

Humanitarian Encyclopedia project

Second Quarterly Report 2020 (April - June)

I. Introduction and highlights

As health authorities in Switzerland declared the state of emergency starting 16 March due to the COVID19 pandemic, the Centre's staff, including the team of the Humanitarian Encyclopedia (HE), worked from home until the end of confinement on 8 June.

Due to the restriction of movement and gatherings, the international community in Geneva had to meet virtually. For instance, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)¹, in which the Centre have been involved to promote the HE, is now taking place from June to September, entirely online.

On 23 June, two meetings were held to consult with the HE Advisory Board and Scientific Committee members on the concept project.

On 30 June, to make a new chapter in the Centre's life, the Centre adopted a new vision, [website](#) and name, the **Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies**.

II. Activities to develop the Humanitarian Encyclopedia

Concepts relevant to the COVID-19

To facilitate humanitarian actors' understanding of COVID19, the HE team has prioritised [17 concepts](#) from the list of 129 concepts. Linguistic analyses have been accelerated to produce explanations.

Four concepts – 'care', 'crisis', 'epidemic', and 'livelihood' – are now available on the [HE](#)

[Website](#). Expanded analysis and supporting visualisations will be available soon.

Survey

At the beginning of June, using the linguist analysis outcome of two concepts – 'risk' and 'aid dependence' – a [survey](#) was designed to collect feedback in order to understand the level of comprehension in relation to concept entries. The Advisory Board and Scientific Committee members, and the Centre's staff and students were invited to take the survey.

The HE team expects to produce a full report based on the survey result by the end of July.

Advisory Board & Scientific Committee

To further concept explanations meetings were held on 23 June with the members of these two advisory groups.

Professor Karl Blanchet shared his [2020-2022 vision](#) for the Humanitarian Encyclopedia. Highlighting two key points:

- The deliverable of the HE will be primarily for humanitarian practitioners on the ground and for local NGOs to better integrate in the humanitarian architecture.
- The interactive platform will be the central focus for the HE. Through the platform, users can raise questions, contribute to concept explanations, find resource materials, connect through the [Humanitarian Organisation Database](#), and also participate in policy debates.

¹ Initially scheduled to take place physically in Geneva in April 2020.

Next, followed by a presentation from Research Coordinator, Alex Odum in which he described the process to deliver the 129 concepts.

Alex described the concept producing process – exploring, analysing, explaining, and unpacking concepts, and then presented a mock-up version of the end product.

The meeting participants actively engaged providing feedback and comments on the presentations including:

- The concept explanations should be provided in different lengths to meet various needs of humanitarian actors (primary HE users) and other users e.g. students, media, etc.
- Experts from the humanitarian sectors should be invited to author concept entries. The elaborated version of concept explanations would be collected and published. Experts are invited to [express interest](#) and share recommendations of their peer-experts.
- More consultations with the AB and SC members should take place to enhance concept explanations.

Development of the HE online platform

A tender was issued for the development of the future platform. This document was shared with six companies. The most suitable company will be selected in July. In addition, another document stating web design requirements was issued for a call for tenders (by invitation) in July. Both processes will be completed in August so the selected companies can start developing the HE platform in September.

III. Governance

Mr Luc Lampriere, Director of the [HI Institute for Humanitarian Action](#) has joined the Advisory Board representing Handicap International. We thank Mr Marco Kirschbaum for his participation in the interim period in the Advisory Board and for his advice during various consultations conducted in 2019.

IV. External representations

WSIS

The HE team has actively participated in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2020. At its photo contest, a photo of the Centre was selected as finalist and the Centre was invited for [a presentation](#).

It was an opportunity to present ways, using the HE as an illustration, to show how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can support humanitarian action, facilitate information conservation and knowledge co-production, and promote partnerships.



[A joint booth](#) with the University of Geneva (UNIGE) has been set up virtually. While UNIGE shared its approach to ICT as part of its broader research domain of Digital Humanities; the Centre presented its innovative transdisciplinary approach for e-learning and co-creation of knowledge, e.g. through the HE and blended training courses (online and face-to-face).

The booth is available online until the 2nd week of September 2020. We welcome your visit.

V. Acknowledgement

We thank Mr Robin Rudaz's civilist support in developing the HE, and wish him all the best for his Master degree sat the University of Neuchâtel.