

ACADEMIC - PRACTITIONER COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FORUM

DRAFT CONCEPT FOR DISCUSSION

It is our intention that this document serves as a starting point for ideas and feedback for the Academic/Practitioner Collaborative Research Forum organized by InterAction with the support of USAID/OFDA. This two-day forum is tentatively planned for the **first week of June in Washington DC**. We invite further comments and suggestions from a broad range of field practitioners and academics.

Context

The most vulnerable households are facing the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters and conflicts. While affected communities try to access an increasing array of services, humanitarian actors are increasingly challenged, in diverse contexts and with dwindling resources, to adapt to the scale and diversity of their needs. Furthermore, humanitarian actors are often required to provide the rationale for their interventions, implement programs based on evidence, and measure short and long-term impacts on the communities they serve

However, the resources and technical know-how available to conduct assessment, design program methodologies, capture evidence and measurement techniques are limited. The academic and research communities have an opportunity to engage and shape these shortcomings.

The planned forum aims to facilitate the systematic collaboration of academics and humanitarian professionals around specific research gaps, improve information exchange across the academic and humanitarian communities, increase accessibility to collaborative research funding streams and promote a platform for research collaborations.

The thematic focus for this initial Forum is currently envisioned to be around multi-sectoral responses, shelter and settlements, urban resilience and the intersection between environment, DRR, NFI, WASH and livelihoods. Final determination will incorporate feedback received from stakeholders.

Based on initial discussion we have identified the following objectives:

1. Identify research needs/gaps that directly apply to the field practice:

There is general lack of research that feed into or influence field practice. While research conducted by organizations, donors or academics positively contribute to the sector, it is often seen as ad-hoc.

2 Promote opportunities for sustained and systematic partnerships:

Research is typically conducted on a project by project basis; however, there are many opportunities to be gained from sustained academic and practitioner partnerships. How can we best develop and sustain partnerships? What is needed from both sides? What will have the greatest impact to the sector? In addition, how do we engage a new generation of young professionals in the fields of academia and humanitarian assistance.

3. Identify and approach funding sources for collaborative research:

Currently, the research stakeholders rely primarily upon a limited number of traditional humanitarian donors. Would a better stakeholder mapping of non-traditional funding sources (private-sector, foundation, professional associations, or development donors for instance) and collaboration improve funding sources?

Please contact Hilmi (mhilmi@interaction.org) or Kathryn (ksidlowski@interaction.org) with questions or comments.