THE USE OF EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS TO DRIVE LEARNING AND CHANGE IN HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to qualitatively explore how far recommendations and lessons recorded in independent external humanitarian evaluations are used to shape future practice and policy, both within organisations and across the humanitarian system, and the forms, drivers and barriers to this. The particular focus is on the individuals conducting the evaluation, who have the potential to be both driver and barrier through the quality, relevance, and communication of their results, alongside other factors within and beyond final evaluation reports, which will be analysed.

This approach involves a distinction between use for learning and for change, including investigation of factors preventing both learning and change, specifically focusing on the role of the evaluator in this process. Factors preventing either use can relate to contextual difficulties, organisational culture, or the evaluation itself. The role of the evaluator, covered by the Evaluation element of this, can also impact and be impacted by the other factors. A further distinction, between types of change and various uses of evaluations to cause this, allows for exploration of use of evaluations beyond direct, instrumental utilisation of results.

Through exploration of evaluations of two humanitarian responses to complex emergencies in the same location within and between organisations, differences and similarities in recommendations and themes across responses and organisations are identified. The use of independent external evaluations allows for transparent cross-organisational comparisons. This enables exploration of evidence of organisational change over time, as well as degrees of similarity between different organisations in the same response in order to judge the value of comparison across responses. The use of independent external evaluations of other organisations to drive learning and change is explored as an alternative utilisation, although this is not the strongest method of cross-organisational knowledge transfer.

While final evaluation reports are analysed to evidence these uses, the report is not the evaluation, with the approach, process and dissemination efforts found to have significant influence on use. To explore this, interviews with staff and evaluators provide further insight. Interviews are used to explore where learning has occurred which did not directly translate into change, and to understand reasons for this, as well as to explore further drivers of change. Questions asked also reveal the correlation between a strong evaluator role, viewed positively by organisational staff, and evidence

of both learning and change in these organisations, as well as the role of the evaluation process as a tool for learning, seen to vary between organisations.

I have selected responses to conflict in Gaza, where DEC members launched appeals in 2009 and 2014, and identified members who faced independent evaluation in either instance. I have chosen to use ActionAid, CARE, Save the Children and World Vision as case studies in my research, conducting interviews with evaluators and staff at a range of levels alongside analysis of evaluation reports.

This research takes place within a complex emergency to investigate the potential for learning and change in challenging circumstances in light of the impossibility of finding a case study free from any contextual challenges. The particularities of Gaza's political and security challenges are a recurring theme in evaluations and interviews, with many interviewees highlighting the specific difficulties limiting the transfer of lessons learned to other responses.

Use of evaluations for change and learning is discovered to be evident in even this difficult context, with types of use varying by programme or project type, organisation and evaluator approach. Recommendations to increase use of evaluations are therefore directed at both organisations and evaluators to promote participation and learning, timeliness, and established processes for dissemination.

Statement of Originality

This thesis is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

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Statement of Ethics Review Approval

This dissertation involved human participants. A Form TDE E1 for each group of participants, showing ethics review approval, has been attached to this dissertation as an appendix (Appendix F)

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List of Tables and Figures

List of Acronyms

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

ALPS- ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System

CSO- Civil Society Organisations

DEC- Disasters Emergency Committee

DFID- UK Department for International Development

DRP- Disaster Response Project

EHA- Evaluation of Humanitarian Action

M&E- Monitoring and Evaluation

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD-DAC- Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ODI- Overseas Development Institute

OPT- Occupied Palestinian Territories

RAPID- Research And Policy In Development framework

RTE- Real Time Evaluations

TOR- Terms of Reference

UN- United Nations

UNRWA- UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

USD- United States Dollar

WVJWG- World Vision Jerusalem West Bank Gaza

WVUK- World Vision UK

Preface and Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This study forms part of a growing volume of literature on humanitarian evaluation use, diagnosing reasons for lack of implementation of recommendations and proposing solutions (Buchanan-Smith and Cosgrave, 2016; Hallam and Bonino, 2013; Knox Clarke and Darcy, 2014; Patton, 2007). This comes in the context of an increase in humanitarian evaluations to meet rising expectations of accountability, with limited evidence of clear resultant changes risking the credibility of this process (Sandison, 2006). The professionalisation and development of standards for evaluation since the 1980s has increasingly given evaluators responsibility for utilisation or non-utilisation of their recommendations, rather than the traditional approach of ascribing this to policy makers' aversion to change (Patton, 2007). These standards focus on the "utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy" of evaluations, with their ability to be utilised notably the top priority (Patton, 2007, p.28).

To judge the rationality of this increased responsibility, this research investigates the contribution of the independent evaluator in utilisation for change, and the relative value of this compared to other factors affecting evaluation use. The form that this use takes can be causing instrumental change, contributing to wider discussion, validating existing assumptions or spreading learning through both the evaluation's process and its results. In each of these, the approach taken by the evaluator and their commitment to facilitating usable and utilised results is significant but generally lacking detailed attention; hence its prioritisation for this research.

Independent external evaluations are the focus of this study to allow for an outside perspective, to reveal themes that those involved in the programme may not see. These evaluations require external consultants to quickly acclimatise to the country and organisational context and culture, working closely with staff while maintaining the "golden thread" of independence to establish respect and professional recognition (Davies and Brummer, 2015). Hiring independent consultants, while expensive and unrealistic for smaller organisations, may be a requirement of larger donor organisations (Laybourn, 2010). This is the case for the evaluations studied in this research, focusing on funding provided by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). The costs involved in hiring these consultants can be an incentive to see that results lead to significant change in policy and practice (Contandriopoulos and Brousselle, 2012).

To explore the utilisation of recommendations from independent evaluations, and the role of the evaluator in this, humanitarian responses by four different organisations within the same location at two points in recent history have been chosen. The choice of case study has an impact on conclusions drawn and their generalisability, and in selecting responses within one location, I hope to minimise contextual factors to produce more meaningful results. This will also involve consideration of the possibility of contextual change over time, and of unique contextual particularities.

I have selected DEC responses to crises in Gaza from 2009-2011 and 2014-2016. Focusing on DEC funded responses allows for realistic comparisons of programmes between agencies; as each agency begins

Figure 1: DEC Logo (DEC, 2015) (b)

the 2-year funding cycle at the same point. DEC appeals in Gaza launched on 22nd January 2009 and 7th August 2014 (DEC, 2010 and DEC, 2017). Many of the DEC organisations had programmes and experience in Gaza before 2009, continued to work there beyond 2016 and, importantly, maintained a presence between 2011 and 2014. The DEC appeals mark periods of increased activity of these and other organisations in Gaza due to the increased vulnerability of the population following episodes of great destruction.

The DEC is comprised of 13 member agencies, although not all will act in every appeal. Funds are raised for agencies during an appeal and allocated based on pre-determined calculations of agencies' capacity and experience (DEC, 2015 (a)). Independent evaluations are carried out on 3-4 members per appeal. Agencies acting in Gaza in both 2009 and 2014 subject to at least one external evaluation are:

ActionAid, Save the Children, CARE, World Vision, Islamic Relief, Christian Aid

Islamic Relief and Christian Aid Evaluations have been excluded due to their limited scope, as these focus only on short programmes within the organisations' wider response. Although World Vision and Save the Children evaluations have been used in the text analysis section of my research, access to staff in order to conduct these interviews was not permitted. Analysis on World Vision and Save the Children evaluation reports is included in this research as this provides useful comparison with other reports, and is supported by interviews with independent evaluators. Evaluations analysed came from the four organisations in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Logos of organisations evaluated and included in this research (DEC, 2015) (b)

Gaza Context

Selection of the Gaza conflict is based on a broad assumption that the context will have retained similarities between the two responses. To ensure that this is the case, and that this research recognises any changes, contextual comparisons have been made on the situations in 2009 and 2014 using available literature.

The Gaza crises are "complex emergencies," meaning that humanitarian assistance has been necessitated by political instabilities and conflict and therefore takes place in a context of physical and political insecurity (OECD-DAC, 1999, p.5). This means that the situation on the ground changes

Figure 3: Map of the Region (FRONTLINE/World, 2006)

quickly, and lessons learned in previous experiences may be difficult to apply in practice. This research explores whether this is considered the most significant barrier to change, and looks at the value of the evaluator's role within this. The decision to look at this complex emergency allows learning and change to be examined in some of the most difficult contexts, to explore where these difficulties prevent change and where change is possible despite challenges.

The Gaza Strip and West Bank form the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), as shown on the map in Figure 3. The boundaries of this region have been contested in violent confrontations since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 (Author Unknown, 2009). The OPT are both physically and politically divided by Israeli land, walls, Israeli settlements and political jurisdiction. While West Bank is controlled by the internationally recognised Fatah government, Gaza has been legally under Hamas government since 2006 (Ibrahim and Beaudet, 2012). The election of Hamas led to an international suspension of aid through governmental channels until the new government would agree to recognise Israel, adhere to previous agreements and end the violence historically conducted by its military branches (Author Unknown, 2009, p.117). Responses in both 2009-2011 and 2014-2016 were complicated by this, as the international boycott means that international NGOs and donors do not work with the de facto government in Gaza. Aid going to Gaza must be channelled through civil society organisations (CSOs) or UN agencies to avoid contact with the Hamas government (Qarmout, 2017).

An ongoing blockade on exports and imports in Gaza was imposed by Israel in June 2007, and this has had a significant impact on aid efforts in both responses studied here (UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, 2010). In the months before the first response, for example, Gaza's poverty level had reached 79% (Author Unknown, 2009, p. 120).

The humanitarian response launched in January 2009 followed 22 days of Israeli bombing of Gaza between 28th December 2008 and 18th January 2009. This attack, known as 'Operation Cast Lead' caused the death of more Palestinians and the destruction of more properties than any previous Israeli assault on the area. Around 1,400 people were killed, including over 300 children (Amnesty International, 2009). This Operation took place in the context of building tensions and outbursts of violence between the two sides. A six-month ceasefire had been brokered under condition of an end to Palestinian rocket attacks, to be rewarded with an easing of the Israeli blockade. While the attacks were greatly reduced, however, this blockade was not eased. The resultant Hamas announcement that the ceasefire would not be extended was a triggering factor in the Israeli intervention (Author Unknown, 2009, p.120). The response by the international community, including DEC agencies, was an immediate emergency intervention to provided targeted support and protection, especially for vulnerable groups (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010).

As with the earlier crisis, the humanitarian response in 2014 followed a military offensive by Israeli forces known as 'Operation Protective Edge.' This seven-week land, sea and air attack again caused unprecedented human and physical destruction, with at least 2,145 deaths. Occupation, blockades and attacks such as this had left Gaza vulnerable, impoverished and suffering "a humanitarian and environmental crisis before the assault began" (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), p.1). This vulnerability had continued despite a relatively calm period since attacks in November 2012, due to events such as the closure of supply tunnels from Egypt in June 2013. Unemployment had risen, with public services stretched to breaking point even before the damage caused in Operation Protective Edge (UNRWA, 2014).

Both crises were followed by significant international attention and contribution to the response by NGOs and UN agencies. DEC funding in the 2009-2011 appeal reached £8.3 million, while in 2014-2016 almost £19 million was raised (DEC, 2010 and DEC, 2017). This should be considered in light of the proximity of the events; just five years apart; in an area with limited access to construction materials,

in which coping mechanisms had been stretched and humanitarian facilities were still damaged by the first crisis or by events of the intervening years (UNRWA, 2014).

These two crises, within the context of ongoing tensions and outbursts of violence over a few short years, can be reasonably claimed to have similarities that would allow for lessons to be learned. Difficulties in access and security as mentioned will complicate this, but as these would be evident to an evaluator in Gaza, recommendations should take these into account. Exploration of change based on independent evaluation recommendations in the Gaza context requires an understanding of these particularities. While some are unique to Gaza, context will always affect planning and implementation of a humanitarian response, with no 'typical' example possible.

Research Questions

My research will use humanitarian responses in Gaza in 2009-2011 and 2014-2016 to respond and contribute to discussion on change, learning and evaluators; to test Sandison's assumption that limited evidence of change from evaluations equates to lack of use and credibility (Sandison, 2006). This study will be based around these questions:

- ➢ Do organisations make policy and/or practice changes based on independent external evaluation of their humanitarian response?
- ➢ Do organisations make changes based on independent external evaluation of comparable humanitarian responses by other organisations working in the same location?
- ➢ Do field staff, policy makers and evaluators themselves learn from independent external evaluation, even where direct change to policy or practice is not evident?
- ➢ What role should the evaluation report play in ensuring that evaluation recommendations are useful and used?
- ➢ How can evaluators drive policy and practice change beyond the report?

Synopsis

The structure of this study is intended to develop answers to the research questions. Chapter 2 presents various forms of evaluation use, discussing and comparing the meaning and value of each. It explores the role of the evaluator in these uses and resultant change, and factors which could prevent both use and change.

Research methodology is explained in Chapter 3, detailing and justifying the approach taken to answering research questions.

Data analysis occurs in Chapters 4 and 5, with evaluation reports of responses by the chosen organisations in Gaza in 2009-2011 and 2014-2016 analysed and compared in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 explores interviews conducted with and questionnaires completed by relevant independent evaluators as well as members of staff at CARE, ActionAid and partners, in order to better understand where change had been driven by evaluations, where learning occurred, and the value of the evaluator's role within and beyond the report.

Analysis of evaluations and interviews are brought together in Chapter 6 to discuss results in relation to the original research questions, before conclusions are presented in Chapter 7 alongside areas of further study.

Synopsis

Chapter 2: Literature Review- Use and How to Encourage It

Use and Change

The traditional means of establishing if an evaluation has been used is by finding evidence of direct change. Evaluations which do not lead to direct change, however, can still be considered to have been used, and therefore understanding of an evaluation's value requires comprehension of uses beyond direct implementation, and their contribution to change. For this research, these uses are highly valuable in exploring changes within and between organisations over longer periods, and in studying the value of learning as a use. High instance of reported lack of use, or even misuse, of evaluations often stem from a narrow definition of use including only traditional direct application for change, suggesting the need for recognition and appreciation of alternatives (Patton, 1977).

Uses of evaluation are grouped into four types in Figure 4. Each of these is explored in turn, to prepare for comprehensive analysis of use of and change caused by evaluations studied. These will be considered in exploring the evaluator's role in facilitating use, and in other factors hindering this.

Instrumental Use	Directly implementing recommendations
Conceptual Use	Results form part of collective contribution to debates and decisions with other information sources
Process Use	The evaluation itself causes information exchange and clarifies thinking
Symbolic Use	Justifying existing processes, supporting existing arguments for change

Figure 4: Uses of evaluations (Hallam and Bonino, 2013, p.18)

The Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (EHA) Guide categorises evaluation use simply into Learning and Accountability (Buchanan-Smith and Cosgrave, 2016). Learning-focused evaluations involve user participation which could lead to Process Use, as these users benefit from the evaluation itself, but also includes Instrumental and Conceptual Use. Evaluations focused on Accountability necessarily require strong independence of the evaluator in order to prove effectiveness of the programme, which could be seen as Symbolic Use but may reduce or discourage Process Use. Patton adds "generation of

knowledge;" a form of Conceptual Use by learning through discussion (Patton, 2007, p.76, Grasso et al, 2012). This knowledge has the potential to be distributed beyond the evaluated organisation, hence its alternative name, 'Enlightenment Use' (Grasso et al, 2012).

An evaluation can evidence multiple forms of use, with Carol Weiss also defining less significant uses, the importance of which requires a value judgement in each context. These uses are often overlooked when considering an evaluation's value, but are used by Weiss to show the diversity of utilisations possible. These uses are:

> Delaying action
> Avoiding responsibility for decision
> Winning recognition and support for a successful programme
> Discrediting disliked policies or opponents
> Supporting prestigious researchers and therefore maintain a prestigious reputation
> Supporting university faculties by providing research projects
> Training researchers
> Encouraging further research

Figure 5: Miscellaneous uses of research, (Weiss, 1977, p.15)

Discovery of these uses in this research is unlikely, as not all stakeholders will use evaluations for these purposes, and those who do maybe unwilling to admit to this, or may be doing so subconsciously.

Instrumental Use

Although instrumental use, or direct implementation of results, seems the most obvious and easily identifiable use of evaluations, it is rare and often happens only partially (Hallam and Bonino, 2013).

Instrumental use can involve operational changes specific to a situation, often identified through evaluations looking at particular projects or programmes during or directly after the response. Evaluations of individual projects and programmes are more likely to focus on practice over policy, and are better positioned to do so (OECD-DAC, 1999, p.18). Implementation of these changes is complicated within a crisis by the chaotic and mutable nature of humanitarian situations, and between crises by contextual particularities which may not be applicable elsewhere (Buchanan-Smith and Cosgrave, 2016).

In End of Project, End of Programme and other types of evaluations, instrumental use is encouraged by specific, measurable recommendations for change and designation of responsibility for follow up

and monitoring. Studies have not shown this creation of tangible targets to be standard evaluation procedure, however (Sandison, 2006). Some evaluators prefer to simply present their findings and conclusions, to avoid placing responsibility on policy makers to make changes that may not be possible. This approach may cause increased difficulties in monitoring and accountability, suggesting options for change which promote discussion rather than action (OECD-DAC, 1999, p.26).

Conceptual Use

Generation of discussion from evaluation recommendations leads to conceptual use of evaluations, as recommendations are considered in the context of other sources. These could include other evaluations of the organisation in different responses, which may raise the same organisational issues. Evaluations form only part of the process by which organisations change at an operational and strategic level (Sandison, 2006). These processes are complex and vary by organisation and individual, as there are often multiple stakeholders involved in making changes, particularly in larger organisations. Other information sources which can effect change in policy and practice may contradict that provided by evaluations, or may suggest different priorities, and therefore information from evaluations must compete with these in order to gain attention and priority of users (Contandriopoulos, D. and Brousselle, A., 2012).

Stakeholders involved in making decisions validate information from evaluations and other sources through social discourse, a much smoother process where this does not conflict with embedded beliefs within the organisation or individual (Knox Clarke and Darcy, 2014). Particularly where this conflict exists, suggestions of change made by evaluations or from other sources will provoke staff resistance, which should be welcomed to generate honest debate. Staff should be given time to understand and discuss implications of any changes, which should be made and communicated in line with the vision and values of the organisation (Clarke and Ramalingam, 2008). Inclusion of a representative selection of organisational staff in the evaluation process will help predict and manage resistance, as well as promoting individual and organisational learning.

Process Use

"Participation in the evaluation process leads to evaluative thinking, and thus to organizational, program, cognitive and behavioural change" (Grasso et al., 2012, p.3) Opportunities for learning and development provided by the process of the evaluation itself are themselves valuable evaluation outcomes. This use can itself take many forms, such as teaching staff evaluative enquiry skills, strengthening professional inter- and intra- organisational networks, or boosting organisational morale. Process Use can be so impactful as to make an evaluation report itself redundant, as responses to recommendations may already have been set in motion (Forss et al, 2002).

This use has increasingly been recognised and valued since being distinguished from a focus on results, such as in studies by Preskill and Caracelli (Preskill and Caracelli, in van de Putte, 2001). This "practitioner centred action research" was reported to be a significant recent shift, creating a sense of ownership to counter the tendency for evaluation reports to be filed and forgotten once the process is complete (van de Putte, 2001, p.9). Since its identification as a distinct use of evaluation, learning from the evaluation process itself has generally been accepted as legitimate, although there is no means of measuring it or comparing its frequency to traditional instrumental use (Forss et al., 2002).

Symbolic Use

Use of evaluations to justify and support existing beliefs can also be legitimate as long as results have not been distorted for this. For this Symbolic Use, evaluations act as independent confirmation of existing views without creating any new information (Sandison, 2006). Symbolic use can also be found in a sense of validation of a programme or project from the mere fact that it has been independently evaluated (Grasso et al, 2012). The decision to evaluate a project or programme gives official recognition that it is worthy of attention, and that areas of improvement should be resourced (Weiss, 2004).

The potential of evaluation results to be manipulated here means that Symbolic Use of evaluations is not always positive or meaningful. This can be a ritualistic process with no intention of follow up, and can encourage misappropriation of an evaluation's direction and conclusions to support a particular agenda, although it is not possible to measure the frequency of this misuse (Sandison, 2006, p.96).

Translation of results into change can be a difficult and subjective process, but this does not mean that efforts to drive this change should be abandoned (Patton, 2007).

To be able to be utilisable, evaluation results must be translated into actionable recommendations; an inescapably political act as these will be used to forward a particular agenda. Evaluation results will support a cause, and are used by proponents of this to reduce uncertainties and reinforce control (Patton, 1977). Weiss defines this as using evaluations as "ammunition for the side that finds its conclusions most congenial and supportive" (Weiss, 1977, p.14). The evaluator must make political decisions from their initial proposal to conduct the evaluation, as they must accept political direction on programmes and areas worthy of evaluation, the key questions of the evaluation, and the validity of the programme's goals as legitimate targets (Weiss, 2004). Adherence to this organisational guidance can limit the flexibility of the evaluator in leading the evaluation.

The Role of the Evaluator

Establishing the intended use of the evaluation and the changes it is intended to make; the organisation's 'Theory of Change;' enables an evaluator to conduct a more effective evaluation (Weiss, in Grasso et al, 2012). Decisions around the purpose of the evaluation will have an impact on the potential for its results to be implemented, but this is not always something over which an evaluator has any influence (Contandriopoulos, D. and Brousselle, A., 2012).

The evaluator is, however, responsible for factors which can have a huge impact on recommendations being implemented. A good evaluation team should bring together a range of perspectives and specialisms, led by a Team Leader with strong communication, negotiation and writing skills as well as experience in humanitarian contexts. These are important attributes to ensure the evaluation report is clearly presented, well-structured and accessible, and has regularly consulted and communicated with affected peoples, agency staff and the evaluation team (OECD- DAC, 1999).

Constant involvement and consultation with field staff and decision makers in the evaluation process is an integral factor in implementing lessons learned from evaluations; something which is largely dependent on communication and interpersonal skills of the evaluators (Knox Clarke and Darcy, 2014). This involvement must be balanced with a need to preserve the independence of the evaluator and their findings, to remove the potential for stakeholders to distort data or minimise negative conclusions; an issue which has been reported to happen at field staff, administrative and government

level (Patton, 2007, p.25). Communication between evaluators and decision makers who have instigated the evaluation is equally integral to ensuring that the evaluation stays true to its intentions and relevant to a situation which, particularly in humanitarian contexts, will change rapidly and could render early recommendations redundant (Mayntz, 1977).

Factors Preventing Change

The uses of an evaluation as explored can be determined in advance, dictating an evaluation approach and type which may not promote legitimate policy and practice change. The skills and approach of the evaluator will also have an impact, as discussed. There are, however, other factors which can make utilisation of an evaluation's recommendations less likely, some of which can also be influenced by an evaluator.

Traditionally, timeliness of evaluations and of publishing of reports is considered significant to utilisation. This is challenged by the types of use discussed, as it assumes the evaluation has been conducted to make a specific decision, relevant only for purely instrumental use (Patton, 1977). Humanitarian organisations do not simply change in a linear manner based on evidence, and should be understood as complex and dynamic systems, reacting to recommendations of evaluations and evidence from other sources in different ways through the four uses above. Changes suggested may run counter to requirements and expectations of donors, so may be disregarded in order to secure further funding. Equally, however, this assumption can be used to resist changes, without exploring options in donor negotiations or seeking less politicised funding sources (Clarke and Ramalingam, 2008).

Organisations with strict, centralised decision-making structure are often slow to recognise a need for change, and will face resentment from field professionals who feel this is being imposed on them. More autonomy to operational offices encourages flexibility based on context, but will mean minimal organisation-wide policy guidance and uniformity (Clarke and Ramalingam, 2008). Evaluations may produce recommendations which challenge the current workings or beliefs of the organisation, but these should not surprise organisational staff. Studies by Patton et al. found that results that were surprising to staff led to an increase in uncertainty rather than driving action, whether these were positive or negative. To counter this, the use of feedback sessions throughout the evaluation process sensitises staff to the ideas and conclusions of the report (Patton et al., 1977). This participation of field staff also fosters a sense of ownership, a key contributor to encouraging follow up. This creates

a culture of learning across the organisation, securing learning as fixed and necessary in programme work (Sandison, 2006). This forms part of discussion of and interest in performance improvement (Knox Clarke and Darcy, 2014).

Although building relationships between evaluators and those who will use their recommendations to promote implementation is important, high staff turnover means that this must occur alongside a strengthening of information management to develop institutional memory (Jones and Mendizabel, 2010). Participation and relationship building can be driven by the evaluator, but also require cooperation and openness of the organisation and its staff. High staff turnover can be used to the advantage of those driving change, as staff can be recruited for their suitability to the recommended changes (Clarke and Ramalingam, 2008). On the other hand, this high turnover can mean the loss of a decision maker who has championed the evaluation and use of its results; and as this individual can have a great effect on implementation of recommendations, this can significantly impact potential for change (Patton et al., 1977).

Particularly where evaluations are made to be publicly available, there can be a disincentive to report or uncover failure. Donor-driven evaluations in particular may fear loss of funding if successes are not evident enough (Laybourn, 2010). Even if the independence and fair-mindedness of the evaluator is assured, data collection can be difficult due to staff reluctance to advertise failings. In difficult humanitarian contexts, this information gathering process can already be complex due to inconsistencies, lack of comparability and lack of baseline data (Knox Clarke and Darcy, 2014). This, and other factors such as lack of allocated time, evaluator experience and resources, can lead to poor quality evaluation; bringing together the role of the evaluator and the context in which they operate as factors preventing implementation (Laybourn, 2010). In instances where recommendations are considered to be irrelevant or not possible in practice, organisations do not always have processes for rejecting these. This leads to agreements in principle which never intend to lead to implementation (Grasso et al, 2012).

Where the differences between users' opinions and data presented in evaluation is high, such as in exposure of poor performance, information is likely to be "ignored, contradicted, or, at the very least, subjected to strong scepticism and low use" (Contandriopoulos, D. and Brousselle, A., 2012). This is further complicated by the involvement of several users whose beliefs may differ, creating 'issue polarization' when disagreements arise over recognition of problems, prioritisation of these and means of resolving them (Contandriopoulos, D. and Brousselle, A., 2012).

It can be argued that these differences in the organisations and contexts in which an evaluation takes place have a greater role than the evaluator in potential utilisation of results, as concluded by Contandriopoulos and Brousselle. The ability of an evaluator to communicate and promote ownership of recommendations and data must always be understood in the context of the drivers of the evaluation and levels of support and consensus on its results (Contandriopoulos and Brousselle, 2012). Organisations will always have a degree of hierarchical power and knowledge, and evaluators should have an awareness of the political interests which stand to gain from their evaluation and its results (Cousins and Shulha, 2006).

Evidence of these explored uses are drawn from evaluation reports and interviews, with factors which prevent recommendations of independent evaluations from utilisation broadly categorised into three areas to discuss their occurrence and prioritisation. The role of the evaluator is the primary focus here, with comparisons made with the others to show relative importance and explore factors covering multiple areas, such as evaluation quality. These categories, explored further in interview discussions, are:

Evaluator   **Context**   **Organisation**

Categorisation of these factors closely reflects that of Bert van de Putte, although his analysis focuses on the evaluation process and the process of implementing its results, rather than looking for attribution of these to the evaluator (van de Putte, 2001). This again supports the lack of previous academic focus on the evaluator as an area of investigation. Analysis of evaluation reports and interviews with evaluators and organisation staff will help to uncover the validity of this as an area worthy of attention in increasing utilisation.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

This research looked at six evaluations, covering three responses each in 2009-2011 and 2014-2016, across four organisations. A qualitative approach was used involving studying reports and interviewing evaluators and staff involved. While a qualitative approach is less likely to provide highly generalisable, standardised results, this allows for detailed understanding of learning and change through evaluation use in these organisations, without the constraints of predetermined categories of quantitative study (Patton, 2015).

Evaluated in 2009-2011	Evaluated in 2014-2016
ActionAid	ActionAid
CARE	Save the Children
World Vision	World Vision

Figure 6: Evaluations Studied

Selection of Gaza as a case study further decreases the likelihood of generalisable results, due to particularities of the political context. With the impossibility of selecting a 'typical' case study, choosing such a complex situation allows for theories of use, learning and change to be explored in the most challenging of circumstances.

The approach taken examines documented evidence of evaluation findings, and makes comparisons of these where an organisation is evaluated in both cases. This is supplemented by interviews uncovering perceptions of use and change, causes of this and the value attributed to the report.

Analysing Evaluations

The first stage used NVivo software to compare evaluation reports and uncover recurring themes in recommendations. Comparisons of Terms of Reference (TOR) were made to ensure that the purposes, objectives and approaches taken in each instance were sufficiently similar, and differences highlighted. This stage focused on change within organisations over time as per the first research question, as the nature of the documents made evidence of other areas such as learning and the evaluator value difficult to discern.

This approach is textual analysis, intending to describe the content and purpose of messages of the text, coded using quantitative research analysis. Thematic units, or themes within the text, were pulled out to code this content using NVivo (Frey et al 1999). In this case, thematic units created were

the OEDC-DAC Criteria, criteria established by the Development Assistance Committee at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. With some evaluation reports already organised in this way, this categorisation gave a comprehensive basis for analysis. These 7 criteria, first established in 1991 and recognised across the humanitarian system, are:

Appropriateness or Relevance; Connectedness; Coherence; Coverage; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Impact (ALNAP, 2006)

Key themes and recommendations within these evaluations which did not fit within these criteria were included if they differed between responses and organisations. An additional focus on connectedness was included to study change between organisations, with particular attention to the form and value of this connectedness relative to the use of independent evaluations of other organisations.

Evaluation reports cannot evidence the change they bring about, and this stage of research was therefore used to find changes in organisations evaluated in both responses, to prepare for the interview stage, and to support or counter claims of change made in interviews. Understanding of the content of the text as the tangible and historic record of the evaluation is an important initial analytical step to examine themes, differences and similarities for further exploration (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The value of the report analysis stage is in substantial evidence of change, to be compared to the perceptions of interviewees in the significance and causes of change. These reports are written to be published publicly, and therefore there is a risk that the content is unduly positive (Laybourn, 2010). Changes claimed to have been caused by a previous evaluation may in fact have other causes or influences, and the next stage of research aims to explore the relative value of these.

Interviews and Questionnaires

As discovered in Chapter 2, an evaluation report marks the end of the evaluation process, rather than being the end goal of it, with the process itself having significant value (Forss et al, 2002). Interviews were therefore used to broaden knowledge from report analysis on change caused by independent external evaluation within and between organisations. Learning from evaluations, the value of the evaluation report and uses of the evaluation beyond the report were then uncovered in discussion,

through open ended interview questions written around these research questions. This stage uses grounded theory to build hypotheses on the importance of the evaluations on change and learning within these organisations (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Interview participants were selected through a snowballing method beginning with contacts at the DEC and through Oxford Brookes University. Policy makers and field staff of these organisations were sought for interview, as well as those independently conducting the evaluations. The criteria for suitability for staff was that they had worked for the organisation on the Gaza response within one or both of these responses. Knowledge of or inclusion in the evaluation process was not a requirement. Participants interviewed are listed in the table below.

It was not possible to talk to staff at Save the Children or World Vision for this research, and interviewees selected are therefore representative of different roles and perspectives on the ActionAid and CARE evaluations, as well as independent evaluators of all evaluations studied.

Name	Organisation	Date	Interview or questionnaire
Aniss Abu Al Atta, N., and Abu-Ghali, A.	PARC (ActionAid partner in Gaza)	06/08/2017	Questionnaire
Bhattacharjee, A.	Independent Evaluator- CARE response, 2009-2011	04/08/2017	Questionnaire
Kahlout, M.	CARE	01/08/2017	Interview
Noyes, M.	ActionAid	11/07/2017	Interview
Ferretti, S.	Independent Evaluator- ActionAid responses 2009-2011 and 2014-2016	13/07/2017	Interview
Shuaibi, A.	CARE	13/07/2017	Interview
Wihaidi, R., and Wehaidy, R.	Independent Evaluators- World Vision responses 2009-2011 and 2014-2016 and Save the Children response 2014-2016	24/08/2017	Interview

Figure 7: Table of interview participants

These semi-structured interviews were based on questions developed as show in Appendices A-D. The open-ended, semi-structured interview approach allows revelation of detail and complexity in responses while preserving some direction and data generalisability (Hammersley, 2008). The interview template, however, designed to give clearer understanding to potential participants, was used by some respondents to overcome language and availability barriers as a questionnaire. The collection of data through questionnaires rather than interviews has limitations, such as concerning

the writing abilities of respondents or the lack of dynamic dialogue adapting to previous answers (Patton, 2015). These participants provided full and valuable answers, so this option was increasingly given to contacts reached in later stages of research gathering. Due to restrictions in availability, one of the three evaluators contacted also asked to receive a questionnaire rather than being interviewed. This questionnaire, directly adapted from interview guides, is attached at Appendix E.

As in the text analysis, thematic units in interview responses were coded with software to organise and analyse data; in this case with NVivo (Frey et al, 1999). This is necessary and valuable to bring together responses contributing to research questions due to the flexible nature of interview discussion. This focus on general themes preserves anonymity of the participant, by avoiding directly linking them or their organisation to their statements. This anonymity allows for more open discussion and preserves ethical integrity of the research, by assuring that no unnecessarily harmful information is released (Neuman, 2012). Participants gave voluntary, informed consent to be interviewed for this research; particularly important in light of the political challenges of the Gaza context.

Interview responses gathered are reflective of only a small number of staff from each organisation, giving their opinion as they understand the context of the question. There may also be issues of bias here, as with the reports, in instances where staff or evaluators exaggerate or overestimate evaluation use. Particularly for questions relating to how much an individual has learned, it is not possible to validate responses given, and staff may attribute learning to an evaluation to a lesser or greater extent while in conversation about the evaluation. This relates to participants' understanding of the audience and purpose of responses, causing conscious and unconscious selectiveness (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Collating Methods

Results of both textual analysis comparison and interviews come together to respond to my research questions, using interview responses to support and challenge evidence of change as seen in evaluation reports. Evidence of lack of change, or an absence of evidence showing it, is also challenged in interviews to establish if learning has taken place and to understand perceptions on causes of this.

Comparisons between ActionAid and World Vision responses in 2009-2011 and 2014-2016 give an insight into the level of change within the organisations between these responses. Although Save the

Children and CARE were each evaluated in just one of the responses, recommendations from the evaluation report can be compared with interview answers to establish awareness of and change resulting from the evaluation. These can also be used as 'control' cases, to explore change taking place without an evaluation, which therefore must have had other drivers. The perspective of the independent consultants conducting these evaluations is used to gain a deeper understanding of the reports' contents, and to investigate learning and change from this external viewpoint.

Limitations

Access to participants, particularly those working in the 2009-2011 response, was a key issue, due to high staff turnover in humanitarian organisations. This means many staff have moved on in the 6 years since the end of this response; an issue affecting evaluation use as well, as explored in Chapter 2 (Patton et al., 1977). Most interview participants were therefore only able to talk about the most recent response, rather than lessons learned and changes made between the two.

Those reached were therefore limited in number, so their views may not reflect those of the organisation. I have taken reasonable measures to assure participants that interviews are confidential and will not be used to criticise organisational or individual learning. Lack of conscious or subconscious bias of participants cannot be guaranteed, and may also occur in reports. Some report types contained limited information on specific findings, making evidence of change harder to find.

Organisational reluctance proved a further obstacle, with some citing difficulties in contacting appropriate staff from either response, or the specific nature of recommendations made. Staff reached for my research were often Gaza based and did not have English as a first language. While language competency was high, this can cause misinterpretations on both sides, and may have meant the exclusion of some potential participants. Giving respondents the choice of participating in an interview or completing the template (Appendix A) has helped to overcome this.

Discovery of few similarities between recommendations made in 2011 evaluations with those of 2016 would not prove that change is directly caused by the evaluation, due to the impossibility of proving direct causative links. While interviews seek to further establish this, evaluations are likely to be one of several factors influencing change, with no means of concretely proving causation. The value of this research is qualitative exploration of perceptions of causation, which cannot be proven.

Chapter 4: Change within Organisations

Analysis of evaluation reports contributes to determination of policy and practice changes made by organisations, looking for causal links between these changes and evaluation recommendations. Change most likely to be evidenced is Instrumental Use of recommendations, although the placement of these crises in a global context can mean that other factors have influenced changes, through Conceptual Use. This may also have come about through Process Use in the evaluation itself, although this will not be distinguishable from reports.

Evidence of Change: ActionAid

ActionAid's programmes in Gaza were subject to independent external evaluation in both the 2009-2011 and 2014-2016 response. The below table compares context, purpose and approach of each of ActionAid's evaluations in advance of analysis of common themes within recommendations, with similarities highlighted using italics and underlining. Differences in context in Gaza itself have been discussed in Chapter 2.

As the table indicates, neither was an End of Project or End of Programme evaluation designed to review and suggest operational changes. The 2010 report provided a strategic intervention overview, while that produced in 2015 was a mid-term evaluation to review and reflect on progress, with a focus on learning directly affecting the ongoing programme. This is important when reviewing reports, as lack of inclusion of an issue may not indicate its absence from ActionAid's response, nor of its exclusion from the evaluation. Both ActionAid evaluations were conducted by the same external consultant, Dr Ferretti, facilitating comparison between the two even in light of these differences in purpose.

	First evaluation- July 2010 Dr Silva Ferretti	Second evaluation- June 2015 Dr Silva Ferretti
Programme Type	*Gaza Emergency Response Programme*	*Emergency Response Programme*- including programmes run by partners
Programme Length	Feb 2009-June 2010- 16 months Phase 1- May-Dec 2009 Phase 2- Jan-June 2010- delays	July 2014- (Evaluated 9 months in to 2-year programme)
Programme overview	Initial phase- assessment and *emergency kit distribution* Phase 1- *Livelihood and psychosocial support projects* Phase 2- *Partnership working* increases, focus on media	Initial phase- Cash voucher distribution, NFI and *winterisation kit distribution* Second phase- *Working with partners* for longer-term recovery, including *psychosocial support, women's livelihoods*, medical help, reconstruction
Evaluation Type	Strategic intervention overview	Mid-term evaluation
Evaluation purpose and objectives	"To assess the role of ActionAid in contributing to the humanitarian response and early recovery in Gaza and determine the efficacy of the programme's distinct focus and approach. Specifically, this evaluation will: - Assess the impact of the humanitarian response - Evaluate internal processes and capacity of AAI and AA Au in implementing the Gaza programme - Identify and assess opportunities for the future, possible methods of operation and scaling up in Gaza" (Ferretti, 2010, p.3)	"This evaluation intends to be also an opportunity to assess, within the current context: - What is the vision of partners, and their capacities to realize it as the programme transitions from emergency response to longer term programming - To bring in a framework that responds to the strategic mandate of ActionAid" (Ferretti, 2015, p.5)

Figure 8: ActionAid Evaluations, from Ferretti, 2010 and Ferretti, 2015

The 2009-2011 response shows thorough participatory needs assessments, but although the initial assessment was conducted quickly, implementation of later phases was delayed by this thoroughness (Ferretti, 2010). Participation of the affected community was a strength of both responses through close links with local organisations. The 2009-2011 intervention "confirmed the capacity of [ActionAid] to set responses centred on participation/community involvement" and that of 2014-2016 challenges ActionAid to introduce innovative participation tools for (Ferretti, 2010, p.11, and 2015).

Accountability is evidenced in the 2009-2011 report, but does not comply with ActionAid's own organisational standards; staff are reported to have had limited knowledge of the Accountability,

Learning and Planning System (ALPS), leading to a lack of innovation and advancement in accountability practices by ActionAid's high standards (Ferretti, 2010, p.19-20). The 2015 report again notes the programme's compliance with international standards of accountability without meeting ActionAid commitments to exceed these (Ferretti, 2015). This is therefore a recommendation which did not lead to explicit change between responses.

The organisation's response in 2009-2011 was reported to have no evident complaints mechanism (Ferretti, 2010, p.21). While no specific mention of this is made in 2015 due to the nature of this evaluation and report, recommendations heavily emphasise a need for increased communication with and participation of affected communities, which could occur through feedback and complaints processes.

Connectedness, bringing short and long term thinking together, is an important area of improvement for ActionAid between these responses, as the organisation developed a more sustainable presence in Gaza (ALNAP, 2006, p.20). Before the 2009-2011 response, ActionAid had no Gaza presence and although this programme sought to foster longer-term engagement, operations ceased following the 2-year response (Ferretti, 2010, p.6). ActionAid learned from this, committing to long-term presence in Gaza in its 2013-2017 strategy and initiating a 3-year response plan when responding to the 2014 emergency (Ferretti, 2015, p.5). Recommendations in the 2015 report target a deepening of the long-term effects and sustainability of ActionAid's work in Gaza, the foundations of which were laid between crises and in the approach of the 2014-2016 response.

ActionAid in its 2009-2011 response strove to engage partners in needs assessments from the initial stages, and sought local partnerships to improve coverage and build capacity. The 2015 report, however, recommends increased involvement of affected populations, strengthening advocacy by building communication and accountability which had therefore potentially deteriorated.

Efforts in 2009-2011 to provide psychosocial support in Gaza intended to connect with local mental health organisations through a referral system which did not materialise, showing a lack of connectedness (Ferretti, 2010). ActionAid's 2009-2011 work in Gaza also included a focus on protection, but did not connect this with international policy work (Ferretti, 2010). Increased links between local and international action within ActionAid are also recommended in 2015, although recent improvements are recognised. The 2015 report underlines the need to link future objectives to a coherent, strategic vision of change, as well as highlighting the need for increased coherence in

psychosocial support to drive resilience, without further mention of improvements to this (Ferretti, 2015, p.14).

Dr Ferretti's 2010 evaluation advises strategic agreement on whether focus should be on immediate relief or recovery which can target the most marginalised. This lack of direction had put pressure on programme staff (Ferretti, 2010, p.7). Efforts were made in the 2014-2016 response to ensure inclusion of marginalised groups and in remote areas, an area identified as needing to be strengthened but towards which efforts are already being made, implying progress from the first report (Ferretti, 2015).

The 2009-2011 ActionAid response in Gaza was notable for its effectiveness; "despite access challenges…and the relatively small size of the OPt team, ActionAid/Austcare managed to rapidly and effectively mount a response" (Ferretti, 2010, p.5) The commitment of staff in securing support from ActionAid international in early stages was important to this, although this support was not sustained throughout the programme. A three-year organisational objective promoting effective development is commended in the 2014-2016 response, showing clear organisational understanding of the importance of this (Ferretti, 2015). There is a lack of emphasis on effectiveness in this second response, but this does not necessarily indicate complacency or regression in this area.

The impact of ActionAid's 2009-2011 response was noted to have had long-term potential, missed due to the closing of ActionAid operations in Gaza after 2011. ActionAid continued to have some presence through its West Bank office and some partnership working (Ferretti, 2010). Impact is not detailed by either evaluation: the 2010 report looks at strategic intervention, and the 2015 report as a mid-term evaluation cannot establish overall impacts. Both reports were produced too early to be able to accurately comment on wider social, environmental, economic or technical impacts (ALANP, 2006).

ActionAid's 2014-2016 response does therefore show some evidence of change since 2009-2011. This is in the form of connectedness between short and long-term planning; an area of marked improvement; and more subtle or implied improvements such as in programme coverage in reaching and including marginalised people. Neither advanced accountability to meet organisational standards, nor coherence between actors, projects, sectors and within the ActionAid network appear to change between responses. As mentioned, the nature of these reports as strategic overview and reflective,

mid-term evaluation means that detailed analysis of programme performance and improvement is not the primary purpose.

Evidence of Change: World Vision

World Vision also faced independent evaluation in both responses, and comparison between these programmes and evaluations can therefore use the same approach as that taken for Action Aid. The first of these evaluations was conducted by Impact Consulting Ltd., the second by Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. The evaluators leading these, however, were the same in both responses. Use of the same individuals to lead the evaluation; as in the case of ActionAid; suggests organisational confidence and satisfaction with the first evaluation, as well as increasing continuity in approach. It also allows for changes based on previous evaluation to be directly acknowledged, or lack of change to be emphasised.

Both of the evaluations of World Vision are End of Project evaluations, and therefore more likely than the ActionAid evaluations to evidence performance and change. Similarities between these two projects and evaluations with regards to approach, purpose and context are shown below, highlighted using italics and underlining.

	First evaluation- Feb 2010 Impact Consulting Ltd.	Second evaluation- Jan 2016 Al Athar Global Consulting Inc.
Project Type	Disaster Response Project (DRP)	Gaza Relief Response and Early Recovery (Phase 1 and 2)
Project Length	01/01/09- 30/09/09- 9 months	15 months
Project Goal	"To improve the _food security_ of _families_ affected by the recent Gaza crisis" (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010, p.ii)	"To meet urgent needs of war-affected children and their _families_ in the Gaza Strip through ensuring _access to food_, basic hygiene materials, psychosocial care and protection, and essential medical care" (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), p.1)
Evaluation Type	_End of project evaluation_	_End of project evaluation_
Evaluation purpose and objectives	-Assess how far _objectives have been met_ -Assess intended, unintended, positive and negative consequences -Establish if funds were used as planned -Hold programme to humanitarian principles and standards -Assess _accountability to beneficiaries_ -Find out if _learning reviews_ were carried out to inform implementation	- Assess project effectiveness and _progress on objectives_ -Assess project efficiency and efficient use of resources for target community -Determine relevance of project to match target community's needs -Study sustainability of results and consideration of long term in emergencies -Assess _accountability to beneficiaries_ in accordance with accountability frameworks -Assess organisational capacities and _ability to adapt_ based on M&E to meet target community needs

Figure 9: World Vision Evaluations, from Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010 and Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., (a) 2016

World Vision's 2009-2011 evaluation report praises the appropriateness of projects in terms of culture, context and affected communities, assured by strong experience and partnerships in Gaza (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). Equally the 2014-2016 response report confirms that World Vision had maintained a strong understanding of the context and of local needs, particularly noting the targeting of vulnerable groups not reached by other organisations (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)).

While local committees were included in decision making and feedback in 2009-2011, this report recommends increased focus on involving affected people throughout the programme (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), and Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010) Affected populations were involved

"in varying degrees" in the 2014-2016 response, although World Vision did take care to maintain relationships with communities targeted (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), p.4, p.5).

A recommendation for World Vision to work to establish a capacity building programme for local organisations in the 2009-2011 evaluation shows the potential for further community partnerships. This is reinforced in comment on compliance with international quality standards, as the evaluation found one project containing no evidence of user participation or capacity building (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). In the 2014-2016 report, there is careful mention of World Vision's openness to feedback and responsiveness to recommendations, including a better understanding of compliance with humanitarian standards, and an inclusiveness of stakeholders including affected populations (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)).

In 2014-2016, the response was found to comply with organisational accountability frameworks, to share information in an appropriate manner, and to have a clear and structured complaints mechanism (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)). This mechanism in particular is an evident improvement from the previous response, during which a lack of formal, documented complaints procedure was a key weakness (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010).

Coherence with other actors in the 2009-2011 response was restricted by coordination mechanisms rather than by World Vision's own failings (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). World Vision played an active role in establishing formal and informal connections, aided by its long experience in the region, effectively reducing duplication and increasing coverage (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). The 2014-2016 response saw high levels of communication between DEC members in the response, sharing lessons and experience as well as improving coverage and targeting (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)).

While World Vision's 2009-2011 response coverage was good, consideration of gender took place "to a lesser extent" than other cross cutting issues (Impact Consulting Ltd, 2010, p.iii). Development of Gender in Disaster policies such as quotas on female committee membership is recommended (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). Gender considerations receive minimal attention in the 2014-2016 response report, although it is noted that World Vision in its work with partners gave consideration to female representation (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)). This could suggest that World Vision met their obligations to gender inclusion in 2014-2016, but perhaps that this was not successful enough for particular acclaim.

Cost efficiency in the 2009-2011 response proved difficult to calculate, but it was concluded that funds had been managed responsibly and built on previous World Vision programmes and experience in the area (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). In 2014-2016, financial management and reporting were notably rigorous and detailed, allowing for confident assertion of cost efficiency (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)). This is a key improvement in transparency in reporting, allowing for efficiency to be more easily and reliably proven.

Effectiveness of the 2014-2016 response is evidenced in the report, with achievement of "objectives and outputs in an effective manner with noted quality" (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), p.28). While the 2009-2011 response was also effective, elements implemented by partners of World Vision were managed less effectively. The evaluation concludes that World Vision could have taken a more active role in these projects to improve quality, targeting and monitoring (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). This is not a recommendation of the 2014-2016 response, in which the strength and commitment of the World Vision team is lauded (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)).

Observations in the 2009-2011 evaluation found considerable positive impact: "we were left with the impression that there was no one who had not benefited from the project in some way!" (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010, p.14). This went beyond immediate lifesaving, including training provision, although limited attention was paid to improving the status of women (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). In 2014-2016, World Vision's programmes were again shown to meet targets, providing vital support expected to increase resilience even where longer-term effects could not yet be measured. The extreme overachieving of some targets in this response raises some evaluator concerns on quality which do not arise in the earlier evaluation (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)). Despite the 2009-2011 recommendation to strengthen its work on supporting the fishing sector, this does not appear in the 2014-2016 response.

World Vision was recommended in the 2009-2011 response to create a dedicated Emergency Response Team to increase capacity in future emergencies (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). This was created and became a useful asset in more effective response in 2014-2016, a direct result of learning explicitly attributed to the 2009-2011 response evaluation (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a)).

The 2014-2016 World Vision response in Gaza is noted in its evaluation report to have been influenced by "acknowledgment of recommendations and proposed areas of improvement in annual evaluation

review of delivered projects, especially the final external evaluation of the 2010 DEC Disaster Response Project" (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), p.30). This statement reinforces examples explored evidencing organisational change between these responses, shown through establishment of a clear complaints mechanism, thorough financial reporting and stronger involvement of affected populations. This may have included improvements in gender considerations, as this was a key recommendation in 2009-2011 and is remarkably absent from the later evaluation report.

Themes of 2009 Response: ActionAid, CARE, World Vision

Analysis of these three evaluations together allows for a more developed understanding of factors which may have been related to the response itself rather than the organisations' approach. This is important in light of the fact that CARE faced independent external evaluation only in the 2009 response, and this section will focus mainly on CARE. With regard to the ActionAid and World Vision programmes, establishing themes of the first response may reveal that issues and recommendations related more to contextual factors than to those within the organisation's control.

	ActionAid- July 2010 Dr Silva Ferretti	CARE- Aug 2010 Abhijit Bhattacharjee	World Vision- Feb 2010 Impact Consulting Ltd.
Project/Programme Type	Gaza Emergency Response Programme	Livelihood Recovery Project and Rebuilding Women's Health Services Project	Disaster Response Project (DRP)
Project/Programme Length	Feb 2009-June 2010- 16 months Phase 1- May-Dec 2009 Phase 2- Jan-June 2010- delays	Livelihoods- March 2009- Sept 2009, 6 months Women's Health- Oct 2009- Aug 2010, 10 months	01/01/09- 30/09/09- 9 months

	ActionAid- July 2010 Dr Silva Ferretti	CARE- Aug 2010 Abhijit Bhattacharjee,	World Vision- Feb 2010 Impact Consulting Ltd.
Project/Programme Goal or Overview	Initial phase- assessment and emergency kit distribution Phase 1- Livelihood and psychosocial support projects Phase 2- Partnership working increases, focus on media	Livelihood Recovery: Assisting farmers in replanting land and establishing small farms Women's Health: Increase access to women's health facilities, improve community health capacities and awareness	"To improve the food security of families affected by the recent Gaza crisis" (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010, p.ii)
Evaluation Type	Strategic intervention overview	End of project evaluation	End of project evaluation
Evaluation purpose and objectives	"To assess the role of ActionAid in contributing to the humanitarian response and early recovery in Gaza and determine the efficacy of the programme's distinct focus and approach. Specifically, this evaluation will: - Assess the impact of the humanitarian response - Evaluate internal processes and capacity of AAI and AA Au in implementing the Gaza programme - Identify and assess opportunities for the future, possible methods of operation and scaling up in Gaza" (Ferretti, 2010, p.3)	"…assessing the impact of two DEC-funded projects implemented by CARE, the "Quick Livelihood Recovery Project" and "Rebuilding Women's Health Services in the Northern Gaza Strip project" on stakeholders in targeted communities, partners, beneficiaries, women and farmers" (Bhattacharjee, 2010, p.7)	-Assess how far objectives have been met -Assess intended, unintended, positive and negative consequences -Establish if funds were used as planned -Hold programme to humanitarian principles and standards -Assess accountability to beneficiaries -Find out if learning reviews were carried out to inform implementation

Figure 10: Evaluations of 2009-2011 response, from Ferretti, 2010, Bhattacharjee, 2010 and Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010

CARE's assessment and understanding of local needs ensured that projects were relevant. These were conducted quickly and in consultation with local organisations, particularly for the livelihoods project. Recommending measures to implement an appropriate pricing policy for some women's health care aspects suggest there is still progress to be made in this area (Bhattacharjee, 2010, p.24). This was a strength of all three responses evaluated in 2009-2011, although both World Vision and CARE were encouraged to further this.

All three responses were found to be accountable to affected populations, with all but ActionAid deemed to have met organisational accountability standards. As with the World Vision and ActionAid programmes in this 2009-2011 response, CARE was found to lack a formal complaints mechanism (Bhattacharjee, 2010). This could suggest a system wide issue in this period.

Recommendations are made in the CARE evaluation report around improving sustainability by linking projects funded by different donors together, increasing partnership working to create a more comprehensive response (Bhattacharjee, 2010, p.24). This is the only evidence of a need to improve connectedness in these responses.

CARE projects were in agreement with policies and standards in its Humanitarian Accountability Framework, establishing a connection with international strategy that ActionAid did not achieve (Ferretti, 2010).

CARE played an active role in coordinating with partners in this response through clusters. The organisation sought to avoid duplication by coordinating with UNRWA and others working in the same sectors, as World Vision did in their response (Bhattacharjee, 2010). Communication with a range of partners ensured that CARE's selection of those reached was neutral and impartial (Bhattacharjee, 2010). Only World Vision faces limitations in its coverage of marginalised populations, giving minimal consideration to gender issues (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010). Gender is not identified as an issue in any of the other 2009-2011 reports.

The 2009-2011 evaluation reports establish the efficiency and effectiveness of all three responses, which were timely in their provision of assistance. One of CARE's project's benefits were yet to be fully realised and had suffered some delays beyond CARE's control (Bhattacharjee, 2010). This is a similar

issue to that of World Vision, who faced lower effectiveness in projects run by partners (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010).

The CARE evaluation report presents a positive impression of the organisation's response, with few recommendations or negative comments. This is generally true of all three organisations, and beyond a lack of established complaints processes there are few limitations that have affected them all.

Themes of 2014 Response: ActionAid, Save the Children, World Vision

As the World Vision and Save the Children 2014-2016 evaluations were both completed by the same consultants, an overlap in themes is perhaps more likely between these responses. Explanation of the background to the humanitarian response, for example, is identical in these reports. As with CARE in the review of the 2009-2011 response, Save the Children's programmes will be the focus here, comparing with ActionAid and World Vision to identify common themes across the 2014-2016 response.

	ActionAid- June 2015 Dr Silva Ferretti	Save the Children- June 2016, Al Athar Global Consulting Inc.	World Vision- Jan 2016 Al Athar Global Consulting Inc.
Project or Programme Type	Emergency Response Programme- including programmes run by partners	Gaza Emergency Response (20 different interventions)	Gaza Relief Response and Early Recovery (Phase 1 and 2)
Project or Programme Length	July 2014- (Evaluated 9 months in to 2- year programme)	July 2014-June 2016 2 years	15 months
Project or Programme Goal or Overview	Initial phase- Cash voucher distribution, NFI and winterisation kit distribution Second phase- Working with partners for longer-term recovery, including psychosocial support, women's livelihoods, medical help, reconstruction	"To immediately save lives and alleviate the suffering of vulnerable children in Gaza, and ensure a return to normalcy as swiftly as possible following hostilities" (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (b), p.ii)	"To meet urgent needs of war-affected children and their families in the Gaza Strip through ensuring access to food, basic hygiene materials, psychosocial care and protection, and essential medical care" (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc., 2016 (a), p.1)

	ActionAid- June 2015 Dr Silva Ferretti	Save the Children- June 2016, Al Athar Global Consulting Inc.	World Vision- Jan 2016 Al Athar Global Consulting Inc.
Evaluation Type	Mid-term evaluation	Overall review of emergency response- not project specific	End of project evaluation
Evaluation purpose and objectives	"This evaluation intends to be also an opportunity to assess, within the current context: - What is the vision of partners, and their capacities to realize it as the programme transitions from emergency response to longer term programming - To bring in a framework that responds to the strategic mandate of ActionAid" (Ferretti, 2015, p.5)	Assessing the effectiveness and quality of the response against OECD-DAC criteria by looking at: - Quality and effectiveness - Accountability and gender mainstreaming - Efficient use of resources - Capacity building and resilience measures - Adherence to codes of conduct - Long term impact in recovery and future planning - Recommending long term strategies on quality and accountability	- Assess project effectiveness and progress on objectives -Assess project efficiency and efficient use of resources for target community -Determine relevance of project to match target community's needs -Study sustainability of results and consideration of long term in emergencies -Assess accountability to beneficiaries in accordance with accountability frameworks -Assess organisational capacities and ability to adapt based on M&E to meet target community needs

Figure 11: Evaluations of 2014-2016 response, from Ferretti, 2015, Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (a), 2016, and Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016

Assessments allowing for feedback and adaptation based on local needs were successfully used in most Save the Children projects, as with those of World Vision, as both had strong a background in the region (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (a) and (b), 2016). There was, however, little evidence of Save the Children engaging in ongoing consultation within the response to promote accountability. World Vision and ActionAid seem to have been more successful in ensuring this participation and accountability, although they are each recommended to further these efforts.

It was identified in the 2009-2011 reports that none of the organisations evaluated had established formal complaints processes. The Save the Children 2014-2016 report found this to be in place and in use, supporting the theory that this was an issue across the system which had for many organisations been resolved in 2014-2016. The report discusses efforts to connect and share good practice among DEC members, including on feedback and complaints systems, further validating this theory (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016).

Save the Children "had a clear vision for transiting from emergency to recovery across sectors," demonstrating strong connectedness in its programming (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016, p.iv). This was strong in projects working to build social resilience in light of worsening economic and social conditions, but weaker in the organisation's M&E structures, which were less adaptable to a recovery stage (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016, p.33 and p.v). All organisations evaluated were found to have connected long-term thinking to emergency response, a particular improvement for ActionAid in establishing a long-term presence (Ferretti, 2015).

The Save the Children response was successful in its coordination of efforts around the overall goal, although connections with other international organisations in education required improvement (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016). ActionAid was less able to connect its programmes to an overall strategic goal, although had notably improved on this (Ferretti, 2015). These organisations were themselves communicating to coordinate responses, with regular meetings beginning in November 2014 between DEC members acting in Gaza (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016, p.24)

Figures on coverage of Save the Children's programmes show wide reach across the affected child population, meeting many targets but not its initial overall aim (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016, p.3). Gender as an under-examined theme is raised only in the World Vision 2009-2011 response, yet in Save the Children's 2014-2016 report, gender is a cross-cutting issue which has been successfully recognised by the programme (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010, and Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016). This is interesting when considering that this Save the Children report was conducted by the same evaluator as both World Vision reports.

Effectiveness was a strength of both Save the Children and World Vision in 2014-2016, while ActionAid's report makes little mention of this (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (a) and (b), 2016). One Save the Children project raised quality and effectiveness concerns due to poor timing, and insufficient and inappropriate resources (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016, p.8).

There are signs of positive impact in the Save the Children response, although the organisation is recommended to establish simple, achievable objectives with partners (Al Athar Global Consulting Inc. (b), 2016). This would improve ability to measure response outputs and impact, some of which will not yet have become evident. These positive impressions alongside an inability to measure longer-term impact are also evidenced in World Vision and ActionAid.

Summary

Throughout the four organisations and six evaluations, some common themes arose. These have been disaggregated by organisation and response in the sections above, and by using the OEDC-DAC criteria in the table below.

Appropriateness or Relevance	Complaints mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability were found to be lacking in 2009-2011, although these had been established by the later response
	Participation is a recurrent recommendation, with even organisations noted to have been successful in this consistently advised to improve it
Connectedness	Connectedness between emergency response and recovery was a consistent strength, with ActionAid's lack of programme continuation after 2009-2011 as the only exception to this
	World Vision had integrated its projects into its development work in the region, a strength which "tends to be usually neglected in most emergency responses" (Impact Consulting Ltd., 2010, p.v)- Impression that this is not the norm.
Coverage	Establishing and meeting realistic targets for coverage in hard to reach areas is not always specified in these reports, with one report noting huge overachievement in some areas due to poor planning, and another failing to establish simpler objectives
	Cross-cutting issues were underexplored in these reports, with World Vision paying insufficient attention to gender in 2009-2011 and Save the Children casually mentioned as succeeding in this.
Impact	Impact of these projects was difficult to establish in all cases due to the timing of the evaluation, giving limited evidence on overall consequences

Figure 12: Common Themes from OEDC-DAC criteria

These reports do not all explore each of the OEDC-DAC criteria in detail, with lack of inclusion of a criterion from the report potentially caused by a lack of concern over or importance accorded to this area. The evaluations cannot be credited with change in these areas. None of these evaluations claim to establish and evaluate the programme's impact, for example, so will not have driven change in terms of increasing focus on this. Equally, evaluation reports have a limited focus on cross-cutting issues, so would not be responsible for increased sensitivity in this area.

While some evaluations have linked recommendations with changes found in future evaluations, organisations evaluated only once can be seen to have strong responses despite lack of previous evaluation. Establishment of a complaints mechanism between the two responses, for example, occurs even in organisations evaluated in only one response.

This understanding of the evaluation reports and comparison of themes occurring across organisations and responses aids in understanding change and the role of the evaluation of this, highlighting the role of other factors by showing changes in those which were only evaluated once. These factors could involve external evaluations of other organisations, including between organisations studied, which will be explored through interviews. A comprehensive view of the evaluation's value also involves study of aspects not recorded in reports, and the role of the process of evaluation before the report creation. These cannot be determined from text analysis alone, and will be examined through interviews.

Chapter 5: Change, Learning and the Evaluator

Responses from interviews and questionnaires gave valuable insight into the perceptions of staff and evaluators around independent external evaluations. To best understand and categorise these responses, each research question is addressed in turn.

Evaluations as a Cause of Change

Do organisations make policy and/or practice changes based on independent external evaluation of their humanitarian response?

Staff interviewed were confident that the relevant and achievable recommendations made by these evaluations had brought change. This was more likely to be remembered and attributed to an evaluation by staff who had been working with that organisation at the time; some policy level staff had not read reports of evaluations from before they arrived, although they were confident that changes would have been made at programme level. One interview participant was not aware of an independent external evaluation conducted on the organisation before they began working there. This indicates that either changes had been taken on board but not clearly ascribed to the evaluation, or that the evaluation's comments had been disregarded. An interview with another member of this same organisation suggested that the evaluation did not promote large scale change; it was circulated, used for reporting and perhaps made some operational changes. This is itself a potential reason for lack of awareness of it elsewhere in the organisation.

Clear purpose and strong staff involvement at different levels throughout the evaluation process were consistent themes in encouraging implementation, with only one example found of an impression of changes being implemented alongside some initial confusion around the evaluation's purpose. Generally, interviews found agreement within organisations and with evaluators on the objectives of the evaluation process, although one participant commented on the evaluation's limited purpose as a checking exercise as limiting its analysis and value.

For ActionAid, evaluated in both instances, staff noted a deliberate effort to repeat the successes of the first process in the second evaluation, with the evaluator left with the impression that many of the recommendations made had been actioned. Smaller recommendations are easier to implement

than those which go beyond the programme, but interviews revealed a consistent belief that evaluations should also make these wider recommendations.

With comments that change and learning are "not a one-time process that starts and ends with evaluation," interviews also revealed other causes of change in these organisations, leading to discussions on the value of these relative to independent external evaluations. One interviewee in particular called Gaza a "bad case study" in its atypical approach to using evaluations for wider change, due to the difficult political situation. When crisis hit, staff in Gaza drew on their experiences and evaluations but also on existing capacities in semi-developmental programmes, due to the chronic problems in the region. It was also noted that the organisation acted in other responses around the world during and between these crises, and learned lessons from these which also contributed to policy change and institutional learning. Experience, in this global sense and through ongoing work in Gaza, was noted as significant in making dynamic changes; this can come from regular internal Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), which can feed in to independent evaluation. After Action Reviews were also commonly referenced as a key driver of policy and practice change, although as these can be influenced by recommendations of external evaluations, this is not completely independent of the evaluations studied. Emergency Preparedness Plans were created by many organisations working in Gaza following the first crisis, based on experience and lessons from evaluations, and these were then used to help respond to unexpected changes in circumstances.

As explored in Chapter 2, many factors can hinder and prevent change. Those factors which emerged as the most important from these discussions were around context and evaluation approaches, although the need for the organisation to be flexible in its policy development was also raised. The complexity of the context and changes in the situation between crises made recommendations difficult to implement and lessons difficult to transfer. This was exacerbated by the involvement of multiple donors, with different requirements and regulations for use of funds. Availability of financial and human resources was a factor in its own right, and donors had a further impact in a reported instance of an evaluation commissioned before the project had begun, giving limited scope and value to the evaluation. Timing of the evaluation was considered to be an issue in other ways, such as when a project was evaluated after completion when many staff had left the organisation. Evaluators highlighted a difference in evaluation approach for this crisis as opposed to a development intervention, as the emergency response needed leaves limited space for reflection and for longer-term planning. These emergency response evaluations do not look at the institutional aspects of the organisation, while those evaluations which were not typical End of Project evaluations did not focus

on the operational changes to programme implementation. Lack of consideration of the next stages of the response was a given barrier to implementing recommendations, when the focus was on mistakes of the past rather than tackling them going forward.

Other Organisations' Evaluations as a Cause of Change

Do organisations make changes based on independent external evaluation of comparable humanitarian responses by other organisations working in the same location?

When asked to consider other causes of policy and programme change, independent external evaluation of other organisations was not suggested by any of the interview participants as important. Coordination and communication with local and international organisations was seen to be highly important, in sharing lessons and experiences such as through cluster meetings and coordination committees. This process allows for learning during a response, rather than waiting for an evaluation once the response has taken place, particularly important due to the access and security difficulties in Gaza, causing some participants to call for more focus on this area for continued improvement.

Lessons shared between these organisations included around DEC member agencies working with the same partners, or in the same geographical areas. Technical information was also shared to help those working on similar sectors and projects, with this coordination generally overseen and facilitated by UNRWA. These organisations were in some instances working in areas which had not been reached by other agencies, so subsequently saw less coordination beyond local partners. Partners contacted saw a degree of transferability in lessons learned from the evaluation to their work with other partners in Gaza. Evaluators were themselves aware of the workings of other organisations in order to assure this coordination, where this was a focus of the evaluation.

Staff claimed to be willing to read evaluations or information provided by other organisations, implying a lack of access to what should be publicly available documentation. Reading independent external evaluations of other organisations was considered to be a useful activity if there was time for it, but that it was not a systematic process. The particularities of the Gaza context were mentioned again as causing difficulties in transferring some lessons in light of differences between organisations, programmes and evaluation approaches. Consequently, an organisation conducting a wide reaching, multi-sectoral programme which was evaluated as a whole would create a report which would be more likely to be read than an evaluation of a narrower project. Executive summaries of evaluation

reports were considered useful tools for disseminating lessons, although one evaluator warned of loss of context and the risk of learning only superficial and generic lessons, a hazard both within and across organisations.

Evaluations as a Cause of Learning

Do field staff, policy makers and evaluators themselves learn from independent external evaluation, even where direct change to policy or practice is not evident?

In a highly complex and politically difficult environment, a lesson learned for one organisation was "given what we can and can't do, how do we do what we can do effectively?" Staff appreciated that despite difficulties in establishing lessons which could be learned for other responses, opportunities for learning within the response were utilised. Due to the ongoing nature of the situation in Gaza, interviewees recognised a need to focus on learning in order to "enhance efficiency and effectiveness" in case of a potential future crisis. Particularly in reports including a strong voice of affected populations, evaluators believed simply reading the report to be effective in improving policy makers' understanding of on-the-ground realities. This use of evaluation reports promotes learning across the organisation with a view to contributing to future change, a Conceptual Use.

Evaluators also spoke of Process Use in staff involvement in learning from the evaluation itself, with critical reflection as a key purpose. Learning was an important aspect of the evaluation in the eyes of most of those interviewed, with participatory approaches generally accepted as the means of achieving this. The intention of this in some cases was explicitly to create space for staff learning and acceptance of the evaluator's conclusions before the report is written. Caution to ensure staff could not have undue influence on the evaluation's conclusions happened to varying degrees; from a strong learning focus which disregards this independence, to almost excluding staff to guarantee it. Interestingly, staff from the organisation with such an independent evaluation process talked of learning between the two responses but clarified that this was not caused by this evaluation. The point that learning, as with change, can be caused by other factors was raised by others to reinforce the fact that evaluations do not occur in a vacuum.

Learning and Accountability were considered to be interconnected by those interviewed, with some distinguishing between accountability and auditing to ensure full understanding of this connection. Critical reflection and learning what is and is not possible was posited as real accountability, in order

to be held responsible for expectations set in programme goals. Donors were noted to have an interest in learning as well as accountability, to improve future programming as well as ensuring efficient use of funds.

This learning also included that of the evaluators themselves, with one aiming to leave every conversation with something that they or the organisation did not know. Evaluators reported development of skills and understanding in each evaluation undertaken, through the opportunity to experience and comprehend the situation on the ground. This learning takes place in the context of changing evaluation processes globally, creating a need to stay informed and an ability to apply skills and principles to different contexts, sectors, interventions and approaches.

The Report's Potential as a Cause of Change

What role should the evaluation report play in ensuring that recommendations are useful and used?

For recommendations to be implemented, it is assumed that the right people in the organisations need to read the evaluation reports produced. This assumption was challenged by an evaluator's comments that "the effort that goes in to writing a report is the one that produces less change because I am always surprised when people read it." While this suggests lower significance of an evaluation report, other evaluators commented on the changes in perception of evaluations by humanitarian organisations in the last 10 years, with an increase in attention paid to the report, process and results. Changes had extended the evaluator's input to include receiving and responding to comments following dissemination of the report. These comments; requesting clarifications, raising further questions or correcting any inaccuracy; demonstrate awareness of and interest in evaluation results from the point of view of the organisation, giving further importance to the evaluation report.

An evaluation report should translate logical findings into actionable solutions to issues discovered. Recommendations from reports should go beyond the project itself, a task made easier in evaluations which look at a whole response rather than a single, specific project. Evaluators commented on the need to state conclusions as well as recommendations in reports, highlighting positive aspects as well as driving further improvement to promote staff inclusion and support. Lack of inclusion of staff or of affected communities was seen as potentially undermining the organisation and making communities feel ignored, an opinion supported by staff and partners. This was seen as

particularly important due to the difficult political context, where any limitations or failings of the project exposed in the report may have good reason, increasing the need for sensitisation discussions and feedback beyond the report.

One evaluator's comments that summarised recommendations from reports often include the same core themes, underlining the need for context given by the full report and by the process itself, is supported by findings in Chapter 4 of recurrent issues under the OEDC-DAC criteria.

The Evaluator's Actions as a Cause of Change

How can evaluators drive policy and practice change beyond the report?

Ensuring that the evaluation report is accessible and widely disseminated is important in ensuring that recommendations are used, with one interview revealing the existence of a DEC funded evaluation which I was unable to find and which does not seem to have been published publicly. Additionally, other staff interviewed did not seem aware of this evaluation, suggesting poor dissemination internally. In the light of comments on the limited readership of a report, however, this is not always the most important factor. Beyond publishing and disseminating the report, evaluators spoke of involvement in communicating results through workshops designed for staff and for partners, and through the production of short videos of interviews with affected people.

Strong efforts to involve staff in the evaluation process and through these dissemination methods did not prevent some surprise at the recommendations made, particularly by partners. These revelations were considered to be useful and achievable, however, contributing to development of tools for future responses with steps put in place to enable implementation of this. In another evaluation, the approach of the evaluator was to create independent recommendations which they would expect the organisation to accept even if they did not fully agree, a method which would discourage the involvement, collaboration and therefore learning of the staff for the sake of independence. To others interviewed, the importance of Process Use clearly outweighed this pure independent route.

The role of the evaluator after the process had finished was consistently limited, with evaluators left with no input and limited information on how their report had been actioned. Equally, evaluators and staff had limited contact before an evaluation began beyond preparation of documentation; although in all cases studied the evaluators had had prior experience with the organisation, so perhaps did not need time for familiarisation. Understanding of the workings of the organisation was considered important, although this could also be established during the process, giving more of an external eye.

Discussions with evaluators revealed that decisions on the evaluation's purpose are established and communicated as part of the Terms Of Reference, as expected, but also that a consultant proposing to conduct the evaluation would have an input in these within their proposal. Evaluators may have a particular approach to evaluations, made clear in their proposal, and in this way their successful application for the role legitimises their proposed methods

As highlighted by one evaluator, the evaluation report is not the evaluation. While the report and dissemination of its results are important, unpublished discussion of findings was highlighted as part of an evaluator's role. This frank conversation, borne of the evaluation process but not necessarily included in the report, exposes areas of concern to drive change while considering the value and appropriateness of highlighting this to the report's audience.

Results of these interview discussions revealed a much wider use of these evaluations than that evidenced in the reports. By bringing these sources together, a better understanding of change will be achieved, as well as of the value of the report in relation to these other evaluation uses.

Chapter 6: Bringing the Data Together

Evidence of Change within Organisations over Time

With both reports and interviews contributing to exploration of evaluation use for change within organisations over time, evidence seen in reports is generally reinforced by interviews. Analysis of evaluation reports from organisations evaluated in both responses has shown some evidence of change over time, with some direct references to change prompted by evaluation recommendations. For example, evaluation reports in almost all instances revealed a lack of complaints procedure in the 2009-2011 response, with this successfully established by the 2014-2016 response. In all cases where this was not clear in reports, interviews confirmed that this had taken place. This demonstrates change over time in every organisation studied, although it is difficult to confirm this as Instrumental Use of a particular evaluation. This may have been a system-wide change based on other influences, even where the later World Vision evaluation attributes this to previous recommendations. Interviews discussed the value of other information sources and ongoing activity of the organisation, which contribute to discussions alongside evaluation results to cause change through Conceptual Use.

Interview conversations were particularly useful in understanding change which was not shown in reports, as participants understood that some areas may be deliberately excluded from reports and raised instead through discussion and feedback processes. This mitigates the potential of resistance to findings by staff, allowing for understanding as suggested in existing literature (Clarke and Ramalingam, 2008).

While the ability to convert recommendations into broader organisational change was complicated by the difficult context, interviewees generally saw the evaluations as valuable within the response. Evaluations of single projects were found in some cases to give recommendations which did not promote this wider change, and while staff reported changes following these evaluations, they did not ascribe these to the evaluation itself.

Supported by reports, interviews conducted sought to determine the relative importance of Evaluation, Context and Organisation in the implementation of recommendations. These factors were found to be greatly inter-connected, with the importance of the context extending in to the context of the evaluation, its approach as decided by the organisation, and the flexibility of the evaluator's

role in this. For an effectively utilised evaluation, the organisation and evaluator should communicate and understand the limitations of the context and the intended result of the evaluation, as well as taking steps to ensure it is accepted, disseminated and integrated into organisational practice and policy.

Evidence of Change between Organisations over Time

Evidence of change between organisations unsurprisingly proved difficult to establish through report analysis. The evaluation reports, although often commending good practice in partnership working and lesson learning between organisations, do not identify explicit changes based on the reports of others. Cross-organisational learning over time was evidenced in interviews, shown to be more likely to result from other communications than from reading external evaluations of other organisations. Coordination between organisations was a common theme of all evaluation reports, as these DEC members and other organisations participated in sectoral clusters with UN agencies (Bhattacharjee, 2010). Lessons learned through this coordination are also utilised for Conceptual Use with evaluations.

The snowballing technique of reaching potential participants for interview often led to connections in partner organisations, with the role and importance of partners and partner relationships frequently commended in reports. These partner interviews provided a valuable and interesting insight into partnership working and the involvement of partners in external evaluations. Staff at partner organisations spoke about how the evaluation had affected them, as well as their understanding of the changes it had brought in the target organisation. These local organisations may have several partners, from DEC members or the wider international community, and can use lessons learned in the evaluation of one of these organisations to affect their workings with others.

Similarities in recommendations made of different organisations in the same response, as discovered in analysis of reports, support one evaluator's comments that recommendations of evaluations consistently focus on the same broad themes, with a deeper understanding of the context needed in order for this to be valuable. While other evaluators spoke of the value of Executive Summaries to give an overview of recommendations to other organisations, this view suggests limited use of evaluation reports for cross-organisational learning. Information from interviews revealed the scope of an organisation's programme to be a key contributing factor in other organisations' interest in reading its evaluation, with programmes covering multiple sectors more likely to be of interest than limited projects. Interviewees did not specify particular instances of learning or change from another

organisations' independent external evaluations in this case or in a more general sense, and other forms of communication as discussed were considered more useful in cross-organisational learning and change.

Evidence of Learning

The potential of an evaluation and its report to lead to change over time was seen to be weakened by narrow evaluations, low levels of staff participation in the process, and poor institutional memory caused by limited access to and awareness of previous evaluations. Inclusion of staff increases the contribution of the evaluation to learning by the evaluator, staff and organisation as a whole, leaving a more positive impression of the evaluation's value in contributing to change, even if Instrumental Use is not evidenced. While this learning was greatly valued by the majority of organisations and evaluators, this Process Use cannot be tangibly measured relative to direct change (Forss et al, 2002).

The evaluation which focused least on learning was also that which was considered by staff to have led to limited change, suggesting a link between the two in terms of impressions of staff. Staff in this organisation specifically noted that changes that had taken place had not occurred due to the evaluation, and while policy makers may actually have been influenced by the evaluation, the perspective of staff here is significant.

The Role of the Report

Recent changes in perceptions of evaluations and reports within organisations were noted by evaluators in interview, supported by literature on the increasing professionalisation and accountability of these (Patton, 2007). While one evaluator expressed doubts that the report would be widely read, focusing instead on the value of the evaluation process, others received feedback on the report. Both approaches left staff and evaluators with the sense that the evaluation had been useful in driving change, suggesting variation between organisations on the value of the report and process of driving change (Contandriopoulos, D. and Brousselle, A. 2012).

An area in which reports were consistently limited in their assessment of the programme or project was in judgement of impact. In many cases, reports specifically cautioned that the evaluation had come too early to accurately assess impact, although some noted promising early indicators. This suggests the importance of timeliness in conducting evaluations and in producing these reports, to be

able to establish overall consequences of a programme or project and therefore make recommendations which reflect and seek to strengthen these. This significance accorded to timeliness counters Patton's conclusions that this is only relevant for Instrumental Use (Patton, 1977).

In some instances, staff were unaware of evaluations and reports which took place before they began working for the organisation. The role of the evaluation report as documenting and preserving lessons of the evaluation process is weakened by this lack of awareness, suggesting poor institutional memory even in consideration of comments by other staff on the limited wider value of this evaluation's results.

Beyond the Report

Interviews strongly emphasised that an evaluation report is not the evaluation itself, reflecting both the significance of Process Use and an awareness that discoveries made in an evaluation could be excluded or diminished in a report intended for wider publication. The means of dissemination of a report, as explored, have an effect on its long-term impact on learning and change, and this is something over which the evaluator can have an influence. This is more likely if dissemination processes and timelines are established in advance. While the direction and approach of an evaluation can be considered to be beyond the evaluator's role, evaluators interviewed spoke of their input into TOR and validation of their approach through the recruitment process.

Emphasis on aspects of the evaluation beyond the report does not diminish the report itself, which can be used to inform policy makers or donors of results, summarise and remind staff of lessons, and for institutional records and memory in a context of high turnover. This connects learning to accountability, with a need for the evaluation's outputs- including learning- to be documented to justify and ensure quality of the evaluation for current and future responses. Recognition of the wider value of evaluations in Process and Conceptual Use in particular was a strong theme of interviews by those who considered the evaluation they conducted or participated in to have been usable and used.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has demonstrated the high value of Process Use as a legitimate and frequent utilisation of evaluations. In the evaluations and reports studied, use for operational change was also visible, indicating that learning through the evaluation process was not the only result of these evaluations. The influence of other factors in these changes is highly likely, with this Conceptual Use also highly valuable. Instrumental Use has not been so clearly evidenced, with strong value given to the role of other information sources and to the contextual particularities unique to Gaza. This chaos, complexity and uniqueness are common factors limiting Instrumental Use within and between crises (Buchanan-Smith and Cosgrave, 2016).

Research conducted supports findings in academic literature of the importance of the process of the evaluation, and of the value of an evaluation beyond its final report. Although this was reflected in literature, it is important that not all evaluations placed such high value on process and conceptual uses as legitimate uses of evaluation; and it was in these instances that lower use of the evaluation was perceived.

Organisations and donors hoping to produce utilisable evaluations and to ensure this utilisation takes place should therefore embrace broad definitions of use and change to include Process Use in particular, while also recognising change through Conceptual Use (Patton, 1977). Processes should be put in place to integrate learning from evaluations into organisational decision-making. Participative approaches should be sought and encouraged when selecting evaluators, and promote high staff participation to maximise this learning. Strict independence of an evaluation should be considered in light of the effect of this on participation and learning. Although learning is an important output, change from evaluations can be maximised by ensuring timeliness of evaluations, in publishing of its reports but also in conducting and including relevant staff in its process.

Evaluators hoping to enhance the utilisation of their evaluations should communicate with staff and policy makers, and make recommendations beyond the immediate programme. They should reduce resistance to report findings through open discussion, which can involve exclusion of certain findings from a report, and establish methods of dissemination of findings with staff and partners in advance.

Both the evaluators and those commissioning the evaluation have a role to play here, not least to ensure that adequate human and financial resources- including time after the evaluation is complete- are provided to embed results into wider practice.

Further Study

As this research has looked at learning in change in a small number of organisations and in one specific location, it is difficult to draw system wide conclusions. The Gaza context; as highlighted in existing literature, evaluation reports and interviews; is particularly complex in terms of capacity to adapt practice and policy, and may have uncovered conclusions which would not be applicable in other contexts. As it is not possible to choose a neutral case study, however, use of such a complex scenario is useful in uncovering possibilities of learning and change under difficult circumstances.

This research could be expanded further through focus on organisational learning; selecting multiple evaluations conducted over multiple locations over a longer period. Interviews and analyses following the structure used in this research could be used to compare evaluator and staff perceptions of learning and change at an organisational level with how this is reflected in reports over time.

Other documents and processes found to induce change in humanitarian organisations could also be explored further, through studies on the impacts of After Action Reviews, cluster meetings and other communications between partners and other organisations, and internal monitoring and evaluation. This would create a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of independent external evaluations relative to these other factors, although would require a level of organisational internal documentation access not available publicly.

The role of the evaluator has been shown here to be important in any utilisation of their evaluations, opening the door for further study into this within different contexts, evaluation types, and with individual focus on Process, Conceptual and Symbolic uses. Process Use in particular is championed by some evaluators and integrated into their approach. In light of the successes of and academic support for this, further study on those choosing not to take this approach may also promote interesting discussion.

Appendices

A- Interview Template

1. At what times during the 2009-2011 response and 2014-2016 response in Gaza were you working for [organisation]?

2. What was your role in [organisation] in these periods?

A- EVALUATED WHILE WORKING AT ORGANISATION

1. How involved did you feel in the evaluation process? Do you feel that you and the rest of the operational staff were kept informed of the evaluation's progress? Did you feel listened to and respected by the evaluator/s?

2. Briefly describe your professional relationships with those conducting the evaluation- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?

3. What contact did you have with the evaluator/s before the evaluation began? Were you involved in any preparation for the evaluation?

4. What do you think the purpose of the evaluation was, and who was it intended for?

5. Were you or other field staff involved in making these decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?

6. -

7. How aware are you of the results and recommendations of the evaluation carried out on your programme?

8. Do you think that these results and recommendations were sufficiently and appropriately shared amongst programme staff? How was this communicated?

9. How did you feel about the results of the evaluation? Did you feel recommendations to be fair and achievable?

10. Were you surprised by the evaluations' recommendations?

11. Did the evaluation recommend strategic changes to [organisation]?

12. Do you know if this has caused any discussion or change at this level? – For 2014 evaluations, do you believe that this will lead to strategic discussion and change?

13. Did the evaluation recommend changes at an operational level?

14. Do you believe that [organisation] considers/will consider these recommendations for future programming?

15. Has the evaluator/s been involved in implementing recommendations, to your knowledge?

16. Do you think you will be able to take these into account in your future programme decisions, whether with [organisation] or with other organisations, in Gaza and elsewhere? If you do not

think you will be able to do this, what do you think are the main reasons for this? [*IF EVALUATED 09 AND WORKED 14: Were you/the organisation able to do this? Why not?]

17. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area?

   Context

   Organisation

   Evaluation

   Other- Please specify

B- EVALUATED 09 AND ONLY WORKED 14

1. How much did you know about [organisation]'s role in Gaza before you joined the organisation?

2. Were you aware of an independent external evaluation having been done on your organisation in Gaza during the 2009-2011 response?

3. How aware were you of the recommendations of this evaluation during the 2014 response?

4. How aware are you of the work of other agencies, particularly other DEC member agencies, in the 2009 response, and of the evaluations carried out on these?

5. Do you think that [organisation] had made changes to policy and/or practice in response to recommendations made by the evaluation?

6. Did you personally make changes to your practice in response to these recommendations?

7. Do you feel that you were able to take lessons from evaluations in to account for the 2014 Gaza response? If there was learning that you/the organisation were unable to turn into practice, what were the reasons for this?

8. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area?

C- WORKED BOTH AND EVALUATED 09/ D- WORKED BOTH AND EVALUATED 14- IN ADDITION TO [A] ABOVE

1. When working on the Gaza response from 2014 onwards, were you conscious of personally making changes based on your own past experience in Gaza?

2. [C ONLY] Were the changes you made/lessons you considered reflected in the evaluation of [organisation]'s 2009 evaluation, to your knowledge?

3. Were you conscious of the organisation making changes based on past experience, [C ONLY] whether from the evaluation or experiences of other staff in Gaza?

4. [C ONLY] Do you think the evaluation was useful in improving the response?

5. [C ONLY] Do you think the evaluation was read and considered by those new to the organisation since the 2009 response?

6. How aware of you of the work of other agencies, particularly other DEC member agencies, in the 2009 and 2014 responses, and of the evaluations carried out on these?

7. Did you feel that the evaluator/s were well informed of [organisation]'s past in Gaza, and that they had a good understanding of the context, the organisation's position etc.?

8. [C ONLY] Do you think an independent external evaluation of the 2014 response would have shown similarities and common themes with the one carried out on the 2009 response?

9. [D ONLY] Do you think an independent external evaluation of the 2009 response would have shown similarities and common themes with the one carried out on the 2014 response? Do you think this would have made a difference to the 2014 response had this evaluation been carried out?

E- EVALUATED 14 AND ONLY WORKED 09

1. How aware are you of the continued role of [organisation] in Gaza since you worked with them, particularly during the response in 2014-2016?

2. Have you read evaluations of [organisation]'s work in this period?

3. Did you find similarities between the recommendations of this evaluation and your experiences working on [organisation]'s Gaza response previously?

4. Do you believe that changes were made to policy and practice following the 2009 response, based on your understanding of the 2014 response and evaluation?

F- ALL

1. How important do you think independent external evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

2. How important do you think internal evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

3. What other influences do you think are important in changing practice and policy?

4. What did you learn from the evaluation/s you were involved in or that we have discussed? Has this affected the way you operate in humanitarian responses? How?

5. What do you think are the qualities or key skills of a good evaluator or evaluating team?

6. Do you think the value and usability of the evaluations we have discussed would have differed if the evaluator/s involved had been different? What comments do you have on the evaluators' role, were there things that went well or could have been done better?

B- Questions for Field Staff Interviews

1. At what times during the 2009-2011 response and 2014-2016 response in Gaza were you working for [organisation]?
2. What was your role in [organisation] in these periods?

A- EVALUATED WHILE WORKING AT ORGANISATION

1. How involved did you feel in the evaluation process? Do you feel that you and the rest of the operational staff were kept informed of the evaluation's progress? Did you feel listened to and respected by the evaluator/s?
2. Briefly describe your professional relationships with those conducting the evaluation- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?
3. What contact did you have with the evaluator/s before the evaluation began? Were you involved in any preparation for the evaluation?
4. What do you think the purpose of the evaluation was, and who was it intended for?
5. Were you or other field staff involved in making these decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?
6. –
7. How aware are you of the results and recommendations of the evaluation carried out on your programme?
8. Do you think that these results and recommendations were sufficiently and appropriately shared amongst programme staff? How was this communicated?
9. How did you feel about the results of the evaluation? Did you feel recommendations to be fair and achievable?
10. Were you surprised by the evaluations' recommendations?
11. Did the evaluation recommend strategic changes to [organisation]?
12. Do you know if this has caused any discussion or change at this level? – For 2014 evaluations, do you believe that this will lead to strategic discussion and change?
13. Did the evaluation recommend changes at an operational level?
14. Do you believe that [organisation] considers/will consider these recommendations for future programming?

15. Has the evaluator/s been involved in implementing recommendations, to your knowledge?

16. Do you think you will be able to take these into account in your future programme decisions, whether with [organisation] or with other organisations, in Gaza and elsewhere? If you do not think you will be able to do this, what do you think are the main reasons for this? [*IF EVALUATED 09 AND WORKED 14: Were you/the organisation able to do this? Why not?]

17. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area? [EXAMPLES BELOW]

    Context

-   The **security situation on the ground** makes it impossible to avoid making some of the same mistakes

-   The **political situation** in terms of early response, access, import restrictions or other national policies makes implementation of recommendations difficult

-   The second Gaza crisis took place too soon after the first (3 years)- this is **not enough time for reflection between crises**

-   This second crisis required a rapid response, with a typical focus on **short-term life saving measures** rather than long-term reflection

    Organisation

-   My involvement/my organisation's involvement in Gaza was **ongoing between these responses-** I do not see a distinct difference

-   My involvement/my organisation's involvement in Gaza was **different by the time of the 2014 response,** the programme recommendations are not applicable

-   Independent evaluations are **not read or properly considered by key policy and practice decision makers** in my organisation

-   Planning of **policy and practice in my organisation is carried out by multiple actors**, who may not all take the findings into consideration

-   My organisation does not have a coherent **follow up procedure** for evaluation recommendations

    Evaluation

-   **I did not read the independent evaluations carried out on other organisations**, so am unaware of these recommendations

-   **I did not read the independent evaluation carried out on my organisation**, so am unaware of these recommendations

-   **I do not agree** with the findings or recommendations laid out in the evaluation

- **I do not find evaluation findings and recommendations relevant** to my future practice

- **I am not sure how** to make changes based on these recommendations

- These evaluations are **long and confusing-** I do not have time to fully read and understand them

- I try to make the relevant changed but find they are **not successful or effective**

- Reading evaluations and adapting practice is **not part of my role**

- This evaluation seems to be aimed more at **strategic change,** rather than change at my level

- **Other- Please specify**

B- EVALUATED 09 AND ONLY WORKED 14

1. How much did you know about [organisation]'s role in Gaza before you joined the organisation?

2. Were you aware of an independent external evaluation having been done on your organisation in Gaza during the 2009-2011 response?

3. How aware were you of the recommendations of this evaluation during the 2014 response?

4. How aware are you of the work of other agencies, particularly other DEC member agencies, in the 2009 response, and of the evaluations carried out on these?

5. Do you think that [organisation] had made changes to policy and/or practice in response to recommendations made by the evaluation?

6. Did you personally make changes to your practice in response to these recommendations?

7. Do you feel that you were able to take lessons from evaluations in to account for the 2014 Gaza response? If there was learning that you/the organisation were unable to turn into practice, what were the reasons for this?

8. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area? [EXAMPLES IN A- 16]

C- WORKED BOTH AND EVALUATED 09/ D- WORKED BOTH AND EVALUATED 14- IN ADDITION TO [A] ABOVE

1. When working on the Gaza response from 2014 onwards, were you conscious of personally making changes based on your own past experience in Gaza?

2. [C ONLY] Were the changes you made/lessons you considered reflected in the evaluation of [organisation]'s 2009 evaluation, to your knowledge?

3. Were you conscious of the organisation making changes based on past experience, [C ONLY] whether from the evaluation or experiences of other staff in Gaza?

4. [C ONLY] Do you think the evaluation was useful in improving the response?

5. [C ONLY] Do you think the evaluation was read and considered by those new to the organisation since the 2009 response?

6. How aware of you of the work of other agencies, particularly other DEC member agencies, in the 2009 and 2014 responses, and of the evaluations carried out on these?

7. Did you feel that the evaluator/s were well informed of [organisation]'s past in Gaza, and that they had a good understanding of the context, the organisation's position etc.?

8. [C ONLY] Do you think an independent external evaluation of the 2014 response would have shown similarities and common themes with the one carried out on the 2009 response?

9. [D ONLY] Do you think an independent external evaluation of the 2009 response would have shown similarities and common themes with the one carried out on the 2014 response? Do you think this would have made a difference to the 2014 response had this evaluation been carried out?

E- EVALUATED 14 AND ONLY WORKED 09

1. How aware are you of the continued role of [organisation] in Gaza since you worked with them, particularly during the response in 2014-2016?

2. Have you read evaluations of [organisation]'s work in this period?

3. Did you find similarities between the recommendations of this evaluation and your experiences working on [organisation]'s Gaza response previously?

4. Do you believe that changes were made to policy and practice following the 2009 response, based on your understanding of the 2014 response and evaluation?

F- ALL

1. How important do you think independent external evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

2. How important do you think internal evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

3. What other influences do you think are important in changing practice and policy?

4. What did you learn from the evaluation/s you were involved in or that we have discussed? Has this affected the way you operate in humanitarian responses? How?

5. What do you think are the qualities or key skills of a good evaluator or evaluating team?

6. Do you think the value and usability of the evaluations we have discussed would have differed if the evaluator/s involved had been different? What comments do you have on the evaluators' role, were there things that went well or could have been done better?

C- Questions for Policy Maker Interviews

1. At what times during the 2009-2011 response and 2014-2016 response in Gaza were you working for [organisation]?

2. What was your role in [organisation] in these periods?

A- EVALUATED WHILE WORKING AT ORGANISATION

1. How involved did you feel in the evaluation process? Do you feel that you and the organisation were kept informed of the evaluation's progress at a strategic level?

2. Briefly describe your professional relationship with those conducting the evaluation- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?

3. What contact did you have with the evaluator/s before the evaluation began? Were you involved in any preparation for the evaluation?

4. What was the purpose of the evaluation, and who was it intended for?

5. Were field staff involved in making these decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?

6. -

7. How aware are you of the results and recommendations of the evaluation carried out on your programme?

8. Do you think that these results and recommendations were sufficiently and appropriately shared amongst programme staff? How was this communicated?

9. How did you feel about the results of the evaluation? Did you feel recommendations to be fair and achievable?

10. Were you surprised by the evaluations' recommendations?

11. Did the evaluation recommend strategic changes to [organisation]?

12. Has this caused any discussion or change at this level? – For 2014 evaluations, do you believe that this will lead to strategic discussion and change?

13. Are you aware of recommended changes at an operational level, and do you know if these have been implemented?

14. -

15. Has the evaluator/s been involved in implementing recommendations, to your knowledge?

16. Do you think you will be able to take these into account in your future policy decisions, whether with [organisation] or with other organisations, in Gaza and elsewhere? If you do not think you will be able to do this, what do you think are the main reasons for this? [*IF EVALUATED 09 AND WORKED 14: Were you/the organisation able to do this? Why not?]

17. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area? [EXAMPLES BELOW]

Context

- The **security situation on the ground** makes it impossible to avoid making some of the same mistakes

- The **political situation** in terms of early response, access, import restrictions or other national policies makes implementation of recommendations difficult

- The second Gaza crisis took place too soon after the first (3 years)- this is **not enough time for reflection between crises**

- This second crisis required a rapid response, with a typical focus on **short-term life saving measures** rather than long-term reflection

Organisation

- My involvement/my organisation's involvement in Gaza was **ongoing between these responses-** I do not see a distinct difference

- My involvement/my organisation's involvement in Gaza was **different by the time of the 2014 response,** the programme recommendations are not applicable

- Independent evaluations are **not read or properly considered by key policy and practice decision makers** in my organisation

- Planning of **policy and practice in my organisation is carried out by multiple actors**, who may not all take the findings into consideration

- My organisation does not have a coherent **follow up procedure** for evaluation recommendations

Evaluation

- **I did not read the independent evaluations carried out on other organisations**, so am unaware of these recommendations

- **I did not read the independent evaluation carried out on my organisation**, so am unaware of these recommendations

- **I do not agree** with the findings or recommendations laid out in the evaluation

- **I do not find evaluation findings and recommendations relevant** to my future practice

- **I am not sure how** to make changes based on these recommendations

- These evaluations are **long and confusing-** I do not have time to fully read and understand them

- I try to make the relevant changed but find they are **not successful or effective**

- Reading evaluations and adapting practice is **not part of my role**

- This evaluation seems to be aimed more at **operational change,** rather than change at my level

- **Other- Please specify**

B- EVALUATED 09 AND ONLY WORKED 14

1. How much do you know about [organisation]'s role in Gaza before you joined the organisation?

2. Were you aware of an independent external evaluation having been done on your organisation in Gaza during the 2009-2011 response?

3. How aware are you of the recommendations made by this evaluation?

4. How aware are you of the work of other agencies, particularly other DEC member agencies, in the 2009 response, and of the evaluations carried out on these?

5. Do you think that [organisation] had made changes to policy and/or practice in response to recommendations made by the evaluation?

6. Did you personally contribute to changes in organisational policy in response to these recommendations?

7. Do you feel that you were able to take lessons from evaluations in to account for the 2014 Gaza response? If there was learning that you were unable to turn into practice, what were the reasons for this?

8. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area? [EXAMPLES IN A- 16]

C- WORKED BOTH AND EVALUATED 09/ D- WORKED BOTH AN EVALUATED 14- IN ADDITION TO [A] ABOVE

1. When working on the Gaza response from 2014 onwards, were you conscious of personally guiding policy changes based on your own past experience in Gaza?

2. [C ONLY] Were the changes you made/lessons you considered reflected in the evaluation of [organisation]'s 2009 evaluation, to your knowledge?

3. Were you conscious of the organisation making changes based on past experience, [C ONLY] whether from the evaluation or experiences of other staff?

4. [C ONLY] Do you think the evaluation was useful in improving the response, either operationally or strategically?

5. [C ONLY] Do you think the evaluation was read and considered by those new to the organisation since the 2009 response?

6. How aware of you of the work of other agencies, particularly other DEC member agencies, in the 2009 and 2014 responses, and of the evaluations carried out on these?

7. Did you feel that the evaluator/s were well informed of [organisation]'s past in Gaza, and that they had a good understanding of the context, the organisation's position etc.?

8. [C ONLY] Do you think an independent external evaluation of the 2014 response would have shown similarities and common themes with the one carried out on the 2009 response?

9. [D ONLY] Do you think an independent external evaluation of the 2009 response would have shown similarities and common themes with the one carried out on the 2014 response? Do you think this would have made a difference to the 2014 response had this evaluation been carried out?

E- EVALUATED 14 AND ONLY WORKED 09

1. How aware are you of the continued role of [organisation] in Gaza since you worked with them, particularly during the response in 2014-2016?

2. Have you read evaluations of [organisation]'s work in this period?

3. Did you find similarities between the recommendations of this evaluation and your experiences working on [organisation]'s Gaza response previously?

4. Do you believe that changes were made to policy and practice following the 2009 response, based on your understanding of the 2014 response and evaluation?

F- ALL

1. How important do you think independent external evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

2. How important do you think internal evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

3. What other influences do you think are important in changing practice and policy?

4. What did you learn from the evaluation/s you were involved in or that we have discussed? Has this affected the way you work? How?

5. What do you think are the qualities or key skills of a good evaluator or evaluating team?

6. Do you think the value and usability of the evaluations we have discussed would have differed if the evaluator/s involved had been different? What comments do you have on the evaluators' role, were there things that went well or could have been done better?

D- Questions for Evaluator Interviews

1. Which of [organisation]'s responses in Gaza did you evaluate?

2. Have you carried out any other evaluations in Gaza, of this organisation or another, and if so was this during 2009-2016?

3. Had you worked with the organisation before this evaluation?

4. If not, were you given the opportunity to get to know the organisation before beginning the evaluation?

5. If you had worked with them before, do you believe this helped you to evaluate [organisation]'s programmes?

A- EVALUATION

1. a. How involved were field staff in the evaluation process? Was this involvement constant throughout the process? What measures did you take to keep field staff informed of the evaluation's progress?

   b. How involved were policy makers in the evaluation process? Was this involvement constant throughout the process? What measures did you take to keep policy makers informed of the evaluation's progress?

2. a. Briefly describe your professional relationship with field staff working on the programme you were evaluating- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?

   b. Briefly describe your professional relationship with policy makers working on the programme you were evaluating- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?

3. a. What contact did you have with field staff before the evaluation began? Were they involved in any evaluation preparation?

   b. What contact did you have with policy makers before the evaluation began? Were they involved in any evaluation preparation?

4. What was the purpose of your evaluation, and who were the intended users of the evaluation? Was this clearly agreed and established before the evaluation began?

5. a. Were field staff involved in making decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?

   b. Were policy makers involved in making decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?

6. Does your evaluation recommend change or simply present findings and conclusions? Why did you choose to take this approach? [NB- This affects phrasing of future questions]

7. a. How were the results and recommendations/conclusions of the evaluation communicated to field staff?

   b. How were the results and recommendations/conclusions of the evaluation communicated to policy makers?

8. –

9. –

10. Were your recommendations/conclusions made in agreement with field staff and policy makers?

11. Did your evaluation recommend strategic changes to [organisation]?

12. Do you know if this has caused any discussion or change at this level? – For 2014 evaluations, do you believe that this will lead to strategic discussion and change?

13. Did the evaluation recommend changes at an operational level?

14. Do you believe that [organisation] considers/will consider these recommendations for future programming?

15. Have you been involved in implementing your recommendations? In what way? Is this at an operational or strategic level?

16. Do you think your recommendations and advice will be able to be taken into account in future programme and policy decisions- either in Gaza or elsewhere, in [organisation] or in staff's future work? If not, what do you think are the main reasons for this? [*IF EVALUATED 09 AND AWARE OF 2014: Do you think the organisation has been able to do this?]

17. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area? [EXAMPLES BELOW]

    Context

- The **security situation on the ground** makes it impossible to avoid making some of the same mistakes

- The **political situation** in terms of early response, access, import restrictions or other national policies makes implementation of recommendations difficult

- The second Gaza crisis took place too soon after the first (3 years)- this is **not enough time for reflection between crises**

- This second crisis required a rapid response, with a typical focus on **short-term life saving measures** rather than long-term reflection

<u>Organisation</u>

- The organisation's involvement in Gaza was **ongoing between these responses-** staff may not see a distinct difference

- The organisation's involvement in Gaza was **different by the time of the 2014 response,** the programme recommendations are not applicable

- Independent evaluations are **not read or properly considered by key policy and practice decision makers** in the organisation

- Planning of **policy and practice in the organisation is carried out by multiple actors**, who may not all take the findings into consideration

- The organisation does not have a coherent **follow up procedure** for evaluation recommendations

<u>Evaluation</u>

- **Staff do not read the independent evaluations carried out on other organisations**, so are unaware of these recommendations

- **Staff do not read the independent evaluation carried out on their organisation**, so are unaware of these recommendations

- **Staff did not agree** with the findings or recommendations laid out in the evaluation

- **Staff did not find evaluation findings and recommendations relevant** to my future practice

- **Staff are not sure how** to make changes based on these recommendations- I did **not make specific targeted recommendations for change**

- Staff may find evaluations to be **long and confusing,** and do not have time to fully read and understand them

- Staff try to make the relevant changed but can find they are **not successful or effective**

- Ensuring that evaluations lead to adapted practice is **not part of my role**

- This evaluation was aimed purely at **strategic/operational change,** not relevant to every level

- **Other- Please specify**

- **I am not aware if changes have or have not been made**

B- E DO NOT MATCH WITH STAFF QUESTIONS

Evaluated in 09

1. How aware were you of the work of other organisations in Gaza in this period? Have you seen evaluations of other organisations in this period? If so, did you notice similarities or common themes?

2. How aware are you of the organisation's response in 2014-2016? In your opinion did the organisation act differently at an operational or strategic level in this response? Do you believe

that your recommendations were considered in planning and implementing this second response?

Evaluated in 14

1. How much did you know about [organisation]'s role in Gaza before your evaluation?

2. How aware are you of the organisation's response in 2009-2011? In your opinion were there lots of common themes and similarities in [organisation]'s response?

3. How aware were you of other organisations' work in Gaza in 2009-2011 as well as during 2014-2016? Did you see any evaluations of other organisations' work in Gaza, and if so did you notice any similarities, common themes etc?

Evaluated in both 09 and 14

1. In your opinion were there a lot of common themes between responses in 2009 and in 2014?

2. How aware were you of other organisations' work in Gaza in 2009-2011 and 2014-2016? Did you see any evaluations of other organisations' work in Gaza, and if so did you notice any similarities, common themes etc?

All

1. What expectations did you have for the utilisation of the results of your evaluation?

2. Were you given time for any preparation work before the evaluation began? If so, how did you make use of this time? If not, do you feel that more preparation would have improved the quality, value or direction of your evaluation? [suggestions- getting to know the organisation, outlining follow-up strategy]

3. Did you find the organisation to be open to evaluation and recommendation?

4. Do you think your role in the follow up was appropriate? Too much, not enough? Was this driven by your own (/your consultancy's) desire to ensure utilisation, or led by [organisation]?

5. Would you evaluate this organisation's programmes and projects in future? (Considering openness and responsiveness of organisational staff, the understanding you have gained of how the organisation operates, responsiveness to recommendations, etc)

F- ALL

1. How important do you think independent external evaluations are in relation to changes to practice and policy?

2. How important do you think internal evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

3. What other influences do you think are important in changing practice and policy?

4. What did you learn from your evaluation/s? Has this affected the way you carry out evaluations? How?

5. What do you think are the qualities or key skills of a good evaluator or evaluating team?

6. Do you think the value and usability of the evaluations we have discussed would have differed if your involvement had been different, or if a different evaluator had been used? What comments do you have on your role, were there things that went well or could have been done better?

E- Adapted Questionnaire for Evaluators- CARE

Thank you for agreeing to help with this research, focusing on the role of the evaluator in implementing recommendations of independent external evaluations. I am looking at various organisations' responses in Gaza in 2009-2011 and 2014-2016, including the response you externally evaluated with CARE (2009-2011).

1. Had you worked with CARE before conducting these evaluations?

2. If not, were you given the opportunity to get to know the organisations and their history in Gaza before beginning the evaluation?

3. If you had worked with them before, do you believe this helped you to evaluate these programmes?

4. Have you carried out any other evaluations in Gaza, of this organisation or another, and if so was this during 2009-2016?

A-EVALUATION

1. a. How involved were field staff in the evaluation process? Was this involvement constant throughout the process? What measures did you take to keep field staff informed of the evaluation's progress?

   b. How involved were policy makers in the evaluation process? Was this involvement constant throughout the process? What measures did you take to keep policy makers informed of the evaluation's progress?

2. a. Briefly describe your professional relationship with field staff working on the programme you were evaluating- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?

   b. Briefly describe your professional relationship with policy makers working on the programme you were evaluating- had you worked with them previously? In what capacity?

3. a. What contact did you have with field staff before the evaluation began? Were they involved in any evaluation preparation?

   b. What contact did you have with policy makers before the evaluation began? Were they involved in any evaluation preparation?

4. What was the purpose of your evaluation, and who were the intended users of the evaluation? Was this clearly agreed and established before the evaluation began?

5. a. Were field staff involved in making decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?

   b. Were policy makers involved in making decisions and shaping the purpose and direction of the evaluation?

6. Does your evaluation recommend change or simply present findings and conclusions? Why did you choose to take this approach?

7. a. How were the results and recommendations/conclusions of the evaluation communicated to field staff?

   b. How were the results and recommendations/conclusions of the evaluation communicated to policy makers?

8. Were your recommendations/conclusions made in agreement with field staff and policy makers?

9. Did your evaluation recommend strategic changes to CARE? Or did the conclusions of your evaluation indicate that strategic changes needed to be made?

10. Do you know if this has caused any discussion or change at this level?

11. Did the evaluation recommend changes at an operational level?

12. Do you believe that the organisation has considered/will consider these recommendations for future programming?

13. Have you been involved in implementing your recommendations or conclusions? In what way? Is this at an operational or strategic level?

14. Do you think your recommendations and advice will be able to be taken into account in future programme and policy decisions- either in Gaza or elsewhere, within the organisation or in staff's future work? If not, what do you think are the main reasons for this? [PLEASE RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE BEFORE MOVING ON]

15. Factors preventing recommendations from becoming change could relate to the **context,** the workings of the **organisation,** or the **evaluation** itself. Which do you think was the most important area? [EXAMPLES BELOW]- Please feel free to add comments and indicate important factors here, but do NOT use these to adapt your answer to q.14 above!

   Context

- The **security situation on the ground** makes it impossible to avoid making some of the same mistakes

- The **political situation** in terms of early response, access, import restrictions or other national policies makes implementation of recommendations difficult
- The second Gaza crisis took place too soon after the first (3 years)- this is **not enough time for reflection between crises**
- This second crisis required a rapid response, with a typical focus on **short-term life saving measures** rather than long-term reflection

Organisation

- The organisation's involvement in Gaza was **ongoing between these responses-** staff may not see a distinct difference
- The organisation's involvement in Gaza was **different by the time of the 2014 response,** the programme recommendations are not applicable
- Independent evaluations are **not read or properly considered by key policy and practice decision makers** in the organisation
- Planning of **policy and practice in the organisation is carried out by multiple actors**, who may not all take the findings into consideration
- The organisation does not have a coherent **follow up procedure** for evaluation recommendations

Evaluation

- **Staff do not read the independent evaluations carried out on other organisations**, so are unaware of these recommendations
- **Staff do not read the independent evaluation carried out on their organisation**, so are unaware of these recommendations
- **Staff did not agree** with the findings or recommendations laid out in the evaluation
- **Staff did not find evaluation findings and recommendations relevant** to my future practice
- **Staff are not sure how** to make changes based on these recommendations- I did **not make specific targeted recommendations for change**
- Staff may find evaluations to be **long and confusing,** and do not have time to fully read and understand them
- Staff try to make the relevant changed but can find they are **not successful or effective**
- Ensuring that evaluations lead to adapted practice is **not part of my role**
- This evaluation was aimed purely at **strategic/operational change,** not relevant to every level
- **Other- Please specify**
- **I am not aware if changes have or have not been made**
- **COMMENTS**

Programme specific

1. How aware were you of the work of other organisations in Gaza in 2009-2011, besides CARE? Have you seen evaluations of other organisations in this period? If so, did you notice similarities or common themes?

2. How aware are you of the organisation's response in 2014-2016? In your opinion did the organisation act differently at an operational or strategic level in this response? Do you believe that your recommendations were considered in planning and implementing this second response?

All

1. What expectations did you have for the utilisation of the results of your evaluations?

2. Were you given time for any preparation work before the evaluation began? If so, how did you make use of this time? If not, do you feel that more preparation would have improved the quality, value or direction of your evaluation?

3. Did you find the organisation to be open to evaluation and recommendation?

4. Do you think your role in the follow up was appropriate? Too much, not enough? Was this driven by your own desire to ensure utilisation, or led by the organisation?

5. Would you evaluate this organisation's programmes and projects in future? (Considering openness and responsiveness of organisational staff, the understanding you have gained of how the organisation operates, responsiveness to recommendations, etc)

F- ALL

1. How important do you think independent external evaluations are in relation to changes to practice and policy?

2. How important do you think internal evaluations are in relation to changes in practice and policy?

3. What other influences do you think are important in changing practice and policy?

4. What did you learn from your evaluation? Has this affected the way you carry out evaluations? How?

5. What do you think are the qualities or key skills of a good evaluator or evaluating team?

6. Do you think the value and usability of the evaluation discussed would have differed if your involvement had been different, or if a different evaluator had been used? What comments do you have on your role, were there things that went well or could have been done better?

Thank you for taking the time to complete these questions, please feel free to ask further questions or note any other comments.

F- Ethics Form

TDE Form E1

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment

Ethics Review Form E1

This form should be completed by the Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Student undertaking a research project which involves human participants. The form will identify whether a more detailed E2 form needs to be submitted to the Faculty Research Ethics Officer.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University **Code of Practice for the Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants**, available at http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/, and to any guidelines provided by relevant academic or professional associations.

It is the Principal Investigator / Supervisor who is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review. Note that all necessary forms should be fully completed and signed before fieldwork commences.

Project Title: Evaluating evaluations of humanitarian response to conflict: the role of the evaluator in driving learning and change in humanitarian policy and practice

Principal Investigator / Supervisor: Cathrine Brun

Student Investigator: Clare Dickson

|		Yes	No
1.	Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, unconscious patients)	☐	X
2.	If the study will involve participants who are unable to give informed consent (e.g. children under the age of 16, people with learning disabilities), will you	☐	X

F- Ethics Form

	be unable to obtain permission from their parents or guardians (as appropriate)?		
3.	Will the study require the cooperation of a gatekeeper for initial access to groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. students, members of a self-help group, employees of a company, residents of a nursing home)	☐	X
4.	Are there any problems with the participants' right to remain anonymous, or to have the information they give not identifiable as theirs?	☐	X
5.	Will it be necessary for the participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time? (eg, covert observation of people in non-public places?)	☐	X
6.	Will the study involve discussion of or responses to questions the participants might find sensitive? (e.g. own drug use, own traumatic experiences)	☐	X
7.	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants?	☐	X
8.	Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?	☐	X
9.	Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	☐	X
10.	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety?	☐	X
11.	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing of participants?	☐	X
12.	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	X
13.	Will deception of participants be necessary during the study?	☐	X
14.	Will the study involve NHS patients, staff, carers or premises?	☐	X

If you have answered 'no' to all the above questions, send the completed form to your Module Leader and keep the original in case you need to submit it with your work.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, you should complete the Form E2 available at http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/Ethics-review-forms/
and, together with this E1 Form, email it to the Faculty Research Ethics Officer, whose name can be found at
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/Research-ethics-officers/

If you answered 'yes' to any of questions 1-13 and 'yes' to question 14, an application must be submitted to the appropriate NHS research ethics committee.
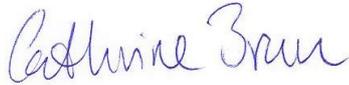
Signed: Principal   Investigator
                                                                     /Supervisor

Signed: Student Investigator

Date: 10/07/17

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