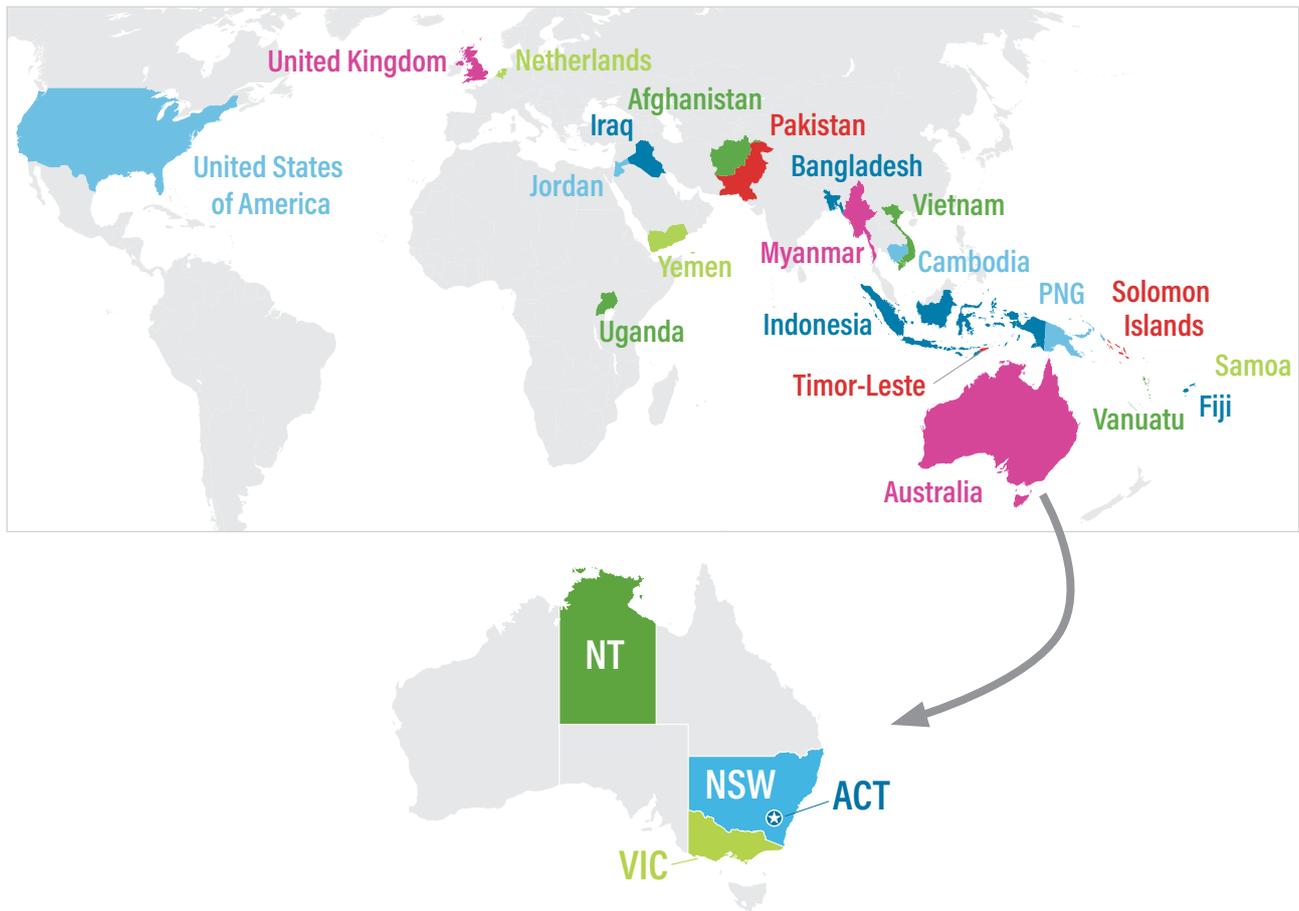


Photo previous page: Aunty Joy delivering the Welcome to Country at the beginning of our 2021 annual retreat. Credit: Beth Eggleston

HUMANITARIAN HORIZONS 2018-2021

Our first ever multi-year strategic research program, [Humanitarian Horizons 2018-21](#), had its final year in 2020-21. Focusing on the Indo-Pacific region and supported by the DFAT and Trade, Humanitarian Horizons aims to progress thinking on the role of the humanitarian sector and produce evidence about ways to achieve better outcomes for crisis-affected people.

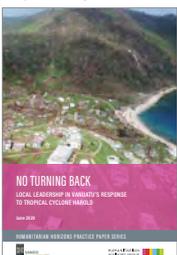
When we began the research program, we could only have dreamt of the directions it would take us. We have always sought to push the envelope on what is possible, practical and relevant. The program had an ambitious agenda to bring fresh thinking and strong evidence to inform policy and decision-making across the humanitarian sector. It hurt our brains, stretched our thought horizons, generated rich and important conversations, created strong connections and produced an enormous amount of learning that we have sought to share amongst our peers and colleagues. The research [contributed to a range of important conversations, decisions and thinking](#) across our

region. Between 2018 and 2021, Humanitarian Horizons staff worked with 31 partners in 10 countries and produced 52 research products.

Our key takeaway as a team is that it is both important and possible – even in the midst of a global pandemic – to work with our partners to produce practitioner-oriented, context-relevant research that informs decision-making. We are incredibly proud of the contributions that our team and our partners have made.

It has been a busy year to round off a full and rich program. [Our partnership-based approach](#) to research has been critical for the influence and reach of the Humanitarian Horizons program, reflecting organisational values and the need for more locally grounded and relevant research in and on the humanitarian sector. We have been incredibly proud to work with amazing national and regional partners, who have informed research priorities, co-led on design and implementation, acted as sounding boards and really owned the research

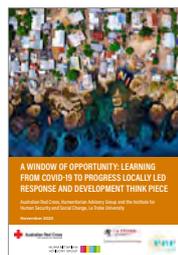
No Turning Back: Local Leadership in Vanuatu's Response to Tropical Cyclone Harold



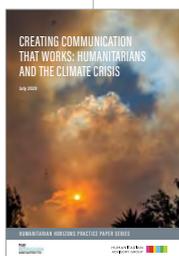
Building a Blueprint for Change: Laying the Foundations



A Window of Opportunity: Learning from COVID-19 to Progress Locally Led Response and Development Think Piece



Emerging Humanitarian Issues Brief: South Asia



Creating Communication that Works: Humanitarians and the Climate Crisis



Reach and Reality: Tracking the Impact of our Research



Learnings from the SEJAJAR Initiative in Indonesia



Emerging Humanitarian Issues Brief: South East Asia



to advocate for change in their own contexts. We are indebted to their knowledge, wisdom, curiosity and generosity, and sincerely grateful for their commitment and perseverance to continue working with us despite the immense challenges they faced during the pandemic.

We have witnessed the [uptake and influence of our research](#) in different ways across the globe. Tracking the impact and influence of research is notoriously difficult, but this process has been critical to understanding how our products are being used, and how we can continue to improve their reach to key audiences in the sector.

In line with our value of being [unfailingly curious](#), we are always eager to learn how we can do things better. That is why the completion of the independent [Mid-Term Review](#) of the Humanitarian Horizons program by CoLAB, a Suva-based Pacific consultancy and research organisation, was a really important milestone not only for the program, but for HAG as an organisation. The outcomes of the review

shaped the final deliverables and projects this year and fed into the design of the next multi-year program.

'It is timely and warranted research. It has the potential to change the way international organisations approach the way they interact with national bodies in humanitarian situations, including complex emergencies. I believe it is offering important empirical evidence to support needed new ways of responding to national humanitarian challenges.' (Key informant interview, Humanitarian Horizons Mid-Term Review)

In 2020-21, we worked with 16 partners in five countries and produced 30 products for the Humanitarian Horizons program. Below is a timeline of selected research products launched this year.





Intention to Impact: Localisation of Humanitarian Action research stream

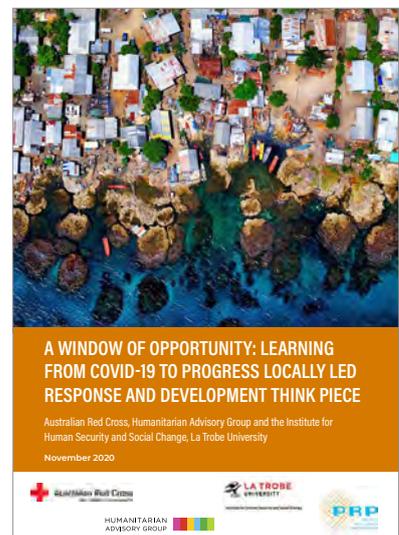
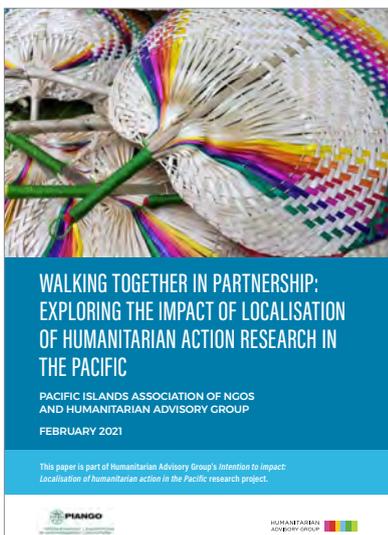
This stream examines local leadership in humanitarian response, focusing on the Pacific. In its final year it reflected on partnership models, considered the impacts of COVID-19, and reviewed progress on localisation in the region.

Our partnership with PIANGO to explore progress on locally led humanitarian action was founded on the idea that it was possible to track progress on localisation, and to influence change using research evidence, with Pacific researchers and partners leading the way. In [Walking Together in Partnership: Exploring the Impact of Localisation of Humanitarian Action Research in the Pacific](#), we reflected on how HAG and PIANGO advanced our partnership and what this has meant for the project's impact to date. The paper shared our successes, challenges and learning about partnership and research impact, with the aim of promoting more equitable knowledge production and exchange in the humanitarian sector.

With the COVID-19 pandemic creating new challenges for the sector, its implications for localisation are still being understood. Working with our partners PIANGO, the Localisation Technical Working Group of the Pacific

Resilience Partnership, the Australian Red Cross, and the Institute for Human Security and Social Change of La Trobe University, we published [A Window of Opportunity: Learning from COVID-19 to Progress Locally Led Response and Development](#) to share experiences and insights from the Pacific. This think piece provided emerging evidence gathered by the co-authors and their partners and posed critical questions for international humanitarian and development actors to consider in their work across the region.

In our final project in this stream, we worked with PIANGO and their National Liaison Units to look at how localisation has progressed since we undertook our baseline studies in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The research also captured insights on how COVID-19 has influenced the locally led response approach across the region, given its impact on humanitarian activities. This pulse check on progress continues the commitment of HAG and our partners to generate evidence that can be adapted and used to inform current and future humanitarian programming.





Diverse and Inclusive Humanitarian Leadership

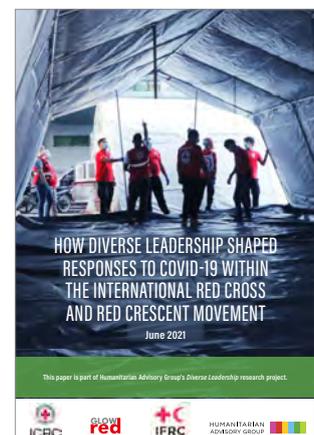
This stream, in partnership with operational humanitarian agencies, explores how diverse and inclusive leadership can enrich the humanitarian system's capacity to tackle key challenges. In its final year, the Diverse Leadership stream has been working on two key research projects.

This year we partnered with GLOW Red, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross to understand how diverse leadership shaped responses to COVID-19 within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement. We set out to understand which areas were prioritised and what decisions were made in response to COVID-19, looking behind the curtains at the range of perspectives and considerations that leaders brought to the critical decisions. The research revealed important differences in the way leaders with different backgrounds, profiles, and experiences approached their options and prioritised actions. Put simply, the research showed that it matters who is around the table. Our report [How Diverse Leadership Shaped Responses to COVID-19 within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#) added a new complement to the principled case for reform by demonstrating the value of having a wide range of perspectives and experiences within the International RCRC Movement's leadership and decision-making.

We presented this research in several exciting forums. Stream lead Pip Henty shared initial findings at GLOW Red's International Women's Day event. Director Kate Sutton shared the research at the [2021 Humanitarian Leadership Conference](#), a global online conference that aims to inform and influence seasoned and emerging humanitarian leaders. Director Beth Eggleston and Pip Henty [presented opening comments](#) at the Commission on the Status of Women non-governmental organisations (NGO) side event 'Applauded on the Frontlines but Excluded from Board Rooms: Diversity and Leadership in the COVID-19 Response'. The event aimed to underline the study's important findings and recommendations for improving diversity, inclusion and equitable decision-making power in the time of COVID-19.

Capitalising on the momentum generated by our 2019 [Data on Diversity](#) report, we kicked off research on humanitarian effectiveness and the diversity of staff and leadership to investigate the relationships between them. Working with our in-country consultants Pamela Combinido, and Suman Ahsanul Islam from Insights, we partnered with 13 organisations and networks across the Philippines, Bangladesh and Indonesia to understand the correlation between diverse and inclusive leadership teams and two areas of practice: innovation and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The findings from this study will be launched in 2021.

"It really is about who you are. What are the values that drive you?"
"Who I am has meaning and changes how I approach situations and decisions." **"In my case I am a mum, I am a woman, I am gay and we have a way of working and living and communicating and relating to people. It's more than just a style. The ethos I have in my personal life has repercussions. It's difficult to separate."** **"The way I lead and my style certainly has to do with gender."**
"My experiences growing up have impacted on how I lead people."
"I think we all bring our personal experiences, anyone who says they don't is lying"
"Whether you like it or not, your personal experience does influence how you behave as a leader, and what you prioritise as a leader. On that journey, there is experience."
"We all bring our personal experiences."





Building a Blueprint for Change

The Building a Blueprint for Change stream, conducted in partnership with the Pujiono Centre, seeks to support transformative systemic change in the humanitarian system at the country level, focusing on Indonesia. It uses historical perspectives and stakeholder engagement to investigate the conditions and drivers of reform, showing the importance of interconnected and inclusive approaches to systems change.

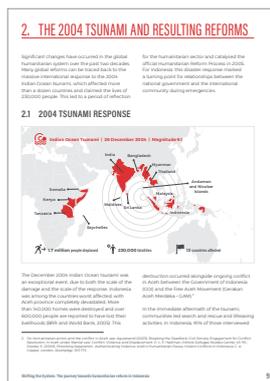
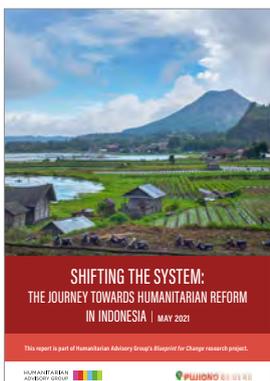
Blueprint work this year was heavily influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic struck Indonesia in early 2020, priorities shifted, and the research pivoted to support the Pujiono Centre in establishing the **SEJAJAR network**, an inclusive, cross-sectoral coordination platform to aid the COVID response. The stream supported the network's development and commissioned a real-time evaluation led by the Institute of Research Governance and Social Change (IRGSC) to capture learnings relevant to the Blueprint project. The evaluation, summarised in **Learnings from the SEJAJAR Initiative in Indonesia**, found that SEJAJAR added unique value to the crisis response by providing a whole-of-society approach and creating space for civil society outside of the conventional humanitarian sphere to meaningfully contribute to response. These learnings fed into the next phase of the research.

To kick off phase 2 (phase 1, the project foundations, ran in 2019-20), the research team first undertook a detailed review of published literature to examine key events and turning points in Indonesia's progression over the past 20 years towards a global example of locally led disaster management and humanitarian action.

This review was published as **Shifting the System: The Journey Towards Humanitarian Reform in Indonesia**, which drew attention to the critical role played by local civil society and grassroots organisations on the path towards reform.

The research progressed with targeted interviews, workshops and focus group discussions to explore the key challenges and opportunities to shift the Indonesian system to a more effective and inclusive model that will bring all actors along in humanitarian reform. Data collection focused on the four priority areas for reform identified in phase 1: coordination, accountability, funding and capacity development. Through collaborations with the Center for Global Development (CGD), stream leads Jesse McCommon and Puji Pujiono were also able to facilitate and contribute to a **by-invitation roundtable** as well as **public debates** about humanitarian reform in the region. The Pujiono Centre translated outputs from Blueprint phase 2 into Bahasa Indonesian to ensure they are accessible to Indonesian audiences.

The stream has supported linkages between national and subnational conversations and has linked these to the discussions going on at a global level – helping to elevate Indonesian voices into wider discussions, and giving often abstract international reform debates an insight into processes and priorities within the country. Overall findings from phase 2 will be launched later in 2021, alongside a learning report, in hopes that lessons from contextualised and country-led reform processes in Indonesia can be adapted and applied to other humanitarian contexts across the globe.





Partnerships and Practice

The Partnerships and Practice stream aims to influence policy and practice throughout the humanitarian sector by bringing critical research on operations and reflective analysis of partnerships and other ways of working. The stream comprises practice papers and guidance notes, monitoring and evaluation, events and the Humanitarian Horizons Research Advisory Committee (RAC). Our practice papers are central to elevating research from the Indo-Pacific region and help inform policy and practice in real time.

Our practice papers and guides, on topics such as the importance of creating [meaningful communication on climate change and humanitarian action](#), aimed to increase engagement across the sector. In response to COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold, our report [No Turning Back](#) provided a rapid analysis of local leadership and the humanitarian community in Vanuatu.

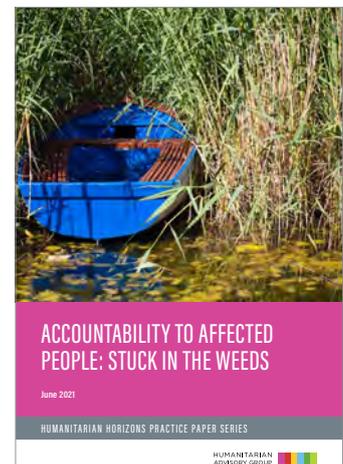
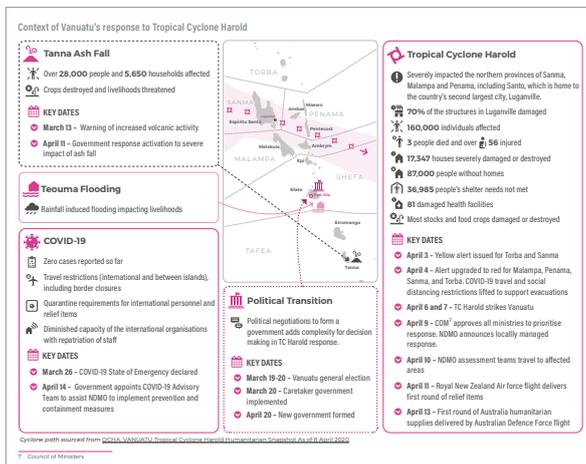
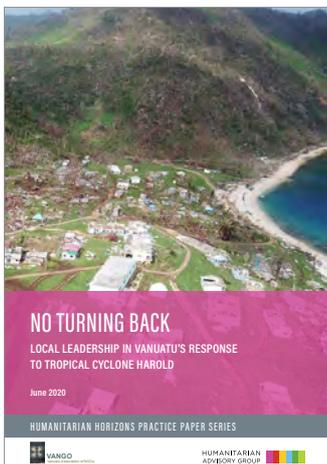
Our research through the Partnerships and Practice stream has been recognised in key sector-wide forums, as when our 2021 Practice Paper on accountability to affected people, called [Stuck in the Weeds](#), was shared on the [H2H Network](#). In the last financial year, our webinar series in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership (CHL) and the Australian Council for International Development analysed the impact of

COVID-19 on local leadership, with hundreds of participants from around the world joining.

Tracking the impact of Humanitarian Horizons has been a central focus of the stream.

Our [Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#) demonstrates how we measure the program's influence across the humanitarian sector. The first outcome in the framework – Evidence is used by the right stakeholders and partners to inform actions and change that support effective humanitarian action – made sure we paid attention to whether our research was responsive to needs and useful throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The RAC, comprised of experts from across the region, also played a core part in the stream over the last financial year by providing strategic advice for the program. Established in 2017, the RAC met twice annually, for a total of four times in person in Canberra and Melbourne and twice remotely.

This financial year also saw the release of our [Mid-Term Review](#), conducted during November-December 2020 by Pacific-based consultants CoLAB. The Mid-Term Review assessed the progress of Humanitarian Horizons until October 2020, incorporating the views of partners and stakeholder organisations regarding the effectiveness of the research and relevance to the humanitarian sector as a whole. Its findings informed and strengthened the next iteration of the program, Humanitarian Horizons 2021-24.



HUMANITARIAN HORIZONS 2021-2024

Humanitarian Horizons 2021–24 is the next iteration of HAG’s strategic, sector-wide research program. More than ever, the events of 2020 highlighted the need for rigorous, practitioner-focused analysis to support the transformative change required to address growing humanitarian needs.

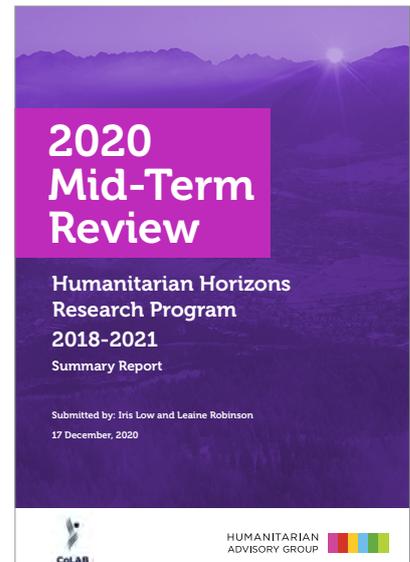
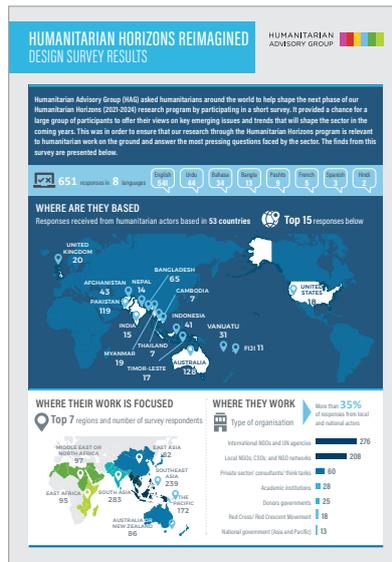
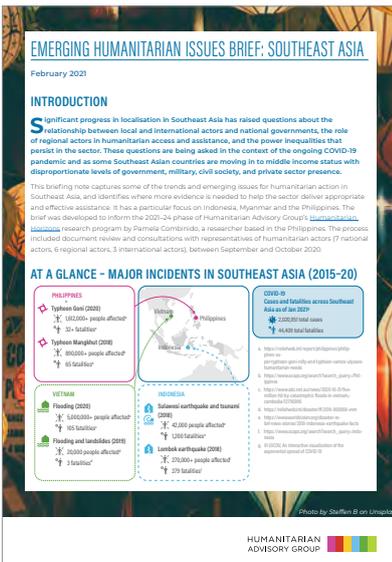
Humanitarian Horizons 2021–24 continues to focus on the Indo-Pacific region, aiming to progress thinking on the role of the humanitarian sector and produce evidence about ways to achieve better outcomes for crisis-affected people.¹ It has been informed by a rigorous and in-depth design process over 12 months, involving a [global sector survey](#), interviews with key humanitarian thinkers, input from regional and national experts and partners, including in the development of Emerging Humanitarian Issues briefs in [South Asia](#), [South East Asia](#), and [the Pacific](#), and an independent mid-term review.

Humanitarian Horizons 2021–24 will build on achievements to date through three interlocking research streams:

1. **People, Power and Local Leadership**
2. **Greening the System**
3. **Real Time Analysis and Influence**

It is underpinned by a fourth stream responsible for governance, accountability and monitoring, evaluation and learning processes. Research will be responsive to the COVID-19 context and to disruptions generally (especially climate-related ones) and will examine links between the thematic focus areas. All streams reflect our commitment to locally informed humanitarian research and approaches that support constructive change.

HAG will continue its partnership-based approach to research which underpins the influence and reach of the current program, reflecting organisational values and the need for more locally grounded and relevant research in and on the humanitarian sector.



¹ Key program objectives are outlined in the theory of change in the program’s Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

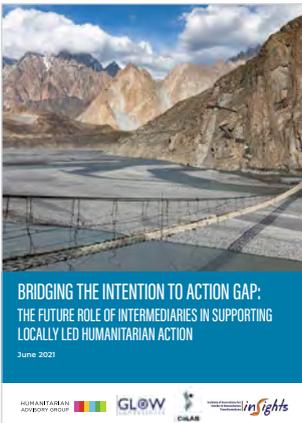
OUR RESEARCH

HAG's research portfolio has gone from strength to strength. We are really proud of the contribution we have made to expanding the evidence base on locally led humanitarian action through other collaborations beyond Humanitarian Horizons. A comprehensive study of the [partnership between Karuna Mission Social Solidarity \(KMSS\) and Trócaire in Myanmar](#), for example, showed the importance of joint reflection and learning as organisations seek to change their ways of working.

We have continued to produce tools to help improve our understanding of humanitarian response and promote better outcomes for

affected people. As part of a project with UN Women, we developed a [framework for the measurement of women's leadership and meaningful participation in COVID-19 responses](#) and piloted it in [the Philippines](#). We have reached out to varied audiences such as through [Humanitarian Exchange magazine](#), published by the Humanitarian Practice Network, and [in joint initiatives with the CGD](#). And we continue to elevate the voices of other organisations and researchers in the region and beyond, as seen in our report on [the role of intermediaries](#) for the facilitators of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream.

Bridging the Intention to Action Gap: The Future Role of Intermediaries in Supporting Locally Led Humanitarian Action



The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 was a galvanising moment for the agenda on locally led humanitarian action. The discussion since then has matured significantly, but is still lacking a constructive

HAG partnered with GLOW Consultants, CoLAB, InSights and independent national consultants to undertake the research, which included over 100 stakeholders from 36 countries across the humanitarian sector.

approach towards the role of intermediaries. HAG was commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, as a co-convenor of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream 2, to analyse the future role for organisations when acting as an intermediary.



The study used a behavioural science approach to better understand how to push the sector from intention to concrete action and change. The report highlights three key findings:

- ▶ The existing role of intermediaries needs to fundamentally shift to better support locally led action
- ▶ Barriers preventing change are currently far more powerful than the triggers that will motivate change
- ▶ Change is required in three key areas to achieve a more effective future role for intermediaries:
 - Motivation for change
 - Opportunity for intermediaries to make easy choices that will effectively support change
 - Developing and deploying capabilities that are adapted to each actor and context, to ensure a fit-for-purpose contribution.

The study also proposed a model for the role of intermediaries, which aimed to capture



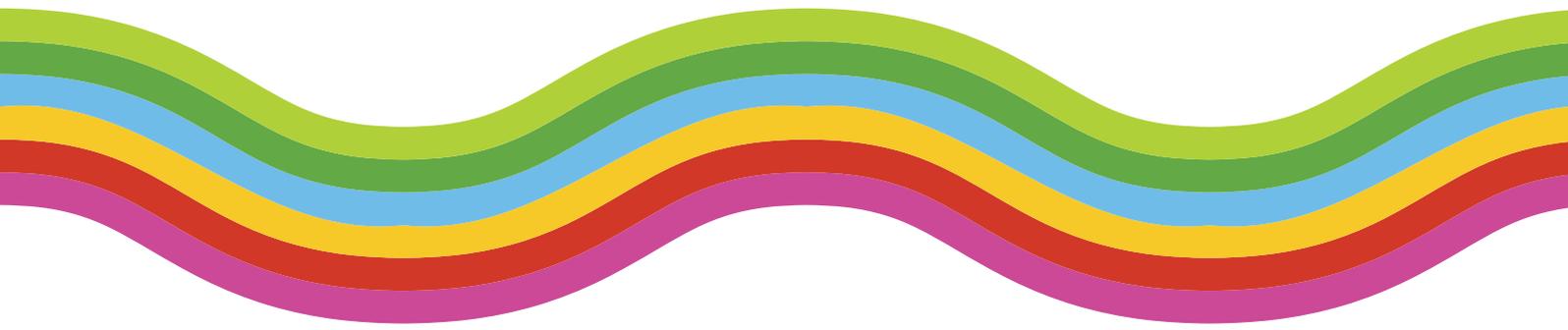
six core capabilities to empower national and local organisations – recognising that, if not addressed alongside the motivation and opportunity for change, improved capabilities on their own will not achieve the fundamental shift required.

Tracking the Progress and Impact of Women’s Leadership in COVID-19 Responses in the Philippines – UN Women



UN Women invited HAG to contribute to its research project on women and girls at the core of COVID-19 prevention in the Asia-Pacific region. As part of the research, we developed a framework and tools to measure women’s leadership and meaningful participation in COVID-19 responses. The framework included three results domains: **safe and meaningful participation; collective influencing and advocacy; and partnership, capacity and funding**, which fed into the overarching impact domain of **transformative leadership**. The framework and tools were piloted in the Philippines. There was distinct and encouraging evidence that women’s rights organisations (WROs) are participating safely in the response to COVID-19, collectively influencing the response, and experiencing

equitable partnerships within it. Their roles have been particularly influential in community responses where women acted as primary responders and were able to direct the focus of activities. However, we also



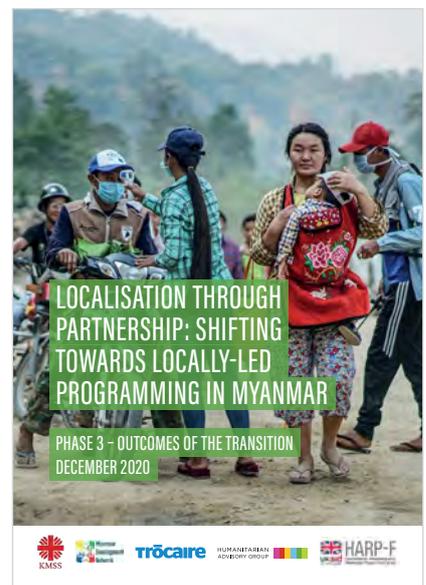
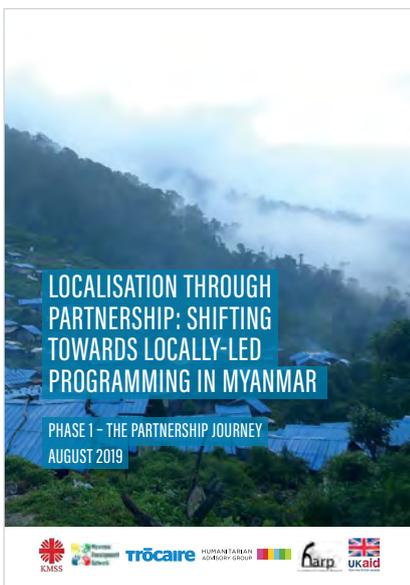
found that WROs and women had relatively little impact on the overall direction of the response. This baseline can act as a catalyst for change among humanitarian actors. It

should prompt organisations and coordination forums to set targets and track change to better include, support and elevate the role of WROs in COVID-19 and broader humanitarian responses.

Localisation Through Partnership: Shifting Towards Locally-led Programming in Myanmar – Trócaire

The *Localisation Through Partnership* research was conducted over three years and aimed to capture learnings from the partnership between KMSS and Trócaire for more locally led humanitarian action in Myanmar. The partnership was developed in 2012 as a response to the crisis in Northern Shan and Kachin States, and sought to transfer the majority of decision-making from Trócaire to KMSS. The 2018-2020 project was funded by the British government's Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility (HARP-F).

The research produced three reports, each analysing a specific part of the transfer of power between KMSS and Trócaire. The [first report](#) mapped the partnership from 2012 to 2018, [the second](#) reviewed the localisation transition from 2019, and the [third report](#) reflected on the localisation process towards the end of 2020, when KMSS took over primary responsibility for the British government's HARP-F grant. The series provided a unique example of localisation in action, as well as highlighting the challenges and opportunities that shifting power between an international NGO and local organisation can bring.



OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The global pandemic continues to hinder the work of humanitarian actors, throughout Australia and the region. We recognise the luxury we have of being able to work from home, when many others across our sector – including the people we aim to serve – are not as fortunate.

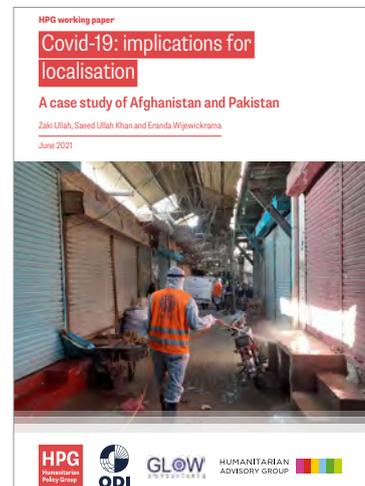
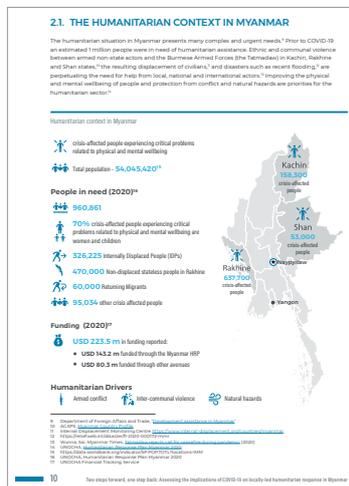
Our research has aimed to be flexible in responding to COVID-19, with an emphasis on how the pandemic is changing the relationship between national and international actors, shifting power but also risk, and adding to already fragile and crisis-prone situations.

Through several projects under the Humanitarian Horizons program and in commissioned research, we have been able to track the impacts of COVID-19 in several places, providing timely insights into the rapidly changing situation. In mid-2020 we published a Practice Paper on [the response to Tropical Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu](#). In late 2020 we built on this with a study of how [COVID-19 is influencing local humanitarian action](#) in Myanmar, in collaboration with [Trócaire Myanmar](#) and the [Myanmar Development Network](#) (MDN). In 2021, in a research partnership with [GLOW Consultants](#), Pakistan, and [ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group](#) (HPG), we explored the [impacts of COVID-19 on localisation in Afghanistan and Pakistan](#).

Our studies showed that as the pandemic continues to push international actors to adapt their approaches, progress toward a more locally led response remains insufficient. For example, our research alongside GLOW Consultants found that international actors placed greater emphasis on localisation out of necessity more than by choice. Restrictions and risks from COVID-19 had led to a greater recognition of the critical roles that local actors are playing – and the greater reliance on local organisations and local staff had also seen more risks transferred to local actors.

Yet funding distributions remained skewed towards larger international and UN organisations, with smaller local organisations receiving insufficient funds to match their risks and needs. While the pandemic also meant that coordination meetings moved online – creating opportunities for local and national actors to participate – leadership roles primarily remained with international actors.

As the commitment to localisation is renewed with Grand Bargain 2.0 and the pandemic continues to evolve, more research will be needed to understand their impacts among the range of barriers and enablers of increased local leadership and how these changes affect humanitarian outcomes for affected people.



OUR GROWING TEAM

Our team grew over the past financial year with new members Eleanor, Sara, Kelly, Louise and Nathaniel joining in a variety of different roles.



Eleanor Davey joined as an Editor at HAG in September 2020. Trained as a historian, her academic research has explored ethics, politics and

decision-making in humanitarian action. She has researched and taught humanitarian affairs in ODI's HPG and the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute at the University of Manchester. Eleanor has served on the Conseil Scientifique of the Fondation Croix-Rouge Française, the British Academy International Engagement Committee, and steering groups for HPG, Merlin, and Save the Children UK, as well as academic projects. She holds a PhD from Queen Mary University of London, and is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University.



Louise Kilgour joined in February 2021 and works across the Monitoring and Evaluation side of HAG. Louise spent eight years working in the international

development sector, with extensive experience in managing projects across a diverse range of sectors. Louise has worked across Africa and the Pacific, and in 2019 was deployed to Mozambique to support World Vision's Southern Africa Flood and Cyclone Emergency Response program. Louise holds a Bachelor of International Development from La Trobe University and a Master of Evaluation from the University of Melbourne.



Kelly Nichols covers Administration and Operations for HAG. She holds a Bachelor of Business and Marketing, and in the early days of her career

was involved in the wholesale sector of a national timber company, with a heavy focus on renewable resources and sustainability.

Kelly's last decade was spent as an Administration Manager for an office fit-out company. She is passionate about the health and wellbeing of our environment and world.



Sara Phillips is a Researcher with HAG, joining in October 2020. She previously worked at Monash University's Gender, Peace and Security Centre before joining

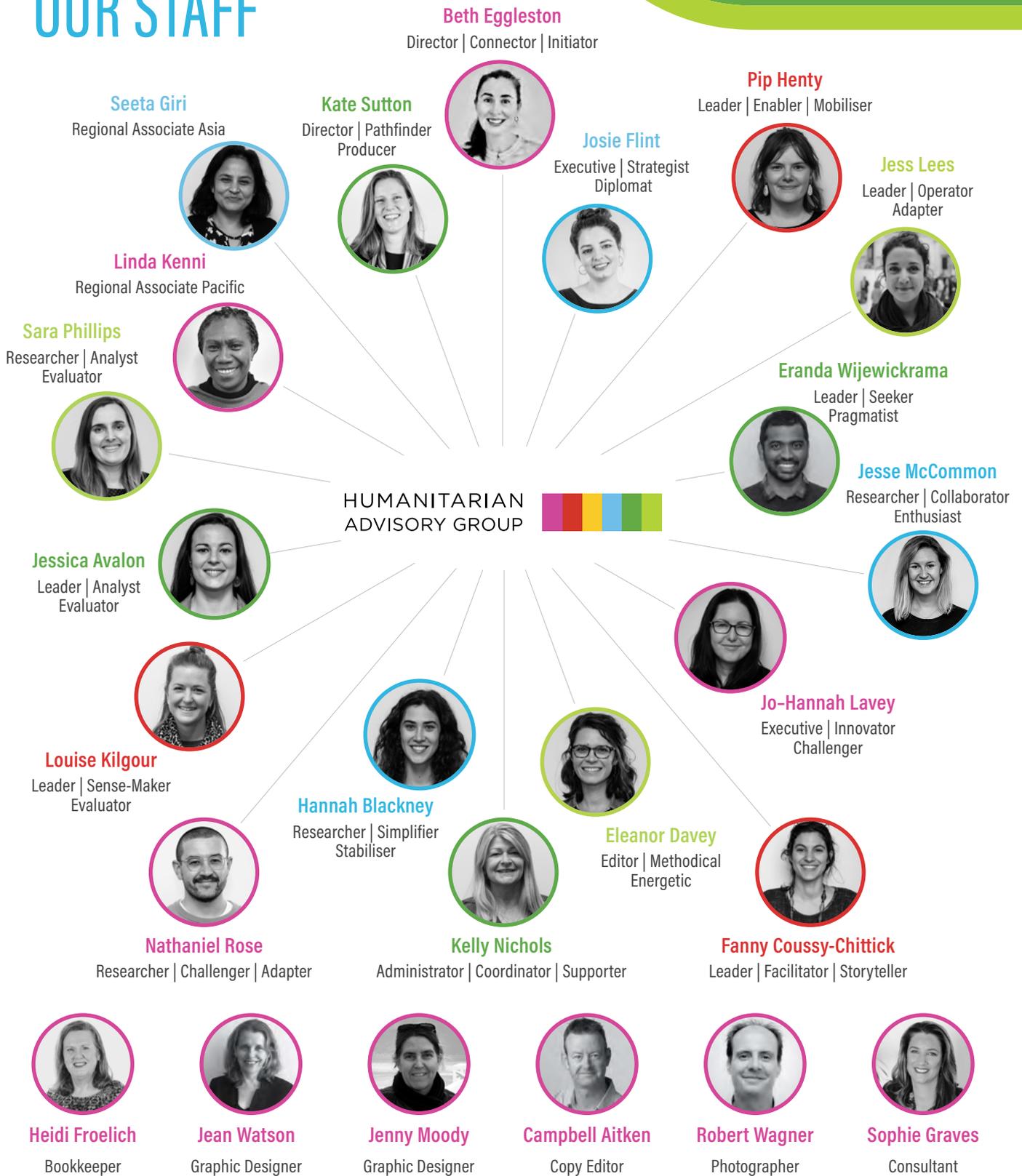
HAG. Her research has focused on gender- and age-based analyses of armed conflict and humanitarian crises, as well as gender, foreign policy and political leadership. Sara completed a Master of International Relations at Monash University. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts (International Studies & French) and a Diploma of Languages (Spanish).



Nathaniel Rose joined HAG as a Researcher in September 2020. Nathaniel has worked within the humanitarian, non-governmental and B-Corp sectors across Europe,

the Middle East, Asia and Australia. These roles varied across communications, research and protection support, giving him considerable exposure to working within an international context with a variety of culturally diverse stakeholders.

OUR STAFF



This year we said goodbye to **Jo-Hannah Lavey**, **Hannah Blackney** and **Jessica Avalon**. We thank them each for their work with the HAG team and hope that we will stay in touch into the future. A particular shout out to Jo-Hannah, one of our longest-standing team members who has been a force in the team. They will all be missed.



All photos by Robert Wagner Photography, except top left and bottom middle, which were taken by Beth Eggleston

OUR DIVERSITY

This past year saw lots of exciting changes at HAG, and we are embracing the welcome challenge of maintaining our collaborative and inclusive approach as the team and our portfolio of work grows. We are also striving to ensure that our focus on diversity and inclusion within the humanitarian sector is self-reflexive and contributes to constructive debate. This means asking the questions of ourselves that we ask of others. Last year's annual report provided us with baseline data for the HAG team. Here's what our diversity and inclusion scorecard looked like in August 2021:

Diversity and Inclusion scorecard



Our leadership team is inclusive

- 80% of our team see the leadership as inclusive
- 87% of our team feel the leadership mostly or always seeks advice and input from all team members
- 80% of our team feel they can safely raise concerns about discrimination with the leadership team
- 93% of our team feel people of all religions, ethnicities, cultures and nationalities can succeed within HAG
- 73% of our team feel people of all genders, ages and disability statuses can succeed within HAG

...but could definitely be more representative

- 13% of our team view the leadership team as diverse and representative of the wider staff
- 7% of our team feel that the leadership team reflects the ethnicities, cultures and races of the population/communities with which we work

In this scorecard, we define the leadership of HAG as our Directors and Executives – but everyone is involved in the business operations and we are committed to making sure that people's voices don't get lost in reporting lines. Compared to last year, the scorecard shows that we have slightly less diversity of thought and in socio-economic backgrounds, and some of our leadership team inclusiveness measures – while still high – have dropped slightly. We will be reflecting on these findings in the coming year. And as the HAG journey continues, we'll work hard to stay inclusive while also identifying the best way to provide support and structure for individuals and project teams.

OUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The fabulous students who joined our internship program in 2020-2021 all deserve special recognition for how they managed to rise to the challenge of undertaking a placement in the middle of a global pandemic. They showed flexibility by juggling competing priorities under difficult circumstances, more often than not while working remotely. The internship program is designed for emerging humanitarian aid and development practitioners, giving them a chance to build skills and knowledge as they complete their studies. Our interns in 2020-2021 have passions ranging from climate change to gendered inequalities, from refugee rights to conflict resolution, and impressed us with their adaptability and independence in this difficult year. You can explore their views in the [new practitioners' blog series](#) on the HAG website.

Ahad Ahmad

University of Melbourne, 2021

Emma Doherty

University of Melbourne, 2020

Anna Finter

University of Melbourne, 2021

Julian Hobson

RMIT University, 2021

YiHan Li

University of Melbourne, 2021

Sara Nduu

RMIT University, 2020

Hannah Sizelove

Brown University, 2021

Sam Quinn

La Trobe University, 2021



Ippei Kato

University of Queensland, 2020

HAG provided me with a wide range of opportunities to develop my research skills and get involved in their projects. Even before I started, HAG supported me to take the Harvard online course on Humanitarian Response to Conflict and Disaster, helping me build foundational knowledge about humanitarian aid and preparing me for working in the field. Once my internship began, I was involved in several projects, such as conducting research about the influence and implementation of new technologies in the humanitarian sector, especially in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis and the Rohingya crisis. Throughout this project, my colleagues consistently advised and provided me with feedback on my research. Weekly online talks with my supervisor, Jesse McCommon, helped me understand how academic and critical research should be performed. Towards the end of my internship, with continuous support from the HAG team (especially Eleanor Davey), I worked on a blog titled [*The Beirut explosion as a trigger for international cooperation on the issue of refugees*](#). The publication of my blog not only brought me a sense of achievement, but enhanced my skills in engaging critically in debates and shaping an argument. I cannot express enough my feelings of appreciation for all the support and encouragement given by HAG. Thanks to the valuable experience, I have now a stronger desire to contribute to the humanitarian sector after graduation.

OUR PURPOSE

We take a huge amount of pride in being a social enterprise. By choosing this business model, we aim to invest our time and money into giving back into the sector and community, reduce our environmental impact, commit to reconciliation and justice for First Nations peoples, support our partners, purchase ethically, and maintain our ethical certifications. This connects all our core values; in a challenging period, it means upping our support to our community and sector when things feel more off-balance than usual.



B-Corp, Social Traders and Us

Our identity as a social enterprise continues to grow and drive our purpose as an organisation. To be a social enterprise means, to us, taking all the innovation and self-determination available in the private sector, and using it to make our community and world a better place. This aligns with our values as an organisation.

It's also why we work hard to maintain our status as a [B-Corporation](#) and our membership with [Social Traders](#). We believe these

frameworks help us hold ourselves accountable to the highest ethical standards and keep us pushing forward as a business. The 'humanitarian' side of what we do often gets the spotlight, but how we're doing it is just as important to us. We celebrate another year of meeting our own lofty goals and setting newer, loftier ones all the same.



This little logo means we work hard to ensure that our business is a force for good. We have chosen to hold ourselves accountable to the highest social, environmental and ethical standards, setting ourselves apart from business as usual.



Brave

The humanitarian world has many contentious issues. We explore them bravely and authentically because we believe the best solutions lie in the art of an honest and evidence-based debate.



Continuously enabling

We believe in giving generously of our ideas, energy, time and networks. We start from a position of 'yes'.



Ridiculously flexible

We understand that life and work don't run to schedule. We support each other and our partners through changing deadlines, competing priorities and evolving goals to achieve the best possible outcomes.



Unfailingly curious

We constantly test our own assumptions and those of the humanitarian world. We explore both the why and the how. We are eager to listen and learn, recognising that knowledge and wisdom often comes from unexpected places.



Ethical

Boundaries can get blurred. We want ours to be crystal clear and we want to be held accountable. We work with B Corps and adhere to ethical standards so we can hold our heads high and have confidence in our practices.

Our work and the Sustainable Development Goals

At HAG we are committed to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). In addition to the work and advice we give pro bono, our everyday client work reflects our values and often directly engages with specific SDGs, something of which we're immensely proud. Over the past financial year, the SDGs that our research and training addressed include:



As a social enterprise working across the humanitarian sector, implementing the SDGs is an essential part of our business. We are committed to protecting our planet, helping those in crisis, ending poverty and ensuring peace and justice is upheld for everyone, no matter where we live.

Events

Training and Facilitation

Education, training and facilitation are a core part of our work. Over the last 12 months, the team have really been able to hone their remote facilitation skills. This included an online SimEx for Caritas Australia and a series of online workshops for CAN DO (Church Agencies Network – Disaster Operations). Nathaniel Rose shared some reflections and tips for [moving a SimEx online](#). We also continued our



HAG team members Pip Henty and Jesse McCommon present at the launch of *Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination in Emergencies: Towards a predictable Model*.

partnerships with major Victorian universities: La Trobe University's Institute for Human Security and Social Change and the University of Melbourne.

Conferences

Our team have been able to participate in several virtual conferences over the past year. In October 2020, Jesse McCommon presented at the International Volunteering Conference. In April 2021, Beth Eggleston, Pip Henty and Kate Sutton were all involved in [CHL's Humanitarian Leadership Conference](#).

International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day (8 March), Pip Henty and project national consultant, Maya Tamayo, participated in a panel co-hosted by the Women's International Network on Disaster Risk Reduction and UN Women on women's leadership during COVID-19. They presented HAG and UN Women's new framework [measuring women's leadership and meaningful participation in COVID-19 responses](#). The framework and first baseline report were also launched in the Philippines on 19 April, fabulously captured in the visual below:



Beth Eggleston moderated Australian Volunteers' International Women's Day, which included comments from Rebecca Bryant (Assistant Secretary of Humanitarian Response, Risk and Recovery, DFAT) and a discussion on the role of women's leadership in agriculture by Dr Nguyen Thi Duong Nga (Vietnam National University of Agriculture) and Anh Pham (agriculture researcher and volunteer). It was also the first in-person event many HAGs were able to attend since the beginning of COVID-19.



Humanitarian Drinks

After Melbourne emerged from lockdown, we were able to celebrate with the first Humanitarian Drinks in December, after what seemed like a long time! In 2021, we've only been able to organise a couple more, but we're looking forward to resuming Humanitarian Drinks at a new location, The Prudence, in North Melbourne on the first Thursday of every month as soon as we're able.

Working with our partners

Our partners are essential to HAG's work. With COVID-19 and climate change placing extreme pressures on our partners throughout the Asia-Pacific region, it has never been more important to demonstrate our support and remain flexible in supporting them to achieve their outcomes. By drawing on the local expertise of our national consultants, partners and regional advisors, we aim to elevate local leadership across everything we do. This year we expanded some of our partnerships to work across multiple projects, while collaborating with a wide range of organisations and individuals across our client work and Humanitarian Horizons program.

Our work alongside the [Pujiono Centre](#) provided crucial research on the humanitarian system and the need for reform in Indonesia. The Pujiono Centre is a not-for-profit organisation established by Indonesian disaster management practitioners. The Centre aims to build effective knowledge of disaster management and

boost capacities of local actors via research, innovation and learning. Likewise, our research on localisation and COVID-19 in Myanmar with the [Myanmar Development Network](#) contributed to timely evidence-building within a precarious and unfolding situation. Established in 2015, MDN provides a unique space in Myanmar, consulting on policy, social research, evaluations and capacity building. Our relationship with the [Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations](#) strengthened through our work on localisation in the Pacific. PIANGO remains a core network and leader in building the capacity of civil society and NGOs throughout the Pacific. Through our research across Pakistan and Afghanistan, our partnership with [GLOW Consultants](#) continued to grow. GLOW Consultants, based in Pakistan, bring expertise and a depth of knowledge to third party monitoring, evaluation and research.



NetZero2030

Last year, we made a commitment to become a NetZero enterprise before 2030. We worked with Carbon Neutral to measure and offset our emissions for the financial year, which allowed us to successfully achieve NetZero for the first time. In 2020-21, we are proud to be able to offset our carbon footprint as a social enterprise for the second year in a row. This time around, the team calculated our emissions internally using Carbon Neutral's online calculator to assess our collective greenhouse gas emissions. We also made more conscious decisions to choose carbon neutral options wherever available, for example, choosing to make our staff retreat a carbon neutral event.

This year our offsets contributed towards reforestation in the Yarra Yarra Biodiversity Corridor. We are delighted with what we've achieved within two years, and will continue to mitigate and offset our emissions each year. Our aim is to soon be able to go beyond NetZero as a business, making a net positive impact on the environment.



The Yarra Yarra Biodiversity Corridor, Southwest Australia. Photo credit: Carbon Neutral.



Reconciliation and Justice commitment and Human Rights policy

This year we began the conversation within HAG about what reconciliation and justice for First Nations Peoples means to us as an organisation and as individuals. Our vision for reconciliation and justice is an inclusive community built on mutual respect, strong relationships, and real opportunities for leadership by First Nations Peoples and communities. We began the process of decolonisation within the workplace by committing to self-education through internal communication channels, implementing [Pay The Rent](#) and engaging with First Nations-owned businesses for events and procurement. We recognise these are small steps in a long march for justice and reconciliation on the lands where we work.



Still from After the Apology, which screened for HAG staff as part of our reconciliation and justice process. Credit: After the Apology, <https://aftertheapology.com/>.



This year we developed our first [Human Rights Policy](#). HAG's work focuses on the humanitarian realm, which is guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. It would be easy to get complacent and think that, because we work on humanitarian issues and often with humanitarian agencies, it's inherently going to be ethical and respectful. But we know that assumption is very dangerous. The process of money changing hands has a very real impact. We may be small, but as a social enterprise we are committed to ensuring that our operations do not exacerbate existing inequalities and

Ethical procurement

This last financial year, like previous years, saw us walk the talk in the ethical procurement of goods and services for HAG. We strive to support women-led, First Nations and local businesses. We are proud to share that 23.4% of our expenditure goes to businesses owned and run by women and 27.6% to our local community.

Communicating our work and values

The start of 2021 saw the launch of HAG's redesigned website, made possible by Georgie Batt from [By Georg Design](#) and Owen Davey from [Pixel Perfect Development](#). Our new website illustrates all the brilliant work we do, from our latest [insights](#) tackling the big questions within the humanitarian sector to highlighting our [values](#) as a social enterprise.

We also launched [The Haggler](#), our quarterly newsletter that aims to inform our audience of recent publications, highlight the work of our incredible partners, and profile networks within the humanitarian sector.

instead support progress and change towards social justice and fulfilment of human rights.

When it comes to how we do our work, we want to be clear – upholding human rights is central to who we are and how we operate. Our [values](#) include respect for human rights. We are an anti-racist organisation, meaning we don't just abhor the injustice that racism perpetrates, but we work to prevent it. As a business, we support and are guided by the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), the [Ten Principles of the Global Compact](#), and [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#). You can read the [full policy](#) on our website.

Our policy and procedure for procurement ensure that HAG actively seeks out other similar businesses operating sustainably and conscious of our planet, supporting local businesses, First Nations-owned and refugee and asylum seeker organisations. We also support [B-Corp](#) & [Social Trader](#) businesses whenever we can when procuring goods and services for HAG.



Thank you to everyone we worked with over the past financial year:

Clients:

Australian Civil-Military Centre

The Australian Council for International Development

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Australian Humanitarian Partnership

Australian Red Cross

Caritas Australia

CDAC Network

Centre for Humanitarian Leadership

Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI

The Institute for Human Security and Social Change, La Trobe University

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Trócaire

UN Women

The University of Melbourne

WaterAid Australia

World Vision Australia

Peer reviewers:

Saida Azimi

Veronique Barbelet

Jon Bugge

Steve Goudswaard

Yo Kuneida

Yos Malole

Mia Marina

Kharisma Priyo Nugroho

Andrew Nzimbi

Heni Pancaningtyas

Róisín Read

Nicholas Ross

Dr Muhammah Kashif Saeed

Fernanda Soares

Theresia Wuryantari

Photo by Jeremy Bishop on Unsplash

OUR OPERATIONS

Financial disclosure

Total trading income	\$1,699,118.50
Total other income	\$50,161.47
Cost of Sales	\$438,886.78
Cost of Operations	\$1,329,174.02
Profit	(\$18,780.83)

A note on our financials: FY 20-21 was a consolidation year for HAG with large investments in our new website, our operational review and most importantly taking care of our team - going on a retreat and trialing a 4-day work week. As a result we planned for a small loss to ensure that we were able to invest in these critical areas, which is reflected in the annual figures.

Governance structure

At Humanitarian Advisory Group we are proud of our flat and flexible organisational structure. Our staff are famous for their ability to 'manage up', and our most creative and innovative ideas come from the equal and open collaboration of all our staff. We admit sometimes when we put our heads together we can enter the internally infamous HAG 'Positive Spiral', always thinking of more and better ways to kick goals and make a meaningful difference.

We don't have a board of directors or a managing governance structure outside of our organisation. We have a Research Advisory Committee for our Humanitarian Horizons research program, whose oversight is specifically of the research undertaken under that program. All major decision-making for the organisation goes through the organisation's Directors – currently, Kate Sutton and Beth Eggleston – who have a once-monthly Directors' meeting to discuss critical organisational decision-making, accountability and progress.

Tax reporting breakdown + tax 'philosophy' (because of B-Corp)

What is our philosophy on taxes as an organisation?

When it comes to taxes at HAG, in all cases, unless circumstances dictate otherwise, we pay on time and in full. We abide by both Australian Taxation Office (ATO) regulations and all taxes required by the state of Victoria. This includes paying income tax on our net profit, GST on all applicable trade transactions, and the state payroll tax. We also pay the PAYG tax that is payable on behalf of employees to the ATO. Where we minimise profit, we do so only in ways that benefit staff and/or contribute to worthy causes; this is part of our ethos as a social enterprise.

We comply by all rules and regulations that apply to us, and believe that taxes are a necessary and logical means to maintain the community of which we are a part.

