Creating the Conditions for Equitable Research Partnerships

STORIES FOR CHANGE: Elevating Global South Experiences in Humanitarian Knowledge Production

CoLAB
Institute of Innovations for Gender & Humanitarian Transformations | inSights
HUMANITARIAN ADVISORY GROUP
Australian Aid
GLOW CONSULTANTS
PIANGO Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations | Association Des Ongs Insulaires Du Pacifique
PUJIONO CENTRE

Humanitarian Horizons: Power, People and Local Leadership December 2022

NEEDLES IN A HAYSTACK: An Analysis of Global South Roles in Humanitarian Knowledge Production

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Australian Aid

What do we know?

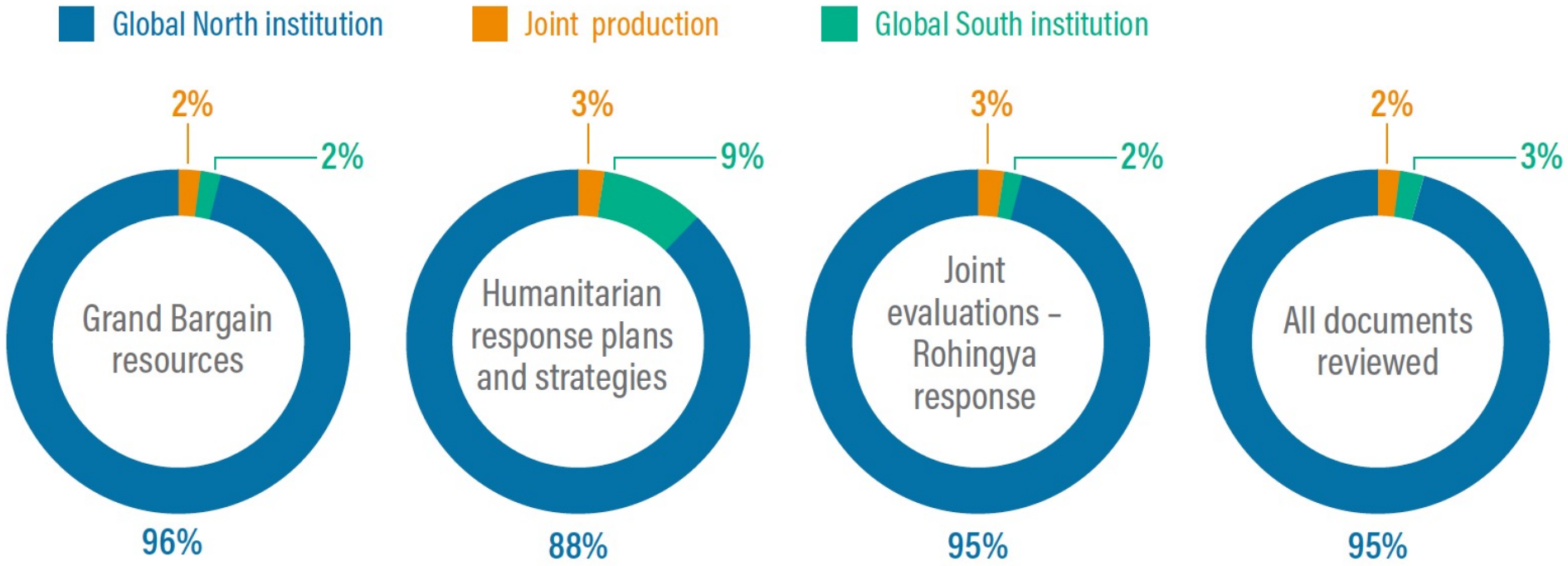
Authorship of core resources[3]

What do we know?

Language used in core resources:

What do we know?

Authorship of references cited



"… the demands of the community, they don't always come first … money makes decisions on what knowledge is needed" (Listening Workshop Participant)

"We have to negotiate with all of the different stakeholders and funders and 'control-holders,' while trying to ensure that the actual research is relevant and empowering for local players" (Listening Workshop Participant)

“Partnerships can really support or undermine more equitable knowledge generation processes” (Listening Workshop Participant)

“Yes, it’s a whole ecosystem, but also tied to institutional cultures and the relationship between different actors. It’s less technical but relational” (Listening Workshop Participant)

“We’ve had people who take a tokenistic approach to engaging with national consultants. They talk down at you … [But we are] able to push back and say it should be done this way, or this is how we would like to be engaged”

“You are still invisible in the end product because they are going to highlight the use of the international consultant or exclude you entirely”

For communities

- The community can become fatigued – they can be interviewed by multiple actors without clear results or outputs that benefit them
- Community members, in some instance, have to rely on contextually ill-informed, poor-quality or biased analysis
- Decision-makers involved with communities (e.g. governments or implementing agencies) neglect opportunities to understand their views and fail to respond to community priorities

For researchers

- Local actors are relegated to passive, transactional enumerators or respondents
- Poor visibility in parts or all of the process can perpetuate negative assumptions about credibility
- There are few opportunities to improve skills, knowledge and network development

For research outputs

- Research outputs are not contextually relevant or do not reflect communities' voices/priorities
- Research outputs are not contextualised and risk not being utilised
- Outputs have little ownership and uptake by the communities they were intended to serve
- Poor or no translation means people who do not understand English cannot access the research
- Outputs are not returned to the local respondents and actors who provided data

For the sector

- If the research questions, frameworks and instruments are not fit for purpose, then the outputs will be irrelevant
- There are few opportunities for good practice and innovation; research outputs become "dead documents" that are not used
- Responses do not reach some sub-groups of the population, particularly those that are most vulnerable

Needles in a Haystack report

Stories for Change report