

UK Investment in Humanitarian Innovation launched through new fund

EMBARGOED UNTIL - 14th October 2010

A landmark grant-making fund to support operational innovations to better assist those affected by disasters was launched in London today.

The Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) will support organisations working in countries struck by humanitarian crises such as Haiti or Pakistan to develop, test and share new technologies and processes that will contribute to more effective and cost-efficient humanitarian aid in the future.

Created through a partnership between two leading initiatives in the humanitarian sector, ELRHA and ALNAP, with a £900,000 start up investment from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), this fund represents a collective effort to enhance the contribution of innovation to improving humanitarian performance in the field. The fund will be hosted by Save the Children UK as part of their ongoing support to the ELRHA initiative

Jess Camburn, ELRHA's Director speaking at the fund's launch, said:

“Everyone wants to see humanitarian aid reach those affected by crises as quickly and as effectively as possible; while we have seen some dramatic breakthroughs in humanitarian practice in recent years, it remains extremely difficult for agencies to find the space and the resources to reflect, innovate and implement new ways of working. The Humanitarian Innovations Fund has been created to provide the sector with a critical new resource to do just that.”

Since 2008 ALNAP research has recommended establishing a sector-wide fund to support the development of new ideas, taking them from the drawing board or small-scale application to wider dissemination. Ben Ramalingam, ALNAP's Head of Research and Development, said:

“There is a clear and urgent need to harness the best creative ideas to address the problems faced by the poorest and most vulnerable. The launch of the fund is an exciting development for the humanitarian community as a whole - an opportunity not just to innovate but to do so in ways that forge new collaborations and partnerships, across the sector and more widely.”

The Humanitarian Innovations Fund was officially launched on the 14th October at ELRHA's Symposium 'Building Partnerships for Humanitarian Impact'. It is expected that the first call for proposals will be made in early 2011.

-ENDS-

Notes for Editors

- Further details about the Humanitarian Innovation Fund will be available shortly at www.humanitarianinnovation.org
- If you are interested in attending the launch of the fund at ELRHA's Symposium 'Building Partnerships for Humanitarian Impact', in London on 14th October 2010, please contact Josh Harris – j.harris@alnap.org
- ELRHA and ALNAP representatives are available for comment, interview and background briefings. Please contact:

Josh Harris, Communications Officer, ALNAP- 07739 021000, 0207 922 0393 - j.harris@alnap.org

- The UK Department for International Development (DFID) will provide an initial investment of £900,000 for the set-up, management and grant-making of the Humanitarian Innovation Fund. It is envisioned that additional donors will be identified over the lifetime of the initiative.

For comment from the Department for International Development please contact:

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- ELRHA is Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance. ELRHA is the first collaborative network dedicated to supporting partnerships between Higher Education institutions in the UK and humanitarian organisations and partners around the world. We believe that Higher Education Institutes represent a phenomenal resource that can and should be harnessed to support the humanitarian endeavour. The ELRHA project has been set up to help meet this challenge and aims to provide a bridge between the humanitarian and higher education communities.

ELRHA therefore works to identify and support partnerships between Higher Education and humanitarian partners that can:

- Work collaboratively to address current humanitarian challenges, and;
- Support and prepare the humanitarian community for the crises of the future.

ELRHA is officially hosted on behalf of the humanitarian sector by Save the Children. More information on ELRHA can be found at www.elrha.org

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- ALNAP is the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. It is a unique network of the key international humanitarian organisations and experts from across the humanitarian sector, including members from donor, NGO, Red Cross/Crescent, UN and independent/academic organisations. A collective response by the humanitarian sector, ALNAP is dedicated to strengthening humanitarian performance through improved learning and accountability. More information, including their work on Humanitarian innovation can be found at www.alnap.org.

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