

Presentation outline & key points

Collecting and utilising evidence in real-time evaluations

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The main objective of this presentation is to explain the use of Real Time Evaluations as an effective method for building a reliable evidence base to assess the quality of humanitarian action and improve the overall performance in the humanitarian sector.

Building an evidence base for humanitarian action is generally a complex task. Furthermore, evaluating humanitarian responses provided in uncertain political environments, turbulent, and insecure operational settings presents challenges beyond those encountered in more stable conditions.¹ These additional challenges are primarily caused by limited access and high insecurity in the field, high staff turnover and the frequent absence of comparable baseline information (datasets) on the response to the affected population.

This presentation will outline how Real Time Evaluations (RTEs) provide immediate and systematic feedback to foster **real time learning** at the country level during humanitarian crises. RTEs seek to unlock operational bottlenecks and promote effective humanitarian action. They are interactive, involving a wide range of stakeholders and therefore contributing to peer-to-peer learning and accountability².

RTEs are **designed for direct instrumental utilisation** by the field staff. This means that an RTE team must:

- Use methods that are valid and can be understood by the country team.
- Provide [feedback](#) in the field for the country team.
- Have the knowledge and experience to be perceived as people with something to contribute.

Collecting a strong, **representative evidence basis** demands different approaches, including:

- i.e. Mixed methods using both quantitative and qualitative data.

1 IASC/HCT evaluation of the humanitarian response in South Central Somalia 2005-2010, Nairobi 2011

2 "Real Time Evaluations contributing to system-wide learning and accountability" HPN- Issue 52, London, 2011

- Structured approaches to data gathering that ensures reliability. This not only includes the use of Interview Guides³, but also the standardised coding of evidence gathered, the use of scoring rubrics for assessing attention to different aspects⁴.
- A strong emphasis on triangulation of the information collected to confirm, or dispute, findings.

3 Data collected using poorly designed interview guides and questionnaires may solicit an enormous amount of data, but result in much of it being unusable as result of being too difficult to measure and impossible to generalize.

4 The Gender Marker is the best know scoring rubric in a humanitarian context.