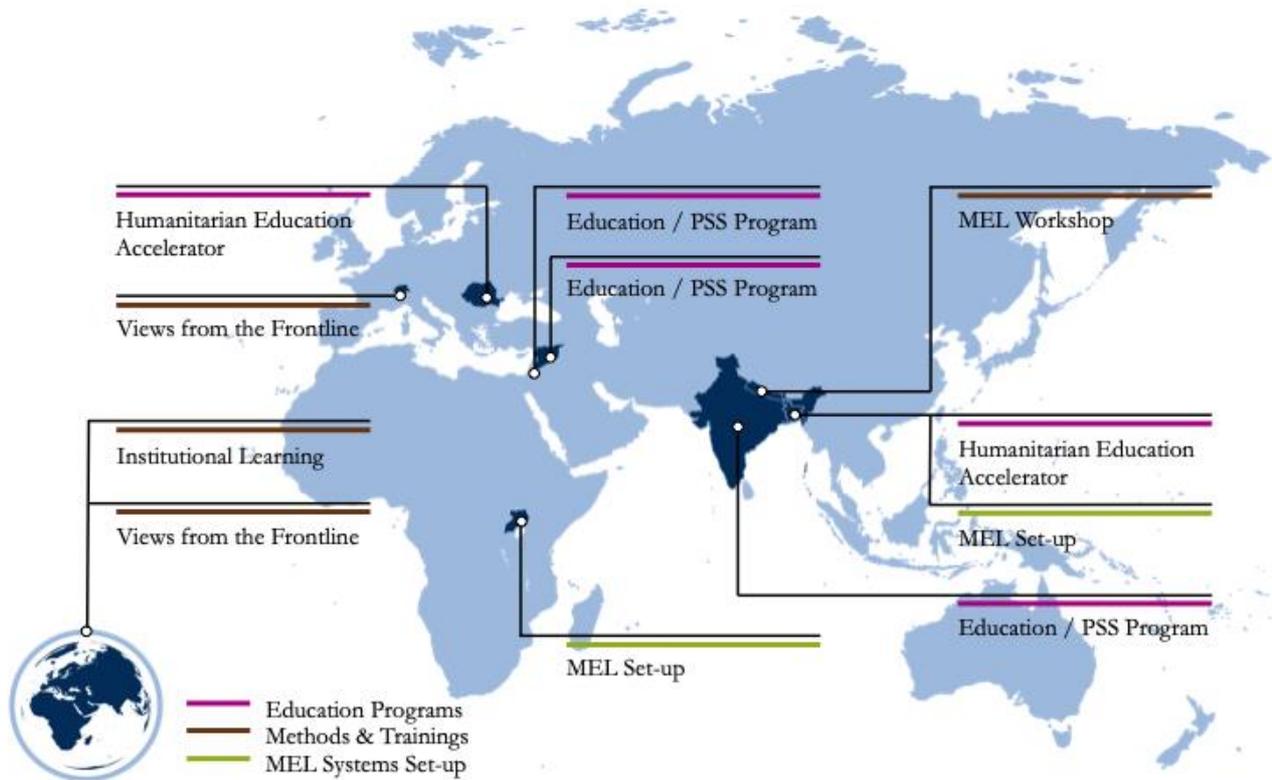


Supporting informed decision-making in development and humanitarian organizations



Development and humanitarian organizations need to take quick action under a number of challenges, most often with very limited information and resources compared to the magnitude of the issues they are confronting. Taking the right decisions is difficult, yet it is vital to ensure that available resources are used effectively for positive impact.

Our goal is to **facilitate informed decision-making in challenging or crisis contexts** that often call for immediate action. Our approach is to **put monitoring, evaluation and learning systems at the service of lasting project success**, and

- Enable quick corrective action when necessary (rapid feedback loops)
- Integrate the perspectives of all stakeholders, especially project beneficiaries (co-creation)
- Identify and understand why specific groups benefit more than others (segmentation)
- Make best use of already available evidence and align with donors' information requests (efficiency)

We offer: support to develop monitoring, evaluation and learning systems; full project engagements; tailored trainings and workshops. Our thematic focus is on **Education** and **Capacity Building**. Our team has a decade of experience in evidence-driven programming in both a research and project management capacity.

Humanitarian Education Accelerator

Project location: Romania, Bangladesh

In collaboration with: Caritas Switzerland, UNHCR, Caritas Bangladesh, American Institutes of Research (AIR), UNICEF, Caritas Luxembourg

Project timeline: November 2017 – September 2019

Context. The Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA) was a partnership of UKAid, UNICEF and UNHCR supporting the evaluation and scaling of programs providing education for refugees and displaced communities. One of such programs is Essence of Learning (EoL), a child-centered approach that seeks to address the specific needs of children who are growing up in crisis contexts, linking pedagogical and psychosocial components to foster children's resilience and their ability to learn. Essence of Learning was developed by Caritas Switzerland – a member of the 2017 HEA cohort of humanitarian innovators – in collaboration with local partners, and has been implemented in various emergency and protracted crisis settings over the last ten years, including Kosovo, Chechnya, Romania and Bangladesh. With HEA's support, Caritas Switzerland was able to pursue a comprehensive evaluation effort – focused on Romania and Bangladesh – and develop monitoring, evaluation and learning tools for quality assurance. The final goal was to formulate a scaling strategy for the program.



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Our work. We took over HEA's program lead on behalf of Caritas Switzerland. Our engagement ranged from the overall management and coordination of the program with all partners, to the designing and implementation of evaluations and a preliminary analysis of scaling opportunities. During our field mission in Bangladesh, we collected a large body of data for two different EoL implementation sites: the Child Friendly Spaces in the Rohingya's refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and the Kindergartens and family day cares in Dhaka's slum areas. Results from the process evaluation in Bangladesh feed into a meta-level evaluation of the EoL program, which include results from the evaluation of social centers serving Roma children in Romania. Findings show that EoL has the potential to be effective in engaging children in crisis situations and point to aspects that need to be carefully considered before scaling the program further, such as strengthening psychosocial support for children and communication channels for teachers.

Supporting institutional learning at Caritas Switzerland

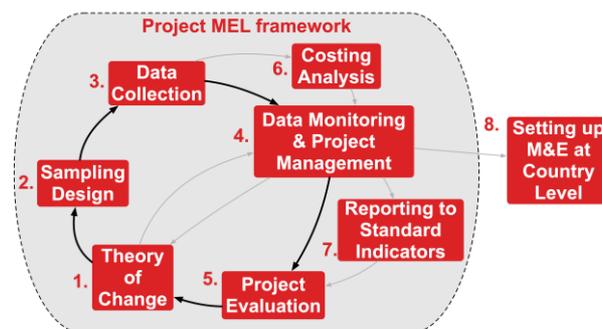
Project location: Switzerland

In collaboration with: Caritas Switzerland

Project timeline: November 2017 – July 2019

Context. Caritas Switzerland is one of the biggest and longest-standing non-profit organizations in Switzerland with a yearly operating budget of around 100 million Swiss francs. With a mission to alleviate poverty and a focus on the most vulnerable, Caritas works in more than 30 countries in the areas of food security, water, climate protection, disaster prevention, migration and education. Projects are carried out in close collaboration with Caritas' local partners. Caritas Switzerland finds itself in a special moment of organizational development and has identified becoming an evidence-based organization as one of its top strategic priorities.

Our work. We guided and managed Caritas' Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy, serving in the capacity of Senior Advisor for MEL within the International Cooperation Department. One of the main objectives was to streamline MEL activities in the field and headquarters to improve data quality and ultimately



achieve a stronger link between MEL and project management. To illustrate some specific activities: We revised the system of standard project indicators and their measuring tools and then led the first organization-wide digital collection of project-level data. The aim of these efforts is to generate a coherent set of data that can be monitored over time and facilitate decision-making as well as reporting to donors and the public. Moreover, we developed training and guidance materials, including a comprehensive manual on Establishing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems. The materials are informed by lessons learned from the piloting of MEL systems in various Caritas offices, which we led (Uganda, Bangladesh) or supported (Ethiopia).

Participatory monitoring for disaster risk reduction

Project location: Switzerland

In collaboration with: Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), Caritas Switzerland

Project timeline: February 2018 – September 2019

Context. Natural disasters – especially climate-related – are affecting food insecure and poor people the most.¹ Views from the Frontline (VFL) is a community consultation process that the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction – an international network of organizations that work to improve the lives of people affected by disasters – has implemented in 129 countries since 2009. With a primary focus on vulnerable groups such as seniors and people with disabilities, VFL aims to establish a citizen-based participatory monitoring process to measure progress in implementing inclusive risk governance. The objective is to inform official monitoring and local action planning. In 2018, VFL launched a new series of local monitoring

¹ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2019. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns. Rome, FAO.



processes led by local actors, which were piloted in Tonga and the Philippines.

Our work. We revised the methodology behind VFL's consultation and monitoring process based on the experience in the Philippines and Tonga. The goal was to enhance the robustness of the methodology and to ensure that the results are informed by a representative sample of the target population. Moreover, we developed a practical guideline manual to support VFL's implementation in the field and designed a web application to calculate sample sizes (i.e. number of communities and households to be surveyed in each risk area). The revised VFL methodology is currently being launched in 48 countries.

Piloting rapid feedback loops to improve performance of ongoing projects in Bangladesh

Project location: Bangladesh

In collaboration with: Caritas Switzerland, Caritas Bangladesh

Project timeline: October 2018 – August 2019

Context. In Bangladesh, arsenic contamination of drinking water still affects 25% of the population, and only 50% has access to improved sanitation facilities.² With the support of Caritas Switzerland, Caritas Bangladesh is implementing the three-year project Ensured Access to Sustainable WASH and Nutrition Foods through Multi-stakeholders Involvement and Small Farming, in the regions of Rajshahi and Dinajpur. Its objectives are to increase access to and adoption of improved water, sanitation and hygiene practices with a goal of decreasing waterborne diseases in children. Moreover, this project promotes small-scale irrigation, livestock watering and production of high nutrition vegetables. It also aims at developing the expertise of local stakeholders in order to support the sustainability of good practices and facilitate replication in other regions.

² Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017. Special focus on inequalities. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO), 2019.



Our work. We supported the design and set-up of a new system to monitor and improve project outcomes. The idea was to generate actionable data that feed into a reactive and iterative monitoring process, which can take quick corrective action when necessary (rapid feedback loops). For example, we are able to learn faster whether the trainings offered through the project are likely to affect behaviour successfully, and – if this is not case – learn where in the project chain we might have to undertake programmatic changes. Rapid feedback loops seek to strengthen the link between monitoring and project management and promote the design of MEL systems, which can react in a more flexible and timely way to information requests from management. We used KoboToolbox and KoboCollect – an online platform and mobile application – to build bilingual questionnaires and support data collection and visualization in near real time together with local partners.

Collaborators



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