Factors that encourage or prevent the use of Humanitarian Evaluations

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study analyzes the phenomena of humanitarian evaluations. It identifies and describes the factors that encourage or prevent the use of humanitarian evaluations and analyzes if those factors can be managed within the procedure for conducting the evaluation. Thereby, it provides information for a better understanding of both the procedures for developing humanitarian evaluations and its components.

The development of this study was first motivated by the lack of understanding and use of humanitarian evaluations that humanitarian professionals have on the subject. Moreover, a deep literature research demonstrate the efforts that both humanitarian organizations and independent researchers are doing to encourage the understanding and use of evaluations. Therefore, this study aims to connect some of the available information in order to complement the existing literature with this analysis.

The methodology for this research follows an inductive approach. Therefore, the data collection follows a theoretical sampling method in which the literature was defined by four different approaches and follow a pre-defined criterion of eligibility. The approaches for data collection looked for: 1. General aspects of humanitarian evaluations, 2. Procedures for developing evaluations, 3. Information about the use and lack of use of evaluations, and 4. Empirical examples of humanitarian evaluation reports. Furthermore, with the collected information, the data was managed using the method of content analysis through which the information was coded taking into account concepts and theories. Finally, the data analysis was made through a Qualitative Data Analysis using the grounded theory approach.

This study presents a conceptual framework with the definition of the concepts used in this analysis and a theoretical framework that shows different perspectives of the factors that encourage or prevent the use of evaluation reports. These frameworks facilitate the understanding of the analysis in which a comparison is made between empirical evidence and literature.

The findings of this study describe the factors that encourage or prevent the use of humanitarian evaluations and the way by which they can be managed within the procedure for conducting the evaluation. Additionally, this study found that the use or lack of use of
evaluations is more related to the linkage between the influential factors than to the management of them in an independent way. Therefore, this study arouses the need of developing deeper analysis on the importance of the linkage between the evaluation components and its final use.
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List of Abbreviations

AEA – American Evaluation Association

ALNAP – Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action

DAC – Development Assistance Committee

DEC – Disaster Emergency Committee

HAP – Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

HC – Humanitarian Coalition

IASC – Inter-Agency Standing Committee

JEEAR – Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda

MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)

NOHA – Network on Humanitarian Action

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

QDA – Qualitative Data Analysis

SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency

UN – United Nations

UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

VOPEs – Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation

WFP – World Food Program
1. Chapter 1, Research problem, methodology and limitations

Introduction

Evaluation is an activity undertaken by individuals and groups to determine the merit, value, worth or effectiveness of something in order to assess it according to predefined guidelines and concepts (Patton, 2008). It is part of the process of developing projects and produces information to link what has been done in the past with what should or can be done in the future (PACT, 2014; UNICEF, 2014). Written records show that the practice for conducting professional evaluations has been a common practice in a diverse range of fields since the 1950’s. Throughout these years, the definitions, theories and procedures for conducting general evaluations has become highly developed. However, it was not until the 1990’s that the humanitarian sector began evaluating projects. Unfortunately, due to a lack of theory specific to humanitarian evaluations, most of the evaluations conducted at this time were undertaken using general theories of evaluation experience (Polastro, 2014, pp. 195-196).

Nowadays, humanitarian evaluations are mostly conducted for accountability reasons, for the measurement of objectives or for learning purposes.

According to the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) guide on evaluation for humanitarian agencies (2006, p. 14), humanitarian evaluations are “a systematic and impartial examination of humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve policy and practice and enhance accountability”. As this definition makes clear, an important part of conducting humanitarian evaluations is to obtain information for providing, through the evaluation findings, knowledge and insights that enable the improvement of policies and practices. Therefore, a fundamental factor in humanitarian policy-making is to have an understanding of the process and results of humanitarian evaluations and the respective mechanisms and tools used to gather and analyze the right information, in the right way, at the right time.

Nowadays, humanitarian evaluations are part of the common interest to various organizations, governments and society. One example is EvalPartners¹, an organization

¹ EvalPartners: 60 Organizations form the International Evaluation Partnership Initiative to enhance the capacities of Civil Societies Organizations through the development of evaluations. www.mymande.org/evalpartners
which was created in order to establish common ground and a working relationship between humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF and organizations that are focused exclusively on evaluation development such as the American and the European Evaluation Societies. According to EvalPartners (2015), these organizations seek to provide the necessary resources and attention by including humanitarian evaluations as part of the international interests of the Sustainable Development Goals. The efforts of these evaluation-focused organizations in the international humanitarian community are focused on intensifying the use of humanitarian evaluations to assist in developing accountable and transparent institutions and to increase the application of evaluation findings in policy-making (EvalPartners, 2015).

This study examines the use of evaluations for humanitarian projects, focusing on the variables that increase or decrease the use of evaluations. The findings of this study will provide information to help develop a better understanding of the procedure for conducting evaluations and will identify the factors that increase or decrease the use of evaluation in humanitarian projects.

The literature that has been considered by this study focuses on problems related to the procedures for developing evaluations, the quality of the findings, and the use of them. Most of it has been developed using information gathered over several years of research and professional experience. In addition to existing research, this study analyses the factors that influence the use of evaluation findings and the procedures used for developing project evaluations in humanitarian interventions.

1.1 Research questions

In spite of the fact that the importance of developing humanitarian evaluations is internationally recognized, the use of evaluation findings is still limited. Therefore, the objective of this research is to identify the factors that increase the likelihood of evaluation findings to be used as well as the factors that prevent their use in humanitarian projects. In this manner, the aim of this research is to describe these factors and examine if they are situated within the procedure for conducting an evaluation or if they are related to causes that are external to the procedure for developing an evaluation.
The findings of this study can be further considered as a basis for the development of recommendations for humanitarian organizations, informing them of the variables that influence the use of evaluation reports.

Therefore, in order to develop this research, the following main research questions are:

1. Which are the factors that encourage the use of humanitarian evaluations and which factors prevent the use of humanitarian evaluations?
2. Can the factors identified as influential be managed within the evaluation procedures? If so, how can they be managed?

To obtain the information necessary to support the answers to the main research questions the following sub-questions have been used to frame the research:

- What are the uses of humanitarian evaluations?
- What are the challenges for humanitarian evaluations?
- What are the components of the evaluation process?
- Which are the influencing actors involved in humanitarian evaluations?

1.2 Relevance of the research for the humanitarian field

The topic of humanitarian evaluations is a complicated issue for most humanitarian staff because of the broad information that exists about them and misconceptions concerning the utility of evaluations for better performance. In order to ensure the relevance of this research for humanitarian practitioners, two steps were followed.

The first, as Booth, et al (2008) and Bryman (2012) recommend, was to talk to other humanitarians\(^2\) to discover how well the selected humanitarians understand evaluations and to what extent these humanitarians have used evaluation reports during humanitarian interventions. To obtain this data this study developed an anonymous questionnaire with six closed questions. The first three questions concerned their level of experience with humanitarian interventions, and the other three concerned the knowledge and experience of humanitarian evaluations. The questionnaire sample were 37 current NOHA students who have had at least one year of experience with humanitarian projects. The results of the survey

\(^2\) For this research, “humanitarians” is understood as current or past NOHA students.
clarified the relevance of this research as fewer than 55% were familiar with the procedure of evaluation, and fewer than 45% had ever used a project evaluation when implementing a new project. Finally, only 14% of the organizations where these humanitarians worked were likely to use evaluations in general (see Annex 1 for more detail).

The second step that this study used determine the relevance of this research for the humanitarian field was to examine the literature to ascertain the importance of evaluation results and their use for humanitarian professionals. The data collected from both the questionnaire and the literature reaffirm the importance of providing information to improve the understanding of humanitarian evaluations and the factors that influence their use.

Therefore, by considering these results, the interest in the subject and the available data, this study aims to provide readers with information for a better understanding of evaluations of humanitarian projects, theirs history, uses, challenges and limitations.

1.3 Research Process

As previously mentioned, the objective of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of humanitarian evaluations. This study focuses on those factors that encourage or prevent the use of evaluation findings, and on the evaluation procedure used by humanitarian organizations. In the following sections the methodology of the research process is explained in detail. It begins with an explanation of the process through which the problem was identified, thereafter the methodology used for data collection and management, and finally, an explanation of the methodology used for data analysis.

1.3.1 Definition of the research problem

Following propositions made by Booth et al. (2008, pp. 70-84); the process of identifying the research problem began with a general overview of the topic of humanitarian evaluations through the observation of debates, lectures, presentations and participating in discussions about it, in parallel with a literature review and analysis. Moreover, individual discussions were held with humanitarian staff, academic supervisors and lectures in order to include a diversity of perspectives and points of view concerning the phenomenon of humanitarian evaluations.
Evaluations are a source of accountability, measurement of improvement and learning. Therefore, misunderstandings about evaluations and how they are used, prevents humanitarian projects from achieving better results over time. Humanitarian evaluations are being conducted, resources are being expended on them and evaluative information is being collected. However, without properly understanding and using the information that evaluations generate, valuable resources are being misspent trying to do the same thing the same way over again, with the result that humanitarian projects take longer to improve.

The methodology for developing this research thus followed an inductive approach. This approach considered detailed information on the topic of evaluations in general and then went into the topic of the factors that affect the use of evaluations findings in particular. Therefore, this study can improve the understanding of humanitarian evaluations, the importance of using evaluation reports for humanitarian organizations and the identification of factors that influence how they are used.

The findings of this study can be further used by organizations, especially by those who are in charge of developing and conducting humanitarian evaluations, by helping them understand the factors that influence the use of humanitarian evaluations. Moreover, a better understanding of these factors can support management decisions concerning the procedures for conducting evaluations in humanitarian interventions.

1.3.2 Methodology for data collection

The methodology used by this study for data collection follows a theoretical sampling approach in which, “The initial case or cases will be selected according to the theoretical purpose that they serve, and further cases will be added in order to facilitate the development of the emerging theory.” (Blaikie, 2010, p. 179). This method was chosen because of its compatibility with the inductive research methodology mentioned above; approach in which the collected information started from the topic of humanitarian evaluation in general, then narrowed its focus to the subject of which factors in particular influence how these evaluations are used, and how they can be used most effectively.

This study is also based on an analysis of existing literature. The literature chosen for this research was validated according to the following criteria of eligibility. First, it must have been relevant to the topic; second, it must be supported, or have been used by international
umbrella organizations and, finally, it must provide generalizable information. These criteria of eligibility reduce the lack of representativeness which can characterize theoretical sampling approaches.

Based on the framework of analysis entailed by the research questions, this study collected information through four approaches. The first approach compiled information related to general aspects of humanitarian evaluations and the second obtained information related to the procedure of developing evaluations. The third approach analyzed information and research related to the use, and lack of use, of humanitarian evaluations and, finally, the fourth selected three empirical examples of humanitarian evaluation reports.

For the first approach of collecting data related to general aspects of humanitarian evaluations, this study focused on the use of evaluations in the literature from key humanitarian organizations. First of all, the research considered important precedential documents such as the ‘Code of Conduct’ for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (1994) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) ‘Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies’ (1999). In addition, publications by international umbrella organizations were considered, namely the ALNAP (2006) guide for humanitarian agencies for evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (2014) published by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP), and the Sphere Project Handbook (2011). Finally, for this first approach, this study used an InterAction study that shows that a shift is underway within the humanitarian system towards the development of evaluations which emphasize local participation and ownership (Levine & Griñó, 2015).

The second approach focused on collecting data concerning the procedure for conducting evaluations. The most relevant non-humanitarian literature that this research analyzed about this topic were two publications by Patton, “Utilization-Focused Evaluation” (2008) and “Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation” (2012). In addition to these two primary publications, this study also used a Patton earlier contribution (1996) concerning evaluation practices.
Several studies have been undertaken about the methodology for conducting humanitarian evaluations. This study considered two; the first written by Bamberger, et al. (2012) focused on the methodology for the development of an evaluation. The second is an ALNAP study written by Knox and Darcy (2014) that focuses on the methodology for collecting the necessary data while developing humanitarian evaluations.

Some of the most important sources analyzed during this research were evaluation handbooks and manuals internationally recognized and experienced organizations. With the intention of covering a diversity of perspectives, this study also considered two handbooks commissioned and published by the World Bank. The first aims to increase the use of and capacity to use, monitoring and evaluation systems (Görgens & Kusek, 2009). The second is an analysis of several World Bank evaluations presented as a handbook to guide for conducting Impact Evaluations (Khandker, et al., 2010).

This study also analyzed four different perspectives from four different handbooks used for developing humanitarian evaluations. The first is the ‘Evaluation Handbook of the Kellogg Foundation’ (2004) which represents the perspective of a private, non-profit organization that is funded and directed by the private sector. The second is the ‘Evaluation Manual of Médecins Sans Frontières’, MSF, (2013) which employs an independent medical perspective. The third is the SIDA ‘Evaluation Manual’ (2004) written from the perspective of a governmental agency. The fourth is a guide developed by the ‘World Food Programme’, WFP, (2013), for developing strategic evaluations and represents the perspective of a United Nations (UN) humanitarian organization.

Finally, the second approach to collecting data concerning the procedure for conducting humanitarian evaluations, this study used two guides developed from experience in the field. The first was based on an analysis conducted by PACT (2014), and through its investigation developed a field guide for evaluation in which a framework for effective terms of reference is developed. The second is a study based on several years of research in Ethiopia, published by the Feinstein International Center (Catley, et al., 2014) which presents a guide based on lessons learned regarding the procedure for conducting humanitarian evaluations.

As mentioned, the third approach focused on collecting information about the use or lack of use of humanitarian evaluations. Therefore, a diverse number of field and case studies
developed by other researchers were considered and selected. First of all, this analysis considered two ALNAP studies, the first concludes by presenting a framework for increasing the impact and use of evaluations in humanitarian action (Hallam, 2011). The second provides information to better understand evaluations to address the challenge of poor and/or ineffective use of humanitarian evaluations (Hallam & Bonino, 2013). This study also considered a UNICEF (2014) research that analyzed information and work obtained over two decades of Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation, VOPEs. Through its research, UNICEF aims to demonstrate the implications that the use of evaluations can have on social and economic development.

Finally, the following studies were also considered as part of this third approach; a recent study that aims to demonstrate the influence that stakeholder’ engagement can have over the evaluation procedure and the use of evaluation results (Adams, et al., 2014); an in-depth study conducted by Ledermann (2012) in which a case study of eleven evaluations of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation are presented with the aim of demonstrating the relationship between the context in which evaluations are conducted and the use of evaluations for change; a further study which collected empirical evidence of factors that decrease the likelihood of evaluations been used and on the basis of its findings suggests a framework to guide negotiations for defining the central objectives of the evaluations (Liket, et al., 2014); a theoretical study which, apart from presenting the differences between general evaluations and humanitarian evaluations, identifies the challenges that prevent the use of humanitarian evaluations and proposes methods for overcoming them (Polastro, 2014); and finally, a critical analyses of other authors’ analysis of the uses to which the lessons learned from the evaluation of humanitarian interventions are put (Weiss, 2001).

The material collected for the first three approaches is comprised by more than forty sources and together represents the data making-up the primary material analyzed in this study. Through this analysis of primary source literature, the research question can be answered without relying on other sources of information, for example, interviews.

Finally, for the fourth approach, this study selected three humanitarian evaluation reports for empirical data. These reports were selected for this study on the basis of two parameters. The first and most important was that the reports must be evaluations of the overall response of
humanitarian organizations to a specific crisis, and the second was that they should all evaluate the response to the same crisis. These criteria were chosen in order to focus the analysis on evaluation development itself and not on an individual organization, or project, or type of crisis.

1.3.3 Methodology for data management

Given that this research is based on published sources, this study used content analysis as a research method for three main reasons. First because of its distinctive approach to the analysis of documents and texts; secondly, because it quantifies data into predetermined categories; and finally, because it is a flexible method (Bryman, 2012, p. 289). This study took advantage of the important amount of available information by categorizing and classifying to classify and categorized it in order to support both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

This study sought out both qualitative information to support the classification of the variables that encourage or prevent the use of evaluation reports, and for qualitative information concerning the procedure for conducting evaluations during humanitarian interventions. The codification was divided into the following broad criteria and within them, a detailed sub-codification was also applied:

- Definition of evaluation.
- Historical background information about evaluation.
- Types of evaluations.
- Standards for developing humanitarian evaluation.
- Content of the evaluation procedure.
- Methodology for developing humanitarian evaluations.
- Uses of humanitarian evaluations.

1.3.4 Methodology for data analysis

To assist in understanding the data and for the further interpretation of it, a Qualitative Data Analysis, QDA, was developed. A QDA is a framework that guides data analysis, and through the grounded theory inductive approach, the data is analyzed whilst it is collected (Bryman, 2012, p. 566). This study chose the grounded theory approach according to the Bryman definition which states that it is an interactive approach to the generation of theory.
from thoroughly collected and analyzed information during the entire course of research (2012, p. 387). This methodology was chosen because of the extensive and unstructured material that this study needed to classify and analyze.

This study identified and separately defined the variables of interest that influence the development and use of evaluation reports. Furthermore, through QDA, two aspects were analyzed; first the context of the variables was considered; and second, the interaction between those variables was analyzed. Finally, using the collected results, it was possible to draw conclusions about patterns.

Empirical evidence was analyzed during the final stage of this study. The results of this analysis were contrasted with the information presented in the theoretical framework.

1.4 Research Limitations

This research is based on a review of literature. A depth investigation has been made in order to collect relevant information about evaluation as a concept, the procedure for conducting humanitarian evaluations and its characteristics, and the use of evaluation reports. The investigation considered recent publications from recognized humanitarian organizations and authors who specialize in evaluation.

The inductive methodology of theoretical sampling that this study employed was appropriate to the research because of the large amount of information that was required and because it facilitated the analysis and development of findings and conclusions. However, understanding the broader topic of humanitarian evaluations required a lot of research and this study cannot guarantee that the entire range has been covered. Likewise, plenty research exist concerning the factors that influence the use of humanitarian evaluations and this study was unable to go through all of them and therefore considered only those that satisfied the eligibility criteria and among these only analyzed those that are recognized by ALNAP to any great depth.

Within the field of humanitarian evaluations, specifically the factors that affect their use, the conceptual framework is much broader than the one presented in this study. However, this study does develop the most relevant concepts focusing on those that are important for understanding both the theoretical framework and the findings themselves.
The research findings will provide a baseline of information concerning the variables which increase and decrease the use of evaluations, the relationship between them and the procedures for conducting an evaluation, and possible ways of managing them. Therefore, this study can serve as a way to draw the attention of organizations to those variables and include them within their evaluation procedures. However, this research will not be able to prove if, as a matter of fact, proper management of those variables actually increases the use of humanitarian evaluations or not. To prove this hypothesis, further empirical research will have to be undertaken. Such research should consider a sample of organizations that have altered how these influential variables are managed and analyze these changes relatively to the degree to which the use of evaluation reports increased due to those changes.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter provides information on why and how this study was undertaken. It begins by explaining the definition and importance of evaluations in general and humanitarian evaluation in particular. The introduction also explains the relevance that humanitarian evaluations have for policy-making and the changes the system is willing to enhance in order to encourage the development and use of humanitarian evaluations. The introduction also provides information about the aim of the study and about the literature considered. The first chapter also explains the research questions and process, the relevance of this study, and its limitations. As part of the research process, chapter one explains in detail how the research problem was defined, which data was collected, as well as how it was managed and analyzed.

Chapter two begins with by introducing background information concerning history of evaluation in general and humanitarian evaluations in particular, and the difference that humanitarian context makes while conducting evaluations. It explains in general terms, the procedure for conducting humanitarian evaluations, its standards and methodologies. The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with contextual information useful during subsequent examinations of the variables that influence the use of humanitarian evaluations.

Chapter three contains information about the concepts used in the humanitarian field with an emphasis on those that are related to the subject of humanitarian evaluations. The objective
of this chapter is to provide the reader with general information about the concepts that this study uses as part of both the theoretical framework and the analysis.

Chapter four introduces the main theoretical framework that identifying the variables that affect the use of humanitarian evaluations. It combines a theoretical approach that defines utilization-focused evaluation with experiences and studies of humanitarian evaluations.

Chapter five is a description of the three empirical examples that this study analyzes. This description is not focused on the organizations that commissioned and developed the evaluation but rather details information about the components of the evaluation reports themselves.

Chapter six consist of an analysis of the empirical examples described in chapter five. The analysis uses the concepts presented in chapter three and is undertaken according to the theoretical framework presented in chapter four. The aim of the chapter is to critically analyze the ways in which the evaluation reports are encouraging or preventing the use of evaluations according to how theory suggests this should be done.

Finally, chapter seven presents the findings of this study. Using the analyses made in chapter four and six each of the factors that are considered to either encourage or prevent the use of evaluations are considered. Moreover, the chapter also includes theoretical implications and recommendations for future research.
2. Chapter Two, Background humanitarian evaluations

2.1 Background, History of Evaluation

Evaluation has been a common feature in project development due to the necessity of assessing whether a project’s objectives have been accomplished in the way they were expected. Therefore, it is difficult to determine a precise starting point for the development of ‘evaluation’ as a profession, obligation or duty.

What we know is that from the late 1950’s until the 1970’s many evaluations were focused on academic assessment. Thereafter, during late 1970’s and 1980’s the amount of evaluations of governmental practices highly increased and the custom of conducting evaluations became frequent (Patton, 2008).

Nevertheless, the beginning of the praxis of humanitarian evaluations is generally identified as having begun with the evaluation assessment of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR) in 1996 (ODI, 1996; Borton, 2004; Polastro, 2014; HAP, 2015). Moreover, the Rwandan crisis and the subsequent evaluation was the precursors to three of the most important humanitarian initiatives in the area of evaluation (Polastro, 2014, p. 196). Those are: the Sphere Project (2011), ALNAP, (2015) and HAP, (2015).

Furthermore, organizations and commissions used two frameworks as a baseline to guide the development of humanitarian evaluations. The first was the UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of 1991 which endorsed the Humanitarian Principles of Humanity, Neutrality and Impartiality (the fourth principle of Independence was endorsed in the General Assembly Resolution 58/114 in 2004). The second was the publication of the Code of Conduct by the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC (1994). These two frameworks are the foundations of every humanitarian intervention and therefore their evaluation, is seen in evaluation manuals, handbooks and practices.

The early humanitarian evaluations were developed using conventional evaluation techniques and focused primarily on reporting the projects’ effectiveness (OECD-DAC, 1999; Patton, 2008). Later, evaluations also focused on delivering data and feedback as part of the project implementation. Additionally, they looked forward to provide useful and useable results to support the processes of problem solving and the actions for performance
improvement in the future (Patton, 2008; Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 2). In the late 1990’s the practice of developing humanitarian evaluations began including policy-focused evaluation techniques, put them a step ahead of the development of general evaluations, and highlighted the significance of the complex context within which humanitarian projects are implemented (OECD-DAC, 1999). Moreover, during the first decade of the 21st century, some humanitarian actors claimed there was a need to considering (to an even greater extent) other aspects such as organizational culture, processes and structures within the procedure for developing evaluations in order to maximize the evaluation’ benefits (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 17). Finally, during the last ten years, an important shift in the way humanitarian evaluations are conducted has taken place, one which provides for the enhanced participation of beneficiaries in the evaluation process in order to demonstrate effectiveness and results (Levine & Griñó, 2015, pp. 4-5).

### 2.2 Context of Humanitarian Evaluations

The circumstances and facts that surround humanitarian projects influence the way their evaluations are developed. Humanitarian evaluations are undertaken, or are evaluating projects which have been implemented in unstable conditions that include permanent emergency, rapidly changing circumstances, armed and/or non-armed conflicts, polarization of perspectives, and instability (OECD-DAC, 1999, pp. 10-11; ALNAP, 2006, p. 15; Polastro, 2014, p. 198).

For the development of humanitarian evaluations, the emergency context represents the greatest difficulty for data collection. The fast planning that characterizes humanitarian interventions often misses evaluative information such as objective statements and definition of indicators (ALNAP, 2006, p. 15). On the other hand, the restricted access to areas where projects are being implemented complicates the contact between evaluators and key informants whether they are stakeholders, humanitarian staff and/or the beneficiaries of the project (OECD-DAC, 1999, pp. 10-11; ALNAP, 2006, p. 15; Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 19).

### 2.3 The procedure for developing Humanitarian Evaluations

Different approaches exist for developing humanitarian evaluations. However, what every organization has in common is that the plan for developing evaluations is framed within the Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR facilitates communication between the evaluators and
stakeholders and it aims to answer the questions of who is going to evaluate, why, when and what (PACT, 2014). Therefore, evidence demonstrates that during the development of an evaluation, the participation of the evaluation manager, evaluators and stakeholders is highly important (MSF, 2013; WFP, 2013; PACT, 2014).

This research shows in a simplified manner the process and characteristics of the ToR in order to provide a wider understanding of the implications and complexity of the development process.

**Process for developing an evaluation outlined by the ToR**

According to some humanitarian organizations, the process for developing the ToR can be summarized in three main stages: preparing, approving, and sharing (Kellogg Foundation, 2004; SIDA, 2004; WFP, 2013). At the preparatory stage key documents, evaluation team members, and stakeholders are identified, a ToR draft is prepared, a budget is estimated and the information is shared. During the approval stage, those involved in drafting the ToR comment, and agree on the evaluation procedure. Finally, the ToR is shared with all those involved.

**Composition of the ToR**

This study selected the following four humanitarian organizations as an example of what should be, according to them, the components of a ToR. Below you can find a comparison between the ToR components used by four humanitarian organizations.

Table 1: Composition of the ToR according to four humanitarian organizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>WFP</th>
<th>MSF</th>
<th>SIDA</th>
<th>PACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program and organization description</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Evaluation purpose</td>
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<td>Description of stakeholders</td>
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<td>Definition of evaluation intended users</td>
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<td>Evaluation priorities</td>
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<td>Evaluation questions</td>
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Combining the stages for developing the ToR together with the components that experienced organizations suggest a ToR should have, this study summarize this information as follows:

**Procedure for defining the ToR:**

1. **Preparing**
   - Information about background and context of both the project and the organization.
   - Identification of the project purposes, resources and stakeholders.
   - Identification of the evaluation purposes, objectives, questions, stakeholders and intended users.
   - Identification of the evaluation methodology, design, timeframe, budget and standards.

2. **Approving**
   - Approval of the evaluation purposes, objectives, questions, stakeholders and intended users.
   - Approval of the evaluation methodology, design, timeframe, budget and standards.
   - Preparation and approval of the information about the evaluation findings and recommendations.
3. Sharing
- Information about stakeholders’ participation.
- Information about how to use and understand evaluation procedure and results.
- Evaluation findings and recommendations.
- Information about evaluators.

*Standards of the ToR*

According to the OECD DAC criteria, nine standards determine the quality of the ToR. As with many other organizations MSF also uses the first five of the ten OECD DAC standards.

Table 2: Description of ToR quality standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Measures the qualitative and quantitative outputs in relation to the inputs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectives</td>
<td>Measures in a timeline to what extent the purpose was achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Measures the differences reached that are attributable to the project implementation. This measurements is done considering wider intended or unintended, immediate or long term, positive or negative social, technical, environmental effects at individual, community or institutional levels and social specific target as age or gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Measures if the project goal is developed in accordance with the needs and priorities of intended beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Measures the activities and inputs in context aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Measures the financial and environmental continuity and future impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Measures the longer term impacts and interconnected problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Measures in which way the activities assess security in accordance with the humanitarian, military and developmental policies as well as human rights concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Measures the coordination of all actors in the system as a whole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data from (OECD-DAC, 1999; MSF, 2013)

However, there are also some notable differences. For example, MSF (2013) considers that for measuring efficiency a comparison with similar projects is required and for measuring effectiveness, the achievements of the process itself must also be measured and not only at the end of the project. This aspect is not mentioned by OECD-DAC (1999) but neither is it
excluded. In terms of relevance MSF also measures whether the project is adaptable to organizational policies while OECD-DAC (1999) also mentions the donors’ priorities. Finally, in terms of applicability, MSF (2013) analyzes the relationship between the ToR design and the objectives of the intervention while OECD-DAC (1999) mentions measuring increases local ownership, accountability and cost effectiveness.

To conclude, and considering the experiences of other organizations, this study highlights the importance how the ToR is drafted including the complete design and methodology for conducting humanitarian evaluations (SIDA, 2004; Polastro, 2014; PACT, 2014). The importance of this approach is mainly for two reasons. The first is because the fulfillment of good quality evaluation standards largely depends on the quality of the methodology and its relationship with the evaluation objectives and the purpose of the organization. The second is because a good description of an evaluation’s methodology must include a description of the data requirements. This description helps to overcome the challenge that data collection represents for evaluators. These subjects is further discussed in sections 3.8, 3.9 and 4.1.2.

2.4 Methodologies for developing humanitarian evaluations

The methodology for developing humanitarian evaluations follows similar principles to those of conducting research. The reason is that in general it does not differ much from those of other types of investigations used in evaluations. However, the context of humanitarian interventions also require evaluators to consider unique aspects of the humanitarian context when choosing the appropriate evaluation methodology in order to ensure usable and transferrable evaluation results.

From a wider perspective, evaluations can be developed using a qualitative, quantitative or mixed approach and it is hard to generalize which one of these is best for conducting humanitarian evaluations in particular. However, experience shows that due to the emergency context of humanitarian interventions, an approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative data is the most recommended one (White, 2010, p. 162; MSF, 2013, p. 15; Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 38).

Qualitative methods
Humanitarian evaluations, especially impact evaluations, emphasize qualitative methods of data collection from small or medium samples sizes (White, 2010, p. 155; Bamberger, et al., 2012, pp. 11-14) because through these, evaluators can analyze specific characteristics of the target population (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 72; Khandker, et al., 2010, p. 19).

Among the literature selected for this study, three aspects of qualitative methodology which prevent the use of evaluation reports were identified. The first is the difficulty of producing generalizable information due to the large amount of individual subjects that this type of methodology collects data for (Bamberger, et al., 2012, p. 4). The second and the third occur mostly because of the emergency context in which humanitarian projects are undertaken. These are; the possibility that information will be biased by individual emotions (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 72) and the lack of reliable information to compare changes in the situation as it existed before the intervention and what the situation would be if the intervention had not occurred (Khandker, et al., 2010, p. 19).

**Quantitative methods**

In spite of the fact that quantitative analysis tends to be described in the humanitarian context as “hard and robust” (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 39), it is regularly used due to the generalizable results that can be produced using this methodology (Bamberger, et al., 2012, pp. 11-15). However, the most relevant factor that limiting the utility of evaluation findings made using quantitative methods is the de-contextualization of those results (Bamberger, et al., 2012, p. 4).

**Mixed Methods**

The strength of a mixed methodology is the credibility that it affords an evaluation because of the potential for triangulation and the inclusion of key indicators such as contextual aspects and conceptual frameworks from different sources (Bamberger, et al., 2012, pp. 3-16). The triangulation, when conducting research such as humanitarian evaluations, involves the crosscheck of the results obtained through one methodology, such as content analysis, against the results obtained through the other methodology, such as interviews (Bryman, 2012, pp. 632-636). The use of a mixed-method approach provides different perspectives which can together produce more accurate information (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 70). The greater
range of analysis the bigger the risk that there will be a lack of connectedness with the evaluation objectives.
3. Chapter Three, Conceptual framework

**Concepts used in the field of humanitarian evaluations**

As was mentioned in chapter 1, the collection of data for this study followed four approaches. The first two were used for the development of this chapter. The first approach focused on literature to inform about evaluation. The use of the theory in this approach was based on the one hand on umbrella humanitarian international organizations, and on the other hand on an author who is specialized in evaluations. This study uses, as foundations for this research, the Code of Conduct (1994) and the OECD-DAC (1999) evaluation guidance because they gave the pace for the creation and development of the concept of evaluation from the humanitarian perspective. It is so, that organizations that today are highly active in the area of humanitarian evaluations such as ALNAP, HAP and InterAction still refer to those two publications when developing new research about the subject. Moreover, this study used the evaluation theories suggested by Michael Quinn Patton (2008; 2012) because he is considered by the evaluation system as one of the most important contributors to the concept of evaluation use and practice (SAGE, 2015).

The second approach focused on the procedure for conducting evaluations. This study examined the practices of four different types of organizations and their manuals and handbooks for conducting evaluations. Moreover, this study considered literature by other authors in which they analyzed the procedure for conducting evaluations.

Therefore, this chapter presents definitions of the concepts used in the field of humanitarian evaluations. This study emphasizes on those aspects which differentiate humanitarian evaluations from general evaluations in order to provide better understanding of the context and circumstances that influence the development and use of humanitarian evaluations.

**3.1 Concept of evaluation**

Evaluation is identified as a systematic process that answers different questions to inform about strategic aspects such as decisions and judgements about a specific project (PACT, 2014, p. 12). Evaluations describe and assess at least the following four aspects. First, the intended goals and objectives, secondly the unintended aspects that occurred. Third, detailed
information about what happened in terms of procedure and findings and finally, the final outcomes and results obtained (Patton, 2008, p. 5)

Evaluations are conducted under the premise that evaluations are essential to progress in a determinate aspect with the purpose of recognizing its merit, worth, value, or significance (Patton, 2008, p. 4; UNICEF, 2014, p. 2).

The reason why humanitarian organizations should evaluate their projects is one of the most stated questions in the literature, and three general reasons were found as part of the answer. First of all, evaluations are conducted to measure the accomplishment of goals, and the definition of those goals depend on the pre-defined evaluation objectives (PACT, 2014, p. 15; Polastro, 2014, p. 193). The second reason is for understanding and knowledge thus evaluations represent evidence of past experiences, lessons and examples of best practices (UNECE, 2013, p. 2) and produce generalizable information about specific aspects to measure effectiveness (Patton, 1996, p. 133). The third reason for developing evaluations is to inform, demonstrate or judge projects’ improvement (UNECE, 2013). Evaluations provide internal information about the strengths and weaknesses of the project which support decisions and actions (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 101) and external information about what works, for whom and in what circumstances (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 23).

3.2 Types of humanitarian evaluations

This study categorizes the types of evaluations under two main classifications. The first classifies the evaluations by answering the question of who develops the evaluation. The second classifies the evaluations by answering the question in what stage of the project implementation the evaluations are been conducted. These aspects are relevant for this study due to factors such as evaluation objectives and evaluation teams which highly influence the use of the evaluation results.

3.2.1 Classification by who develops the evaluation

Internal evaluations

This type of evaluation uses internal resources of the organization such as physical area, staff, funds and information (Görgens & Kusek, 2009; Hallam & Bonino, 2013; MSF, 2013; PACT, 2014). These types of evaluations are criticized for not being objective nor
independent, usually bureaucratic and less likely to have a team with skills for evaluations (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 65). For those reasons, internal evaluations usually are not developed for accountability reasons nor used for auditable reports and do not replace external evaluations (SIDA, 2004, p. 18).

**External or independent evaluations**

Two main motives exist for using external evaluations; the first is the importance of adding the perspectives of those with different areas of expertise to the organizational knowledge; the second reason is for auditing purposes (SIDA, 2004, p. 18; MSF, 2013, p. 3; PACT, 2014). These types of evaluations have been criticized for taking long periods of time due to the need for information sharing and the need for an outsider to have and understand information about beneficiaries and aspects of organizational cultural as well as the risk that they will not generate the necessarily connectedness with the intended users of the evaluation (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 65; Hallam, 2011, p. 16).

**Mixed or participatory evaluations**

Because of the above-mentioned criticisms of both internal and external evaluations, many organizations encourage the use of evaluation teams composed by both external and internal personnel (Hallam, 2011, p. 16; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 31).

3.2.2 **Classification according to when an evaluation can be developed**

Humanitarian evaluations can be conducted at every stage of the project implementation, however, depending on which stage the project is at, different approaches can be considered.

**Formative evaluations**

Formative evaluations are usually conducted in the early stages of project implementation, normally as a preliminary stage of summative evaluations (Patton, 1996, p. 136) and assess the employment of policies and progress improvements (PACT, 2014, p. 13). The policies of the project are evaluated in order to determine whether the objectives, beliefs and assumptions of the project planning are still the ones expected, and if not, whether they will be possible to achieve (OECD-DAC, 1999, pp. 17-18). Finally, according to studies, this type of evaluations should be conducted by personnel with the capacity to enact changes in the way the project is being implemented (Scriven, 1991, p. 20).
According to Patton, formative evaluations are part of improvement-oriented evaluations and should ask the following questions:

“What are the program’s strengths and weaknesses? To what extent are participants progressing toward the desired outcomes? Which types of participants are making good progress and which types aren’t doing so well? What kinds of implementation problems have emerged and how are they being addressed? What’s happening that wasn’t expected? How are staff and clients interacting? What are staff and participant perceptions of the program? What do they like? Dislike? Want to change? What are perceptions of the program’s culture and climate? How are funds being used compared with initial expectations? How is the program’s external environment affecting internal operations? Where efficiencies are be realized? What new ideas are emerging that can be tried out and tested?” (Patton, 2008, pp. 116,117).

Summative evaluations

Summative evaluations “provides data to support a judgement about the program’s worth so that a decision can be made about the merit of conducting the program” (Patton, 2008, p. 114). This type of evaluation is usually assessed at the end of the project and measures whether the intended outcomes were achieved (PACT, 2014, p. 13). The product of these evaluations are not conclusions regarding improvement or development (Scriven, 1991, p. 20) and are instead primarily used for accountability purposes and therefore undertaken by external staff (SIDA, 2004, pp. 14-18).

Process evaluations

Process evaluations are used at every stage of the project to measure in which way the project achieved the implementation of goals in relation to what was planned (PACT, 2014, p. 13). These evaluations produce indicators by which to measure the delivery of resources, therefore they are usually used to complement other types of evaluations (Khandker, et al., 2010, p. 18; Catley, et al., 2014, p. 18).

Outcomes evaluations
Outcomes evaluations measure the changes that the implementation of the project has had on the life of the beneficiaries in terms of policies, beliefs, attitudes, outcomes, etc. (PACT, 2014, p. 13).

**Impact evaluations**

Impact evaluations measure qualitative and quantitative livelihood changes in a specific community that can be attributed to the project’s implementation and identify differences caused on individuals (Khandker, et al., 2010, p. 4; White, 2010, p. 154; PACT, 2014, p. 13). Organizations have enhanced the use of this type of evaluations over the last decade as it increases accountability towards donors, stakeholders and especially aid recipients, by answering the question of whether the project or intervention actually worked (Catley, et al., 2014, p. 4).

Graph number 1, helps visualize the classification of the evaluations mentioned in 3.2:

Graph 1: Classification of the evaluations within the Project Timeline

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**3.3 Purpose of Humanitarian Evaluations**

The overall aim of an evaluation is to support the decision making processes. Therefore, the most important aspect of an evaluation procedure is to determine the purpose of undertaking that evaluation. As mentioned before, several types of evaluations exist, the use of which depends on who is conducting them and at which stage of project implementation they are being conducted. In the same way, evaluations can have different purposes and these are determined by organizational policies and determine the evaluation’s objectives.
This study categorizes the evaluation purposes according to three main objectives. The first and more common objective of evaluation used over the years is ensuring accountability; the second are evaluations measuring improvement and the third are evaluations for learning purposes.

Below, the three main purposes of humanitarian evaluations are described:

**Accountability**

Accountability is defined by HAP as “the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power” (2014, p. 19). For evaluation purposes, accountability is defined by SIDA as “a relation which exists where one party – the principal – has delegated tasks to a second party – the agent – and the latter is required to report back to the former about the implementation and results of those tasks” (2004, p. 12). Evaluations for accountability purposes “provide an account of how things are going but not enough information to inform decisions or solve problems.” (Patton, 2008, p. 121).

Evaluations whose purpose is to demonstrate accountability, focus on the outcomes and results achieved in terms of project planning and objectives and therefore tend to be developed independently (SIDA, 2004, p. 12; Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 3; MSF, 2013, p. 5). Accountability evaluations can be conducted in respect of members, donors and beneficiaries of the project and its definition frames the evaluation procedure (UNECE, 2013, p. 2). These types of evaluations focus on measuring the effectiveness of the project implementation and produce information useful for long and short term decision-making processes. In the short term, these types of evaluations help to make funding decisions and to determine the likelihood of maintaining, changing or expanding the project (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 101). In the long term, these evaluations help to identify and replicate successes as well as to learn from failures (Ibid, 2004, p. 28).

**Improvement**

Improvement is the fundamental goal of evaluations. Thus, every evaluation exercise produces results for decision-making with the aim of improvement in mind. However, evaluations are limited to providing information; the use of that information to produce
improvements depends on staff with the capacity to implement change. These types of evaluations are usually part of an organizational culture, and therefore the evaluation findings are used to generate changes at the level of organizational behavior. Nevertheless, studies reveal that for evaluations to be used as a catalyst for changes to organizational culture, they must consider organizational policies, contexts and circumstances (Hallam, 2011, pp. 7-8). Consequently, evidence has demonstrated that evaluations that aim for improvement at the level of the organization must be participatory to achieve their goals (MSF, 2013, p. 4).

Knowledge

In the last decade, the inclusion of beneficiaries’ perceptions in evaluations has produced a better understanding of political, social, economic and cultural issues, which has led to the generation of lessons-learned data (Hallam, 2011, p. 18).

The production of knowledge-purpose evaluations is usually linked to an organizational goal of being learning oriented. Therefore, these organizations value, invest and motivate the development and management of evaluations (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 24-25). Finally, evidence shows that these types of evaluations increase the community participation and the ownership of a project (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 21), two characteristics that increase its sustainability.

3.4 Evaluation Objectives

The main challenge for an evaluation is to provide information that is needed, when it is needed, and in such a way that can be used (Patton, 2008). Defining evaluation objectives is crucial because the way the evaluation proceeds is framed and guided by those objectives. Therefore, evaluation results can answer or suggest explanations to predetermined evaluation questions and its utility is limited to these aspects. For this reason, the stage in which the evaluation objectives are established is a sensitive one and requires communication and agreements between the evaluation team and stakeholders (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 51).

According to other research, those projects which have clear, well established and descriptive information concerning the context and local circumstances at both the moment of project implementation and the moment of project evaluation, facilitate the evaluation procedure (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 51; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 47). Moreover, according to
the study conducted by Liket, et al., the evaluation procedure also benefits from a clear description that connects the intervention with the intended effects of the project implementation (2014, p. 181).

As mentioned above, there are different purposes for conducting an evaluation, and the importance of describing these reasons goes hand in hand with identifying who has requested the assessment. Hence every evaluation has specific goals and requirements and the utility of an evaluation will therefore depend on whether the approach satisfies the requirements of those who have requested the evaluation (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 47).

This study has identified two main problems concerning the definition of the evaluation objectives. The first is the risk of vague, unclear or contradictory evaluation questions and the second are unforeseen disagreements between project managers and stakeholders. One of the main reasons these problems to happen is the lack of clear project objectives, without which evaluation objectives themselves are also likely to be unclear (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 13; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 60) and consequently contradiction can emerge between evaluation design and stakeholders engagement (Liket, et al., 2014).

In sum, a good definition of evaluation objectives is positively associated with the utility of evaluation results but also depends on project planning, the evaluation team and the participation of stakeholders.

3.5 Human Resources, the evaluation team

As mentioned in the first chapter, humanitarian interventions are characterized by limited resources whether assets or human and financial resources. Among these limitations, having a well-composed evaluation team represents an additional challenge because it must be composed of individuals with experience, knowledge, skills (Bamberger, et al., 2012, p. 27) and a willingness to work in an emergency context (PACT, 2014, pp. 78-81).

Forming an evaluation team implies finding personnel who meets the requirements established in the ToR (Levine & Griñó, 2015, p. 11), therefore the evaluation questions and the intended users must have been previously determined, and clearly defined.

Moreover, organizations have a responsibility to support the evaluation process in at least two ways. First, by communicating the evaluation purposes in a constructive manner to
enhance the flow of information, reduce misunderstandings and manage time efficiently, in order to facilitate the evaluation process. The second way in which organizations support the evaluation process is through the establishment of standards for the protection of individual evaluators and the management of findings (UNICEF, 2014, p. 24).

**Composition of evaluation team**

Nowadays, most humanitarian organizations agree on the need to include personnel with evaluative skills and those with in-depth knowledge about the intervention itself, in the evaluation team. The composition of the team is always predetermined by the nature of the evaluation; whether it is an external, internal or a mixed evaluation. According to the OECD-DAC criteria, the composition of the evaluation team should also be influenced by the characteristics of the emergency, the interventions and the evaluation objectives (1999, p. 24). Therefore, every evaluation team greatly benefits when it has at least one evaluator with in-depth knowledge about the project and evaluation objectives (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 24; MSF, 2013, p. 16). In the same way, depending on the characteristics of the intervention, technical expertise may be required.

Ideally, humanitarian organizations work with evaluation teams which are multicultural, multidisciplinary and multi-skilled, with a minimum level of experience (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 24; Bamberger, et al., 2012, p. 27; UNICEF, 2014, p. 24). However, lack of financial resources and lack of specialized evaluators have resulted in evaluation teams with training, and knowledge of the organization and intervention but without knowledge of evaluations (Polastro, 2014, p. 200). Yet, according to evidence, the ideal situation is one in which the evaluation team has at least one staff member with both experience in evaluation and the authority to make decision (SIDA, 2004, p. 76; MSF, 2013, p. 16).

In 1994, the American Evaluation Association published a list of principles for evaluators. This list has become a procedural framework for most evaluations conducted since then. In spite of the fact that this publication does not emphasize the composition that an evaluation team must have, it does provide generalizable information for evaluators to consider when

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3 Examples of technical characteristics: water sanitation, health, nutrition, epidemiology or any other medical aspect, food and agriculture management, etc.
developing an evaluation. Annex 2 shows detailed information about the principles for evaluators published by the American Evaluation Association, AEA.

Finally, evidence demonstrates the need for establishing communication between those who are involved in the evaluation and the intended users (Levine & Griñó, 2015, p. 9). The communication established at the beginning of the evaluation procedure is equally as important as communication at the end of the evaluation process; the stage at which findings are presented. Evaluators must consider and understand the knowledge and perception of others in order to clarify both the terms and objectives of the evaluation (PACT, 2014, p. 11).

3.6 Evaluation Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those involved in the evaluation procedure that are positively or negatively affected by the evaluation in short or long term (MSF, 2013, p. 15). They can be “(...) any person who has an interest in the project being evaluated or in the results of the evaluation … or even indirect interest in program effectiveness.” (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 48). The relevance of stakeholders represent to the evaluation procedure derives from two aspects. First, due to the information that needs to be shared with evaluators, and the second due to the increased utility of the evaluation that the participation of stakeholders represents.

This study has emphasized the importance of the definition of the evaluation objectives. The participation of stakeholders in defining them promotes communication, generates realistic expectations of evaluation results, and conveys information about both sides knowledge and perspective (SIDA, 2004, pp. 17-18; MSF, 2013, p. 4). According to Adams, et al. this type of participation allows evaluators act as a guide for stakeholders in the final stages when results must be interpreted and recommendations need to be made (2014, p. 244).

Adams, et al. present in their study the variables necessarily to facilitating stakeholders’ engagement with the evaluation findings, a six step procedure in which communication and clear definitions determine the success or failure of the engagement. Annex 3 presents more information about Adams, et al. six stage procedure and its limitations.

Intended beneficiaries

Given that the current humanitarian system emphasizes the participation of intended beneficiaries, this study considers beneficiaries separately stakeholders.
First, studies reveal that in those cases where beneficiaries’ perspectives were not, or minimally considered, a gap between evaluative information and future evaluation results tended to occur (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 39). Secondly, analyses by other researchers suggest that only those evaluations, which included beneficiaries’ perceptions are able to assess the outcomes and the sustainability of the project from the users’ perspective (Levine & Griñó, 2015, p. 5). Finally, evidence has also shown that the participation of beneficiaries in the evaluation process results in a win-win, evaluators present accountable results and beneficiaries interact with the project, improving results and generating connectedness (UNICEF, 2014, p. 8).

### 3.7 Financial Resources

As said, humanitarian interventions are characterized by complex contexts and lack of resources. In spite of a large body of donors and volunteers, financial resources are always limited due to the endless needs which arise in emergency situations. Therefore, funding for undertaking evaluations is also an issue, not only for developing and undertaking evaluations as such, but also for training or enlisting specialized and competent personnel in the evaluation team (Bamberger, et al., 2012, p. 27; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 41). It is not the objective of this study to present a detailed guideline for conducting a humanitarian evaluation, however, part of the objectives do entail providing a better understanding of evaluations. Therefore, this study includes two examples of evaluation budgets in annex 4.

### 3.8 Data collection for humanitarian evaluations

The complex contexts of humanitarian environments and the speed at which humanitarian interventions are planned makes data collection one of the biggest challenges for humanitarian evaluations. Evaluators have to overcome obstacles related to available data such as the lack of monitoring data (Hallam, 2011, p. 20), non-structured reports (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 11) and non-existent baseline data with pre-intervention information (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 12). Moreover, research shows two partially-related aspects which hinder data collection from key informants and staff. The first is the high rotation and turnover of internal staff (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 15; Polastro, 2011, pp. 38,39; Ledermann, 2012, p. 165; Polastro, 2014, p. 199) and the second is limited access, safety concerns, and the limited time that evaluators have when collecting data (Polastro, 2014, p. 199).
The limited quality of the data collected are significant because emergency and unsafe contexts decrease the reliability of individual reports which can result in unreliable or biased information (Polastro, 2014, p. 199). This, combined with poor definitions of evaluation objectives and evaluation methodology, decreases the amount of quality data available on which to base a useful evaluation reports (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 11; Liket, et al., 2014, p. 172). Finally, data collection lacks pre-defined key indicators, protocols and procedures (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 12) as well as organizational definitions of data management methodology and organizational evaluative incentives (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 32).

For the collection of data for humanitarian evaluations, the Kellogg Foundation suggests a guideline to follow before choosing a methodology. In this guideline they recommend that data collectors consider and identify the available resources and ensure that the evaluation team has the required level of expertise for the circumstances of the project (2004, pp. 71-72).

Furthermore, another problem associated with data collection are gaps in data processing. Evidence shows that good data management is a challenge in itself because of the gigantic range of sources that exists (Polastro, 2011, p. 51). Data management must now also include new collection channels such as clicks, visits and comments in social space (Kistler, 2011, p. 568). Evaluators face two important problems when collecting data, the first is the time that data management takes and the second is that inappropriate data management can miss useful, relevant and historical evidence which is necessary for a structured development of evaluative analysis (Knox & Darcy, 2014, pp. 33-34).

3.9 System for data management

The latest investigations into data management have focused their attention on the importance of data management over data collection. Researchers have found that most data is not being used due to management complications and most evaluations collect data from the beginning whereas existing data is not considered (Görgens & Kusek, 2009; Knox & Darcy, 2014, pp. 33-34). Technological tools for data management have existed for several years, however, in humanitarian interventions they are rarely implemented, mostly because of costs and a lack of knowledge about their use. As Labin mentioned in her study, the amount of information that exists exceeds the capacity to be managed, the challenge is grouping data
for comparison, analysis and further information distribution (2011, p. 576). In spite of the fact that the existence of large amount of data management software, most humanitarian organizations are not using them for two main reasons. The first is because differences exist between humanitarian interventions on the type of data that is required by the project and evaluation objectives. The second is because of a lack of knowledge concerning systems management and of funding for training staff in these tasks (Labin, 2011, p. 576)

3.10 Format of evaluation reports

According to a number of organizations, a good evaluation report is one which answers the questions defined in the evaluation objectives. As part of providing this information, they must show a balance between what was achieved and how it was achieved, together with recommendations to improve what was missed (OECD-DAC, 1999, pp. 25-26; MSF, 2013, p. 6). Moreover, much of the attention is focused on presenting information with the following characteristics. Layouts and headings are indispensable for skimming the document. Both the executive summary and evaluation summary must be easy to read and understand. Finally it must be sequenced in a way that facilitates rapid response and decision making (SIDA, 2004, pp. 83-84; MSF, 2013, pp. 27,28; Polastro, 2014, p. 213).

Latest studies recommend the use of several languages and other communicational tools in the presentation of the evaluation. In particular, the use of local language (Polastro, 2014, p. 213). This goes together with the inclusion of beneficiaries in the process of implementing the humanitarian projects.

3.11 Communication

Communication is a critical feature of every stage of every project. During the evaluation of a project, the communication is crucial for informing evaluators of stakeholders’ expectations, and decision-makers on the evaluation’s findings and recommendations (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 62).

Nowadays, evaluators face not merely the challenge of sharing quality information over rapid communication channels, but also of engaging stakeholders with the communication systems; whichever the evaluators decided to use at the beginning of the intervention (Kistler, 2011, p. 570). This engagement is especially important for humanitarian evaluations because
of the context of emergency situations which require that faster decisions must be taken. Organizations and decision-makers act in accordance with evaluation findings when they are informed and according to how they are presented (Patton, 2008, p. 687; Kistler, 2011, p. 570).

In conclusion, good communication depends on how the information is shared and presented considering the characteristics, capacities and skills of those receiving the information and for what purpose it is being presented.

3.12 Perception of evaluation and evaluators

The perception of evaluation and evaluators can be a barrier for an evaluation. Unfortunately, past experiences, misunderstandings or lack of knowledge have mischaracterized evaluations as criticisms and evaluators as critics. This perception increases the resistance to evaluation recommendations and to any other action that implies change (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 76; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 27). As mentioned before, communication plays an important role in avoiding misconceptions about both the procedure of evaluation and the purpose for undertaking it (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 7). Therefore, the evaluation process must provide for an enhanced organizational understanding that encourages a willingness to change, presents reward for improvement and not punishment for failure (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 18).

3.13 Political context

This study analyzed political aspects of evaluation because evaluators often have to overcome major political barriers to develop evaluations and present findings. According to some researchers, the most important problem is the lack of connectedness between evaluations and the political context (Weiss, 2001, p. 421; Stern, 2008, p. 256).

Theoretically, humanitarian interventions cannot be used as a political tool. This assertion has been promoted since 1994 with the publication of the first and third principle of the Code of Conduct (ICRC, 1994). However, in reality political issues are often limiting factors when conducting and using evaluations.

This study found three areas in which the conduction of humanitarian evaluations is influenced by political realities. The first is the influence of legal reforms during the
evaluations development. The second is the global context and internationalization of evaluations and the third and most complex are the political power relations.

Legal reforms driven by a political agenda are external factors that affect the conduction of evaluations in a direct manner as well as their subsequent use. The problem is that these reforms are outside evaluators’ control and most of the time outside the knowledge of umbrella evaluation agencies as well. In the case of Europe, the political context in which evaluations are developed has been influenced by reforms in public management and new definitions of policy objectives. These changes call for the participation and coordination of government and policy actors involved in the whole process of policy delivery (Stern, 2008, p. 249). However, a gap is still present in the connectedness between umbrella political organizations and humanitarian agencies, and a bigger gap between both evaluation agencies and the evaluation departments of humanitarian organizations. On the other hand, among contexts that include fragile states such as Ukraine or Somalia, the lack of reforms of legal frameworks and the absence of governance directly impair the operability of humanitarian projects and therefore the development and use of evaluations.

Globalization internationalizes many humanitarian interventions and most humanitarian organizations. In this context, the media plays an important role in this process, however it has also been leveraged and financially supported by political actors turning shared information into influence and biased conceptions (Labin, 2011, p. 572). Thus, this internationalization can be a negative influence when it is driven by politicized actors. Instead, it can, and should be used for positive purposes such as for linking policy makers and evaluation commissions (Stern, 2008, p. 250). Moreover, another aspect that is worth highlighting is that this process of internationalization has increased the number and diversity of humanitarian actors, which at the same time generates more interventions, funding needs, and donors (Polastro, 2014, p. 193).

Finally, power relations in complex contexts such as the ones where humanitarian interventions are implemented directly affect the implementation or not of the evaluation results. Emergency contexts are likely to be controlled by political power relations which influence the process of making decisions based on the objectives defined in the project plan (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, pp. 33-34).
3.14 Conclusion chapter three

The objective of chapter three was to present definitions of the different components of humanitarian evaluations that are needed to understand the following sections of this study. Considering how extensive the subject of humanitarian evaluations is, it is important to understand these concepts in order to further understanding how these factors can increase or decrease the use of humanitarian evaluations.

In chapter three evaluation was defined as a systematic process which determines the merit, worth, value, or significance of a project in order to take specific decisions about it. It was mentioned that humanitarian evaluations are mostly conducted due to accountability, improvement or knowledge purposes and can be classified by according to who conducted the evaluation or when the evaluation was conducted. Besides, chapter three explained the definition and role of evaluation’s objectives, team and stakeholders.

In addition, this chapter exposed the challenge that represents for humanitarian evaluators finding relievable information, processing and managing data, producing appropriate data analysis and generating complementing data for future research. Similarly, chapter three highlights the difficulties that evaluators must overcome due to the perception that staff have about evaluators as critics and evaluations as criticisms.

Finally, it states how the evaluation reports must be presented, the importance of communication within the procedure for conducting the evaluation and the political considerations which affect the development of humanitarian evaluation and its report.
4. Chapter four, Theoretical framework

Perspectives about the factors that influence the use of humanitarian evaluations

The third approach that this study used for data collection focused on those factors that influence the use of evaluation results in humanitarian projects. Consequently, to help answer this question this study considered theories from other authors’ research where their hypotheses were analyzed using case studies and field work.

Chapter four focuses on those factors which, according to theory and evidence, encourage or prevent the use of evaluations. These factors are divided in two main groups; the first group are procedural factors which are part of the process of conducting humanitarian evaluations; and the second group are those factors that are external to the process for conducting humanitarian evaluations. In developing this chapter, this study relied upon the same literature and approaches as in the third chapter. However, this chapter does not focus on definitions but rather what researchers and literature says about the factors that prevent or encourage the use of humanitarian evaluations. It illustrates, on the basis of experience, case studies and theoretical analyses, some suggestions about what should be included in, humanitarian evaluations, and how these factors must be managed to ensure their use.

4.1 Influencing factors that are part of the process for conducting humanitarian evaluations.

4.1.1 The evaluation team

Composition of the evaluation team

According to some authors and humanitarian organizations, the composition of the evaluation team can have a significant impact on the future use of evaluation reports. Below, this study presents, different perspectives about how the composition of the evaluation team can influence the use of evaluations.

On the one hand, studies reveal that there are problems and dissatisfaction with external evaluations because of the amount of time and resources consumed to explain to the evaluators the organizational culture and practices (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 30). Nevertheless, external evaluations are frequently used for audit purposes because of their objective approach (SIDA, 2004, p. 17).
In the same way, studies also reveal that internal teams increase evaluation utilization for two main reasons. The first is because they are more likely to present findings as appropriate, actionable items (Bourgeois, et al., 2011, p. 230) and second because they are developed according to a better understanding of organizational policies, procedures and other intervention experiences (SIDA, 2004, p. 18; Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 65; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 30; MSF, 2013, p. 5).

On the other hand, an ALNAP analysis of a group of research, literature, and the results of discussions with field staff concluded that mixed-composed evaluation teams tend to produce better results. The study states that the inclusion of both stakeholders and staff in the development of evaluations, as well as both external and internal staff on the evaluation team, increases the usability of, and engagement with, the evaluation reports (Hallam, 2011, pp. 15, 16). As a consequence of the positive response to mixed-composed teams, organizations such as UNHCR and CARE have demonstrated a preference for this type of evaluation teams by shifting, from exclusively external evaluation teams, to mixed evaluation team (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 31, 32).

**Qualifications of the evaluation team**

As discussed in chapter two, humanitarian organizations suggest that the qualifications of the evaluators must be determined in accordance with the requirements of the ToR. Evidence suggests that misidentifying the qualifications requirements can affect the credibility of the evaluation and therefore the usability of the evaluation reports as well (SIDA, 2004, pp. 76-77; Patton, 2012, p. 40).

Based on an analysis of competences and experience of utilization-focused evaluations, it is apparent that the evaluation team must have knowledge and be competent in general skills evaluation, possess context-specific knowledge, communicational skills, and have an understanding of how the other people who are involved work (Patton, 2008, p. 24; 2012, p. 39). Additionally, one of the necessary prerequisites that a team must have which can later encourage the use of evaluations is a leader or leadership capable of stimulating understanding and engagement between stakeholders and evaluators. This engagement will increase the potential for acceptance of the evaluation findings and recommendations,
enhance a positive perception of the evaluators and evaluations and demonstrate the benefits of evaluation in general (Patton, 2008, pp. 224,225; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 24-26).

However, interviews conducted by Buchanan-Smith found no evidence demonstrating the relationship between qualified staff, and quality and acceptance of evaluation findings (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 41). Further research is required to prove a definitive increase in both evaluation quality and acceptance directly attributable to qualified staff.

4.1.2 Methodology

Methodology of the evaluation

The guidance for evaluators’ managers in the humanitarian context, published by the OECD, states that good quality evaluation methodology increases the usability of the reports by supporting the purpose of the evaluation whether this is accountability, improvement or knowledge (OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 2).

According to Polastro, evaluation methodology influences the use of the evaluations for three reasons. The first is because, a good methodology enhances the participation and learning of beneficiaries and stakeholders in the entire process of evaluation, which increases the usability of evaluation findings. Second, because the credibility of the evidence is positively related to the credibility of the source, and finally, because a good methodology ensures feedback from operational staff and decision-makers (2014, pp. 211-213).

A clear definition of the evaluation methodology is relevant to avoid the misuse of resources and the generation of unusable results. For example, one ALNAP study presented the experience of the Word Bank, in which evaluations conducted through weak methodologies ultimately required that new and more thorough evaluations had to be undertaken (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 78). Practice that few humanitarian organizations can afford.

Finally, a robust methodology for conducting utilization-focused evaluation, should consider as Patton suggests, aspects such as: credibility, validity, quality and utility of the evaluations for decision-making procedures (2012, pp. 273-282).

Methodology of data collection and analysis

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4 Margie Buchanan-Smith, ALNAP Independent, personal communication, June 2013
According to Polastros’ study, humanitarian evaluations are conducted mostly using qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, observations, documents review, data analysis and workshops. In spite of the common practice of using qualitative methods, Polastro also emphasizes the need for multiple evaluation methods, and suggests triangulation to guarantee good data quality which can encourage the use of evaluation results (2014, pp. 210, 211). In the same way, organizations such as the Kellogg Foundation have experienced the necessity of multiple evaluation methods and today they advocate mixed-methods whenever possible (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 70).

According to Patton, the methodology for data collection is spontaneously defined when the entire evaluation framework is conceptualized and suggests the following questions as a guideline for collecting data:

“What existing data will be used and how will they be accessed? Who will collect new indicators data? Who will have oversight and management responsibility for data collection? How often will indicators data be collected? How often reported? Will data be gathered on all program participants or only a sample? If a sample, how selected? How will findings be reported? To whom? In what format? When? How often?” (2008, p. 249)

**4.1.3 The purpose of the evaluation**

According to Patton, a utilization-focused evaluation has, as its overall purpose, the use of evaluations by the intended users and, as part of this, the definition of a more specific purpose such as accountability, improvement or learning (2012, p. 115)

For some organizations such as PACT, the reason for conducting evaluations is the combination of achieving accountability, improvement and learning purposes at the same time (2014, p. 13). However, some studies show that when two or more objectives guide an evaluation, conflicts are likely to occur over the definition and prioritization of such objectives (Hallam, 2011, pp. 8-10). For this reason, the intended users of the evaluation must clearly define the evaluation aim, purpose and outcomes.

Moreover, according to Levine and Griñó, the definition of the evaluation’s purpose is a main aspect of the evaluation development for two main reasons. First, because it goes in hand with the definition of who will conduct, contribute and manage the evaluation; and second,
because it also correctly frames and helps direct the evaluation objectives and further questions (2015, p. 11). Evidence emphasizes the importance of connectedness between the purpose of the evaluation, and objectives, and questions in order to produce usable evaluations for decision-making (Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 15).

Finally, one ALNAP study has highlighted that the conception of the evaluation is framed by its purpose. Then both, the purpose and its final use of an evaluation are highly dependent on: the definition of the performers and managers of the evaluation; and the communication of that definition to those involved in the evaluation process (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 45-46).

### 4.1.4 Definition of evaluation objectives

According to the OECD-DAC guidance for humanitarian evaluators, the articulation of clear objectives for the overall evaluation project is indispensable; experience demonstrates that the effectiveness of the evaluation process is restricted when clear objectives are missing (1999, p. 13).

Also, another ALNAP study which focused on the experience of humanitarian organizations at the planning stage of conducting a humanitarian evaluation, illustrated the need for clear objectives that limit the emphasis of the evaluation, and the importance of dedicating more resources to enhance the participation of, not only intended users, but also beneficiaries (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 62,63). In the same way, according to Weiss, the evaluation objectives are related to the project objectives and when one of them is unclear the evaluation should not be developed because its results would not be meaningful (1997).

### 4.1.5 Communication

Proper communication encourages the development and use of evaluations because it reduces the common internal rejection towards evaluation and evaluators; reduces time spent in the initial stages, and sets real expectations (Patton, 2008, p. 53). Conversely, bad communication increases misunderstandings between evaluators and non-evaluators, which at the same time, decrease the usability of evaluation results (Ibis, 2008, p. 53). Therefore, good communication throughout the evaluation process can ensure adequate updates for both stakeholders and evaluators, reducing the risk of misunderstandings.
4.1.6 Stakeholders engagement

Stakeholders are the evaluation final users, and evidence demonstrates that, establishing priorities according to stakeholders’ expectations increases engagement and encourages subsequent use of the evaluations (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 49-51). A utilization-focused evaluation begins with the interaction between evaluators and the primary intended users in order to “engender commitments to both evaluation and use.” (Patton, 2008, p. 38). Moreover, in order to tackle the resistance to evaluation use, theory suggests that engagement with stakeholders must focus on enhancing understanding and recognition of the value of the evaluation (Patton, 2012, p. 321).

Additionally, Adams, et al. based their analysis on the premise that, the use of evaluations will increase when stakeholders are engaged with the procedure. Therefore, after considering different collaborative approaches, such as practical participatory evaluations, or utilization-focused evaluations and models, she determined a collaborative framework to best engage stakeholders in humanitarian evaluations (2014, p. 244). They emphasized the importance of three considerations. First, the identification of stakeholders’ expectations; second, working together reviewing, prioritizing and interpreting the findings; third presenting the recommendations and finally, establishing a plan to use evaluation finding for change (2014, p. et al). Unfortunately, although the model which Adams, et al. proposed increases the engagement and interest of stakeholders also requires extensive resource and is not supported by any evidence as to whether it actually increases the use of evaluations.

Additionally, ALNAP studies have also presented evidence demonstrating that the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process increases the sense of ownership which is essential to ensuring the use of the evaluation’s final report (Hallam, 2011, p. 15) and a precondition for evaluations to generate change (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 11). Moreover, field studies reveal that involving several stakeholders in the evaluation planning process can help to ensure the relevance and use of evaluation findings (PACT, 2014, p. 22).

Finally, Patton states that utilization-focused evaluations are framed by stakeholders’ standards and expectations of deliverables and suggests a simulation of the use of findings for understanding stakeholders’ expectations and increasing further engagement with the entire evaluation (Patton, 2012, pp. 309-312)
4.1.7 Format of the evaluation report

This study considers the format of the evaluation reports to be one of the most important factors influencing the use of humanitarian evaluations. This assertion is made on the basis of research demonstrating that even though the evaluation might contain the correct information, the way it is presented increases or decreases the likelihood it will be used (Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Patton, 2008; Hallam, 2011; UNECE, 2013; Liket, et al., 2014).

As mentioned in section 3.6, the design of an evaluation report must take into account the final users of the evaluation. Therefore, the definition and participation of the intended users during the process for conducting the evaluation is a variable that is positively related to the use of the final reports. The evaluation report is not simply the list of the components that make up the evaluation, findings and recommendations. It links all these features and presents them to the intended users and people involved. For that reason, the evaluation purpose, objectives and questions must be established according to stakeholders and final users’ requirements (Patton, 2008, pp. 49-51). It is worth noting that the importance and influence which the format of evaluation reports has on their use has been known since evaluation began being used. Consequently, this study included as part of the analyzed literature, organizations and studies that had made recommendations, guidelines, research and analyses which suggest the most important characteristics for an evaluation report.

The evaluation report contains information concerning the evaluation, findings and recommendations but the way the information is presented can encourage or prevent its use. Experience shows a preference on organizations to assign resources to evaluations that provide relevant information in a short, clear and comprehensible format that helps staff to visualize the results (Patton, 2008, p. 28; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 33,34). In addition, organizations such as the WFP go further recommending the inclusion of graphs and tables for both the evaluation objectives and recommendations (2013, pp. 25-26).

Moreover, through interviews conducted with organizations such as MSF, CARE, WFP and UNHCR, one ALNAP study has demonstrated the effect on rejection that boring, overwhelming and lengthy evaluation reports can have. That study also claims that, for evaluations to be useful, they need to present their findings timely with the decision-making processes (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 34-55).
According to Polastros’ study, in order to make usable evaluation findings, humanitarian evaluation reports should meet the following criteria of; precision, representativeness, pertinence, generalization, attribution, being in context and have a clear definition of its methodology (2014, p. 212).

From the perspective of general utilization-focused evaluations, Patton suggests five reporting principles that evaluation reports should have. He states that reports must; explain the evaluation purpose and stay true to it; identify the priorities and questions of intended users; and conduct the evaluation in accordance to them; engage final users; communicate the findings efficiently and effectively through the use of graphics and other visuals; and distinguish diffusion from use (2012, pp. 369-375)

**4.1.8 Follow-up**

The follow-up of evaluation results encourage acting upon the evaluation recommendations. Theory suggests that, the follow-up should be done by establishing a plan and budget for it (Patton, 2012, p. 382), and by instituting a department in charge of managing the evaluation and its findings (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 72-75). As that is so, evidence demonstrate how during the last five years some organizations such as the UNDP, FAO and WFP have changed their organizational structure to include a department in charge of the management of evaluation findings (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, pp. 75-78). Additionally, studies recommend evaluators include a follow-up mechanism as part of the report (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 56), and for organizations to implement a system that tracks the extent to which changes were implemented in accordance with the evaluation recommendations (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 71).

From a utilization-focused perspective, utilization (of evaluations) means working with the final users to “monitor what happens to the findings and recommendations and to watch for additional opportunities to apply the findings” (Patton, 2012, p. 381).
4.2 Influencing factors that are external to the process for conducting humanitarian evaluations.

4.2.1 Political context
On the one hand, evaluation societies, commissions or umbrella organizations have not generated sufficient connectedness with policy makers and control agencies. Therefore, they have not shared information, knowledge or worked together to recognize the benefits of evaluation. (Stern, 2008, pp. 249-256). On the other hand, evidence shows that evaluators have not properly considered aspects such as political backing, political interests and most importantly, political context when delivering recommendations (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, pp. 3-4). Therefore, this gap tends to impede the implementation of recommendations and the use of evaluation findings.

Lack of connectedness with the wider political context makes it impossible to implement the evaluation recommendations. Therefore, in scenarios where evaluation outcomes run contrary to already compromised political objectives, the invariable result will be a decrease in the use of evaluation findings (Patton, 2008, p. 10; Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 17).

4.5 Conclusion chapter four
These theoretical frameworks were chosen in order to present what theory, complemented with evidence and case studies, suggests concerning the factors that encourage or prevent the use of evaluations. The information collected through the theoretical framework permits us to analyze how organizations are conducting their evaluations and whether they are considering the recommendations by theory to enhance the use of evaluations.

Chapter four presented what literature suggests influence the use of evaluations. First, it analyzed in which way the composition and qualification of the evaluation team may affect the development, reliability, acceptance and use of evaluations. Moreover, this chapter explained in which way the methodology for both data collection and analysis can affect the development of the evaluation and how they should be managed in order to produce utilization-focused evaluations. Likewise, this theoretical framework also presented how the management of both the communication and stakeholders’ engagement can encourage or prevent the use of evaluations in humanitarian context.
In addition, chapter four exposed in which way the definition of the objectives is an influential factor for encouraging the use of evaluations and suggested several considerations to be taken into account as part of the format of the evaluation. Finally, it mentioned the importance of considering the political factors when producing the recommendations in order to enhance the implementation of them.

The next chapter describes three examples of how organizations are conducting and presenting their evaluations. Subsequently, in chapter six, this study compares the current practices of three organizations with what literature suggests should be done to increase their use.
5. Chapter Five, Empirical evidence

Empirical examples of Humanitarian Evaluations

The objective of this study is to identify the factors that encourage and prevent the use of humanitarian evaluations. Therefore, in chapter four, this study presented the perspectives of studies and the experiences of other authors and researchers, in order to identify the factors which encourage or prevent the use of humanitarian evaluations.

As was mentioned in chapter one, the fourth approach for data collection analyzed empirical examples from three evaluation reports. This chapter explores these empirical examples. The focus will be restricted to the evaluation procedure, methodology and presentation. This section will not focus on the humanitarian crisis in which the projects where implemented and evaluated. The evaluations considered all the humanitarian response and coordination of groups of international humanitarian organizations to a specific crisis situation, the 2010 floods in Pakistan.

The first evaluation report is a real time evaluation (RTE) conducted by Think Ahead for the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC). The second evaluation report was commissioned by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and was conducted by a team composed of four independent evaluators. Finally, the third evaluation report was commissioned and developed by the Humanitarian Coalition, HC.

5.1 Description of the DEC Real-Time Evaluation Report

The DEC has been working in the field of humanitarian response since 1963. It brings together thirteen UK aid agencies to raise funds for humanitarian projects and to date have run 67 appeals (DEC, 2015).

The evaluation assessed twenty projects of thirteen humanitarian agencies over two weeks in Pakistan during 2010. The evaluation report consists of five parts, the executive summary, an introduction, the findings classified according to the evaluation objectives and region, the recommendations and the appendix (Murtaza, et al., 2011, p. et al).

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The two page executive summary includes the following information; the overall context of the humanitarian crisis; numerical data for the affected population and loosed assets; health and security risks; inter-agency funding sources; and evaluation objectives and recommendations (Murtaza, et al., 2011, pp. 3,4). The second part is the introduction which provides general information concerning the crisis situation in which the projects were implemented and the evaluation conducted (Ibid, et al., 2011, p. 5). In the third part, the objectives of the evaluation are presented and complemented with evaluation questions (Ibid, et al., 2011, p. 6). Considering the evaluation objectives, this evaluation can be defined as a Formative, Process, Outcome and Summative evaluation and its’ purpose seems to be accountability towards the donors, the project plan and the affected population.

The evaluation findings are classified and presented on the basis of the evaluation questions of each evaluation objective and the recommendations are listed and complemented with supporting information. (Murtaza, et al., 2011, pp. 7-31) Finally, as part of the appendices, the evaluation report provides information concerning the composition and experience of the evaluation team and the methodology through which the data was collected (Ibid, et al., 2011, pp. 32-36). The evaluation team first conducted a literature review of; reports of the analyzed agencies, previous lessons learnt and DEC reports. They also developed direct observation and conducted workshops, interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, staff and the affected population.

5.2 Description of the Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation

The IASC is an inter-agency coordinator of humanitarian assistance established in June 1992 in response to UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182. It seeks to coordinate Member organizations and Standing Invitee organizations in order to strengthen humanitarian assistance (IASC, 2015).

The evaluation was commissioned by the IASC, and was developed between January and March 2011 by a team of independent evaluators. The evaluation reports starts with a one page executive summary with information about how the evaluation was conducted and how

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6 Member organizations: 1. FAO, 2. OCHA, 3. UNDP, 4. UN-Habitat, 5. UNHCR, 6. UNICEF, 7. WFP, 8. WHO  
the results were presented (Polastro, 2011, p. 4). The executive summary is complemented with an eleven page table where conclusions and recommendations are presented. The information in the table is classified by area, finding, conclusion, recommendation, priority, level, responsible and time (Ibid, 2011, pp. 5-15).

The second part of the report includes information about the crisis situation, human and asset losses (Polastro, 2011, pp. 17-21). The third part (Ibid, 2011, pp. 22-24), explains the process through which the evaluation was planned and conducted. According to the report, the evaluation methodology was a deductive analysis and the data was collected following a mixed-method approach. For data collection, evaluators developed; a literature review; semi-structure and group interviews with stakeholders; staff and affected population and direct observation, and the data was as far as possible triangulated. The report states that the recommendations were suggested following a utilization-focus approach and the priorities were established through workshops.

From the fourth part onwards, the findings, conclusions and recommendations are classified by each subject (Polastro, 2011, pp. 24-61). The presentation of the findings include; the evaluation findings about the crisis situation; the context and circumstances; and project implementations that organizations undertook. As part of the recommendations, additional information is presented to contextualize the statements and the report also proposes activities for achieving the recommendations.

The annexes are guided by the ToR and include background information; evaluation objectives; questions and methodology; the theoretical framework which guided the evaluation; procedures for stakeholders’ engagement; tentative timeline; a description of the evaluation team; and deliverables (Polastro, 2011, pp. 62-86). Finally, the rest of the annexes provide complete information about the stakeholders involved, the timeline and activities of evaluators as well as the results of interviews and workshops. The report ends with a summary of the CVs of each member of the evaluation team (Ibid, 2011, pp. 87-140).
5.3 Description of the Humanitarian Coalition Evaluation Report

The Humanitarian Coalition (HC) involves five humanitarian agencies\(^8\) and since 2014 has aimed to maximize the Canadian fundraising efforts for humanitarian projects run by member organizations (HC, 2015).

The evaluation was commissioned and developed by the HC in order to assess the level of coordination of the aid activities between the organizations which are members of the HC. The report begins with an executive summary which includes information about the humanitarian crisis, the motives for the evaluation and its objectives and information about the framework. The executive summary also includes a description of the evaluation findings and for each group of evaluation findings, recommendations as well (HC, 2012, pp. 6-10).

The second part of the evaluation report is divided into chapters. Those chapters include; an introduction with information about the HC; the outline of the report and background and contextual information about the humanitarian crisis (HC, 2012, pp. 11,12). The purpose of the evaluation is clearly identified and the methodology for data collection is explained. According to the report, data was collected through literature reviews and semi-structure interviews of beneficiaries, staff and stakeholders (Ibid, 2012, pp. 12-14).


\(^8\) Humanitarian Agencies: 1. CARE Canada, 2. Oxfam Canada, 3. Oxfam Québec, 4. Save the Children Canada, 5. Plan Canada
6. Chapter six, Analysis

Chapter four presented what other authors, based on their experiences and research, suggest should be taken into account in order to encourage the use of humanitarian evaluations. Additionally, three evaluation reports were described in chapter five. Having analyzed these evaluation reports, in chapter six this study develops a comparison of how evaluations are conducted and presented with the way theory suggests evaluation reports should be presented in order to encourage the use of evaluation reports. This chapter presents a critical analysis, followed by a comparison of what organizations are actually doing with what literature suggests should be done in order to enhance the use of evaluations.

6.1 Critical analysis to the DEC Real-Time Evaluation Report

The DEC evaluation team was composed of 6 gender-balanced external consultants, three national and three international. The team benefitted from having three personnel with experience in evaluation, monitoring and humanitarian standards, one of whom had expertise in Pakistani evaluations. Additionally, the other three consultants had experience working with humanitarian organizations in Pakistan, one of whom had been actively involved in relief and development activities.

In spite of the fact that the evaluation was conducted by an external evaluation team, this example illustrates how to tackle the problems of time and lack of internal and contextual knowledge were addressed by assigning a team leader who had previous experience in DEC Pakistan, and three other consultants with experience running evaluations in Pakistan. This example highlights the importance of having local staff with established network and experience in the field when conducting an evaluation. Having staff who meet these qualifications facilitates time management and reduces misunderstandings due to lack of contextual knowledge. Most importantly, it also demonstrates that internal staff is not imperative, but staff with experience and knowledge about the organization and the context are.

In the DEC evaluation, the relationship with stakeholders is pragmatic since stakeholders are being, and are interested in continuing to be, funded by the DEC. The evaluation team hold an initial briefing workshop with the intended users to understand key standpoints and factors which affect DEC accountability priorities. This initial briefing includes stakeholders in the
procedure, which should engage and encourage them to use the evaluation as a basis for change. However, this study did not find information that suggest that in the workshop, stakeholders understood the relevance and utility of the evaluation, neither the evaluation purpose nor objectives were shared and discussed, aspects which, according to Patton, are necessary to encourage the use of evaluation reports (2012, pp. 309-312).

In addition, the evaluation team conducted interviews with agency and partner staff as well as with stakeholders in order collect information. Likewise, participatory exercises were conducted with intended beneficiaries in the field. However, although the evaluators did collect information, this study did not find any information suggesting that in this first stage, DEC evaluators also identified the expectations that stakeholders had or the criteria or standards with which findings were going to be reviewed. These are aspects which, according to past research, are indispensable to keep stakeholders engaged so evaluation findings are used in the future (Hallam, 2011, p. 15; Adams, et al., 2014, p. 245).

In order to tacked the criticisms that evaluators generally received for collecting information without subsequently presenting the findings, the DEC evaluation team conducted a debriefing workshop to present stakeholders the initial findings and lessons learned. Theory suggests that, debriefing meetings should measure the findings according to the pre-established expectations and priorities (Adams, et al., 2014, pp. 245-246). However, this study did not find any information to suggest that the DEC evaluators identified, together with stakeholders, expectations for the evaluation. Neither did this study found any information that would suggest that the findings were also presented to the intended beneficiaries in the field. This is contrary to one of the most recent field studies, which emphasizes the importance of considering the automatic expectations that evaluators generate in affected population when collecting information (Levine & Griñó, 2015, p. 15).

Continuing with the theory that an evaluation report must include; studies demonstrate the importance of including background and context information in order to: understand and attribute the evaluation to the intervention and circumstances (Knox & Darcy, 2014, p. 40) and classify findings and recommendations according to generalizable definitions (Polastro, 2014, p. 212). In spite of the fact that the DEC report did included some contextual
information in the introduction, other missing background and contextual information was presented in the findings. This mixed up the information presented in the report.

Moreover, evaluation theory insists on the importance of defining the purpose, objectives and methodology of evaluations. However, this study found that, the DEC report, did not clearly mention the purpose of the evaluation, for example whether its focus was accountability, improvement or learning objectives. Consequently, expectations were not presented and the evaluation objectives remained broad and mixed. Additionally, although the report explains the methodology used for data collection, it does not mention or follow any methodology for conducting the evaluation. Considering that evaluation use is highly dependent on how the evaluation purpose is defined, its objectives and methodology (Weiss, 1997; OECD-DAC, 1999, p. 13; Patton, 2008; Hallam & Bonino, 2013) this study can assume that, by missing these information, the report is less likely to be used.

Evaluation theory also suggests that evaluation reports must permit the reader to skim the document and immediately understand the most relevant findings as well as the recommendations for managing those findings (Hallam & Bonino, 2013, p. 72). This study found that the evaluation team did not present the report in a clear manner for the following reasons. First, in the executive summary the findings are listed as objectives without saying which objective the finding corresponds to; likewise the recommendations are not linked to a finding or to an objective. Second, the findings and recommendations do not follow a specific order and are not linked, and recommendations do not suggest specific actions to take in order to address them. Third, the presentation of the findings differs from one to another one, making it difficult to compare and assess the overall results.

In addition, one of the evaluation objectives aims to measure to what degree agencies are committed to humanitarian principles, standards and behaviors. However, the evaluation does not establish a benchmark of principles, standards and behaviors which the findings will be compared to. In a similar way, one of the evaluation questions asks “what steps have agencies taken…” yet the conclusion to this evaluative question in the report does not include any steps, just a broad description of some limitations and women’s perceptions.

This study found that the DEC report does not meet the requirements of a well-organized report for two reasons. First, because findings are mixed with background information and
in a similar way recommendations are also mixed with findings. Second, because recommendations lack order and continuity; they are not classified according to each evaluation objective; they do not follow a specific design; and only a few include suggestions of how those recommendations can be reached.

6.2 Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation

The team for the Inter-Agency, IA, evaluation was composed of four external consultants working for an independent organization specialized in humanitarian evaluation with experience in Pakistan. The team included both international and national staff, was both gender and aged balanced, had good knowledge and experience of humanitarian operations in Pakistan, and evaluative skills according to the evaluation objectives. This example shows that the requirement that personnel be experienced and skilled is better than being internal staff when conducting these evaluations.

The IA evaluation process is similar to the SIDA, MSF, WFP and PACT examples which this study presented in chapter two, which recommend the inclusion of team qualifications as part of the pre-established ToR. This practice is supported by Pattons’ theory which emphasizes that the specification of the team qualifications in relation to the evaluation objectives increases the credibility and usability of the evaluation reports (2012, p. 40).

In order to counter the lack of knowledge about the project and the organization which external consultants faced, an IA support group monitored remotely and provided the required information. On the one hand, organizations such as MSF, SIDA and Kellogg Foundation as well as the OECD-DAC recommend internal participation to help evaluators to develop the assessment in accordance with organizational policies and practices and involve internal staff in the development of the evaluation. On the other hand, this type of approach has proved to be time and resource consuming which can influence the way the evaluation develops and the organization’s acceptance of the evaluation.

One of the main concerns of the evaluation team with the IA evaluation was stakeholder engagement. This engagement was enhanced through; a participatory methodology in which evaluators served as facilitators for internal staff involvement; and through an IA evaluation framework with which internal staff were familiar. Theory suggests that these type of
approaches increases the acceptance and further use of evaluations because they connect evaluators and staff with one language and procedure which everyone knows and understands.

Additionally, the report includes detailed background information with maps and charts as visual tools for a better understanding of the crisis situation. According to publications by Polastro (2014) and Patton (2012), clear and complete information about the context increases the possibility of using the reports as lessons learned for further interventions in similar circumstances.

Moreover, the evaluation report specifies both, the methodology with which the evaluation was conducted, and the methodology used for data collection. The IA evaluation included, as theory suggests, triangulation of data to ensure quality. In the same way, the report states the objectives of the evaluation and its emphasis, aspect which frames the expectations of the staff involved. However, this study did not found information that confirms that these objectives were communicated to intended beneficiaries in order to consider and frame their expectations as well.

The IA evaluation report presents the findings and recommendations in two ways. First, as a table included in the executive summary, and second, with more information divided among the chapters, each of which follow the description of the evaluation objectives. This type of evaluation design has being enhanced by other organizations such as WFP (2013) and authors such as Patton (2008) and Hallam (2011) to facilitate skimming of the document and its further use as a research tool. However, this study found that a heading that identified where findings starts was missing.

The evaluation findings are judged according to pre-established standards which were adapted to the emergency context. This method of presentation allows the users of the evaluation to compare the current results with future assessments, aspect which increases the future utility of the evaluation report.

Finally, findings, conclusions and recommendations were presented to stakeholders in order to jointly validate and prioritize the recommendations. The final report was presented to stakeholders and validated according to pre-defined standards. This last step allows
evaluators, together with stakeholders, to define the staff in charge of implementing the recommendations and to establish a timeline for it. This action plan meets suggestions done by Knox and Darcy (2014), and Patton (2008) and can be considered as the follow-up of the evaluation, enhancing its use.

6.5 Humanitarian Coalition Evaluation

Evaluators for the HC assessment were divided in two gender-balanced teams, the group as a whole consisted of internal staff from the HC M&E area and one international consultant. This mostly internal team composition tackles potential criticisms of a lack of objectivity and independence by including an external consultant.

Evaluators engaged stakeholders, staff, and intended beneficiaries through focus group discussions which included gender considerations. Additionally, preliminary findings were presented to field staff in order to enhance their participation and consider their perspectives, and the results of these discussions contributed to the final evaluation report. Theory emphasizes the positive effect that this type of approach has on staff acceptance of evaluation procedures; staff participation in the evaluation development generates ownership of the lessons learned.

The report includes background and context information, however, in contrast to other reports, the HC report includes information not only about the crisis situation but also about the organization. The inclusion of information about both, the crisis and the organization, facilitates the recognition and use of the report in future interventions as a tool based on lessons learned, for defining the plan and conducting of further evaluations (Patton, 2012, pp. 143-147).

The HC report includes a chapter under the name “Purpose and Methodology”. However, it merely lists the evaluation objectives and does not explain if the evaluation is conducted for accountability, improvement or learning purposes. The chapter broadly explains the methods for data collection but does not explain the methodology followed for conducting either the evaluation or for data collection. Theoretical information about methodology is missing. Analyses by Polastro (2014) and Hallam (2011) highlight the importance of a well-established methodological definition that guides the conduction and presentation of the
evaluation. According to them, without a good methodology the evaluation misses important procedural aspects such as feedback and follow-up.

The recommendations of the HC report are highlighted which, as was mentioned before in this chapter, is positive if readers need to skim the document to find the most important aspects. However, recommendations are distributed and repeated all through the document, which makes fast visualization and comparison of them difficult.

The HC evaluation *per se* illustrates a way evaluation reports can be used; it evaluates in a way which is consistent with the way the evaluation findings of the last RTE were considered and solved. This practice meets Hallam and Bonino recommendation of establishing a department in charge of managing evaluation findings (2013, pp. 72-75).

In spite of the fact that the report explains that the ToR are part of the annexes, this study was not able to analyze its composition because the evaluation report did not include the annexes in the available document.

**6.4 Summary chapter six**

By applying the theoretical framework, this study identified some of the procedural factors which, when included as part of the procedure for conducting a humanitarian evaluation, and depending on how they are managed, encourages or prevent the use of evaluation reports.

Table number 3 lists the factors that this study identified as influential to encouraging the use of humanitarian evaluations. These factors are classified under three main aspects; first, the composition of the evaluation team; second, the stakeholders’ engagement; and third, the composition of the evaluation report. According to theory, the use of evaluations can be encouraged by employing mixed-composition evaluation teams, however none of the analyzed empirical examples had such a team. On the contrary, the three of them include staff qualified in evaluation and relief which demonstrates the importance of those qualifications and contradicts literature suggestions of a lack of personnel qualified in humanitarian evaluations.

The second aspect is stakeholders’ engagement. Empirical evidence demonstrates the efforts the humanitarian system is making to include stakeholders in project and evaluation development. However, such engagement is left mostly until the information gathering stage
and is missing two of the most important aspects of stakeholder engagement; expectations and follow-up management.

Finally, the complexity and deficiencies of the humanitarian evaluation report highlights gaps in the linkage of the components of the evaluation. Two aspects increase deficiencies in producing evaluations which have use as its final purpose; first, missing components in the evaluation report; and second, lack of connectedness between those components.

The following table summarizes which of the factors were considered by each of the three evaluation reports analyzed in chapter six.

Table 3: Summary of what empirical examples do in comparison to what theory suggest should be done to encourage the use of evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation team</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>HC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mix composition team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified in evaluation and relief</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders engagement</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>HC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary participation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format evaluation report</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>HC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear evaluation objectives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology for data collection</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations liked to objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions to take to reach recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline to meet the recommendations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data from chapter four, five and six.
7. Chapter seven, Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to analyze the phenomena of humanitarian evaluations with the purpose of identifying those factors that encourage or prevent the use of evaluations. In order to do so, this study collected information about both, the procedure for conducting humanitarian evaluations and the factors that, according to studies and evidence, seem to influence the use of evaluations. After classifying and analyzing the collected information this study presented a theoretical framework which the empirical evidence was compared to.

This process of comparison helps to answer the research questions. In the following sections, this study presents the factors that encourage or prevent the use of evaluations. The findings of this study describe in which way the influential factors can be managed within the evaluation procedure so as to encourage the use of evaluations and evaluation reports. The theoretical implications of this study suggest a new theoretical approach to the thesis question. Chapter seven also includes two recommendations for further research and the conclusions of this study.

7.2 Findings

This study concludes that those factors that encourage can be the same factors that prevent the use of evaluations. Moreover, this study found that those factors can all be managed within the procedures for conducting the humanitarian evaluation and that differences in the way they are managed is the reason they either encourage or prevent the use of evaluations.

7.2.1 The evaluation team

Contrary to what theory suggests, consideration of internal and context aspects and the objectivity and connectedness of the results cannot be ensured by any specific composition of the evaluation team. Neither are internal or external staff imperative, but specific knowledge is. This study suggests that what is imperative is an evaluation team with the following characteristics:

- A team that works well together.
- Deep knowledge about the context, the internal policies and procedures of both the commissioner and the project.
- An established network in the field.
- Experience in humanitarian evaluations.

However, this study highlights that a highly qualified team with these characteristics does not necessarily produce a good or useful evaluation or evaluation report, but rather facilitates the development of a successful assessment.

Moreover, this study found that many authors highlight the lack of personnel with evaluative skills among evaluative teams. This study found that most of the studies, handbooks and examples included teams with personnel with evaluative qualifications, but these staff were more likely to be external or consultants and not internal humanitarian staff.

7.2.2 Evaluation Methodology

Literature emphasizes the importance of evaluation methodology, but both theory and practice do not develop or clarify details about which methods evaluators can follow to determine a methodology which is appropriate for conducting the evaluation. This study found in both literature and empirical evidence a misconception concerning methodology for conducting the evaluation and the methodology for collecting data in evaluations. Lack of clear methodology can result in weak procedures because the methodology is necessary for framing and linking the influential factors.

7.2.3 Purpose of the evaluation

Similarly to the evaluation methodology, this study found misconceptions about the purpose of evaluations. An evaluation purpose defines for what the evaluation is going to be used for. However, this study found that the evaluation purpose is often simply being assumed to be evident in the evaluation objectives whereas the correct practice is to define the evaluation objectives based on the purpose of the evaluation. A well-stated evaluation purpose structures the evaluation objectives, questions and limits the expectations.

7.2.4 Evaluation objectives

As mentioned, this study found a lack of differentiation between evaluation purpose, objectives and questions. The evaluation objectives should be established according to what intended users expect to be accomplished and should actually be accomplished, by providing answers to specific evaluation questions. Even though theory emphasizes the importance of
a clear differentiation of these, the studies and empirical evidence still demonstrate failure in those aspects.

Two of the evaluation reports, the IA and the HC, used a framework to establish the evaluation objectives which is consistent with the OEDC-DAC (1999) criteria. However, the objectives have different purposes and this study found them to be broad and unspecific which, as theory suggested, ends up providing descriptive information rather than an answer to a question.

7.2.5 Communication
Communication is crucial, but this study does not consider it as a discrete factor but instead as a linkage between every single individual aspect of the development and presentation of a humanitarian evaluation. The role of communication in evaluation links information about the project, organization and context with the evaluation’s purpose, objectives and questions, with the development and presentation of further findings. Establishing and sharing information about all the individual components of an evaluation is of the main factors that increase participation, ownership and recognition of the evaluation. And therefore; its use.

7.2.6 Stakeholders’ engagement
This study found that an effort is being made by both organizations and researchers to increase the participation and engagement of stakeholders. However, the findings of this study also demonstrate that this engagement often restricted to the first information collection stage and does not include expectations management or an attempt to help stakeholders recognize the value of the evaluation. This study agrees with Levine and Griñó (2015), about the need to obtain meaningful participation from stakeholders rather than simply information as part of the evaluation procedure, and to engage them to further understanding and use of the evaluation findings.

7.2.7 Format of the evaluation report
This study found that there is no ‘perfect’ format for an evaluation. This study disagrees with both theories, those suggesting that small reports are better and those suggesting longer reports are. This study concludes that both are necessary. First, an executive summary that summarizes the report, but also includes information about the purpose of the evaluation, its objectives, questions, findings and recommendations. Second, the body of the report which
includes complete information concerning the ToR, and extensive and linked information about each objective with its correspondent questions, findings, recommendations and follow-ups.

Moreover, the format of the evaluation must be consistent with the evaluations methodology and purpose. Therefore, its success is also dependent on other factors.

**7.2.8 Follow-up**

As theory suggests, the use of evaluations does not happen in isolation from the procedures of the evaluation itself, and this process depends on the follow-up. Unfortunately, this study found that both studies and empirical evidence demonstrate both a lack of recognition of the importance of the follow-up and a failure in practice to include a follow-up plan as part of the evaluation report. This study also found that the reason follow-up information and participation is missing is usually because the participation of stakeholders in the procedure of developing the evaluation is restricted to information gathering and not on identifying those aspects of the evaluation’s purpose and findings important to the intended users.

**7.2.9 Political context**

The political context is not something that can be managed as part of the way the evaluation is conducted. However, the influence of political context in stakeholders can be tackled by considering these contextual aspects while determining the evaluation recommendations. This study highlights that this not only applies to political context but also to organizational policies and procedures and crisis context in general. Evaluation findings must consider contextual circumstances and provide evaluation recommendations in accordance with both the organization’s policies, practices and capacities.

**7.5 Theoretical implications**

Both humanitarian agencies and researchers presented different perspectives on the factors that encourage the use of evaluations as well as the components that are essential for successful evaluations development and presentation. However, this study calls for a shift in emphasis from factors within the development and presentation of evaluations to the linkage and interconnectedness of those factors with the primary purpose of acting on the evaluation findings.
This study agrees with Patton’s theory (2012) that the evaluation’s objective should be that the evaluation findings are acted upon and that the subsequent objective of the evaluators should be framing the evaluation according to a more specific purpose such as accountability, improvement or knowledge gathering.

7.6 Recommendations for future research

The findings of this study demonstrate that it is the linkages between factors as much as the factors themselves which determine whether an evaluation will encourage or prevent the use of evaluations and stakeholders acting on their findings. Therefore, this study recommends that a long term study analyzing whether the acceptance of evaluation findings and the use of evaluations increases or decreases after changes to the procedures that ensure that influential factors are linked.

This study also recommends researchers develop and present information for both humanitarian organizations and evaluators so that both are better able to understand the concept and implications of the methodology used to conduct humanitarian evaluations.

7.7 Conclusion Chapter seven

This study presented information to help develop a deeper understanding of the main concepts used in humanitarian evaluations and to understand how some factors can either encourage or prevent the use of evaluations. Furthermore, through applying concepts and theories of evaluations, this study analyzed how evaluations are being developed and presented in comparison to how theory suggests this should be done in order to encourage the use of humanitarian evaluations.

This study found that the use of evaluations and evaluation reports does not depend merely on specific factors, but more on the interlinkage between the most important procedural factors for conducting and presenting the evaluations.

A well-established purpose for the evaluation is only possible if it takes into consideration and is defined by stakeholders’ expectations and end-users participation. Moreover, the perception of the utility of the evaluation can be encourage only if this well-established evaluation purpose frames the evaluation objectives and questions, including that they all properly communicate to those involved in the conduction of it.
The evaluation team must be selected with due consideration of the evaluation objectives and the humanitarian context. As mentioned, this study highlights the importance of having an evaluation team with evaluative knowledge, wider understanding of the crisis context, project development, organizational policies and procedures, and a clear understanding of the evaluation’s purpose. The evaluation team must define a methodology for developing the evaluation in such a way that ensures the validity and reliability of both the procedure for the entire evaluation and the way data will be collected, managed and analyzed.

Finally, the format of the evaluation report must summarize every aspect of the evaluation’s findings, recommendations and follow-up and in accordance with each evaluation question. The follow-up must state a clear timeline and define those responsible for acting on the evaluation, in accordance to what the evaluation team and stakeholders have established. Moreover, it must also explain the entire procedure through which the evaluation’s objectives were defined, how it was conducted and the way it was presented. This last aspect is the most useful for further analysis and developing generalizable conclusions.

Humanitarian evaluations are a complex phenomenon, the interdependence of the factors necessary to produce a usable humanitarian evaluation is increased by the complexity of the humanitarian crisis context itself. However, when evaluations fulfil their purpose, they can produce information that is applicable to future humanitarian projects.

The fast and volatile humanitarian context requires a fast response and humanitarian evaluations can and should become sources for research when implementing new projects. Only evaluations that explain the context, procedure, findings, recommendations and follow-up can accelerate the detection and development of new solutions for the next generation of humanitarian projects.

This conclusion is intended to encourage other authors and humanitarian organizations to link the components of the procedures for developing and undertaking humanitarian evaluations in such a way that the entire process meets the requirements necessary for producing useful and usable evaluations.
Bibliography


ICRC, 1994. Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief, s.l.: International Committee of the Red Cross.


Annexes

Annex 1

Relevance of the research in humanitarian field

Questionnaire results: 37 respondents with more than one year experience working on humanitarian interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience working in humanitarian projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Governmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery of the report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever participated developing a Project Evaluation Report?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever used an Evaluation Report during the implementation of a new project?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent are evaluations used in the Humanitarian Organization you work on?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always used</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially used</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2

Guiding principles for evaluators according to the American Evaluation Association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systematic Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>1. Explore with the client the shortcoming and straights of evaluation questions and approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Use appropriate standards for the methodology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Communicate the approaches, methods and limitations with sufficient detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence</strong></td>
<td>1. Qualified evaluation team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Cultural competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Practice within the limits of its competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Seek to maintain and improve their competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrity/Honesty</strong></td>
<td>1. Negotiate cost, tasks, limitations of methodology, scope of results, uses of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Disclose any role or relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Record and report any changes to the original project, the reasons and possible impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Be explicit about the interests of the parts involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Represent accurately the procedures, data and findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Work to resolve any concerns related to procedures or activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Disclose all financial support sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect for people</strong></td>
<td>1. Seek a comprehensive understanding of contextual elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ethics, standards, and regulations regarding confidentiality, informed consent and potential risks or harms to participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Conduct the evaluation and communicate its results in a way that respects stakeholders´ dignity and self-worth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Foster social equity in evaluation, give benefit in return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Respect social and cultural differences among stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibilities for general and public welfare</strong></td>
<td>1. Include relevant perspectives and interests of the full range of stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Consider not only immediate operations but also the broad assumptions, implications and potential side effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Give stakeholders access to evaluative information in understandable forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Maintain balance between clients and other stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Take into account public interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3

Six steps procedure (Adams, et al., 2014, p. et al) for engaging stakeholders with evaluation findings:

1. Setting expectations help stakeholders define the standards with which evaluation findings will be reviewed.
2. Review synthesized findings and compare them to established expectations.
3. Stakeholders identify the key findings and through a ranking of priorities act immediately.
4. Share understanding of the findings and interpret them.
5. Stakeholders make recommendations for change based on the findings interpretation.
   It is suggested to analyze these recommendations through a group discussion.
6. Stakeholders formulate as a group an action plan to implement the recommendations.


- Procedure can be resource intensive.
- Requires from both evaluators and stakeholders, engagement, time, energy and money.
- It is proved to work only with quantitative data.
Annex 4

Items that must be consider when defining a budget for the evaluation development in humanitarian interventions.

Example 1, According to MSF:

- Remuneration for evaluators
- Fees for consultants
- Travel costs and allowances
- Accommodation in the field and HQ

Example 2, According to Kellogg Foundation the budget for developing an evaluation is between 5% and 7% of the total project budget and includes:

- Evaluation staff salaries and benefits
- External consultants if needed
- Travel expenses
- Communications cost
- Printing and duplication
- Supplies and equipment
## Annex 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of an Evaluation Report</th>
<th>MSF</th>
<th>SIDA</th>
<th>WFP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of abbreviations and acronyms</td>
<td>Executive summary</td>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive summary</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Evaluation Features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The evaluated intervention</td>
<td>Project and WFP context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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