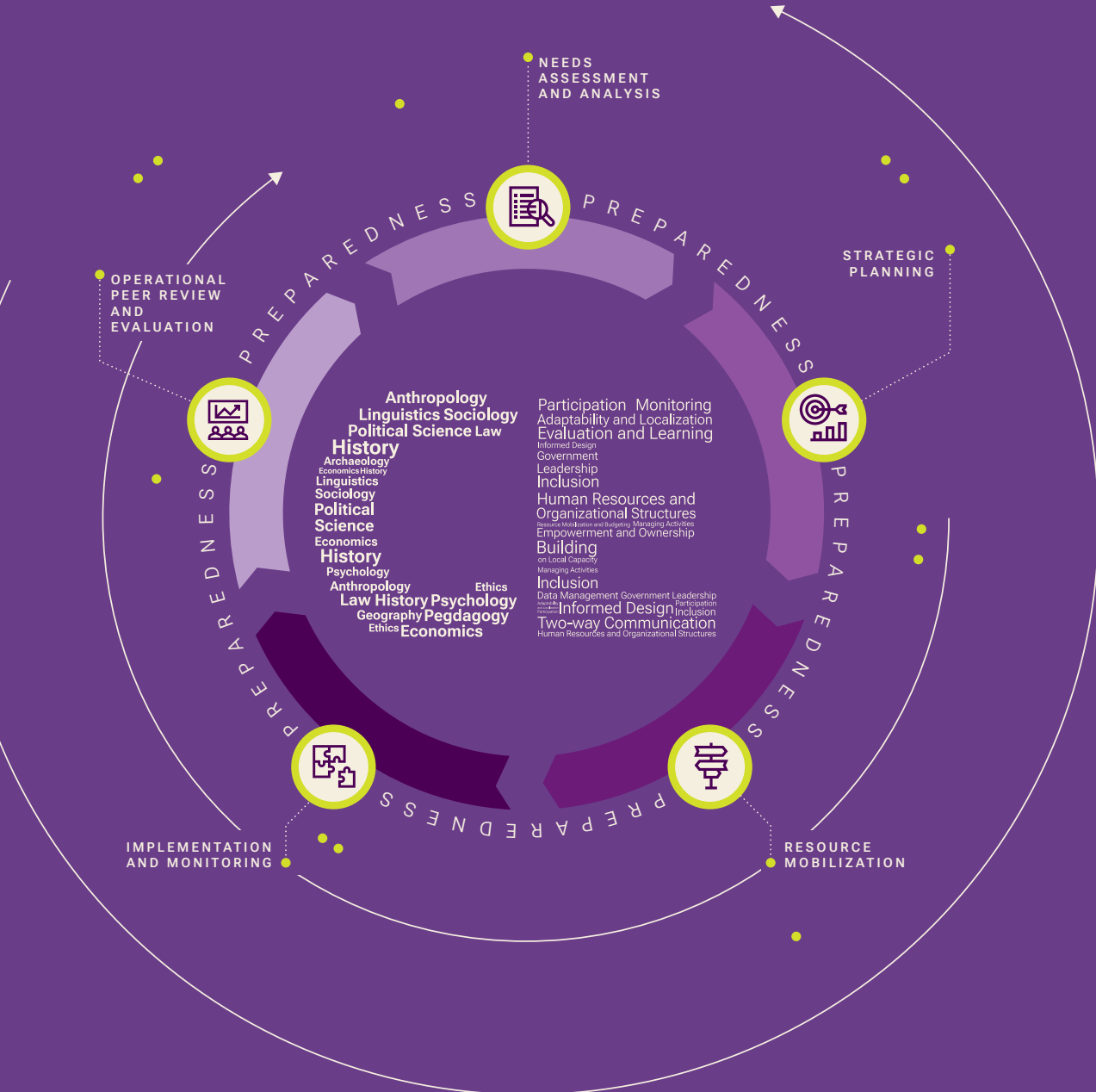


# SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

## CODES OF CONDUCT MAPPING



# Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action

## **Codes of Conduct Mapping**

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Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action Project (SS4CE in HA) is an initiative launched at the end of 2020, funded by the Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, USAID. The main objectives focused on co-creation of global goods, through an intentionally designed collaborative approach that connects with global humanitarian and public health system-wide mechanisms that harnessed active participation of humanitarian organizations, academic institutions and donors. The processes undertaken for the development of global goods are also further framed in the 'decolonization of aid' agenda and provide clear recommendations for implementation actions for driving more people centred and community-led humanitarian and development programs. As envisioned the project has made substantive progress to systematically align social science informed community engagement actions to humanitarian architecture, tailored to different elements and enablers of humanitarian program cycle (HPC).

Leveraging on the initial, exclusive Public Health Emergency (PHE) focus, at the time, due to the COVID-19 response the SS4CE project developed a multi-pronged, governance structure that could facilitate the linkages and inform all humanitarian crises (natural hazards, conflicts and PHEs). This governance structure provided technical oversight to the development of SS4CE global goods, as well as positioning the processes and outputs of the project with key humanitarian stakeholders including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), Clusters and committees, for the uptake and mainstreaming within the on-going and relevant humanitarian program processes.

The mapping of codes of conduct (CoC) for the application of SS4CE in HA is a partnership with Sonar-Global, Makerere University of Uganda and members of Technical Working Group-1 (TWG-1).

This assessment was envisioned to review existing codes of conduct currently applied in the humanitarian system and academic world, related to social sciences and community engagement in humanitarian action. By reviewing the content of identified codes, it challenges the status-quo of humanitarian programmes wherein the at-risk and affected communities' engagement continues to be notional and reinforces capacity gaps to engage communities in their social-cultural realms. It underpins the need to have humanitarian action more adaptive, contextually specific, sensitive to vulnerabilities and power relations; planned in consultation with at-risk and affected communities and local institutions, based on social and interdisciplinary science evidence. Social sciences informed community engagement, not only addresses participation issues and immediate needs of the affected communities but also strengthens community systems where marginalized groups are equal partners in finding solutions, having wider knowledge and understanding of social science disciplines conceptual frameworks-/historical/political /sociological/economical etc; and providing pathways to deal with systemic fallacies and challenges (social justice, gender equity, decolonization and localization).

We hope that these CoCs mapping exercises will contribute to reform community engagement processes, especially leveraging the benefits of social sciences for informing challenging humanitarian contexts. It will identify the gaps that should be addressed and included in a CoC for the application of SS4CE in HA ensuring communities are at the center of humanitarian processes. This will be of utmost importance to respond effectively.

**Sonar Global**, Tamara Giles-Vernick  
**UNICEF**, Vincent Petit

#### Key deliverables for the project are:

- Landscape report
- Ethics and Data Sharing Mapping Review
- **Codes of Conduct Mapping Review**
- Mapping of Capacity Development for the application of SS4CE in HA in Conflicts and Hazards
- Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Community Engagement
- Compendium of Case Studies on the Use of community engagement to Inform Decision Making
- Desk Review of Community Engagement indicators Across Humanitarian Response Plans (2022) and Documentation on Community Engagement
- Vision Paper on Community Engagement for Accountability to Affected Populations and Social and Behavior Change.
- Common Principles and Code of Conduct for the Application of SS4CE in HA

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# Executive Summary



## Introduction

Humanitarian action (HA) provides assistance to communities at risk of or affected by disasters such as flooding, earthquakes, disease outbreaks and conflict. The humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. It consists of five elements coordinated in a seamless manner, with one step logically building on the previous step that, in turn, leads to the next. Successful implementation of the HPC is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, constructive coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management.

The social sciences contribute to the different stages in humanitarian programming, providing evidence to inform decision making, ensuring affected peoples' participation throughout the cycle, aiming at more effective and efficient humanitarian action.

Community engagement (CE) is a key participatory process, inclusive of political, institutional, societal and communal relationships which need to be adequately inscribed into different social, political, and cultural contexts. Active participation, mutual respect for different knowledge systems and co-creation are essential characteristics of CE. Stakeholders such as donors, academics, humanitarian practitioners and representatives from at-risk and affected communities — among other actors involved in humanitarian action — need to ensure the provision of needed services and protection without amplifying misrepresentation, discrimination and power asymmetries.

This mapping report documents existing codes of conduct (CoCs) in HA, social science research, CE and the intersection of the three SS4CE in HA. The report analyses the process of creating such codes, their application and compliance as well as existing gaps. The report provides recommendations to address identified gaps in the creation of a CoC for the application of SS4CE in HA at the different stages of the HPC.

## Methodology

- **Scoping review:** A Scoping review of published and grey literature, related to CoCs in HA, social science research, CE and for the application of SS4CE in HA was conducted. Twenty-six COCs, as well as national guidelines, covering social science research and other regulatory organization documents comprised the main literature reviewed.
- **Technical working group (TWG) meetings:** A TWG was convened to provide technical guidance and advice. The group consisted of 20 members, representing academic institutions, non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and civil society. The group met monthly during 2022. This CoC TWG discussed working methods, and CoC-relevant aspects as developed over time from information emerging in the literature review and discussions. The TWG also provided detailed feedback into the final analysis and draft versions of this report.
- **In-depth interviews:** A total of five in-depth interviews with TWG experts were conducted. The qualitative interview guide focused on the participant's knowledge and experience in CoC and the application of social sciences and CE in HA. All interviews were recorded and stored on a secure cloud accessible to the CoC team for reference during analysis.
- **Online contributions (Padlet):** TWG participants were also invited to contribute via Padlet (an online platform used as a discussion forum). <https://padlet.com/babylonia00/am3rd1i03665kc9u>

A codebook and a matrix for reviewed CoCs were developed, using MS Excel, detailing key themes: source document, key focus of the CoC and identified gaps.





## Findings

The review identified several existing CoCs linked to the humanitarian system, as well as to the applicability of social science research, but no specific CoC linked to the application of SS4CE in HA at the different stages of the HPC were found.

The findings showed that humanitarian organizations, as well as academic institutions and national research councils, outline their own general CoCs relevant to their disciplines and mandates. Humanitarian CoCs are linked to European humanitarian principles and the notion of 'do no harm'. Conducting social science research in humanitarian crises remains relatively unregulated beyond basic Western ethical guidelines and norms developed for research in general, with no link to the different approaches to the application of social science in the different stages of the HPC. The findings also showed that existing CoCs do not address issues linked to the colonial legacy, power dynamics and racism between the global north and global south. The documents reviewed did not address the issue of co-creation, co-construction and co-leading research processes with communities. In general terms, research and/or data collection initiatives are visualized and planned in northern institutions with a colonial mindset – people affected by humanitarian crises are objects of research, not co-researchers.

Existing codes have been created based on ethical and moral conceptualizations connected with European values, no CoC was found that allows for local principles and values to be considered and systematically included in the creation and implementation process.

The literature points at challenges in uptake, implementation, and compliance of existing CoCs. A limitation of CoCs is that a signatory can simply break them. Considering that the *raison d'être* of CoCs is the commitment of organizations and individuals to be held accountable to humanitarian principles and to communities affected by crises, the consequences of breaking the code are important. One of the challenges is that compliance mechanisms are triggered only when a complaint is placed, there is no surveillance or monitoring of the fulfilment of a CoC. At the same time, it is not evident that organizations have internal compliance mechanisms set up to deal with breaches of a CoC, this is even worse in the case of inter-agency CoCs (e.g. the Red Cross CoC) compliance mechanisms.

## Conclusions

The mapping on CoCs asserts that there is no standalone CoC specifically tackling the application of SS4CE in HA in the different stages of the HPC, nor is there any existing humanitarian or research organizational CoC which makes explicit reference to this dimension.

Ethical frameworks and CoCs in humanitarian action help shape how the relationship between stakeholders in the humanitarian arena are defined and how interactions should take place. These forms of 'moral imaginations' have recently been criticized for articulating and upholding historically-constituted Eurocentric (colonial) structures of power. This includes the disempowering ways in which knowledge is produced about racialized, often distant, and vulnerable others and the dismissal of other worldviews/culture or paradigms. Hence, there has been a growing conversation about the need to decolonize ethics and CoCs within modern humanitarianism. For a CoC to be considered global, it needs wide participation in its development and opt-in.

There are three key questions raised by the mapping exercise. The first query points at how to shift the paradigm and create spaces for negotiating different practices and value systems in ways that foster inclusion without subsuming them into one world or another. This in turn will allow grounding humanitarian action in the everyday realities of people who experience and live with crisis. It is important to ponder how to do this in a systematic manner, as an integrated way of working for humanitarians and researchers. Second, the application of social science in HA, begs the question of the role they play, either perpetuating or challenging the colonial legacy and power imbalances when engaging with communities in humanitarian contexts. Finally, in order to create an applicable, fit for purpose, practical and meaningful CoC, there is a need for organizations to review internal mechanisms of compliance and commit to holding the staff accountable for possible breaches of the code.

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# Acknowledgments



We want to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this research process in what was unmistakably a shared effort. We thank all TWG-1 members who participated in the co-constructive dialogue process through meetings and individual interviews. We are grateful to the SAG members for feedback on findings.

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# List of Abbreviations

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to affected populations
<b>AFRO (WHO)</b>	Africa Regional Office (WHO)
<b>CE</b>	Community Engagement
<b>CHS</b>	Core Humanitarian Standards
<b>CoC</b>	Code(s) of Conduct
<b>DRRM</b>	Disaster Reduction and Risk Management
<b>ERB</b>	Ethical Review Board
<b>EVD</b>	Ebola Virus Disease
<b>HA</b>	Humanitarian Action
<b>HPC</b>	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
<b>IASC</b>	Inter Agency Standard Committe
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IEC</b>	Independent Ethics Committe
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-governmental Organization
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization

<b>OCHA</b>	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PHE</b>	Public Health in Emergencies
<b>RCCE</b>	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
<b>RDC</b>	Republique Democratique du Congo
<b>SBC</b>	Social and Behavioral Change
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SS4CE in HA</b>	Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UNCST</b>	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



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# Introduction



Humanitarian action (HA) entails assistance, protection, and advocacy in response to people's needs resulting from disasters, armed conflict or other causes, or emergency response preparedness. It aims to save lives and reduce suffering in the short term and to preserve people's dignity and pave the way to recovery and long term solutions to displacement. HA is based on the premise that human suffering should be prevented and alleviated wherever it happens (referred to as the 'humanitarian imperative').

Humanitarian crises expose, change and increase vulnerabilities and inequalities among populations. The application of social sciences, in the different stages of the humanitarian program cycle, provides a broad and deep appreciation of cultural context, social, gender norms and roles, and knowledge systems. It contributes to the understanding of perceptions of the humanitarian system and responses. The application of social sciences for community engagement contributes to ensure participation of the at-risk and affected at all stages of humanitarian programming, bringing different knowledge systems in equal terms to decision making processes for effective and efficient HA. The application of social sciences has been predominantly in the field of Public Health Emergencies (PHE).<sup>1</sup>

The social sciences are varied and there are no standardized, fit for purpose applications. Instead, a diverse range of actors (academic, humanitarians, civil society organizations, etc.) use social sciences at different stages of humanitarian programming in an ad-hoc manner. There is no consensus on integrated or systematic common frameworks, guidelines, or standard operating procedures for the application of this area of work in HA. Social sciences are not yet systematically embedded in the humanitarian system, their application remains a silo exercise, taking place parallel to the humanitarian architecture. Institutions and organizations conducting this kind of work do so from diverse approaches and with different objectives. The competition for funds from major donors contribute to the diversification and proliferation of models and approaches, complicating a standardization process that facilitates its establishment in humanitarian ways of working.

The social sciences allow different actors to examine and question social positioning and relationships in power structures, starting with the individual conducting the work and how s/he relates with the environment. This understanding contributes to raising awareness on contextual

power dynamics between native communities and the humanitarian system in a particular local environment, and how they impact HA. The application of social sciences creates participative processes of data collection which offer the possibility of meaningful engagement of the affected in humanitarian programming. Achieving effective community engagement in HA, in a non-instrumental way, is key to ensure all stakeholders and alternative knowledge systems to the Eurocentric one are not dismissed and are included in decision making processes.

We found the following definition of Community Engagement (CE) outlined in the UNICEF Minimum Quality Standards and Indicators for Community Engagement:<sup>2</sup>

*A foundational action for working with traditional, community, civil society, government, and opinion groups and leaders; and expanding collective or group roles in addressing the issues that affect their lives. Community engagement empowers social groups and social networks, builds upon local strengths and capacities, and improves local participation, ownership, adaptation, and communication. Through community engagement principles and strategies, all stakeholders gain access to processes for assessing, analysing, planning, leading, implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions, programmes and policies that will promote survival, development, protection and participation.*

The work shows the existence of codes of conduct (CoC) linked to the humanitarian system as well as others linked to research (both bio-medical and social sciences research). Nevertheless, the literature reviewed confirms there are no clear guidelines or CoCs on the application of social sciences for community engagement connected to the humanitarian program cycle, for different kinds of crises and contexts. Although ethical regulatory bodies for the implementation of research exist at global and country level, in academic institutions and in certain organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) or World Health Organization (WHO), they do not fully offer the specific guidance that covers the application of social sciences in HA. As a result, there are no uniform approaches or compliance mechanisms linked to a CoC for the application of social sciences for community engagement in humanitarian action.

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# Methodology





This work was co-led by UNICEF HQ Social Behavior Change (SBC) section (the SS4CE in HA project) and Makerere University (as part of Sonar Global). This mapping exercise has been supported by:

### Scoping review

A Scoping review of published and grey literature, related to CoC for social sciences application in HA was conducted. Existing CoCs for HA and for social sciences research have been identified and analysed. A total of 26 documents including standalone CoCs, national guidelines covering the conduct of social science research and other regulatory organization documents comprised the main literature reviewed (see Annex III for full details).

### Technical working group (TWG) meetings

A TWG of 20 members, representing academic institutions, non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and civil society, was constituted (Annex III) to meet monthly. This CoC TWG discussed methods of work, CoC themes as developed over time including from what emerged in the literature review. A total of 6 meetings were held. The TWG also provided detailed feedback on, and input into, the final analysis and draft versions of this report.

### In-depth interviews

A total of five in-depth interviews with TWG experts were conducted to further understand emerging issues in the development of a CoC. The interviews were conducted using online video platforms, at agreed times that were convenient for both the CoC team and the participants. The qualitative interview guide (Annex II) focused on participants' knowledge and experience of CoC and using social sciences data in humanitarian situations. All interviews were recorded and stored on a secure cloud accessible to the CoC team for reference during analysis.

### Online contributions (Padlet)

TWG participants were also invited to contribute via Padlet (an online platform used as a discussion forum). This procedure was particularly important for members who either were unable to attend a meeting or contribute a specific point of view during the meeting. As such they were able to provide feedback and suggestions at their convenience.

A codebook was developed using Microsoft Excel covering key themes such as the source document/participant, key points covered and any relevant information. From these codes, thematic analysis was used (Bernard, 2011) to identify broader, cross-cutting themes. These themes form the basis upon which our findings are presented. From the themes we identified gaps and opportunities for improvement that will be addressed in the development of the CoC for the application of social sciences in HA.

## Limitations

It would have been ideal to be present in a humanitarian crisis response in order to get first-hand accounts of the procedures used to conduct social science research or use social data during HA, but this was beyond the possibilities of this project.

Mechanisms to reach other targeted stakeholders as participants, particularly those that were unable to meet or respond to the call to participate, should be explored for future revisions to the exercise.

# Codes of conduct in humanitarian action: Origins

In 1994, The ICRC drafted the first CoC for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief. The urgent need was identified after the proliferation of HA and organizations fueled by the interest of donors due to its quick and visible (superficial) positive impact. These organizations were launching operations in the field according to questionable, vague, or sometimes nonexistent ethical standards. As a result, the integrity of HA itself was threatened. The joint Evaluation of the Rwanda crisis response<sup>3</sup> reinforced the understanding of the problem of over-proliferation of agencies and low standards. The situation in the Goma camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was proof that aid could fuel and perpetuate conflict. Accountability became the watchword, and several initiatives were developed to address this issue. One of the favourite mechanisms for enhancing accountability has been the

creation of CoCs to establish common standards for HA. Notable developments have been made in recent years to develop CoCs for humanitarian intervention in conflicts on the part of international NGOs and UN organizations.

**CoCs are common policies, standards, and principles to be upheld both by the staff and third parties acting on behalf of an organization**, although most CoCs of organizations operating in HA do not prescribe concrete operational procedures and they are not backed by stringent compliance mechanisms. They remain foundational documents setting the boundaries of how interventions must take place, for the benefit of whom and under which conditions.<sup>4</sup> CoCs define the ethical framework and the approach taken by an organization beyond its operational mandate.



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# Research ethics and codes of conduct: Origins

There are key events where egregious and disastrous breaches of humane ethical values were committed in the history of research that prompted the need to protect and regulate the participation of human subjects in medical research.

1. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1932-1972): “the longest non-therapeutic experiment on human beings in medical history” (Thomas, 1991) led to the 1979 Belmont Report that emphasized autonomy, beneficence, justice in research. Introduced the federal requirements for research involving humans to have institutional ethics.
2. Unethical medical practices during the 1930s and 1940s by German physicians, proponents of racial hygiene, and continued by the Nazi regime. In 1947, during the Nuremberg trials, Nazi physicians were accused of conducting inhumane and unethical human experiments in concentration camps. This led to the establishment of the Nuremberg Code for medical research which emphasized voluntary participation, informed consent, and justification of risk.
3. The Declaration of Helsinki (1964, last revised 2013): Outlined research ethics principles for World Medical Association such as:
  - a. Voluntary participation
  - b. Informed consent
  - c. Benefit vs risk
  - d. Confidentiality

All aimed at the well-being of humans above the interests of science and society.

However, since the existence of these guidelines there have been repeated examples of abuse, which show the complex nature of codified ethics and their dependence on moral interpretation.

The ethics of social science research is a relatively new field, emerging only in the middle of the 20th century, with many, well-studied examples of extreme violations of ethics within the annals of behavioural and social scientific research. One of the most egregious comes from a 1963 research project concerning ‘obedience to authority’, conducted by psychologist Stanley Milgram.<sup>5</sup> This experiment misled volunteer subjects and failed to obtain their informed consent. The right to withdrawal was not covered adequately in the study. Withdrawal rights enable participants to withdraw without explanation or reprisal. Although Milgram stated participants were able to withdraw, verbal cues given by the experimenter convinced the participants that they were unable to withdraw immediately. When participants requested to withdraw due to the distress of hearing screams of the learner, rather than allowing them to leave instantly, the experimenter would state a set of verbal cues to encourage the participant. “Please continue,” “The experiment requires that you continue,” “It is absolutely essential that you continue,” “You have no other choice, you must go on”. (Milgram, 1963). These prompts resulted in the participants feeling obligated to carry on under pressure. The only time participants could truly withdraw was after the four verbal cues. Therefore, it was not impossible as 35% of participants chose to leave. (McLeod, 2007). However, it was still unethical as participants were unable to withdraw upon request.

Evidently, the verbal prompts led all participants to believe they had no right to withdraw from the study. In addition, some subjects experienced psychological distress knowing they could administer what would be considered a lethal shock to another human being.

### Reviewing research protocols: the birth of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)

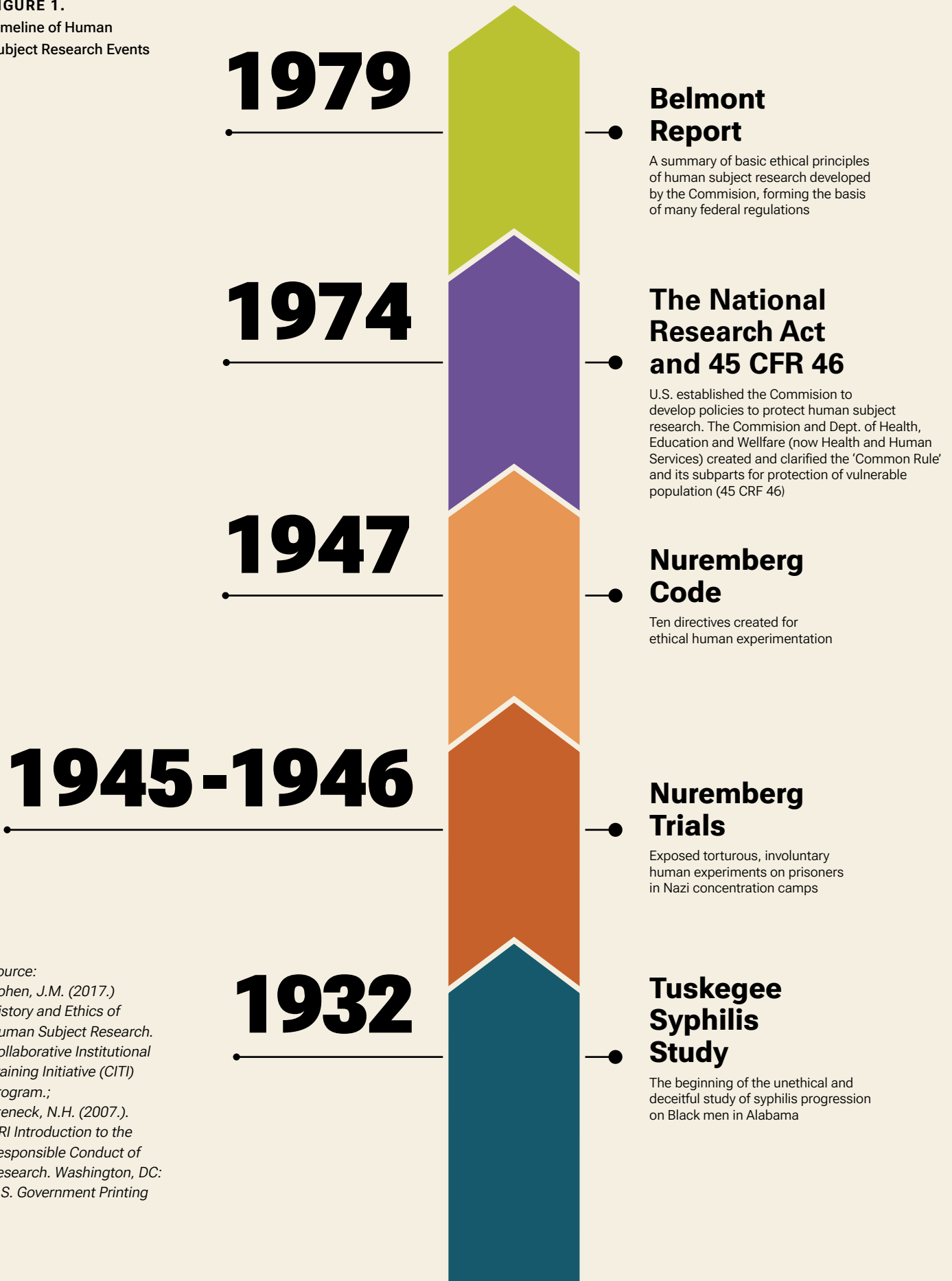
When the Tuskegee and Milgram experiments began, there were no review boards to oversee the goals of these projects. It was not until the mid-1960s that the U.S. Federal Government began the process of developing a set of official rules governing the conduct of research, partly in response to those already mentioned above. This ultimately led to the passage of the National Research Act by the U.S. Congress in 1974. This act set up an Office for the Protection of Research Risks (OPRR) and resulted in a set of guidelines known as the Common Rule, which was widely adopted by federal agencies (Alvino, 2003, p. 898). The Common Rule mandated, among other things, that any institution receiving federal funds for research must establish an institutional review committee. These committees, known as institutional review boards (IRBs), have the job of watching over all research proposals that involve working with human subjects and animals. Universities and colleges that receive federal funding for research on human subjects are required by

federal law to have review boards or forfeit their federal funding. IRBs are responsible for carrying out U.S. government regulations proposed for human research. They must determine whether the benefits of a study outweigh its risks, whether consent procedures have been carefully carried out, and whether any group of individuals has been unfairly treated or left out of the potential positive outcomes of a given study (Beyrer & Kass, 2002). This is important in a hierarchically structured society where we cannot assume racism, sexism, homophobia and classism are not present in research.

Currently, professional associations for each discipline, as well as academic institutions and national research councils, outline their own general ethical guidelines relevant to their disciplines and mandates.<sup>6</sup> Engagement by researchers in humanitarian crises remains relatively unregulated beyond basic ethical guidelines and norms developed for research in general (Black, 2003).



**FIGURE 1.**  
Timeline of Human Subject Research Events



Source:  
Cohen, J.M. (2017.)  
*History and Ethics of Human Subject Research. Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program.*;  
Steneck, N.H. (2007.).  
*ORI Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing*

# Ethical challenges in the application of social sciences in humanitarian action

It is the lack of knowledge and systematic inclusion of at-risk and affected communities in humanitarian programming that drives the application of the social sciences in HA. At the same time, there is a need for evidence-based research that contributes to more effective and efficient responses. (O'Mathúna, 2015). For instance, during recovery phases, it is essential to understand how participants have experienced a past humanitarian crisis and how they continue to experience life in its aftermath (Berman et al., 2016). This demands a respectful engagement with the affected communities, ensuring that the rights of participants are respected throughout the process (Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007). This way, social science research can be key for a broader appreciation of people's lives, understandings, attitudes, behaviours, and how they relate to the environment within the difficult and frequently unstable conditions that arise during and after humanitarian crises (O'Mathúna, 2015).

One of the intentions of this mapping exercise was to find documents that link the application of social sciences for community engagement with the HPC.

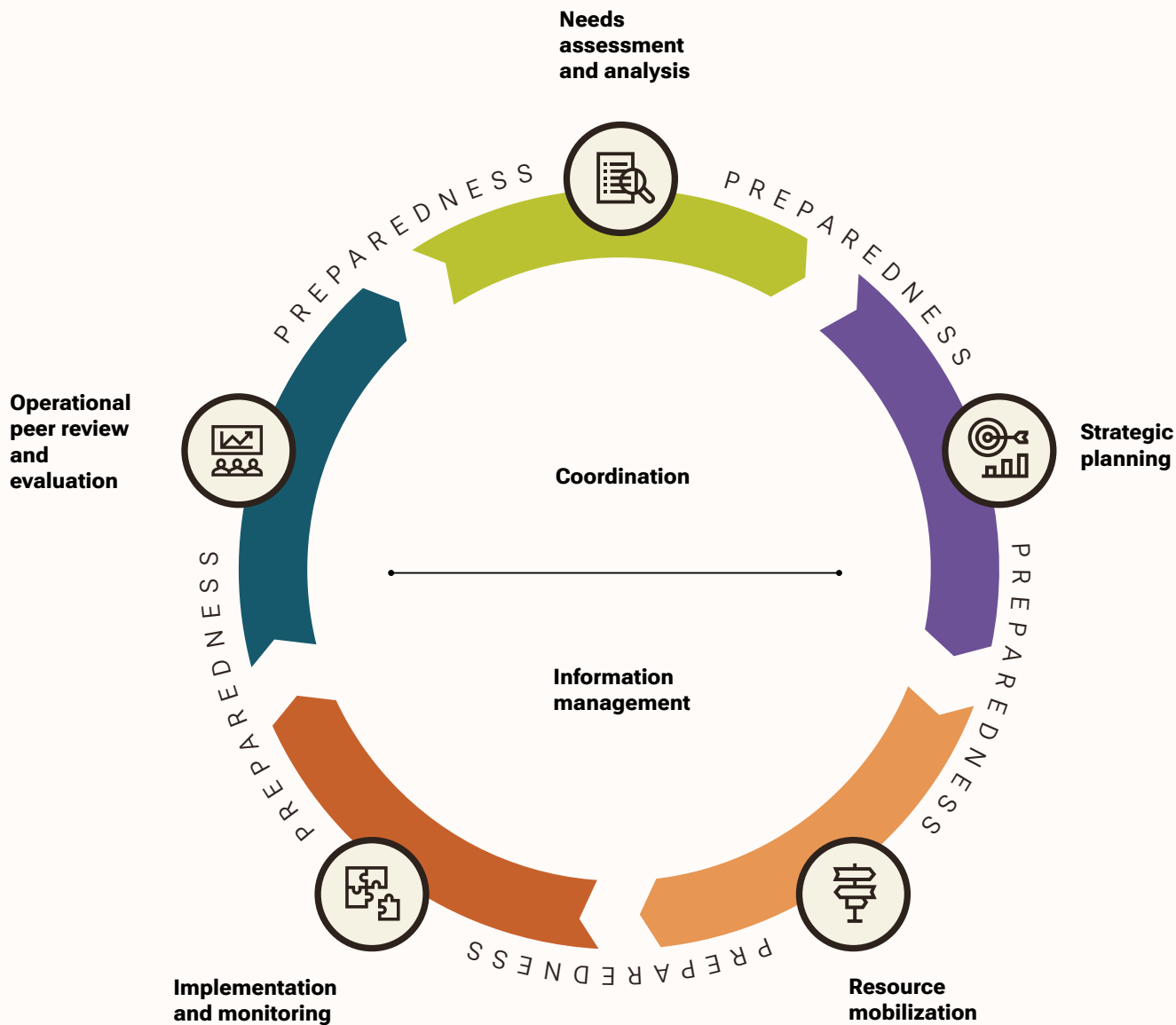
In normal times, during and after humanitarian crises, people may face challenges to their physical, emotional, and intellectual development due to their age, gender, ethnicity/religion, socio-economic position, relation with local/national authority, or other factors that limit their access to essential services and/or compromises their decisional power or status within a community. This situation may be exacerbated during a humanitarian crisis. A review by Bruno and Haar (2020) noted that the researcher must decide whether they cooperate with authorities by sharing their research, and risk being complicit in less socially desirable actions, or refuse and risk access to their study population, potentially depriving communities of a

safe space to share their views and concerns and participate in humanitarian programming.

Bruno and Haar (2020) conclude that the interest in the ethics of studying humanitarian crises has been dramatically increasing in recent years. While key concepts within all research settings such as beneficence, justice and respect for persons are crucially relevant, there are considerations unique to the specific humanitarian context. The particular vulnerabilities of conflict affected populations, the contextual challenges of working in humanitarian settings, and the need for ensuring strong community engagement at all levels make this area of research particularly challenging. Humanitarian crises are prevalent throughout the globe and studying them with the utmost ethical forethought is critical to maintaining sound research principles and ethical standards.

It is important to appreciate the ethical, methodological and data sharing challenges linked to the different applications of social sciences in HA depending on which stage of the humanitarian program cycle the work is being conducted, the type of crisis and the context. Data shows that social sciences have been used in HA in the initial stages of a crisis to properly understand the developing situation for best interventions. The application of social sciences for community engagement in humanitarian actions poses several ethical questions. For instance, researchers engaging with and collecting social sciences information from at-risk and affected populations during the onset/first stages of a crisis without being integrated in wider response mechanisms can challenge conventional humanitarian ethical principles.<sup>7</sup>

FIGURE 2. The HPC Elements



Source: OCHA services, Humanitarian Response: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/es/programme-cycle/space>

The literature points at inadequacies in conducting disaster research involving marginalized and vulnerable groups (Block, Warr, Gibbs, & Riggs, 2013; Luc & Altare, 2018a). It also describes different actors collecting social sciences data during protracted emergencies with different goals (Akondeng et al., 2022; Luc & Altare, 2018a; UNICEF, 2020). Often, these objectives do not represent a direct benefit for the affected

people who participated in the process. Discussions with the TWG members and the literature point at the integration of social science data as some of the greatest challenges in humanitarian programming and the risks associated with only integrating people's data without understanding the consequences can make them even more vulnerable.<sup>8</sup>

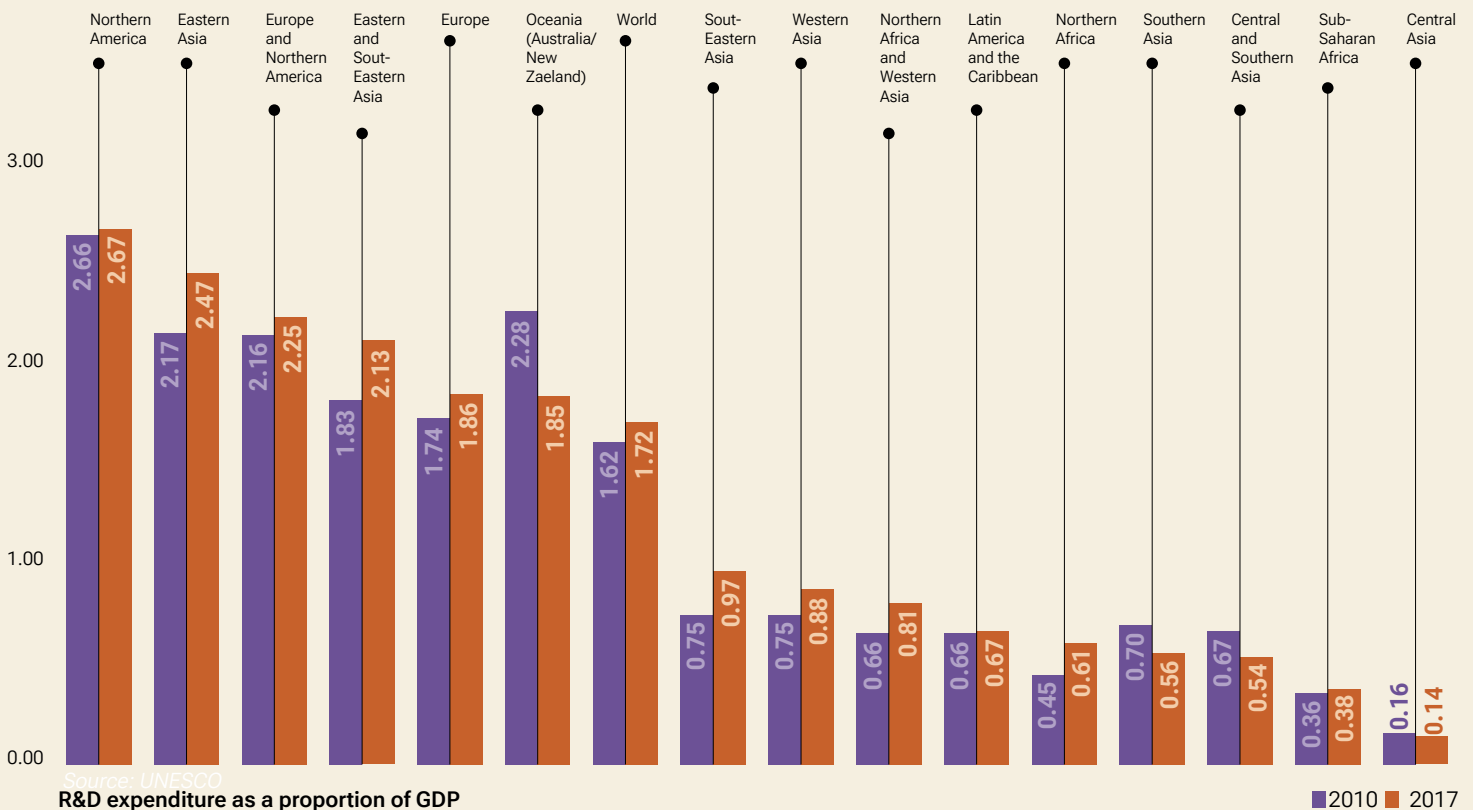
# The Global South and Global North relation: Decolonizing codes of conduct

The process through which research is being designed and implemented poses ethical questions concerning the North-South relation. The World Economic Forum<sup>9</sup> refers to the need to tackle the historic and structural inequities in the global approach to funding scientific research and development, in which North-South collaboration is uneven. Exploitative North-South research collaborations often follow patterns established in colonial times. Researchers in developing countries are often confined to minor roles, and donors tend to back a select group of mostly Global North institutions.<sup>10</sup> For instance, in relation

to funds transfers, donors have strict protocols for transferring cash. In the case of partnerships with Southern institutions, academic institutions in the North continue to be the ones getting the funds, as they are familiar with the protocols and there is a reputation built on trust with donors.

According to UNESCO data (2020), there is little allocation of government funds to research and higher education in southern countries (please see Fig.3). This has led to a continuous dependence on the West for funding.<sup>11</sup>

**FIGURE 3.** Regional trends on research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP (2010 – 2017)





A major challenge, that has been widely debated, in research partnerships is how to address the unequal status between partners. While collaborations can be based on equality and processes that are mutually beneficial to all stakeholders it is often the case that there can be highly unequal power relations that can be detrimental both in terms of findings and for future partnerships (Johnson & Wilson, 2006). Inequality may be based on differences in a range of areas such as access to resources, power relations, knowledge, capacities, and capabilities. Partners may also have different assumptions, perspectives/worldviews, agendas, and expectations. Although such differences are evident in many North–North/South–South partnerships, they are even more apparent in those between North and South. Partnerships between North and South tend to focus on donor–recipient relationships. As explained earlier, Northern institutions are recipients and administrators of funds, which places them in an unequal power relationship with their Southern counterpart. Sometimes the research agenda is set with no participation of the southern institution, research counterparts, and native communities. The whole participation, co-creation, respect for native knowledge systems, accountability, and contribution to the empowerment of local systems through a decolonization agenda is especially missed by those in power who set the agenda (Johnson & Wilson, 2006; Marc, 2017).

According to Luc and Altare (2018b), potential for ethical risks can exist when the ethical standards and CoCs developed in one context (usually Western Eurocentric) are applied to another context without due attention to local understandings of social norms and behaviours. The risks of exploitation of the participants may emerge out of a conflict between the community's belief systems and laws that punish vulnerable individuals. There can be a disconnect between national and international laws and native ethical codes. Even though ethical norms and correct ways of acting may vary from one society to another, all revised CoCs refer to ethical standards and CoCs as they are understood in Western (Eurocentric) societies and applied to Western based scientific research. In general terms there is no consideration of the existence of alternative/native concepts of ethics or accepted behaviours in the codes reviewed.

Another ethical challenge associated with conducting research/assessments in HA is the difficulty for at-risk and affected

communities to distinguish relief from research. A challenge of conflict of interest may arise, especially when the humanitarian aid provider also considers conducting research within the same area where they are offering aid. This may create expectations among participants and impact their consent to be enrolled in the study. In one study of health-seeking behaviours undertaken by a humanitarian NGO in a rural village in an African country consent forms were signed by the participants, but there was uncertainty as the NGO was mostly known in the area as an assistance provider. It was not always clear to the researchers whether participants freely consented to take part in the research or whether they assumed they had to participate to receive assistance, or out of gratitude.

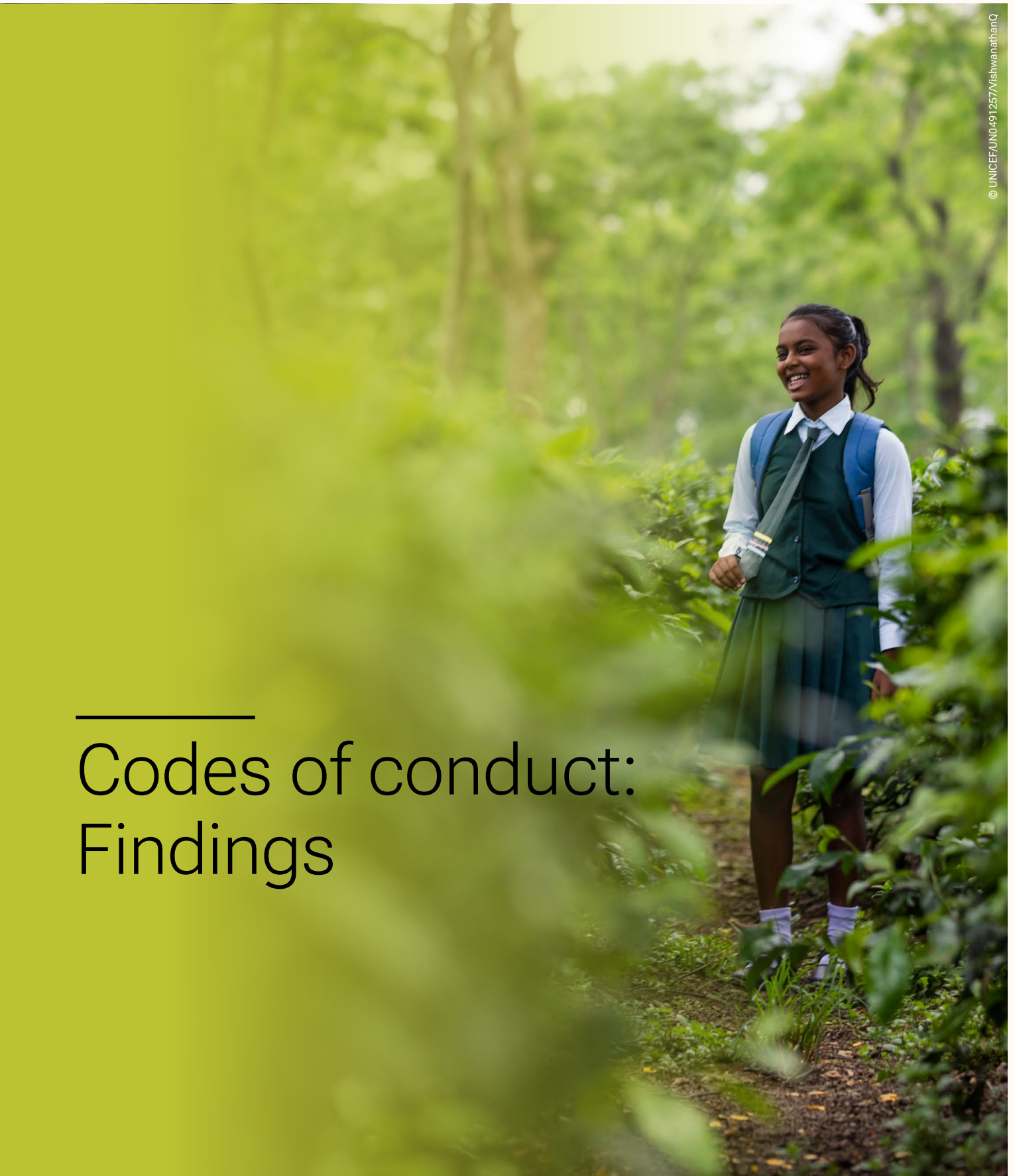
There are cultural considerations, ethical values, and personal experience and opinions of the researchers that incorporate ethical dilemmas related to cultural relativism. For example, accepting cultural norms such as gaining a husband's consent for his wife's participation in a research study, or excluding children from a research project on the grounds that their voice is not relevant, equates to denying some of the fundamental principles of ethical research.

Research integrity cases have been increasingly discussed publicly, affecting public attitudes towards scientists and raising awareness about ethical issues involving violations and their consequences (Armond et al., 2021). Commentators refer to trust among scientists as a critical determinant of societies' resilience in their fight against the COVID 19 pandemic. Yet, this trust has been eroded in some countries. In countries where trust in the government is low, the independence of scientists and scientific institutions is essential to obtain citizen's support for measures necessary to protect public health. Trust in scientists lends clarity and credibility to policy recommendations, which should lead to higher support for and compliance (Algan, Cohen, Davoine, Foucault, & Stantcheva, 2021).

Following the points mentioned above, we used this review to consider the limitations, challenges, and gaps in the existing documents. This exercise will provide the basis on which to build a specific CoC for the application of social sciences for community engagement in HA that is fit for purpose, inclusive and respectful of all forms of knowledge existing on the planet.

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# Codes of conduct: Findings



The mapping exercise revealed that there are documents that offer guidance to the conduct of humanitarian practitioners and for researchers in humanitarian contexts. The mapping did not find any specifically to facilitate or elevate community engagement at different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle.

Twenty-five CoC/ethics were reviewed for this mapping exercise. They are: UNICEF Guidelines for interviewing children; UNICEF Ethics of SBC, the Uganda National Council For Science and Technology (UNCST) code of ethics; World Health Organization (WHO) code of conduct for responsible research; the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC); The UNHCR Code of Conduct and Explanatory Notes; Oxfam International Employee Code of Conduct; OXFAM Research guidelines; SPHERE (Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response); The San Code; UNESCO; The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity; American Sociological Association (ASA) Code of ethics; The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief; Code of ethics for research in the social and behavioural sciences involving human participants for Dutch Universities; ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity; Code of Ethics of the Sierra Leonean Association of Social Workers; Australian Council of Overseas Aid Code of Conduct; Ethical guidelines for social science research in health, India; code of conduct for humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone; IMPACT code of Conduct for Staff; NIHR Ethical Dimensions of Community Engagement and Involvement in Global Health Research; the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and the World Economic Forum Code of Ethics; the MSF OCA Code of Conduct.

We have created a typology to facilitate the analysis of the documents. The categories defined are:

1. Scope of implementation: universal/country specific/ organization specific/sector specific
2. Intention: general statement of principles/detail statements of performance standards
3. Uptake
4. Implementation
5. Compliance mechanisms
6. Inclusion of native knowledge

Please see Table 1, in Annex III, for a detailed analysis of these categories from the 20 CoCs reviewed.

## Scope and intention

The CoC for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief, the IASC code, and the Core Humanitarian Standards and Sphere, aim to bring together a common normative, system-wide guidance to the essential elements of principled, accountable, and quality HA. None of these codes, in general, address how general principles such as neutrality can be converted into practice in a specific context. On the other hand, there are certain codes that are developed for specific situations in particular countries, like the Sierra Leone CoC<sup>12</sup> or the Joint Policy of Operations (JPO) and Principles and Policies of Humanitarian Operations (PPHO) in Liberia,<sup>13</sup> or the Uganda National Guidelines for Conduct of Research during the Covid 19 pandemic.<sup>14</sup>

Some organizations like OXFAM, MSF, UNICEF, develop their own codes, applicable to the staff and provide the criteria of specific good behaviour and attitude of its workers. For instance, the MSF Code refers to good behaviour in the basis of personal commitment, respect for medical ethics, humanistic ideals, human rights, and humanitarian international law as well as a general attitude characterized by neutrality, impartiality, and non-discrimination. These CoCs do not offer guidance for people from external organizations working in HA like social science researchers and their specific accountabilities on the application starting with the need or intended outcomes from their research in regards to humanitarian action that they may/ may not be associated with. They do not incorporate social science perspectives or make reference to community engagement.

A different type of CoCs are the ones developed to guide practitioners and researchers on how to deal with specific groups of people. For example, UNICEF has a set of guidelines for staff and journalists that aim at guiding the reporting and interviewing of children (UNICEF, 2015). The San people of South Africa developed the San code of research ethics. The San peoples, widely known as 'first' or 'indigenous' peoples of Southern Africa, have been the object of much academic research over the past centuries. In recent years San leaders have, with increasing confidence, arrived at the conclusion that most academic research on their communities was neither requested, useful, nor protected them, in any meaningful way. In many cases dissatisfaction, if not actual harm, was the result.

This code requires all researchers intending to engage with San communities to commit to four central values, namely fairness, respect, care, and honesty, as well as to comply with a simple process of community approval.<sup>15</sup>

Some donors also adopted a set of 24 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship. These were drawn up to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of donor action, as well as their accountability to affected people, implementing organizations and domestic constituencies, regarding the funding, coordination, follow-up, and evaluation of such actions.<sup>16</sup>

There were a few CoCs that directly had a specific focus on social sciences. UNESCO has a social science specific CoC. However, this code was not designed for the application of social sciences in HA, but it contains areas of relevance to a humanitarian situation. The other set of guidelines that we found that could be said to have a social science specific reference was the UNCST guidelines to conduct research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UNESCO guidelines for research practice fosters researchers' awareness of the potential ethical, sometimes legal, dilemmas from competing obligations and conflicts of interest and draws attention to certain areas in which conflicts between ethical principles and aims of the research might arise, and to stress the need for resolution. The points in the guidelines are intended to act as signposts rather than detailed prescriptions or regulations. They are not intended to be a substitute for the scientific and professional judgement of the individual researcher.

The guiding principles set out in these CoCs lack an element of contextualization to different settings. They lack flexibility to cater for a different interpretation of the statements other than that stated.

## Uptake, implementation, compliance mechanisms and native knowledge

The uptake or opt-in to a CoC relates to the process of creation of such codes. For instance, the CHS, Sphere and the IASC codes went through a process of consultations and co-creation with many stakeholders. This facilitated the opt-in process to the final product.

The enforcement of many CoCs varies in terms of effectiveness. Those that are developed for staff are easier to enforce, having members accepting and signing the code before starting to work with the organization. Even then, adherence is still hard to monitor, track or enforce, and it is left to individual judgement most of the time. For example, the CoC for the International Committee of the Red Cross, may only be binding for employees but it does state clearly that adherence to it is not enforceable beyond expecting people to abide by what it stated. Often accountability is left to the top-level managers on behalf of the staff of the member organizations.

Although codes are voluntary, there is often an element of compulsion to opt-in. More and more, humanitarian organizations are making it mandatory for future staff to sign the organization's CoC. The CoC is one of the tools the humanitarian community has to prevent and sanction cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected people. Since the 1990s, reports have documented UN peacekeepers engaging in sexual exploitation and abuse.<sup>17</sup>

The system fails to address serious breaches of the CoC in humanitarian crises, as the example of WHO's DRC 10th Ebola virus disease outbreak response shows. Reports refer to the fact that the misconduct and names of perpetrators were known by management in WHO and no action was taken. Some of the men responsible for operations in WHO AFRO were moved to higher positions at global level.<sup>18</sup>

In terms of implementation and compliance, the weakest area of CoCs is what happens when a signatory breaks the code. If the essential nature of a code is that it is a public statement of principles or performance objectives against which an agency commits itself to be judged, then the consequences of breaking the code are important. Compliance mechanisms are usually underdeveloped, and if they do exist are underused. One problem with organizations signing up to codes is that there is too little thought as to what changes will have to be made in procedures as a result. There have been developments in recent years as a reaction to the scandals mentioned earlier.

The Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of

Research (2018) was a positive development to address the implementation and compliance mechanisms.

The Sphere handbook encourages the facilitation of safe access to legal support and justice systems for people whose rights were violated. They recommend avoiding promoting access to justice in situations where the judicial process might cause further harm to victims. For instance, healthcare providers and gender-based violence referral networks should be aware of the national medico-legal system and the relevant laws on sexual violence and inform survivors about any mandatory reporting laws that could limit the confidentiality of the information patients disclose. This may influence the survivor's decision to continue care or reporting, but it must be respected.



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# Conclusions and recommendations



The work of this subproject on CoCs asserts that there is no standalone CoC specifically tackling the use of social sciences for community engagement in humanitarian action (SS4CE in HA), nor is there any existing humanitarian or research organizational CoC which makes explicit reference to this dimension. Experiences from field work suggest that there are unwritten principles which are adopted in the field.<sup>19</sup> Although we can identify and link principles and elements relating to social sciences, or community engagement, across existing CoCs from different fields,<sup>20</sup> the absence of a coherent articulation of these three components (social science, CE, HA) in CoCs is identified as a significant flaw that needs to be addressed.

Partners have recommended harmonization of a CoC as key. Harmonization needs to happen at multiple levels; with native communities and their expectations, with the international humanitarian system and their expectations, with implementing organizations and their mandate requirements, and, with researchers and their affiliated institutions expectations. Work needs to point at merging expectations and accountabilities and finding a middle ground where affected communities are at the centre and local and international expectations are met.

## Co-creation

There is a need to closely coordinate efforts to improve ethics and CoCs for social science research and data-use in HA. This is important as the formulation of ethical principles and CoCs were commonly integrated. Many of the CoC incorporate ethics principles and thus speak to some ethics frameworks.

A broad array of stakeholders: communities, civil society organizations such as social networks, faith-based organizations, youth and women's organizations, indigenous groups, humanitarian organizations, indigenous groups, humanitarian organizations, social science institutions and networks, communities and donors must participate in co-creating, and further implementing a comprehensive CoC for social sciences application in HA.

## Addressing implementation and compliance: Humanitarian ERB

One area that needs to be considered in formulation of a CoC for the application of social sciences for community engagement in HA is how to enforce the guidelines. Thus far the guidelines have been largely perceived as non-binding and thus difficult to enforce in the various sectors that they operate. However, there is recognition that this challenge is not insurmountable and needs to be carefully considered. There is a need to guarantee uptake/implementation/compliance of the CoC.

One possibility that was discussed with partners is to consider the creation of a humanitarian ERB/IEC/IRB to serve as a regulatory body. This body should be composed of representatives of all stakeholders, inclusive of native researchers. The group will work in connection with national/local ERB/IEC/IRB existing groups and will bring focused co-developed knowledge on regulating and overseeing the ethical implementation of social sciences for community engagement in HA.

## The inclusion of community engagement

Social sciences application must enhance CE as an overall approach aimed at the systematic inclusion of local communities in HA at all levels and stages of the HPC. On the one hand, the cultural awareness and evidence provided by social science can offer a rigorous base for giving communities this centrality. On the other, the self-reflexivity process it induces contributes to the understanding of the dynamics generated during the encounter of Eurocentric systems of knowledge and native ones. This sheds light on how past events like colonization and decolonization processes, and fundamental concepts like racism and power dynamics, shape that encounter. Social sciences share a Eurocentric origin with HA and have played an important role in the history of colonization. For this reason, it is necessary to explicitly define a CoC that ensures a fair encounter of systems of knowledge, addressing existing inequities related to power dynamics and asymmetries.<sup>21</sup>

A CoC for the application of SS4CE would need to integrate this conceptualization of CE as a fundamental dimension to the entire delivery of humanitarian aid, and of the social sciences as a resource to achieve this goal. Institutionalizing this approach in a CoC and defining the norms to deliver it ethically is not without challenges. SS4CE is a new concept with multiple layers, and multiple actors. The CoC should provide inclusive and decolonized guidance for social science and CE to be adopted substantively and not instrumentally. Its level of standardization across clusters, agencies and organizations should not disregard adequate contextualization of principles across different regional and crisis contexts, which is key to achieve effective involvement of local communities.

The design of the CoC for the application of social sciences for community engagement (SS4CE) in HA needs to include a component that promotes co-creating through CE at all stages of the HPC. This must emphasize 'real' community engagement of people through intentional and structured processes and platforms that they are a part of and are relevant to their daily lives. Approaches such as ethnography offer opportunities for engaging, building trust and understanding different peoples and their capacities, assets and partnerships as equal and active stakeholders during humanitarian action.

## Advancing and including the decolonization agenda in codes of conduct

Existing CoCs and ethics guidelines describe principles to protect participants in research and affected communities. Yet, the rather paternalistic tone in the documents does not imply systematic inclusion of native knowledge systems and practices challenging the hegemonic Eurocentric worldviews. It is important to visualize the concrete North-South asymmetries related to CoCs and their implementation. For instance, in

situations where there are opposing values due to different cosmovision and knowledge systems involved, dialogue should take place to reach an agreement before starting the research. A CoC for the application of social sciences needs to capture the deep meanings of cultural practices from the perspective of the local people, contributing to the interpretation of what guiding principles need to be the frame for each contextualised engagement rather than assume Eurocentric standard values must fit globally.

A CoC needs to point the researcher/practitioner to the practice of reflexivity and positionality, acknowledging and addressing their privileges. Reflexivity has been foregrounded as an important practice in scholarship regarding the scrutiny of ethical research and knowledge production, contributing towards disrupting power asymmetries. Reflexivity is complex as it entails a constant re-examination of the assumptions embedded in our pedagogy, scholarship, and motives for engaging with the world. This exercise is vital in the process of decolonising knowledge as it will help the researcher to consider how the privileges they hold impact the epistemological and methodological approach to the application of social sciences.

Examples of how to decolonize research methodologies exist in the literature, like in Canada, the US and New Zealand. This can serve as a basis for the creation of a CoC for social sciences application in HA. There is a need to systematically incorporate the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups that are at the centre of HA into the discussion on how to formulate CoCs that are all inclusive. A CoC must include the action of contextualization of ethics and CoC in different places and with different peoples.

Ethics guidelines and CoC must address the unequal relationship between Northern and Southern institutions and with native researchers. Fair contracts and payment, as well as respectful relations, and recognition and inclusion in all the research processes. The CoC should be inclusive of other conceptualizations and understandings of ethics, it must refer to the need to contextualise as a standard.



## Accountability

Humanitarian actors are accountable to the people they are intending to serve, to their donors, to their own organization's charter or mandate, and to the legislation governing charitable organizations, both in their home country and the country of operation. They are also, in a sense, accountable to international humanitarian law, to the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Accountability in research or research accountability as general terms may thus refer to a range of concerns and practices related to the philosophies, policies, systems, procedures, and standards for analysing and promoting ethical conduct in research. Accountability in research requires reviewing institutional policies (for example, those of universities) and examining the attitudes and behaviour of researchers. Institutional policies are key because they dictate the tone and culture of tolerance in research conduct and are major

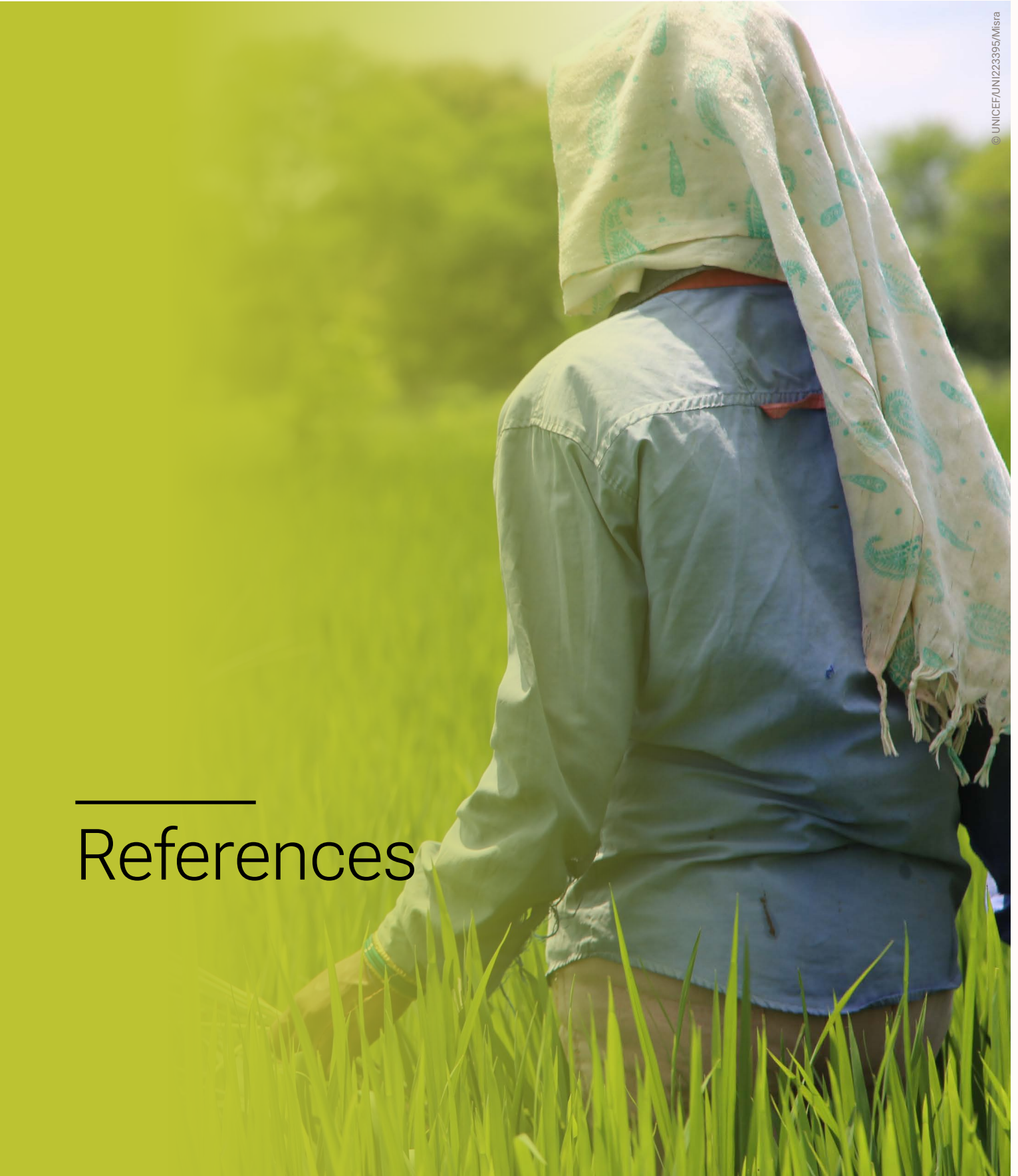
influences on how and why researchers work on particular issues (Sovacool, 2005). Society demands accountability from researchers. This is especially true when the results of a particular research affect individuals and communities.

What happens when research takes place in humanitarian crises? How do we define accountability in these cases? Are researchers accountable to humanitarian principles and how do social sciences application contribute to driving and achieving better community engagement that is foundational to achieve better outcomes from humanitarian action that recognizes communities as the owners of their survival, development and recovery from crisis after crisis? There is a need to understand the intersection between HA and the role of social sciences for effective, timely and sustained community engagement during the different stages of humanitarian programming and define accountabilities.



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# Annexes

- I. TWG meeting agenda and work plan
- II. One-on-one code of conduct interview guide
- III. Summary notes from review of CoC/Examples /  
extract of database matrix
- IV. Summary of key issues and questions from  
individual interviews with experts:
- V. Case studies: Code of conduct in social  
sciences for community engagement

## Annex I.

# TWG1 Agenda and Work plan

Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action (SS4CE in HA) October 2021 –December 2022

Technical Working Group 1 (TWG1) Ethics, data sharing and Code of Conduct

### Project aims

- Strengthen global and regional demand and capacity for social science integration into humanitarian programming
- To ensure engagement of affected and at-risk communities throughout the humanitarian programme cycle
- To respond adaptively, rapidly, effectively and efficiently to humanitarian emergencies.

Overall aim is to co-develop the following Global Goods:

- Mapping
- Guidelines for ethics and data sharing of social sciences data in humanitarian action
- Code of conduct for social sciences in humanitarian action

### Deliverable 1.

Map existing ethics/data sharing and code of conduct guidelines and processes related to application of social sciences in humanitarian action.

- Identify and describe the ethics, data sharing and CoCs on social sciences' application in humanitarian action.
- Monthly meetings TWG1
- Participant's contributions in PADLET
- Review of secondary sources (existent key humanitarian documents related to ethics, data sharing and CoCs already existing in the humanitarian architecture)
- Discussions with participants to define way forward
- Produce the mapping document

### Deliverable 2.

Guidelines on ethics and data sharing for the application of social sciences in humanitarian action

- Identification of gaps, challenges, and questions from the mapping exercise.
- Identify recent humanitarian crises in Brazil and Uganda with social sciences' application as case studies.
- Track, review, and analyse ethics review processes by ERCs, for social sciences research in humanitarian action in Brazil and Uganda -as case studies.
- Interview key-actors (social scientists, ERCs, Research and Humanitarian Institutions, Social Movements) in Brazil and Uganda.
- Exchange with TWG1 members, according to agreed working modality, to get their contributions to co-develop the guidelines.
- Develop guidelines; product to be shared with TWG1 for peer review and comments. First draft to be shared: 30/10/2022, Final product: December 2022

### Deliverable 3.

CoC for social sciences application (data collection and use/sharing in humanitarian action (December 2022)

- Identify gaps, challenges, and questions from mapping exercise
- Exchange with TWG1 members, according to agreed working modality, to get their contributions to co-develop the guidelines.
- Develop guidelines to be shared with TWG1 for peer review and comments. First draft to be shared: 30/10/2022, Final product: December 2022

### Dimensions of the Global Goods

- Humanitarian action: Humanitarian Programme Cycle (including emergency response)
- Social Sciences application in humanitarian action (quantitative and qualitative data)
- Community engagement / Civil Society participation

## Annex II. The qualitative interview guide focused on participants' knowledge and experience of CoC and using social sciences data in humanitarian situations.

The following questions were asked concerning humanitarian data sharing and ethics:

- What type of social sciences data is available and can this be used by humanitarians?
- Is social science data collection, and sharing, standardized in the humanitarian system? Are there any shared platforms to upload the data?
- What are the ethical standards followed for the application of social sciences in HA? What are existing examples of guidelines and protocols?
- What are the current ethical challenges for social sciences in HA?

### Code of Conduct for the application of social sciences in humanitarian action:

- Are there any CoCs addressing the application of social sciences in humanitarian action (inclusive of data collection, analysis, use, and results dissemination)?
- What are your suggestions to create or improve a CoC of social sciences in humanitarian action?
- What is the target audience for the CoC document once completed?
- What should be the main areas of coverage for the CoC?
- How different are the CoCs that are out there and what are your thoughts about what should be included in a social science CoC?
- How should the CoC apply in the humanitarian programme cycle?
- What is a CoC?
- What is your experience with CoCs?
- Tell us about your experience with social science data in a humanitarian situation?

## Annex III. Summary Notes from the Review of CoC

Codes of conduct (Table 1) reviewed and their relevance to social science

### Major Codes of Conduct that were identified

A number of CoCs including standalone CoCs, national guidelines covering the conduct of social science research and other regulatory organization documents comprised the main literature reviewed. These CoCs include the following;

### OCHAs (the United Nations office coordinating Humanitarian Affairs) Code of Conduct

All OCHA activities are guided by the four humanitarian principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. These principles provide the foundations for HA, central to establishing and maintaining access to affected people, whether in a natural disaster or a complex emergency, such as armed conflict.

Promoting and ensuring compliance with the principles are essential elements of effective humanitarian coordination.

Origins and implementation: The humanitarian principles are derived from the core principles, which have long guided the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies.

The principles' centrality to the work of OCHA and other humanitarian organizations is formally enshrined in two General Assembly resolutions. The first three principles (humanity, neutrality and impartiality) are endorsed in General Assembly resolution 46/182, adopted in 1991.

This resolution also established the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). General Assembly resolution 58/114 (2004) added independence as a fourth key principle underlying humanitarian action.

The General Assembly has repeatedly reaffirmed the importance of promoting and respecting these principles within the framework of humanitarian assistance. Commitment to the principles has also been expressed at an institutional level by many humanitarian organizations.

### **Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief:**

A voluntary code designed to help signatories deliver principled and effective HA. It sets out ten core principles as well as three annexes with recommendations to governments of affected states, donor governments and intergovernmental organizations. Over the years, adherence to the Code has become an important way for the Red Cross and Red Crescent and NGOs to define themselves as humanitarians.

**UNICEF:** The UNICEF guidelines are divided into two covering guidelines for interviewing children and guidelines for reporting on children. They emphasized the need to respect the child and involve parents and guardians when conducting interviews with children in emergency situations.

The following principles should be followed in interviewing children:

- Do no harm to any child; do not discriminate in choosing children to interview; no staging; ensure that the child, or guardian, knows who they are talking with in spite of what the media report is regarding; obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs; pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed; a chaperone/guardian and/or one additional member of UNICEF personnel should be present with the child along with the UNICEF personnel or associate.

The guidelines further show how to approach reporting on children emphasizing the following:

- Do not further stigmatize any child; always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image; in instances where children are identified, complete captions and shortlist information should accompany all multimedia; always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified; in certain circumstances of risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child; in certain cases, using a child's identity - their name and/or recognizable image - is in the child's best interests. However, when the child's identity is used, they must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals; confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both; in selecting photographs which remain within the field of child rights or

other human rights, select images that successfully capture the core elements of the topic; cover a representative range of related people, activities, locations; offer varied visual perspectives; and are technically sound.

**World Health Organisation:** Ethical standards for research during public health emergencies: Distilling existing guidance to support COVID-19 R&D.

Research is a key aspect of response to public health emergencies, yet it should never impede response efforts. This means that research should not be conducted if it can be expected to take away personnel, equipment, facilities, and other resources from those required for outbreak response. In addition, resources allocated to research must not take away from routine health care and public health services.

CoC for the **International Red Cross and Red Crescent**

**Movement** and NGOs in disaster relief: A voluntary code designed to help signatories deliver principled and effective HA. It sets out ten core principles as well as three annexes with recommendations to governments of affected states, donor governments and intergovernmental organizations. Over the years, adherence to the Code has become one important way for the Red Cross and Red Crescent and NGOs to define themselves as humanitarians. The 10 core principles include:

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind.
3. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
4. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and to those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

**Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, 2021:** This system-wide Operational Guidance, will ensure concrete steps for data responsibility in all phases of HA.

The Operational Guidance is divided into four sections:

1. Describes the rationale and approach for the Guidance, offers an overview of data responsibility in HA, and clarifies the audience and scope of the document.
2. Presents a set of Principles for Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action.
3. Describes key actions for data responsibility to be taken at different levels of humanitarian response, including specific roles and responsibilities for realizing these actions.
4. A set of Annexes that offer key definitions, examples of templates and tools for data responsibility, resources and references, and background information on the development of the Operational Guidance.

Principles for Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action  
Accountability (of relevance to social science) include:  
Confidentiality, coordination and collaboration, data security,  
defined purpose, necessity and proportionality, fairness and  
legitimacy human rights based approach, people centred and  
inclusive

The three principles of respect, beneficence and justice are used  
are used in the following ways:

**a. Designing research**

- Designed to reduce risks for participants and increase their possible benefits.
- The research must be designed to protect vulnerable participants, for example, children or women workers in a garment factory.
- Questions for surveys and interviews should be respectful and phrased in culturally-appropriate language.

**b. Selecting participants**

- Participants should only be involved in research that has potentially some benefit for themselves, they should be involved in deciding what those benefits are, no individual or group of participants should face more risks than benefits from participating.

**c. Gaining the consent of participants**

- Researchers must gain voluntary, informed consent. This means that the participants must have the relevant information about what the research concerns and understand it, including the possible risks and benefits to themselves. They must be free to choose whether or not to participate, without inducement, give their consent either written or verbal and have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.
- The depth of the consent process will depend on the topic of research and the extent to which it could impact on the participants' lives.
- If research involves children (as defined by national law, or those under 18) then their parents or guardians must also give consent. It is best to get their written consent, in (the rare) case of disputes later.
- Special care must be taken when seeking consent from vulnerable groups, for example prisoners.
- Researchers must ensure that no participants are forced to take part, for example by their employer, their parents, or by village elders.

**d. Conducting the research**

- Researchers should be qualified and/or trained for the task. They need to have good self-awareness and strong listening skills.
- Research should be conducted in places that are socially comfortable for the participant and where they are able to speak freely.
- If the participant has incurred direct financial costs for participating then they can be reimbursed, but they should not be paid to participate.
- The participants must be able to contact the researchers, either directly or through local partners.
- If a participant reports any serious adverse effects as a result of participating, such as losing their job or being physically abused, then this must be reported to the Oxfam Project Manager by the researcher.

Using the research findings participants in research should be told how Oxfam would like to use the research findings (for example as part of a campaign). They must then be asked, and must be free to choose, whether or not they can be quoted in Oxfam materials, their real name can be used in Oxfam materials, their photographic image and/or film of them (if taken) can be used in Oxfam materials.



Their choices must be clearly recorded and always kept with their testimony and/or the relevant media.

If it is agreed that all or any part of a participant's testimony should be confidential then that commitment must be clearly recorded and respected. If the testimony is to be made anonymous, or used with a false name, make sure that any other identifying details are also changed.

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### **Uganda National Council for Science and Technology**

**(UNCST):** National guidelines for conduct of research during Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Qualitative work on local enablers and barriers, focus on mental health and psychosocial support for special populations like children, focus on effects on health workers, factors influencing community involvement, focus on misinformation sources and generally capture the overall context of the emergency action. The following are the guidelines that were set for conducting social science research during the outbreak:

- Develop qualitative assessment frameworks to systematically collect information related to local barriers and enablers for the uptake and adherence to public health measures for prevention and control.
- Identify how the burden of responding to the outbreak and implementing public health measures affects the physical and psychological health of those providing care for COVID-19 patients and identify the immediate needs that must be addressed.
- Identify the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) risks and vulnerabilities including for special populations, like children and define mitigation measures within existing health care systems.
- Psychological effects of COVID-19 on health care workers.
- Identify the underlying drivers of fear, anxiety and stigma that fuel misinformation and rumour, particularly through social media.
- Identify factors that influence the involvement of communities throughout the response process.
- Identify knowledge gaps in the notification of COVID-19 among public health physicians.
- Identify perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and practices among communities concerning preventive precautionary measures on COVID-19.
- Monitor social media for information and rumours around COVID-19.

- Monitor and evaluate impact of public awareness interventions including messages developed for different population groups.
- Notifiable disease reporting among public sector physicians' impact.
- Identify and target special groups in the communities e.g. opinion leaders, church elders, imams, etc and assess their KAP on COVID-19 as they can have an effect on their respective communities' behaviour change.
- Impacts of social stigma and social distancing on implementation of effective control of COVID-19 in the national context.
- Document experiences of healthcare providers and their families and network of contacts in the context of COVID-19.
- Implementation research within a country's response system.
- Gender dimensions of COVID-19 infection.
- The impact of COVID-19 on pattern and severity of poisoning events and substance abuse at the community level and in national settings.

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**UNHCR:** CoC and explanatory notes: UNHCR's capacity to ensure the protection of and assistance to refugees and other persons of concern depends on the ability of its staff to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. The UNHCR is specific to staff and others doing UNHCR contracted work. It is too generic with very little reference to research in general or social science in particular. The overall principles of doing no harm or protection of vulnerable populations such as refugees are important foundation principles for research in these contexts. Nevertheless, it aims to protect the rights of vulnerable refugees and guide staff to conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring disrepute to the organization. It is not enforceable by law.

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**Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC):** Recommendations For Conducting Ethical Mental Health And Psychosocial Research In Emergency Settings.

- **Research Purpose and Benefit:** Ethical research addresses questions and topics that respond to a recognized gap or need; ethical research ensures fair and direct benefits and minimizes research risks; dissemination of research findings to participants, collaborators and others.
- **Analysis of Ethical issues:** All research protocols involving primary data collection for publication in a scientific medium (e.g., journal, book, conference) must undergo a process of ethical review, before research starts, to address potential ethical issues.

- **Participation:** Participation in research demonstrates respect for individual and community autonomy and self-determination. Ethical research practice includes community participation to the extent possible but if there is an opportunity to conduct this research with the vulnerable populations it should be done. If research questions can be answered without vulnerable populations participating, that should take precedence. Collaborating and coordinating with others in the setting with fair selection of participants and robust and reliable informed consent processes. Reflecting on the study conduct for collective learning on ethical research practice.
- **Safety:** Participant and researcher safety are overriding priorities in emergency settings; responding to participant vulnerability and protection needs; assessing and responding to participant autonomy and capacity; ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to privacy; accountability through fair selection and specialist training of research teams and auxiliary staff; staff care; environmental, political and health security.
- **Neutrality:** Ensure non-discrimination and non-alignment (not taking sides) in conflict settings; access to and exit from the study site; declare researcher interests; the role of funding.
- **Study Design:** To be ethical, research must be well designed; the research methodology must be appropriate to the research question and target population.



**SPHERE:** The Sphere Project, now known as Sphere, was created in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Its aim was to improve the quality of their humanitarian responses and to be accountable for their actions.

The Sphere philosophy is based on two core beliefs:

- People affected by disaster or conflict have the right to life with dignity and, therefore, the right to assistance.
- All possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict.

Follows the CoC: Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes.

**UNESCO:** Key areas of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers

- UNESCO attaches the highest priority to the maintenance of high standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability in the research it supports. This applies to all aspects of that research from collection, recording, citing and reporting to the retention of scientific material.
- As UNESCO fosters international, interdisciplinary, comparative and policy-relevant social science research, network and research activities will take place in many parts of the world, and within a variety of economic, cultural, legal and political settings. Researchers may therefore inevitably face ethical, sometimes legal, dilemmas from competing obligations and conflicts of interest.
- For the most part, researchers will be aware of the potential difficulties arising from their work. However, UNESCO is concerned to draw the attention of all researchers to certain areas in which conflicts between ethical principles and aims of the research might arise, and to stress the need for their resolution.
- Therefore, a set of Ethical Guidelines has been developed to provide a framework to guide research practice. They are intended to act as signposts rather than detailed prescriptions or regulations. They are not intended to be a substitute for the scientific and professional judgement of the individual researcher.
- UNESCO encourages the participating institutions and networks to develop policies and promote information sessions for awareness-raising concerning ethical issues in social research.

**UNICEF:** The UNICEF guidelines are divided in two, covering guidelines for interviewing and reporting on children. They emphasized the need to respect the child and involve parents and guardians when conducting interviews with children in emergency situations. From the document titled “Ethical Reporting Guidelines”

## Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines

Researchers should be fully aware of the ethical issues involved in their work and adhere to the following basic principles:

1. Responsibility for all procedures and ethical issues related to the project rests with the principal investigators.
2. Research should be conducted in such a way that the integrity of the research enterprise is maintained, and negative after-effects, which might diminish the potential for future research, should be avoided.
3. The choice of research issues should be based on the best scientific judgement and on an assessment of the potential benefit to the participants and society in relation to the risk to be borne by the participants. Studies should relate to an important intellectual issue.
4. The researcher should consider the effects of his/her work, including the consequences or misuse, both for the individuals and groups among whom they do their fieldwork, and for their colleagues and for the wider society.
5. The researcher should be aware of any potential harmful effects. In such circumstances, the chosen method should be used only if no alternative methods can be found after consultation with colleagues and other experts. Full justification for the method chosen should be given.
6. The research should be conducted in a competent fashion as an objective scientific project and without bias. All research personnel should be qualified to use all of the procedures employed by them.
7. The research should be carried out in full compliance with, and awareness of, local customs, standards, laws and regulations.
8. All researchers should be familiar with, and respect, the host culture. Researchers undertaking research on cultures, countries and ethnic groups other than their own should make their research objectives particularly clear and remain aware of the concerns and welfare of the individuals, or communities, to be studied.
9. The principal investigators’ own ethical principles should be made clear to all those involved in the research to allow informed collaboration with other researchers. Potential conflicts should be resolved before the research begins.
10. The research should avoid undue intrusion into the lives of the individuals or communities they study. The welfare of the informants should have the highest priority; their dignity, privacy and interests should be protected at all times.
11. Freely given informed consent should be obtained from all human subjects. Potential participants should be informed, in a manner and in language they can understand, of the context, purpose, nature, methods, procedures, and sponsors of the research. Research teams should be identified and contactable during and after the research activity.
12. There should be no coercion. Participants should be fully informed of their right to refuse, and to withdraw at any time during the research.
13. Potential participants should be protected against any, and all, potentially harmful effects and should be informed of any potential consequences of their participation.
14. Full confidentiality of all information and the anonymity of participants should be maintained. Participants should be informed of any potential limitations to the confidentiality of any information supplied. Procedures should be put in place to protect the confidentiality of information and the anonymity of the participants in all research materials.
15. Participants should be offered access to research results, presented in a manner and language they can understand.
16. All research should be reported widely, with objectivity and integrity.
17. Researchers should provide adequate information in all publications and to colleagues to permit their methods and findings to be properly assessed. Limits of reliability and applicability should be made clear.
18. Researchers are responsible for properly acknowledging the unpublished, as well as published, work of other scholars.
19. All research materials should be preserved in a manner that respects the agreements made with participants.

TABLE 1. Codes of conduct

Type of CoC	Typology: Universal/ institutional coverage	Aim of CoC	Directed to	Humanitarian context	Research context content
1 UNICEF	For UNICEF staff and Journalists covering children.	Guidelines for reporting on and interviewing children.	Staff, but could be applied by researchers.	No	Yes, covers interviewing and reporting aspects.
2 Uganda National Council For Science and Technology (UNCST)	Country wide. All research involving humans.	How best research can be done in line with Ministry of Health guidelines for response to outbreaks (e.g., prevention of Covid-19).	No, mostly covers researchers, research teams.	Falls under rapid response to disease outbreak situations.	Detailed guidelines general science subject areas including social sciences.
3 World Health Organisation (WHO)- Code of conduct for responsible research	International, institutional and national.	Policy on misconduct in research which aims at examining and reporting wrongdoing in research. Also has CoC for responsible research.	CoC guides WHO staff and others collaborating with WHO.	No	All research associated with WHO including non-clinical (social sciences) research.
4 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)	For humanitarian staff, Organisations, and their partners.	Aims to bring together a common normative, system-wide guidance to inform individual and collective action and uphold high standards for data responsibility in different operating environments.	For humanitarian staff.	Focuses on humanitarian action.	May be applied for data collected in humanitarian action.
5 The UNHCR Code of Conduct and Explanatory Notes	For UNHCR staff, organisations and their partners.	To clarify appropriate behaviour particularly in situations where difficult choices need to be made.	For humanitarian staff.	Focuses on humanitarian action.	Applicable in humanitarian emergencies like refugee crises.

Social science content	Main focus	Legal or administrative enforcement	Community engagement component	History	Strengths	Gap
Not social sciences specific.	Provides guidelines for interviewing and reporting on children.	Implementation and compliance is taken care of by the UN committee on the rights of the child.	Not specific	Commissioned in 1999; published in 2005 .	Offers guidelines for working with children ethically.	May miss out on contexts outside the norm.
Includes a social sciences component.	Priorities for disease related research in biomedical, clinical (e.g. RCTs) and social sciences.	UNCST regulates all research and provides measures for enforcement (through RECs/ IRBs).	Covers research responsive to community needs.	Developed in 2020	Comprehensive multi disciplinary focus.	Too generic
Not social sciences specific.	Gives particular emphasis to good research practice, conflict of interest, intellectual property, publication, and research wrongdoing.	Institutional enforcement by established ethics team.	Not specific	Not provided	Provides service which considers reports confidentially and anonymously upon request known as "The Integrity Hotline."	Sanctions tailored mainly to WHO related staff.
General	Ethical and effective management of personal and non-personal data for operational response.	National and institutional laws should be applied.	Recommends community engagement.	The agencies a sub-group on data responsibility in humanitarian action in 2020.	Offers templates that guide implementation and unites almost all UN agencies and other international NGOs under one umbrella. Will be reviewed every two years.	Focus on international agencies may meet contextual challenges.
General	Sets acceptable standard of behaviour for UNHCR under the UN charter. Also, to help UNHCR staff deal with ethical and moral dilemmas linked to their professional/ social lives and sometimes private lives.	Document lacks the force of the law; so UNHCR plays the duty to monitor implementation and compliance.	Communicate the principles to the communities and gives them the opportunity to report any breaches of the code without fear.	Was developed and transmitted in 2002.	Looks at CoC from the conduct rather than the misconduct perspective.	Heavily skewed towards UNCHR.

Type of CoC	Typology: Universal/ Institutional coverage	Aim of CoC	Directed to	Humanitarian context	Research Context content
6 Oxfam International Employee Code of Conduct	For Oxfam staff.	Ensures that all Oxfam employees avoid using unequal power relationships for their own benefit.	For humanitarian staff.	Focuses on humanitarian action.	Can be applied in all contexts of humanitarian action.
7 OXFAM research guidelines	For staff, partners and any other individuals working in the development sector.	Developing methods that give better insights on hidden social science issues.	No, it can be oxfam staff and partners, researchers and policy makers.	Focuses on providing social science essential information on what needs changing, how people are affected and positive change strategies.	Can be applied in vulnerable situations like natural hazards, conflict and displacement. Also in academia.
8 SPHERE (Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response)	Global	Builds on legal and ethical foundations of humanitarianism.	Supports humanitarian staff wherever they work.	Core humanitarian standards under the humanitarian charter.	Apply throughout the programme cycle.
9 The San Code	Southern Africa	Commitment of all researchers intending to engage with San communities to commit to four central values which are fairness, respect, care and honesty.	Yes	Focuses on upholding the values spelt out in the code which speak on promoting the livelihood of the San people.	Specifically recorded for the san people.
10 UNESCO	Global	But encourages local contextualisation.	Specific to social science staff.	Not specific	19 principles to guide research conduct.
11 The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity	All European academies (ALLEA)	CoC ensure proper research behaviour, to maximise the quality and robustness of social science research, and to respond adequately to threats to, or violations of, research integrity.	Academic institutions.	Not specific	Covers principles, good research practices, violations of research integrity.

Social science content	Main focus	Legal or administrative enforcement	Community engagement component	History	Strengths	Gap
General	To give guidance on the key social sciences issues and standards by which Oxfam employees are expected to adhere to in certain circumstances.	Subject to relevant international human rights law, Laws of the country where a social science assignment for Oxfam is executed.	Recommends community engagement.	Living document with annual reviews; developed in 2017, revised in 2018 then 2019.	Has a social science component.	Developed with institutional staff in mind and may need adapting.
General	Providing methodological guidance, peer review and support on how to plan, manage and analyse research.	Is done by research ethics committees and backed up by the law of a given country when need arises like it is in clinical trials.	Looks at research that is geared towards the development sector, general well being of people in different communities.	Were launched in 2012.	Considers a variety of disciplines.	Ethical standards need to be context specific given the different settings in which research is carried.
General	Very comprehensive and cover a wide range of areas in the programme cycle.	Principles in the charter are reflected in international law. Also they depend on the fundamental moral principle of Humanity.	Looks at alleviating people from suffering.	Was created in 1997.	It gives a sense of ownership to people who use it, thus it is a document for all.	Does not take care of the mental health of the relevant stakeholders.
General	reducing double standard in research / ethics dumping.	Is taken care of by the ethics committee.	Looks at alleviating san people from social challenges/ empowerment.	Was created in 2017.	Fosters the continued existance and survival for minority groups of society.	Can lead to social indicipline amongst people in society.
Social sciences specific.	Focuses on providing a framework to guide research practice.	Signposts, not prescriptions or regulations.	With caution to avoid undue intrusion.	Not provided.	19 principles offer a platform for ethical conduct of research.	Role of non-research stakeholders such as donors not covered.
General sciences	Research in all scientific and scholarly fields (social sciences, humanities and natural sciences).	Self governing membership. No uniform enforcement by association.	Not provided in explicit terms.	Founded in 1994.	Living document reviewed every 3-5 years.	Misses the humanitarian context.

Type of CoC	Typology: Universal/ Institutional coverage	Aim of CoC	Directed to	Humanitarian context	Research Context content
12 American Sociological Association (ASA) code of ethics	ASA members in their professional capacities.	No	No	Not specific	Covers a large section of the research cycle (planning, implementation and dissemination).
13 The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief	Covers donor governments and inter-governmental organizations.	Seeks to maintain high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact.	Staff have a specific CoC.	Guidelines cover humanitarian situations.	Not research specific.
14 Code of ethics for research in the social and behavioural sciences involving human participants	Academic institutions that fall under the deans of social sciences as united by the DW in Netherlands.	Aims to support researchers and ethics boards in their ethical reflections.	Staff members	No	Guidelines for all researchers. Offers general ethical guidelines.
15 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Data responsibility guidelines	UN agencies and NGOs	The OCHA Data Responsibility Guidelines ('the Guidelines') offer a set of principles, processes and tools that support data responsibility in OCHA's work.	Guidelines for OCHA staff.	Specific focus on humanitarian context.	Mainly focusing on data related activities (sharing, storing and management).
16 UNICEF The Ethics of SBC	UNICEF	Ethics principles that govern UNICEF's work on SBC.	Principles for UNICEF staff.	In general terms.	Not research specific.
17 ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity	All European Academies	To equip researchers with research principles and good research practices and Integrity.	Researchers, research institutions, organisations, authors, publishers and reviewers.	No	Guidelines for all researchers, research institutions, organisations, authors, publishers and reviewers. Offers general ethical guidelines.



Social science content	Main focus	Legal or administrative enforcement	Community engagement component	History	Strengths	Gap
Sets broad standards for sociologists.	Principles and ethical standards that underlie sociologists scientific and professional responsibilities and conduct.	Encouraged to refer to standards of ASA. Committee on professional conduct presides over disputes.	Not provided in explicit terms.	Documented dated June 2018.	Gives detailed guidelines for members of association.	Too narrow and relevant to members.
In general terms	Offers guidelines to multiple institutions on responsible conduct of work during emergency situations.	Voluntary code. In case of war it is applied in conformity to international humanitarian law.	Principle 6, covers community engagement component.	1994	Covers donors and guides on dealing with governments.	Offers broad guidelines mostly targeted to programme implementation rather than social science research.
Yes	Covers scientific relevance, necessity and validity, informed consent, data protection and privacy, guidelines for ERB complaints procedures.	All social sciences institutes at Dutch universities subscribe.	Not specific	2016	Offers avenue for participants to make complaints.	Not humanitarian specific.
Not social sciences specific.	Data about the context, the people affected and the humanitarian response.	Has a comprehensive enforcement mechanism at global, national and regional levels.	Deliberately recommends community engagement at different stages.	Informed by gap analysis studies, research and field testing conducted by OCHA in 2019 and 2020.	Adoption aided by relevant templates and backed by international law; General Assembly resolution 46/182, which was adopted in 1991 and General Assembly resolution 58/114 (2004).	No particular focus on social sciences.
Not social sciences specific.	Offers UNICEF staff with guidelines for ethical conduct in general.	Limited to UNICEF.	Not provided in explicit terms.	Not provided	Provides specific guidelines for those associated with UNICEF.	Focus on social sciences but not specifically linked with humanitarian action and the HPC.
Yes	Covers Research principles and good research practice, Violations, integrity .	Bound by Professional responsibility.	Not specific	2017	Offers guidance to all researchers, organisations and institutions conducting research.	Lacks enforcement or complaints mechanisms.

Type of CoC	Typology: Universal/ Institutional coverage	Aim of CoC	Directed to	Humanitarian context	Research Context content
18 <b>Code of Ethics of the sierra Leonan Association of Social Workers</b>	Social Workers Association of Sierra Leone.	To guide social workers and social work students regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work or the populations they serve.	Social Workers and Social work students.	Not specific to Humanitarian Context except for when a social worker is deployed in humanitarian context.	Not research specific .
19 <b>Autralian Council of Overseas Aid Code of Conduct</b>	ACFOA, Australian NGOs	To regulate Australian NGOs behaviour and standards.	Australian NGOs	Yes, it has a humanitarian Context.	Not research specific.
20 <b>Ethical guidelines for social science research in health</b>	Academic Institutions in India.	Aims to support researchers and ethics boards in their ethical reflections.	Staff members	No	Guidelines for all researchers. Offers general ethical guidelines.
21 <b>Code of conduct for humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone</b>	Humanitarian stakeholders in Sierra Leone.	The Sierra Leone code deals with the problem of armed convoys.' its aim is to ensure that the parties to the conflict recognise and observe the impartiality and the inviolability of humanitarian principles.'	Humanitarian stakeholders in Sierra Leone and parties to the conflict.	Focuses on humanitarian action.	Does not cover research.
22 <b>IMPACT code of conduct</b>	IMPACT staff	It aims at Guiding IMPACT staff in the excecution of their work.	It can be IMPACT staff and partners, researchers and policy makers.	Yes, it has a humanitarian Context.	Yes, regarding data protection.

Social science content	Main focus	Legal or administrative enforcement	Community engagement component	History	Strengths	Gap
Not specific	The focus is regulation of social workers and students behavior in the execution of their work and to give guidance where there is conflict of interest in decision making.	Enforced by regulatory bodies such as the licensing board for social workers.	No aspect of community engagement.	Created in 2016	It provides professional guidance and can be used by social workers elsewhere.	It's a professional code for social workers and students only. It may not be generalised to other professionals.
Not specific	Its primary focus is on the rights of donors. code only addresses the aspect of non-governmental organizations activities.	It is enforced by the Australian Government.	No aspect of community engagement.	1997	It's enforced by the Australian Government through annual reporting.	This Australian code does not address ethical issues in the provision of humanitarian and development aid.
Yes	Covers scientific relevance, necessity and validity, informed consent, data protection and privacy, guidelines for ERB complaints procedures.	All social sciences institutes at Dutch universities subscribe.	Not specific	2016	Offers avenue for participants to make complaints.	Not humanitarian specific.
Not social sciences specific	Protection of humanitarian actors.	Sierra Leone government	No aspect of community engagement.	1998	It's signed by two conflicting parties.	Enforcement is only focused on protection of humanitarian workers.
Not social sciences specific.	Providing guidance to IMPACT staff.	It is enforced by IMPACT management for their staff and partners.	Yes an aspect of community engagement in as far as upholding the rights of beneficiaries and communities that IMPACT operates in.	Version 2, 2021	It has partnerships with world accredited Humanitarian actors and relevant policies in humanitarian work.	It is specific to IMPACT organization staff.

Type of CoC	Typology: Universal/ Institutional coverage	Aim of CoC	Directed to	Humanitarian context	Research Context content
23 <b>NIHR Ethical Dimensions of Community Engagement and Involvement in Global Health Research ( Brief)</b>	Researchers in health research, how to conduct community engagement and involvement ethically	Its aims is to bring out ethical goals of community engagement and involvement in global health research.	Researchers in global health Research.	Not specific to humanitarian context.	Specific to research context.
24 <b>The Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)</b>	Humanitarian system essential elements for principled, accountable and quality humanitarian action.	Builds on legal and ethical foundations of humanitarianism.	Supports humanitarian staff (organisations and individuals).	Specific focus on humanitarian context.	Not research specific.
25 <b>World Economic Forum Code of Ethics</b>	Global	The aim of this code is to establish the foundations for open conversations that unite different opinions, perspectives and recommendations to safeguard a positive and sound research environment.	Guides, mentors Researchers in the World.	Not specific to humanitarian context.	Yes, research specific.
26 <b>MSF OCA code of conduct</b>	For staff working with MSF OCA.	Builds on legal and ethical foundations of humanitarianism.	Supports humanitarian staff wherever they work.	Core humanitarian standards under the humanitarian charter.	Not research specific .

Social science content	Main focus	Legal or administrative enforcement	Community engagement component	History	Strengths	Gap
Not social sciences specific.	Community engagement and involvement in health research.	It's a reflective brief, not a code of conduct.	It heavily focuses on community engagement in health research.	July, 2021	It strongly brings out the importance of community and involvement in health research.	It lacks social science perspectives.
Not social sciences specific.	To support humanitarian organisations and individuals to provide quality and effective assistance.	The Humanitarian Charter and Protection Principles directly support the Core Humanitarian Standard.	It focuses on community engagement in terms of centering the communities in which they work at the heart of their interventions.	Created in 2018 and under Sphere.	It is a guideline that can be used by all.	It lacks guidance on research activities in humanitarian work.
All Inclusive of both the natural science and social science Research.	The main focus is to create a positive research environment for all researchers and research institutions.	Some principles in the code are reflected in international law. Also they depend on the fundamental moral principles of humanity such as, 'do no harm'.	Yes, in terms of a principle of engaging the public.	Was created in Jan 2021	It's supportive to researchers.	It's generalist in nature and lacks an element of enforcement.
Not social sciences specific.	Its focus is to provide the criteria of specific (good) behaviour and attitude of MSF workers, namely, the basis of personal commitment, respect for medical ethics, humanistic ideals, human rights and humanitarian international law as well as a general attitude characterised by neutrality, impartiality and non-discrimination.	Some principles in the code are reflected in international law.	Not specific to Community engagement.	Was created Sept 2018	It's a code which can be enforced based on international law.	It's linear in nature, Very prescriptive with no room for contextualising.

## Annex IV. Summary of key issues and questions from individual interviews with experts:

- There seems to have emerged a consensus from participants that social science specific CoCs are largely not available.
- Discussions on CoCs need to focus on identifying what the issues are and what happens when data is shared and needs to be used for advocacy.
- There is a requirement to think about how to create better collaborations and what happens to the data that is collected during the research process.
- There were discussions on how CoCs might reconcile the gap between knowing what to do and being morally courageous to do it.
- When there is an impasse that cannot be resolved by existing codes, many have tended to revert to Geneva convention which is considered broad enough to act as a tiebreaker.
- CoCs must be consistent with humanitarian law.
- Data ownership should be part of the CoC (who owns the data?)
- The individual interviews suggested that there was a need to include a training component to keep up with rapidly changing humanitarian situations. This training should target social science researchers.
- It was suggested to bring native researchers (e.g. from Canada or Brazil) into a discussion on how to include marginalized communities into the discussion of how to formulate CoCs that are all inclusive. Additionally, connecting with civil society organizations such as through NEAR (<https://www.near.ngo/>) was suggested as another way to introduce more viewpoints.
- Discussions related to content of CoC such as what to include, linking with the decolonization and localization agendas, the relationship between the North and South of social institutions, payment and recognition practices, etc.

## Annex V. Case studies: Code of conduct in social sciences for community engagement

*In this summary many short examples are presented of how perceptions can be influenced by different factors, but they have an impact on the effectiveness of operations, the security of staff and locals, and the wellbeing of all stakeholders on the field. Check the following sections for developed case studies.*

The main goal was an evaluation of Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) work in crises by communities, conducted in 2007, with 11 projects visited in Central Africa, Central Asia and Middle East (half stable, half unstable contexts). Another goal was to find out to what extent MSF's supposed 'difference' (independence, political and financial) from other Humanitarian organizations is real and identified as such by stakeholders in the field.

### **In the Eyes of Others; how people in crises perceived Humanitarian aid – MSF**

- Social science research, mostly qualitative approach.
- Preliminary literature reviews.
- Questionnaire on perception of Humanitarian aid, of MSF itself and of disease treatment (translated in all main local languages for selected countries)
- Semi-structured interviews, reports, collaboration with local universities (MA students: anthropology, sociology and political science selected and trained for questionnaire and focus group discussion (FGD))
- FDGs (more than 50 groups per country)
- Participants were: international staff, local staff, locals (patients, people living close to MSF facilities, administrative, religious and political authorities, local doctors, etc.).

## Emerging themes

### MSF as an institution:

- MSF missions are organized by country, and not region. So, people would not understand why a project is in a single country.
- Issues raised by MSF's vertical projects. Many people questioned this lack of treatment and asked for a broadening of MSF's medical activities.
- Name creates confusion in refugee and migrants' communities (understood as ability to move between countries).
- Physical and symbolic distance between staff and locals created by medical facilities, offices and compounds.
- Vocabulary used by the organization could be perceived as martial and cast doubts over its intent.
- Confusion between MSF, its translated names, and other forces with similar acronyms can raise security issues for staff.
- Logo and visual communication misunderstood at times
- Cultural discrepancies (medical but not only) between international staff and local patients.

**H principles:** neutrality, impartiality, independence, plus notions of transparency and credibility:

- Not all staff agree on definitions of the principles.
- Difficult to translate the principles into practice.
- Not all local stakeholders think these principles are upheld by MSF.
- More attention to the disease than the patient.
- MSF 'too independent'. Not enough collaboration with other social and medical actors. Not neutral.
- Many participants were surprised to learn of MSF's financial independence.
- Many expect increased transparency.
- Neutrality is the most questioned principle.

**Factors influencing perceptions:** both of HA and MSF in particular:

- Relevance of political and social environment of the projects, in particular the importance of religious context.
- Structure of the aid system and power relationships.
- Duration of operations in a country had limited impact. Acceptance linked to quality of the treatment provided, appropriateness of response to needs, quality of networks established with local stakeholders.

- Differences between five MSF sections makes it possible for local authorities to exploit them for political needs. Bad relations of one section in a region can influence others.
- Importance of context. The study shows that in the Middle East, as in all other contexts, as a result of historic, political, and social differences and the behaviour of humanitarian actors, NGOs working in the field are suspected of having a hidden agenda.
- Difficult economic situation in some countries. NGOs perceived as rich orgs.
- HA perceived as something for poor countries

### Importance of local populations analytical framework:

3 scenarios: perceived political proximity (ex. OPT), religious proximity (ex. Niger) and secular proximity (ex. Kyrgyzstan) and how they influence perceptions. Sometimes perceived positively, sometimes negatively.

**The humanitarian aid system:** The international Humanitarian system shapes the way single organizations are perceived.

See appendix for more details.

### Perceptions of Dignity in Humanitarian Aid: A Postcolonial Critique of Syrian Refugee Response (Burne, 2016)

Perceptions of dignity and sustainability from Syrian refugees and local aid-workers in Jordan. How local opinions differ from those that guide the international and Jordanian response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Analytical lens: Modern iterations of western imperialism.





### Methodology: Semi-structured interviews.

Need for more sustainable, and culturally-informed, support to refugees. Recommendations from participants are included in the study.

Dignity is described by many as a combination of self-sustainability, pride and economic independence, whereas the current structuring of humanitarian aid creates a strong dependency on aid (cash assistance) for livelihood.

There is a need for more sustainable aid, employment opportunities for Syrian refugees and an institutionalized approach to psychosocial support programmes.

These findings suggest a need for a more historically informed view of humanitarian aid and the broader, regional, political implications.

- Question that proved most useful:  
*Why do refugees leave camps?*
  - a. Four out of six aid workers stated that the camps were inhumane and degrading; essentially unlivable. Autonomy and privacy were severely restricted, with large numbers of caravans in enclosed spaces and the international agencies providing a warden-like presence. Privacy is perceived as essential to dignity. One example: Three families living in one caravan, which is generally described

as an average-sized bedroom, for one person, with shared toilet and shower facilities.

- b. There were safety concerns in the camps, caused by conflict and theft. One family recounted an incident in 2015 where, after two months of living in the Za'atari camp, they returned to their caravan to find all of their personal items missing. Another family had recounted their fears of walking around the camp because of a prevalence of beggars and suspect individuals, and also told of stories they had heard about corrupt UNHCR and Jordanian security officers that harassed and abused some of their friends. Aid workers identified safety and security as primary concerns expressed by people living in camps.
  - c. Health concerns: Many refugees claim exacerbation of asthma and preexisting health conditions.
  - d. Fears of isolation and lack of integration.
- Result is no refugee would like to return to a camp (compare also with stories from refugee camps on Greek islands).
  - For the majority of Palestinian and Syrian refugees dignity is linked to being able to provide for themselves and their family (independence and livelihood). It cannot be given, but must be earned. Whereas Syrian refugees are very dependent on cash assistance from organizations (UNHCR, UNICEF) which increases the psychological trauma linked with displacement.



- All Syrian families that participated (interviews) relied on some form of cash assistance from UN agencies, and yet not enough to live adequately (housing, health, etc.).
- There was also a feeling that aid is not evenly distributed.
- All agreed that cash assistance was necessary to provide for basic needs, but not sustainable. Dependency on cash assistance is an obstacle to dignity.
- Suggestions from the refugees themselves were for agencies to better understand their needs and to coordinate and divide labour with each other, intervening on securing all aspects of their life and to be able to allocate resources fairly.
- Belief that there should be more employment opportunities, however, aid workers saw potential conflict by creating employment competition between locals (Jordanians) and the refugee communities.
- There is a need for thorough psychosocial support and a culturally-informed view of economic independence. Importantly, some aid workers recognized adequate economic support was needed to ensure Syrians would be able to rebuild their country at the end of conflict.
- Jordan has, since the beginning, restructured its plans with regards to refugee camps to integrate the idea that refugees may become part of Jordanian society. There have been efforts towards resilience and capacity building and wider money allocations for camps.



## Discussion:

- Refugees would leave the camp mainly for security and safety concerns and not predominantly for reasons related to empowerment, privacy and other reasons imagined by humanitarian workers.
- Due to limitations in the study, empowerment could remain a deep-rooted reason for refugees looking to urban communities, despite their services/assistance being more difficult to access, and less tailored to requirement, than in camps.
- There should be consistency in the definition of dignity across different populations. With an overwhelming theme of pride, self-sustainability and economic independence and the idea of equality between Syrians and Jordanians.
- Cash assistance, over protracted conflicts, increases dependence across generational lines. Caring for short-term concerns of refugees is only one piece of the puzzle. Therefore, humanitarian aid should increase its focus on the development of refugees as agents of change and not simply recipients of aid, as the current structure of aid implies.
- Economic independence and psychosocial support should be prerequisites for structural resilience in the Syrian refugee community. Trauma is real and needs to be addressed and healed.
- Aid dependence looks remarkably like neocolonial, regional foreign policy.
- Perception of achieving sustainability by aid workers needs a deeper shift in paradigmatic thought. The cultural tie of pride and employment, or self sufficiency and economic independence, has immense implications for the structuring of humanitarian aid, redefines empowerment and resilience, as something that cannot be distributed via a vis an eye scanner.
- Most aid workers and refugees expressed views whereby injecting more money would not solve problems. Self-sufficiency is the goal. Certainly, there are immediate needs that an influx of international donor aid could remedy, such as buying bigger caravans, installing more bathrooms and building additional kitchen space. However, this would not be a sustainable use of funding unless it is presumed that the refugees will forever be dependent on humanitarian aid and will remain in the camps for the rest of their lives.

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### **Ground Truth Solutions, AAP WG Afghanistan, “Introducing perception indicators into the HRP” (2020)**

This document is a slide presentation explaining perception indicators, which are based on surveys of affected communities that enable them to “systematically express their opinions, views and perceptions about the humanitarian assistance received.” The survey, conducted at multiple junctures over a period of time, covers themes relating to the quality of relationships and services, provides information and mechanisms for participants to voice complaints, and broadly seeks the ‘empowerment’ of these affected populations. The indicators thus provide essential feedback for humanitarian organizations and to ensure accountability to affected populations (“AAP”).

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### **Adi Maya, The “New Humanitarians: Vernacular Aid in Greece”, Working paper, Center for Humanitarian Leadership, July 2022.**

This thought-provoking article explores how participants in the “New Humanitarians”, in Greece, understand and act on ‘vernacular humanitarianism’ as a way of challenging the fundamental problems created by large-scale humanitarian agency responses, including their verticality and concentration of power in the hands of UN agencies and northern NGOs.

Vernacular humanitarianism seeks a more participatory and locally responsive approach to humanitarian assistance, by embracing local historical/traditional practices and a “universal notion of humanity” (Maya, 5). Participants in Maya’s investigation included refugees, local volunteers, and international volunteers. These varied participants embraced and acted upon certain principles (“solidarity, hospitality, equality, and agency”). Maya’s conclusions are largely sympathetic to these “New Humanitarians”, contending that their innovative approaches are indeed reshaping traditional humanitarianism. At the same time, Maya underscores certain tensions, most notably that these new humanitarians remain influenced by traditional humanitarianism and thus are limited in their efforts to reconfigure fundamentally the objectives of humanitarian response (do they provide for minimal needs, e.g. Agamben’s “bare life”, or help to lay the foundations for a “full social existence and qualified life” among refugees?). They are thus unable to reshape the power relations that underpin traditional humanitarian programming.

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### **Corinne Davey, Paul Nolan, Patricia Ray. “Change starts with us, talk to us! Beneficiary perceptions regarding the effectiveness of measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian aid workers: a HAP commissioned study,” Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International, 2010.**

This study, commissioned by HAP, focuses on improving policies relating to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian aid workers or others involved in humanitarian response. Specifically, it investigated in Thailand, Haiti and Kenya “the extent to which beneficiaries feel safer as a result of measures introduced by aid agencies, including both policies and response mechanisms.” The choice of Thailand and Kenya as sites for investigation was to capture responses to changes in policy concerning the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse since 2007. At the time of the report, Haiti was undergoing a more recent crisis that had displaced many people and could thus offer insight into the effectiveness of prevention efforts in a large-scale, rapid response.

In Thailand, the report concluded that sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers has declined, but that camp security forces still engage in this type of abuse. In Haiti, prevention efforts had only just started. In Kenya, it appears that following concerted efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in prior years, these efforts had effectively disappeared, so that international and national workers as well as other workers and volunteers were still engaging in such exploitative practices. All respondents indicated a serious underreporting of sexual exploitation and abuse. Women, girls, and boys were most vulnerable to such exploitation and abuse, and orphans faced the highest risk. In Kenya and Haiti, insufficient food and schemes such as cash for work could result in sex with humanitarian workers or other camp residents to gain access to cash or to be included on a list for employment opportunities. Rape by residents, security forces or inhabitants outside of camps was a further problem.

Several problems with measures put in place included underreporting, lack of clarity about process for doing so, lack of proof to make accusations, lack of staff interest in reports of sexual exploitation and abuse, concerns about confidentiality, language barriers and shame.

The report concludes with multiple recommendations. For instance, a first set of recommendations involved the rethinking of how aid is distributed so that it would not be open to abuse. Another set involved the 'scale up' of efforts to introduce CoCs, the training of all humanitarian workers, and the designation of a full-time focal point person with sufficient authority to ensure protection of humanitarian assistance recipients and to follow up on reports of exploitation or abuse.

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**Elizabeth Stites and Darlington Akabwai, Changing Roles, Shifting Risks: Livelihood Impacts of Disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda. Feinstein International Center, 2009.**

This qualitative investigation explores how disarmament policies have altered livelihood systems among those living in the semi-arid Karamoja region in northeastern Uganda. The population there tends to engage in agro-pastoralism (cattle raising combined with agricultural cultivation), as well as marketing and providing labour for beer brewing, construction, brick making, quarrying, as well as domestic service. This configuration of livelihoods has been the consequence of multiple factors, most notably insecurity and consequent disarmament. The authors note that cattle raiding has long been practiced as a means of wealth distribution, but political instability within the Ugandan government, civil war in the north, as well as an arms trade from Sudan, coupled with multiple droughts and livestock epidemics, have aggravated cattle raiding and heightened instability. For that reason, the major policy to quell the problems have been disarmament and development through the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP). Although the authors see disarmament as a positive development in theory, they note that its 'unintended consequences', notably; increased insecurity for communities; stripping of essential and productive assets; the erosion of traditional mechanisms to cope with vulnerability and food insecurity; shifts in gender-based labour roles, responsibilities and identities; transfer of animal management responsibilities; and the collapse of the dual settlement and migratory systems central to the success of pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods (Stites and Akabwai, 2009: 11)

Moreover, the disarmament process itself was characterized by human rights abuses (detention and physical abuse), particularly of young men, although the authors noted that a recent change in commander and his initiation of dialogues with local communities reduced such abuses. In addition, populations contended that they could not protect themselves or their assets following disarmament. The authors suggest

that better engagement practices, at multiple scales, across sectors may have resulted in improvements in this process.

Disarmament has also adversely affected cattle raising because cattle were protected in kraals at military barracks, thus forcing herders from pasturing their cattle within limited distances of these sites. Declining pasture quality, restricted access to water and the crowding of cattle all reduced animal health. Food insecurity has increased substantially, and the security risks to women and men have also escalated as a consequence of disarmament. Gender-based violence against women and girls has been a significant problem.

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**Greg Hansen, Coming to Terms with the Humanitarian Imperative in Iraq. Humanitarian Agenda 2015 Briefing Paper. Feinstein International Center, 2007.**

This is a field-based report addressing the humanitarian response in Iraq, particularly "the operational environment, donor environment, and strategic policy environment" within a significantly worsening context of violence, conflict, state failure, food insecurity and very high death tolls.

Operational environment: During the period of investigation, Hansen found that HA was not generally rejected by Iraqi populations. Moreover, influenced by Islamic and Iraqi teachings, they embraced ideals of humanitarian assistance and were highly critical of the 'instrumentalization, politicization and militarization of humanitarian activity by Iraqi as well as international actors'. Humanitarian workers, who experienced killings and various forms of violence between 2003 and 2006, were less judged by the countries from which they came than by their affiliation with specific political interests in Iraq. As conditions became increasingly unstable, some humanitarian organizations responded by withdrawing, but others by embedding themselves in particular Iraqi structures (local militias, military, etc), thereby compromising their images as neutral and blurring distinctions between humanitarian, military, and political action.

Donor environment: The report also found considerable problems with funding. Funding, although considerable following the US invasion of Iraq, declined considerably in 2005 leaving important shortfalls, even as media stories circulated about astounding sums invested in Iraq. Moreover, the amount of assistance apparently provided did not appear to Iraqi respondents to translate into real improvements in their own lives. As a consequence, many were convinced that "all assistance efforts—international and national—are corrupt."

Strategic policy environment: Hansen identifies one major problem hampering the UN humanitarian response was Resolution 1546. This resolution 'subordinated' (we don't find out exactly what this means) the UN humanitarian response to the Multinational Forces and UN military agendas of transitioning Iraq away from military occupation. This created an untenable situation for the UN humanitarian response, because its activities are now harnessed to political and military agendas and protections.

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**Andrew Wilder, Perceptions of the Pakistan Earthquake Response, Humanitarian Agenda 2015, Pakistan Country Study, Feinstein International Center, 2008.**

This report is a case study of humanitarian response during the Pakistan Earthquake of 2005 as perceived by beneficiaries of assistance and humanitarian workers themselves. As part of a Feinstein International Center series of case studies, this specific report is interested in multiple questions about 'the universality of humanitarian action' (save lives and alleviate suffering), how terrorism and counter-terrorism affect HA, what the consequences of integrating humanitarian and political agendas might be, and the security of humanitarian workers. The response to, and recovery from, the earthquake occurred in a geopolitical context that highlighted Pakistan's shared frontiers with Afghanistan and its role in the US War on Terror.

The report yielded some surprising results (although the author doesn't much question his own positionality in this report, as a researcher from a US institution, and how that might have shaped the types of responses he received).

- During the initial period of response, Wilder argues that there was a consensus around **humanitarian principles** of 'save lives and alleviate suffering'. Reflecting on the initial response, recipients found international aid workers to be generally respectful of local practices (except for Cuban workers) but criticized Pakistani national humanitarian workers for their lack of respect. During the recovery period, however, Wilder found less agreement around humanitarian principles and practices. Seen as the purview of northern, secular countries, questions of human rights, and particularly the rights of women, tended to generate tensions.
- The **impact of the War on Terror** on humanitarian response was debated. Recipients and providers of humanitarian aid

contended that the initial assistance was not linked to the US War on Terror, but humanitarian officials argued that it shaped the scale of the response. Perhaps unconsciously mobilizing language from its disastrous ambitions in the Vietnam war, US officials suggested that the earthquake response served as an opportunity to 'win hearts and minds'. Coordination between Islamic and non-Islamic organizations was quite poor. The US did not want to allow militant organizations to assist those suffering from, or displaced by, the earthquake but ended up doing nothing about their assistance.

- **Integrating humanitarian and political agendas:** The US political agenda (discussed above) appears not to have had much effect for recipients of humanitarian relief. The record of the Pakistani army in response and recovery was mixed. Its initial relief efforts, although generating discomfort among humanitarian organizations, ultimately garnered praise. During recovery efforts, however, the army was widely criticized because of its control over (lagging) recovery efforts and its implication in conflicts with militant groups.
- **Worries about insecurity** from militant Islamic groups were misplaced. Security of humanitarian workers was a major concern from the beginning, although Wilder reports 'no serious incidents' involving these workers. Workers perceived restrictions were unnecessarily inflexible and hampered the effectiveness of their response efforts. Incidents from 2007 did increase, but largely from internal tensions (slowness of recovery efforts, employment), not those introduced by militant groups.

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**Antonio Donini (team leader), Larissa Fast, Greg Hansen, Simon Harris, Larry Minear, Tasneem Mowjee, and Andrew Wilder. Humanitarian Agenda 2015 Final Report: The state of the humanitarian enterprise. Feinstein International Center.**

Based on 12 case studies of local perceptions of HA (above we have summarized a few of those case studies), this is the final report on 'the constraints, challenges and compromises affecting humanitarian action in conflict and crisis settings.' As mentioned above, the report rests on analyses of four components (universality of humanitarianism, terrorism/counter-terrorism, costs of integrating humanitarian and political agenda and action, and security of humanitarian workers and recipients of humanitarian assistance).

### **Ground Truth Solutions, Perception survey of aid recipients in Somalia, December 2020.**

Ground Truth Solutions conducted a survey of internally displaced persons and residents in Somalia (questions are primarily closed, except for a final open-ended question). Somalia has undergone a host of catastrophic events before the COVID-19 pandemic that massively heightened food insecurity and devastated the country's health care capacity to respond to the pandemic. The survey questioned more than 1500 people across most of Somalia in September 2020 and made several conclusions, notably in comparison to results of previous surveys conducted from 2017:

- Need for better information about who is providing assistance and how to gain access to it (knowledge has declined since 2017)
- Worsening capacity to meet basic needs in past 6 months (reduced from 2018 and 2019)
- Mixed opinions about whether aid organizations really listen to them. Although most respondents felt that they were treated with respect, this proportion has declined precipitously since 2019.
- Aid goes to those needing it the most, but aid agency decision-making processes are opaque
- Most people felt safe obtaining their CVA (cash and voucher assistance) and spending it.

### **Hugo Slim, How We Look: Hostile Perceptions of Humanitarian Action. Presentation to the Conference on Humanitarian Coordination Wilton Park Montreux, 21st April 2004**

This was an address in the wake of actions against humanitarian workers, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and encouraging reflection on diverse perceptions of HAs.

### **Peter J. Hoffman and Thomas G. Weiss, "Humanitarianism and Practitioners: Social Science Matters", In Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics, ed Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008.**

The authors frame this piece as a 'roadmap for the dynamics, vocabularies and findings' in this collection, for humanitarian workers, encouraging them to engage with the social sciences to strengthen responses. It begins with an acknowledgement of practitioner impatience with research, but makes a robust defence of the social sciences and their potential contribution to humanitarian programming. It includes multiple lessons (about putting 'victims' first, about change, about the importance of paying attention to political agendas and relations, accountability), all of which highlight the importance of social sciences contributions to teasing out the complexities of these lessons and putting them into practice.



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# Endnotes

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- 4 For examples of humanitarian CoCs see: PHAP (PHAP, 2017, Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, [https://phap.org/PHAP/PHAP/About/Code\\_of\\_ethics.aspx#:~:text=Core%20principles,-Members%20and%20certificants&text=The%20purpose%20of%20humanitarian%20action,respect%20for%20the%20human%20being](https://phap.org/PHAP/PHAP/About/Code_of_ethics.aspx#:~:text=Core%20principles,-Members%20and%20certificants&text=The%20purpose%20of%20humanitarian%20action,respect%20for%20the%20human%20being), checked 20.07.22); ICRC (ICRC, 2018, Code of Conduct for employees of the International Committee of the Red Cross, [https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_may\\_2018.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/code_of_conduct_may_2018.pdf), checked 20.07.22); Action Against Hunger (Action Against Hunger, 2016, Code of Conduct for Action Against Hunger staff and other team members, [https://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/2018\\_code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](https://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/2018_code_of_conduct.pdf), checked 22.07.22).
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- 7 See ICRC, The fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, [https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/topic/file\\_plus\\_list/4046the\\_fundamental\\_principles\\_of\\_the\\_international\\_red\\_cross\\_and\\_red\\_crescent\\_movement.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/topic/file_plus_list/4046the_fundamental_principles_of_the_international_red_cross_and_red_crescent_movement.pdf)
- 8 See Gutierrez, M. and Bryant, J. The Fading Gloss of Data Science: Towards an Agenda that Faces the Challenges of Big Data for Development and Humanitarian Action. Published online: 4 February 2022, © Society for International Development 2022, corrected publication 2022
- 9 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/02/north-south-divide-scientific-research/>
- 10 How can the Global South confront the unequal North-South academic collaborations? <https://ddrn.dk/10068/>
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- 20 See, for example: (i) the Helsinki Declaration (WMA General Assembly, 1964, Declaration of Helsinki - Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, <https://www.wma.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/DoH-Oct2008.pdf>, checked 20.07.22) or (ii) the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979, Belmont Report - Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human; *Subjects of Research*, [https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf), checked 20.07.2022) regulating research on human subjects but mostly with reference to the biomedical area; or (iii) the CER ethical principles (Simon Fraser University - Community Engaged Research Initiative, 2020, *Community-Engaged; Research Ethical Principles*, <https://www.sfu.ca/ceeri/ethics/cer-ethical-principles.html>, checked 20.07.22) regulating research on communities but not specifically related to HA.
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**Social Sciences for Community Engagement  
in Humanitarian Action**

Codes of Conduct Mapping

