

Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle



What is HAEC?

The Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle (HAEC) Associate Award works to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency food security activities funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) by increasing the use of cost-effective and timely impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts. Impact evaluations provide robust evidence to inform technical approaches to improve the impact of humanitarian interventions. HAEC is a three-year activity (2021-2024) funded by USAID/BHA and issued through the IDEAL Leader with Associate Awards Activity, implemented by TANGO International, in collaboration with Save the Children, 3ie, and Causal Design.

Why Focus on Impact Evaluations?

Impact evaluations are a key tool to better understand program effectiveness, in terms of outcomes met and cost-effectiveness. Impact evaluations use cause-and-effect analysis to determine which interventions are responsible for changes in outcomes, both positive and negative. The findings from impact evaluations allow staff to make data-driven decisions, provide evidence for replication and scaling, and influence broader humanitarian policy decisions.

Impact evaluations are rarely conducted in humanitarian contexts. This is largely due to a lack of experienced and qualified researchers with a willingness to lead impact evaluation in the contexts where humanitarian awards are implemented. This is exacerbated by general misconceptions around the cost, timeliness, difficulty, feasibility, and value of impact evaluations.

What does HAEC do?

To address these challenges, HAEC will:



Increase the quantity and capacity of researchers and evaluators willing to lead impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts.



Demonstrate cost-effective approaches to achieve insightful and informative impact evaluations.



Reduce the time, cost, and capacity barriers that limit humanitarian organizations' ability to partner with researchers to achieve evaluation goals.



Disseminate research learnings and findings to the broader humanitarian community to improve future rounds of emergency activities.

How will HAEC do this?

HAEC's approach targets an increase in the **demand** for impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts, while also strengthening and increasing the **supply** of capable and qualified researchers to conduct these evaluations. To do this, HAEC will:

- 1. Identify evidence gaps in emergency food security activities.** HAEC will conduct a comprehensive Evidence Gap Map to identify knowledge and evidence gaps in emergency activities research literature (both peer-reviewed and grey-literature). HAEC will host stakeholder consultations with humanitarian actors to identify how to provide the greatest value add to evaluators, researchers, implementing partners, and policy makers operating in humanitarian contexts.
- 2. Employ a mentorship model to train evaluators in humanitarian contexts.** HAEC will identify researchers with experience leading impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts. HAEC will then connect these experienced researchers to mentor qualified researchers with less experience in emergency contexts. This works to increase the number of qualified researchers available to conduct impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts.
- 3. Generate further evidence in humanitarian contexts.** HAEC will identify relevant research questions for humanitarian activities and address these questions with a request for Expressions of Research Interest from implementing partners. HAEC will then match implementing partners with researchers to address identified research questions through impact evaluations.
- 4. Disseminate findings about best practices.** HAEC will hold capacity strengthening events for key humanitarian stakeholders around planning, administering, executing, and utilizing impact evaluation findings. HAEC will socialize lessons learned – for applied research and for policy makers – highlighting relevant findings in the impact evaluation space, funded by HAEC or by other mechanisms.

