

Latest global initiative to transform impact of research and innovation on world's most vulnerable

The Global Prioritisation Exercise (GPE), a first-of-its-kind, launched by global charity Elrha to help ensure research and innovation can answer the world's most pressing needs

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LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM: An initiative launched by global charity Elrha to transform the impact of humanitarian research and innovation, the Global Prioritisation Exercise (GPE) will improve outcomes for communities affected by crises.

The GPE will do this by:

- revealing investment trends and activities in humanitarian research and innovation, and highlighting successful examples of the investment
- identifying what humanitarians and communities affected by crisis believe are the most pressing areas for investment
- supporting the development of coordinating mechanisms that enable multiple actors to align their activities against identified needs.

“Humanitarian needs are rising rapidly, and funding is not keeping up.” said Mark Bowden, Chair of the GPE Reference Group and Senior Research Associate with the Humanitarian Policy Group at Overseas Development Institute.

“This year, one in 29 people worldwide need humanitarian assistance and protection – it was one in 33 people last year. If the humanitarian system is to successfully support the most vulnerable people, it needs to be truly anticipatory and fit for purpose when responding to crises.

“Innovation and research can play a vital role in saving lives, but we need to invest more in them and take a more coordinated and strategic approach when we do so. That’s what this Global Prioritisation Exercise will lay the foundations for.”

The first phase of the GPE includes a global mapping exercise carried out by a consortium of researchers across the world, led by the American University of Beirut (Lebanon) in close collaboration with Deakin University (Australia).

Researchers from the University of Washington (USA), Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Studies (Switzerland), The Aga Khan University (Pakistan) and Birzeit University (Palestine) are also involved.

The mapping will identify what humanitarian research and innovation has been undertaken worldwide over the past five years, by whom, who has funded it, and the extent to which researchers and innovators from crisis-affected settings have been engaged in and led such work.

The findings, and perspectives on research and innovation funding priorities moving forwards, will be further explored through the second phase of the GPE, which comprises consultations with stakeholders at international, regional and local community levels. Collectively, the work of the GPE aims to build a more inclusive humanitarian research and innovation ecosystem.

“We’re embarking on an ambitious and comprehensive review of humanitarian research and innovation, that we hope will also inform the humanitarian research and innovation landscape post-

COVID-19,” said consortium lead Samer Jabbour, Professor of Public Health Practice at the American University of Beirut’s Faculty of Health Sciences.

“This scope is quite large. We want to identify actors; initiatives and outputs; and investments; and through the consultations we will also solicit views of donors on research and innovation investment priorities, strategies and coordination.”

Through this multipronged approach, the GPE will identify critical gaps and opportunities for research and innovation to inform and improve humanitarian policy and practice.

The work will also include an update of the minimum target spending on humanitarian research and innovation, conservatively estimated in 2015 to be around \$75 million of the total humanitarian spending.

“We want to update this estimate for 2021 and compare it against actual spending on humanitarian research and innovation documented through the analysis of donor funding databases, as data allows,” added Jabbour.

The GPE’s launch comes five years after Elrha published its first [Global Mapping Report](#), which provided a baseline of global humanitarian research and innovation activity.

Its results raised important questions about how well investments, outputs and initiatives aligned to recognised humanitarian priorities and needs.

It also revealed differences between the focus of research and innovation communities, and that most research and innovation grants went to practitioners in the ‘Global North’, far from where humanitarian needs are.

Jess Camburn, CEO of Elrha remarked: “We urgently need to build more effective alliances within and between communities affected by crises, the local organisations that support them, and the communities of science, research and innovation within the humanitarian system.

“We know countries and companies that consistently invest in innovation, research and development are more productive and adaptive. But at the last check, investment in humanitarian research and innovation was less than 0.2% of annual expenditure and what is invested isn’t always coordinated or aligned to identified needs. That’s not good enough.

“Now more than ever, we must work together to ensure people affected by crises receive humanitarian response that is supported by coordinated investments into evidenced new solutions to the world’s most pressing problems.”

Diana Puyo, Project leader for the Global and Community consultation at Philanthropy Advisors commented: “Despite the humanitarian system’s efforts to better integrate people affected by crises in the heart of problem-solving, there’s still a lot to be done to ensure their meaningful participation in humanitarian action.

Citing that research and innovation have the potential to improve humanitarian responses, Puyo explained “why we’ve embarked on community consultations on these matters in Bangladesh, South Sudan and Syria, some of the most complex crises nowadays. In these, we wish to learn about the community perceptions and needs in terms of humanitarian research and innovation, as well as the main challenges and opportunities to engage with them.”

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For more information on the GPE or for interview opportunities, please contact:

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Additional communications assets are available [here](#). Help us to spread the word about the **Global Prioritisation Exercise (GPE)**. With your support, we can reach more people and ensure a range of key actors have information they need to increase the impact of humanitarian research and innovation – with the aim of ultimately improving outcomes for people affected by crises.

Notes to editor:

About the GPE

- The Global Prioritisation Exercise (GPE) is an Elrha initiative for the humanitarian sector that aims to increase the impact of humanitarian research and innovation investments for communities affected by crises, by targeting resources at the most pressing problem.
- The GPE has three phases as follows:
Phase one – global mapping to identify what research and innovation is has been conducted worldwide over the past five years, by whom, who has funded it, and how researchers and innovators from communities affected by crisis have engaged with or led such efforts.
Phase two – consultations with stakeholders at the international, regional and local community levels.
Phase three–thematic publications and a synthesis report.
- The GPE has a dedicated Reference Group, chaired by Mark Bowden, Senior Research Associate with the Humanitarian Policy Group at Overseas Development Institute. Its members reflect a broad range of experiences and backgrounds with a strong, proven commitment to research and innovation. More details can be found [here](#).
- Keep up to date with the GPE’s progress and news by joining its mailing list [here](#).
- Download the 2016/17 Global Mapping Report [here](#)
- The GPE is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).
- Elrha partnered with academic institutions, American University of Beirut (Lebanon) and Deakin University (Australia), and the consulting firm Philanthropy Advisors and its partners Innovations Consulting Solutions for the Community Consultation, and IARAN and Gray Dot Catalyst for the Global consultation, on the GPE initiative.

About Elrha

- Elrha is a global charity established in 2009 that finds solutions to complex humanitarian problems through research and innovation. It’s programmes include: the [Humanitarian Innovation Fund](#) and [Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises](#).
- Elrha is an established actor in the humanitarian community, working in partnership with humanitarian organisations, researchers, innovators, and the private sector to tackle some of the most difficult challenges facing people all over the world.
- For more information on Elrha visit its [website](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).