Exploring Localized Humanitarian Innovation: A Combined Scoping Study and Case Study of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

MARIA GUSTAFSSON AND JESSICA ELIASSON | DIVISION OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL SAFETY | LTH | LUND UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

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Maria Gustafsson and Jessica Eliasson

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Authors: Maria Gustafsson and Jessica Eliasson
Supervisor: Henrik Tehler

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Abstract

Within recent years, the concept of Humanitarian Innovation (HI) has emerged and received growing attention within the humanitarian system, as a critical means of adapting to growing complexities, uncertainties and resource scarcity. While perceived as a means of stimulating broader system changes and increasing effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance, current efforts of HI have met criticism for being too top-down driven, Northern biased and detached from local actors priorities and needs. As a consequence, there appears to be a need to localize HI in order to ensure sustainable change. While there appears to be strong evidence suggesting that local actors and communities are uniquely positioned to innovate in ways that are relevant, effective and culturally and contextually appropriate, localized HI still appears to be under-researched and lacking practical guidelines. Through a scoping study and case study of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the concept of localized HI was investigated in terms of what it entails, how it is perceived, how it occurs and how it can be managed. The findings show growing interest in and a strong consensus on the need for localized HI, although a terminological and conceptual ambiguity exists, which may hinder the ability to manage it. It also appears critical to discuss who is considered 'local' and whether localized HI happens organically or can and should be facilitated. Not asking these questions means that the localized HI agenda will likely remain misdirected, scattered, vague and difficult to operationalize going forward.

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Riskhantering och samhällssäkerhet
Lunds tekniska högskola
Lunds universitet
Box 118
221 00 Lund

http://www.risk.lth.se

Telefon: 046 - 222 73 60

Division of Risk Management and Societal Safety
Faculty of Engineering
Lund University
P.O. Box 118
SE-221 00 Lund
Sweden

http://www.risk.lth.se

Telephone: +46 46 222 73 60

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Summary

Within recent years, a so-called *innovation turn* has emerged and received growing attention within the humanitarian system, resulting in a field with its own terminology, discourse and institutional components, all gathered under the term humanitarian innovation (HI). While perceived as a means of stimulating broader system changes and increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the resource scarce humanitarian system, current efforts of HI have largely met criticism for being too top-down driven, Northern biased and detached from local actors' priorities and needs. As a consequence, there appears to be a need to *localize HI* in order to ensure sustainable change. Alongside the 'innovation turn', localization has been described as part of a wider paradigm shift within the humanitarian system. While there appears to be strong evidence suggesting that innovation is needed, and that local actors and communities are uniquely positioned to innovate in ways that are relevant, effective and culturally and contextually appropriate, localized HI still appears to be under-researched and lacking practical guidelines. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate what is known about the concept and how it is perceived, as well as how it occurs and how it can be managed.

The issue of localized HI was investigated through a joint scoping study of scientific and gray literature, in combination with a qualitative case study of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which have committed to both the innovation turn and the localization agenda, for instance by being one of the signatories of the Grand Bargain. 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Movement actors from various operational and geographical positions.

The findings suggest that terminological and conceptual ambiguity exist, hindering the opportunity to operationalize or manage localized HI. This ambiguity appeared to be stemming from ambiguity tied to the two individual concepts 'HI' and 'localization'. Despite this, a few core traits of localized HI emerged, such as a thorough inclusion of local actors throughout the entire innovation process; acknowledging local innovative capacity; equitable partnerships, and; local ownership and decision-making power. This research moreover identified that there appears to be a disproportionate focus on enhancing involvement, inclusion and participation of local actors in innovation processes, rather than on decentralizing innovation capacity and reallocating the power and decision-making around these processes from headquarter levels to local levels. Yet, it also showed that it is as important to establish equal partnerships in which the capacities of all actors are acknowledged and utilized efficiently. As part of such partnerships, discussions about who is considered local should arguably be explicit, as this was found to be a highly relative concept.

Moreover, the findings showed diverse understandings of whether localized HI happens organically or needs to be facilitated. This might be a challenge, as working towards common objectives and aligning ways of getting there necessitates a shared understanding of how change happens. This, as it will likely dictate what resources are dedicated and which efforts are made. The diverse understandings of how localized HI happens, together with the ambiguous

understandings of what the concept entails, may be explanations to why progress has thus far been slow.

To conclude, this research suggests that without a clear and shared understanding of *what* localized HI is and *why* it is needed, the *how* of localized HI will likely remain vague. Although limited in scope, the findings are believed to contribute to the broader and emerging discussion on localized HI within the humanitarian system. It is suggested for future research to further the attempt to investigate the concept. It is especially encouraged to investigate already existing examples of localized HI as this has repeatedly been found to be under acknowledged and lacking documentation. Additionally, it would be interesting to approach localized HI with a critical lens, for instance investigating values attached to ‘the local’ in the conceptualization of localized HI.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

ALNAP - Active Learning Network for Accountability and Learning

CRC - Canadian Red Cross

CADRIM - The Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre

DRM - Disaster Risk Management

EVCA - Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

HI - Humanitarian Innovation

HIF - Humanitarian Innovation Fund

HO - Humanitarian Organization

HQ - Headquarters

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross

INGO - International Non-governmental Organization

IFRC - International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

NGO - Non-governmental Organization

NS - National Society

PNS - Partner National Society

The Movement - The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

WHS - World Humanitarian Summit

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1. Introduction & Background

1.1 Humanitarian Innovation

The humanitarian system is facing great challenges due to increasing complexity, scope and frequency of hazards (Betts et al., 2012; Kraft & Smith, 2019; Madianou, 2019). At the same time, the system is described as stretched beyond capacity (ALNAP, 2015). With a growing number of crisis-affected people globally and increasing costs of humanitarian aid, practitioners and researchers alike question the ability to meet these growing and changing needs (Betts & Bloom, 2014). Therefore, greater innovation has been called for as a means to trigger creative thinking and provide new solutions to stimulate broader system changes and increase effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian system (Elrha, 2020; Kent, 2012; Madianou, 2019; Sheather et al., 2016).

Within recent years, a so-called *innovation turn* (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Searle, 2017) has emerged and received growing attention within the humanitarian system, resulting in a field with its own terminology, discourse and institutional components, all gathered under the term Humanitarian innovation (HI) (Sandvik, 2014; Bessant et al., 2015). HI received further attention at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), where 'transformation through innovation' was one of four main themes (Bessant et al., 2015; Scott-Smith, 2016).

Although "humanitarians have always innovated" (Sandvik, 2017:1), there has been little to no recording of innovation management within the system prior to 2009, when the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) held an 'innovation fair' and launched a report on HI (Bessant et al., 2015). This has been noted as a defining moment for HI, as it was followed by an increased interest in, and funding of, activities, publications and projects targeted at innovation (Scott-Smith, 2016). However, HI has thus far been critiqued for being too top-down driven and Northern biased, promoting externally developed solutions to perceived needs, rather than locally identified solutions rooted in end-users' needs and priorities (Fejerskov & Fetterer, 2020; Sandvik, 2017). This has been called the top-down world of HI (Betts & Bloom, 2013), where actors from the Global North, such as private actors and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), are said to be key actors influencing funding and decision making (Skeels, 2020). This, despite the well documented efficiency of managing locally defined issues with innovations designed by end-users (Elrha, 2020). In order for HI to reach its full potential of meeting the growing challenges and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system in a sustainable manner, some have raised the need to *localize HI* (Fejerskov & Fetterer, 2020), stating that the innovation agenda "should have as its guiding light the idea of a paradigmatic shift in attitude, enabled by the principles of disaster prevention, local ownership and beneficiary engagement" (Ramalingam et al., 2009:81).

1.1.1 Localized HI

While ideas of ownership, participation and inclusion of local actors are not new within the humanitarian system (Babister, 2020; Barakat & Milton, 2020), they have emerged with renewed force in recent years (Van Brabant & Patel, 2018). Building on existing local capacities has repeatedly been found to be key for humanitarian effectiveness and sustainability (Churruca Muguruza, 2015). Alongside the 'innovation turn', localization has been described as part of a wider paradigm shift within the humanitarian system (Kuipers et al., 2020) and was highlighted in the WHS where it gained momentum (Roepstorff, 2019). The Grand Bargain agreement, with its 52 international signatories, strongly emphasized the role of local actors (Babister, 2020; Barakat & Milton, 2020), with the slogan "as local as possible, as international as necessary" (Roepstorff, 2019:286). While there is now a quickly growing body of literature and commitments to localization, the concept is still contested (Barakat & Milton, 2020), and a Global Humanitarian Assistance report found that little progress has been made in practice since the Grand Bargain (Van Voorst, 2019).

While there appears to be strong evidence suggesting that innovation is needed within the humanitarian system, and that local actors and communities are uniquely positioned to innovate in ways that are relevant, effective and culturally and contextually appropriate (Betts & Bloom, 2013), what will here be referred to as *localized HI* appears to be under-researched and lacking practical guidelines. For instance, there is a lack of understanding of what localized HI entails, how it occurs and how it can be managed in order to improve humanitarian assistance (Betts & Bloom, 2013).

1.2 Purpose & Aims

The purpose of this research is to give insight into the emerging phenomenon of localized HI, by exploring what it can entail and how it is perceived, as well as how it occurs and how it can be managed. This will be carried out through a scoping study of gray and scientific literature, and by using the case of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to investigate localized HI in practice, as will be presented further below.

1.3 Research questions

In light of this, the research questions are phrased as follows;

1. *What is currently known in the gray and scientific literature and by practitioners about localized HI and how is it perceived?*

2. *How does localized HI occur and how can it be managed? What are the challenges and enablers?*

1.4. Thesis outline

The structure of this thesis is as follows: section 2 introduces the case of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, followed by the methodology and research design in section 3. The succeeding sections, 4 and 5, present the results, starting with the scoping study results followed by the results from the case of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This is followed by a discussion of the findings in section 6. A conclusion is lastly presented in section 7.

2. The case of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, hereafter referred to as the Movement, is arguably an interesting case to investigate as they have committed to both the innovation turn and the localization agenda. For instance, by being one of the signatories of the Grand Bargain and the launching of the 2015 World Disaster Report, in which local actors are emphasized as essential for effectiveness of the humanitarian system (IFRC, 2015; Roepstorff, 2019).

The Movement is a large humanitarian INGO with a longstanding humanitarian presence. It consists of three main components: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and; 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (NSs) (IFRC, 2021a). Although guided by the same fundamental principles, all are independent entities, and the NSs serve as auxiliaries to their national authorities (Ibid.). Additionally, the Movement consists of various global and regional reference and knowledge centers, which are delegated functions and centers of expertise hosted by NSs (IFRC, 2021b). Moreover, the IFRC secretariat has a dedicated innovation team, and some NSs have established innovation teams or hubs. Due to the Movement's mandates, geographical reach and vast network which connects humanitarian actors at various levels, from local to international, they have been found to be uniquely positioned for pursuing efforts around both localization and innovation (Zyck & Krebs, 2015; IFRC, 2018).

For terminological clarification, Partner National Societies (PNSs) refer to National Societies, which besides domestic operations, provide financial and technical support internationally to so-called Host National Societies (Austin & Chessex, 2018). The National Societies often on the receiving end, Host National Societies, will here be referred to as NSs. This delineation and structure is mainly a way to clarify the reading, and to distinguish whether a respondent's NS's operations are predominantly domestic or located internationally via various support functions.

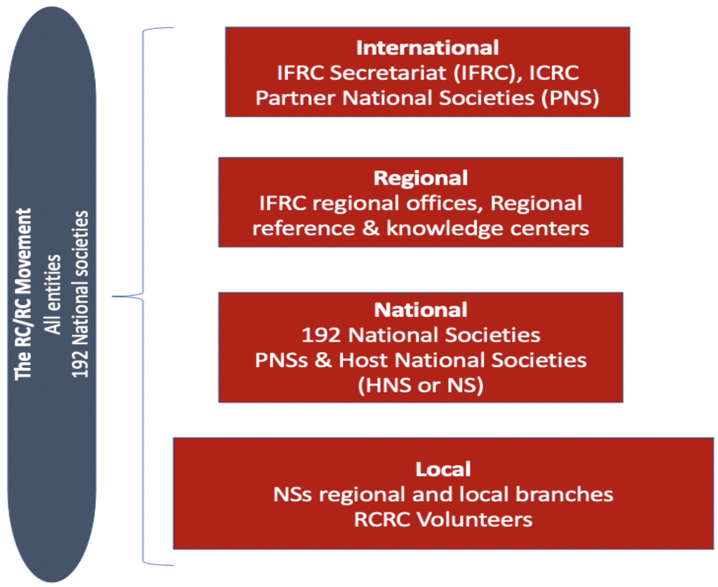

Figure 1: A simplified visualization of the Movement's various levels and entities.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research strategy

This thesis was conducted as a combination of a scoping study and qualitative case study. The research process was inductive due to the explorative nature of the research, and the process of collecting data and identifying main themes was iterative until a comprehensive set of themes emerged (Creswell, 2013).

The rationale behind the scoping study was to map the extent and content of existing knowledge on localized HI, by transparently and systematically scanning scientific and gray literature (Levac et al., 2010). A scoping study can also help clarify complex concepts (Levac et al., 2010), which was favorable in order to fulfill the research purpose. While the scoping study methodology can be used as a stand-alone method in its own right (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), a qualitative case study design was applied to complement the results by providing in-depth, practical understanding of the research issue (Creswell, 2013). The succeeding sub-section will present how the scoping study was conducted, followed by an explanation of the case study process and design, and be concluded by a discussion on the limitations of this research.

3.2 Scoping study

There is no single definition of what a scoping study entails (Levac et.al, 2010). However, this research draws on Arksey and O'Malley's' (2005) understanding of a scoping study as a method to scan and map the available literature of a broader research topic. A scoping study can be especially suitable when addressing less focused and broader topics where multiple research designs could prove useful (Ibid.), which is the case of this research. In order to get a thorough

overview of what is known on the topics by both researchers and practitioners, the scoping study was divided into two main parts, one of scientific literature and one of gray literature.
The scoping study processes largely followed the Arksey and O'Malley framework (2005), including the recommendations by Levac et al. (2010), which consists of the 6 stages: 1) identifying the research question; 2) identifying relevant studies; 3) study selection; 4) charting the data; 5) collating, summarizing and reporting results, and; 6) consultation.

The research questions were identified in stage 1 and guided the scientific and gray scoping. The research questions were found to be broad enough for capturing the complexity of the main concepts, while also narrow enough to facilitate a systematic and rigorous scoping study, which is in line with the recommendations of Arksey and O'Malley (2005). Stages 2-4 were followed separately for the scientific and gray scoping, and will be presented below as such.

Stage 6, consultation, is presented by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) as an optional stage, but is argued to be an essential component of scoping studies by Levac et al. (2010), as it can enhance the rigor of the research. However, how to integrate such findings with the scoping study results is as yet unclear, and limited guidance exists (Levac et al., 2010). Consultative interviews were not conducted in this research as such. However, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners, which provided complementary insights.

3.2.1 Scientific literature

Stage 2 - Identifying relevant studies

Database selection and search strings
For scanning the scientific literature field, the electronic database Scopus (Elsevier), which could be accessed through our Lund University subscription, was selected. As the largest database of peer-reviewed literature covering a wide range of research fields (Beerens & Tehler, 2016), it was found to be a suitable database for a systematic search. It shall be noted here that spelling localization with "S" and "Z", respectively, generated the same number of results. In order to answer the research questions, the following search strings were applied:

Search strings	Number of results
"Humanitarian innovation" AND Localization	0
Humanitarian AND innovation AND Localization	0
Localization AND Innovation	441
"Bottom-up innovation"	23
"Localized innovation"	11

Table 1: Initial search strings.

As can be seen in table 1, the results generated from the initial search strings were very limited. The one outlier, “Localization AND innovation”, resulted in merely two relevant papers after the initial sorting. Due to these limited results, it was decided to broaden the search and to investigate the key concepts of humanitarian innovation and localization separately. Refining the search strategy in an iterative manner when needed, as was the case in this scoping, is recommended by Levac et al. (2010). The search was ultimately divided into three overarching categories: 1) humanitarian innovation; 2) localization, and; 3) localized HI (see figure 1).

When deciding the search strings for the more extended categories, i.e. categories 1 and 2, quite broad keywords were chosen. Each individual search string consisted of variations and alternative formulations of the core concepts and in different combinations, such as “innovative” and “innovation”. In total, 13 search strings were selected and searched for with the search filter “Article title, Abstract and Keywords”. Each search string was given a letter code within an Excel sheet in order to facilitate an easy tracking of the sorting process (see Appendix A).

Stage 3 & 4 - Study selection and charting the data

The inclusion criteria *Open Access* and *English* were applied within the initial search. Literature was further filtered out in three steps (see figure 1). First, duplicates were removed and titles were sorted based on relevance. Second, the remaining papers were reviewed by the abstracts and further narrowed down. The relevance criteria can be difficult to concretize due to the subjective nature of “relevance”, but the papers needed to be centered around the humanitarian system, development sector and/or disaster risk management (DRM), or present theoretical and conceptual tools of relevance. Due to the somewhat low number of results as well as the ambiguity of the core concepts, the inclusion of the literature was quite generous.

The reviewing process was divided among the two two authors in order to cover a bigger scope. This was also necessary due to time and resource constraints. The first 20 papers selected for full-text analysis were divided into 10 each to be read independently. These were then discussed in order to ensure transparency and internal consistency with the research purpose (Levac et al., 2010) and to reduce ambiguity tied to paper selection. Lastly, the remaining papers were read in full, equally divided between the researchers and coded as relevant or semi-relevant. In line with what Levac et al. (2010) suggest, the process of inclusion and exclusion of literature was iterative, and we regularly discussed among ourselves when uncertainties arose related to the relevance criteria.

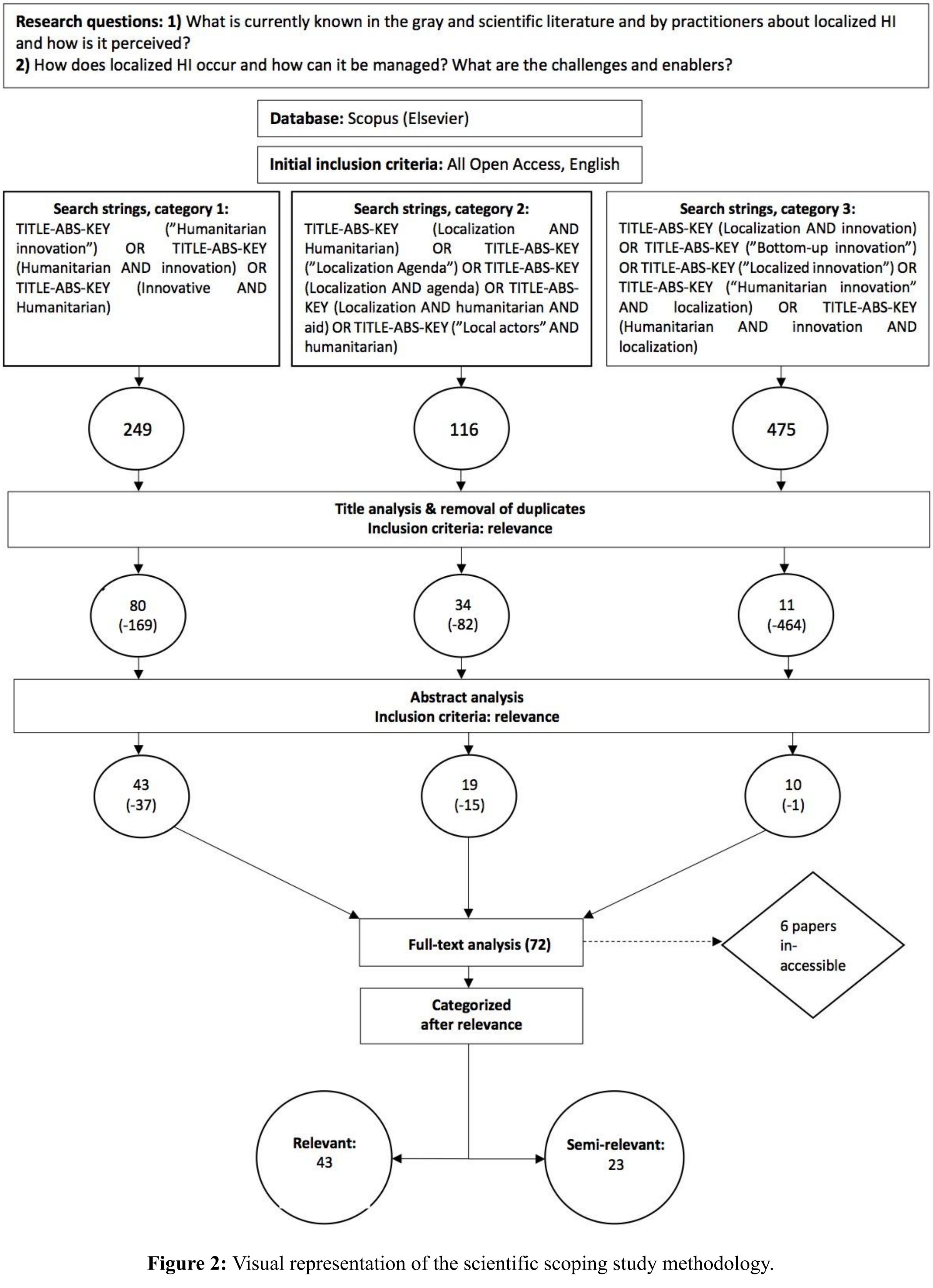

Figure 2: Visual representation of the scientific scoping study methodology.

3.2.2. Gray Literature

Stage 2 - Identifying relevant studies

Database selection and search strings

The database used for scanning gray literature was the Google search engine and its advanced search function, which was found suitable due to its accessibility and variety of sources available. The scoping of gray literature was partly informed by the initial findings of the scientific scoping, in terms of the number of relevant, available literature within each category. Due to the limited scope of this research, and the quite vast number of results on localization emerging from the scientific scoping, it was decided that category 2, i.e. localization, was here redundant. Instead, the two search strings *humanitarian AND innovation* and *humanitarian AND innovation AND localisation,* were applied (see figure 2). It must be noted here that localization was spelled with an “S” as opposed to the scientific scoping searches, spelled with a “Z”. Both variations were initially searched for in an informal search, where the searches with “Z” generated less results. In addition, early findings indicated that localisation spelled with an “S” is most commonly used among practitioners.

Stage 3 & 4 - Study selection and charting the data

Similarly to the scientific scoping, initial inclusion criteria were applied when conducting the searches in the database. These inclusion criteria were papers: 1) available in English and 2) available in PDF-format. The literature was then sorted based on titles, including the removal of duplicates, and then abstracts were reviewed in a similar manner as in the scientific scoping. Relevance was again applied as an inclusion criteria, i.e. literature had to be centered within the humanitarian system, development sector and/or disaster risk management (DRM), or present theoretical and conceptual tools of relevance to these wider research topics. The review process was evenly divided among the authors, and papers were discussed when uncertainties arose.

Figure 3: Visual representation of the gray scoping study methodology.

Stage 5 - Analysis of findings

After the final sorting, in-depth reading and parallel memoing, note taking and manual coding began separately of both scientific and gray literature. Pre-established categories were defined into which findings from both the scientific and gray literature were sorted, such as *definitions*, *global commitments* and *tools and frameworks*. These were broad categories, developed by the two authors in order to early on map out what was known about the concepts and to gain a comprehensive overview over contextual background and current attempts to operationalize it. Additional emerging categories were then identified, in accordance with the Arksey & O'Malley framework (2005), such as *critique of HI* and *HI and experimentation*. Thereafter, overall patterns and themes were analyzed and presented in order to answer the research questions, to inform the interview guide, and to compare and contrast them to the case study results.

It shall be noted that out of the total 122 papers read of combined scientific and gray literature, not all ended up being utilized in the end. This was due to factors such as redundancy, irrelevance or duplication. For instance, the most recent publication was referred to when the same content was found in multiple publications by one author.

3.3 Qualitative case study

The case study applied the logic of an instrumental case (Creswell, 2013), in which exploring the case of the Movement was believed to provide deeper understanding of the wider research problem of interest. This case was also specifically believed to give insight to how localized HI occurs, how it can be managed and what challenges and enablers exist, thus providing insights in order to answer the research questions. Primary data was collected in the form of 11 semi-structured interviews with Movement actors.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were found to be the most appropriate interview methodology, as they allowed us to explore the research problem by using open-ended questions with non-rigid sequencing, while simultaneously providing a guiding structure (Bryman, 2012). This methodology also allows for investigating emerging themes and topics during the interviews, which would not have been possible with structured interviews (Creswell, 2013). Semi-structured interviews were further found to be valuable due to the explorative nature of the thesis, in light of the current research gap and the complexity of the key concepts. This would not have been possible with structured interviews as the emerging discussion would be highly limited and influenced by the authors, risking a systematic bias (Bryman, 2012). Unstructured interviews would presumably have generated too scattered data, and therefore risk obscuring the key concepts rather than aiding in exploring emerging themes.

3.3.2 Sampling strategy

In total, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Movement actors at various levels and positions within the Movement. The sampling strategy was primarily a convenience sampling due to established contact with a small team at the Canadian Red Cross (CRC), which assisted with finding available and relevant interviewees with whom we were put in contact. It was arguably also a case of purposeful sampling (Bryman, 2012), in the sense that pre-established inclusion criteria were developed which were shared with the CRC team. It was essential that the interviewees were working with DRM, innovation or localization, and ranging from different positions and levels within the wider organization in order for us to understand the researched problem more holistically. Two interviewees were reached via snowballing (Creswell, 2013) through another key respondent at the IFRC. The sample size included respondents from the three general organizational levels: international, regional, and national, namely the IFRC Secretariat, IFRC regional level, PNSs and NSs. More specifically: the IFRC Secretariat, The Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre (CADRIM), the PNSs Canadian Red Cross and British Red Cross, and the Host NSs Somaliland Red Crescent Society, Mongolia Red Cross Society, Jamaica Red Cross and Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society (see figure 4). As can be seen in figure 4, no employees representing NSs' local or regional branches were interviewed. This was mainly due to the limited scope and the sampling strategy of this research, dictating which respondents we were put in contact with. However, these levels are arguably not as distinct and clear cut as here simplified and visualized, and NSs may also be seen as local actors, as will be discussed more in the results section.

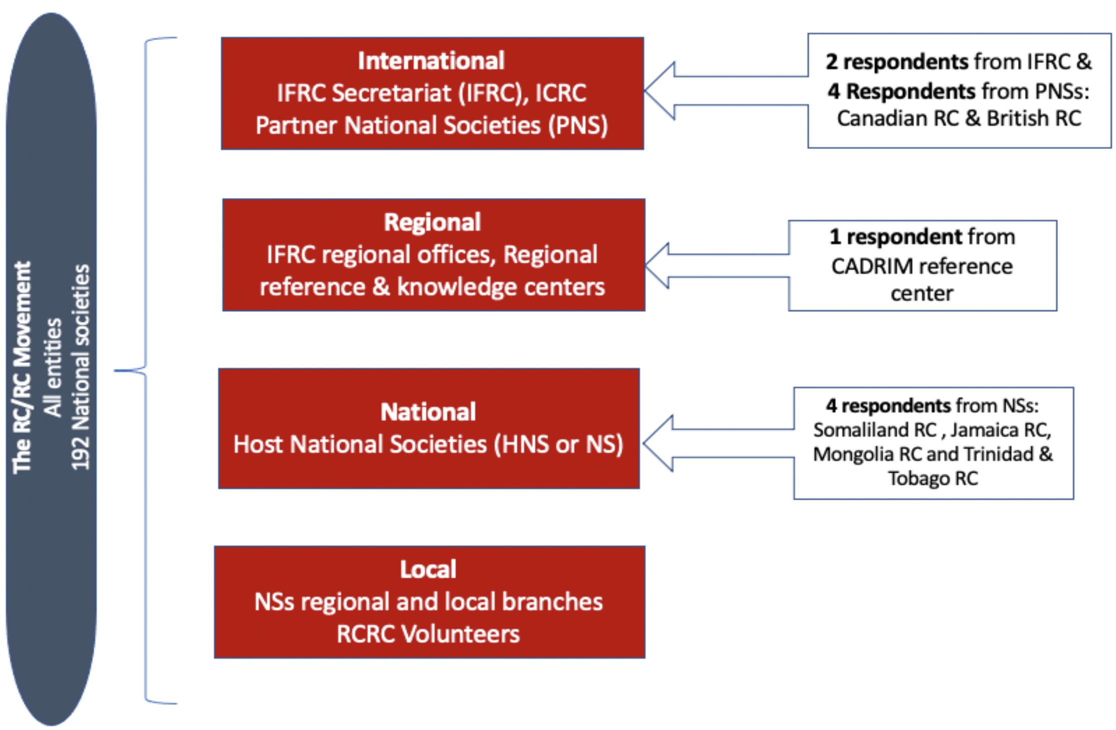

Figure 4: A simplified visualization of the respondents and corresponding operational levels and geographical positions.

3.3.3 Interview guide and interview process

Two interview guides were developed prior to the interviews, one for NS respondents and one for PNS, CADRIM and IFRC respondents. The interview questions remained largely the same but were individually assessed and slightly altered based on the interviewee's position and organizational level, such as asking about receiving versus providing support. Both interview guides were based on four main themes identified through the preliminary scoping study findings: conceptual understanding of HI; innovation processes; partnerships and collaboration, and; understanding of localized HI. Questions were then formulated within these wider themes (see Appendices B and C).

The questions were designed to provide insight into the organizational structure and operations, as well as to give tangible examples of if localized HI occurs and if so how it is managed in practice. They were also designed to provide insights into the practitioners' subjective experiences and understandings of the concepts of both HI and localization, as well as around reconciling the two. After each interview, the researchers assessed the questions and the sequencing in terms of how well the participants had understood the questions and made slight modifications to improve the guide.

The interviews were all conducted via the video conferencing tool Zoom, as either audio or video calls, ranging from 35-70 minutes and averaging 45 minutes. The interview questions were shared upon request prior to the interview.

3.3.4 Ethical considerations

The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research in general and about their participation in particular, and were guaranteed that their names would not be used. The respondents were also asked whether their title and position could be mentioned in correlation to their individual answers. All interviews were recorded via Zoom with the consent of the respondents and then transcribed manually by the researchers in close proximity to the interviews (within 48 hours). The recordings were deleted after the transcriptions were done.

3.3.5 Coding and analysis of data

When analyzing the data, the Miles and Huberman framework for analysis was used, which is a framework containing the stages of data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions (Punch, 1998). The reduction of data entails coding and memoing to extract patterns which is an integrated part of the analysis. The data display will be presented as key themes and analytical conclusions will be drawn by comparing and contrasting the findings from the case study with those from the scoping study.

3.4 Limitations

3.4.1 Limitations with the scoping study

One dilemma regarding the large quantity of data gathered in a scoping study is the balance between breadth and depth (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Despite the fairly large amount of results, only a small portion addressed the key concepts explicitly, as could be identified early on in the sorting process. This enabled both a breadth and depth of the scoping study. However, given the limited scope, time, and the large amount of data collected in this research, generalizations had to be made and some concepts have been presented in a simplified way.

Another limitation concerns the reliability and validity of the results from using the search engine Google in order to scan and map the gray literature. The search results may vary due to algorithms influencing search results via, for instance, personalization, or a removal of similar results. Therefore, the replicability of the gray search is very limited. However, due to the limited available scientific literature, gray literature was seen as vital in order to better understand the research problem and answer the research questions.

3.4.2 Limitations of the case study

The generalizability of the case study findings outside the confines of the case are inherently limited due to the nature of the case study design (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the Movement is a huge, widespread organization and the comparatively small sample size limits the generalizability within the Movement. For instance, NSs cannot be seen as representative of the region in which they operate, nor can the NS respondents be seen as representative of their NS. However, the range of the sample size, spanning across levels and geographical positions, arguably provided rich data on the research topic.

In addition, case studies are limited in both time and scope (Creswell, 2013), affecting the amount of interviews possible to conduct and other datasets to collect. Commonly, multiple sources of data are utilized within a qualitative case study as a means of triangulation to strengthen the validity (Creswell, 2013). However, due to the rich secondary data provided by the scoping study, the single data source of semi-structured interviews was deemed both sufficient and a necessary limitation considering the scope of the research.

Moreover, all respondents except for one were identified by employees within the Movement. One respondent was identified by us. Having a majority of respondents identified by employees within an organization might be a limiting factor as the sampling could be biased and affected by factors beyond our control, such as that many respondents could be described as gatekeepers (Bryman, 2012). A gatekeeper is a person that often holds a senior position within an organization and that may have an interest in protecting that organization's image (Ibid). In this case, many respondents hold such positions, which could potentially have affected their answers. This issue was addressed by being transparent with the research purpose and by asking open-ended and value-neutral questions. Another limitation could be formal and informal hierarchies, power dimensions and dependencies within the Movement, affecting the respondents answers. This was partly addressed by ensuring that individual respondents would remain anonymous in correlation to their answers and by re-emphasizing the purpose of the research as not in any way being an internal review on behalf of the CRC or IFRC, despite their assistance with finding respondents.

Additionally, an innovation team at the IFRC level was identified and explicitly mentioned and recommended by many respondents as a potentially valuable source of information for this research. Interviewing a member of this team could potentially have provided valuable insights to the end result, but unfortunately we were unable to establish contact despite multiple attempts via different channels of communication.

Lastly, the study was conducted remotely and all interviews were held online via Zoom. This may have limited our ability to get a more complete and in-depth understanding of the contexts of which the participants spoke. In most cases the online interviews utilized the video function. However, in some cases, due to for instance bad internet connection, the interviews were only voice calls. This may further have limited the perceptions of both the questions and the answers, as well as the openness throughout the interview as a consequence of not establishing a face-to-face connection.

3.4.3 Overall limitations

In addition to the limitations above, there are certain researcher biases to consider while reading this research in its entirety. First, two people conducted this research, which can be both a strength and a weakness. For instance, both have been involved in sorting, reading and categorizing the literature used in the scoping study, as well as in coding, interpreting and analyzing the interview results. This has been done both separately and jointly, and during times in the process in which work has been done separately, different interpretations may have occurred. It was therefore essential that we, as two individuals, discussed our views and standpoints openly since these could differ due to inherent subjectivity.

4. Scoping study results

4.1 Introduction and outline

In light of the lack of research on localized HI, the two concepts of HI and localization were investigated separately. This section is structured as follows; findings from scientific and gray literature will be presented separately under each sub-section. Not all subsections contain findings from both scientific and gray literature due to a lack of relevant findings. Firstly, what is known about HI and localized HI will be presented, followed by an introduction of the localization agenda. Lastly, what is known about operationalizing HI, including enablers and challenges, will be presented.

4.2 What is known about humanitarian innovation?

Scientific literature

While often criticized for being merely another buzzword brought into the humanitarian system (Sandvik et al., 2017; Scott-Smith, 2016), Bessant et al. (2015) argue that HI's importance should not be underestimated. Much of the scientific research suggests that HI is essential for the system to ensure efficiency and relevance (Kent, 2012; Mcgoldrick, 2015) and that it is a "matter of survival" (Scott-Smith, 2016:2232) for the system. Yet, there is little focus in the scientific literature on defining the concept and specifying what it entails (Sandvik et al., 2017; Scott-Smith, 2016).

Many introduce HI as a phenomenon inspired by science and technology (Sandvik et al., 2017) and the private market (Scott-Smith, 2016). This is evident through a vocabulary and focus echoing the business sector, and it is argued that "the innovation agenda seems preoccupied with identifying new 'products and business models'" (Scott-Smith, 2016:2233). This appears to relate to the growing emphasis on technological innovations, such as the use of drones and AI, within the humanitarian system (Besiou & van Wassenhove, 2019). HI is also presented as a strategy, by which new technologies for improved information and communication channels can be better integrated into the system (McGoldrick, 2015). Many also describe HI more generally as new ideas that will lead to improvements (Haavisto & Kovács, 2015; Scott-Smith, T, 2016; Sheather et al., 2016), and as a process including different phases (Sheather et al., 2016). Further, the solutions resulting from innovation are explained as ranging from products and services to processes (Sandvik et al., 2017; Sheather et al., 2016), but all with the purpose of improving the efficiency of humanitarian assistance (Sandvik et al., 2017). While some refer to innovation as a novelty within the system (Bessant et al., 2015), others describe it as belonging to everyday practices (Sandvik, 2017; Scriven 2016; UN, 2013).

Although innovation is frequently explained in terms of new technology and entrepreneurialism (Scott-Smith, 2016), there appears to have been increasing attempts to refine and adapt the concept to better suit the humanitarian system. One example of a key actor seeking to do so is the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF), established in 2010 as part of the global charity Elrha (Obrecht & Warner, 2016). HIF is described as the first non-governmental actor funding innovation within the system (Ibid.), and as the first cross-sectoral support function of HI (Scriven, 2016).

Gray literature

The gray literature largely supports the findings above. While no single definition of innovation exists, many draw upon or refer to innovation as "dynamic processes which focus on the creation and implementation of new or improved products and services, processes, positions and paradigms" (Ramalingam et al., 2009:3; See also; Betts et al., 2012; Betts & Bloom, 2014; Obrecht & Warner, 2016; Sandvik, 2017). Out of these, Betts and Bloom (2014) find products and processes to be the most common, and Skeels (2020) argues that HI is predominantly focused on product development. It is also suggested that innovation can be understood as "creating value from ideas" (Sandvik, 2017:6) through an iterative process in which ideas are identified, adapted and scaled up (Obrecht & Warner, 2016). HI is often described as a process of finding and scaling solutions to problems (Betts et al., 2012; Betts & Bloom, 2014; Churruca Muguruza, 2015), and as a way to address challenges within the system (UN, 2013). In line with the scientific literature, improvements in terms of increased effectiveness and efficiency emerge as key aims of HI (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Sandvik, 2017), and many argue that innovation is an absolute necessity within the humanitarian system (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Skeels, 2020).

While there tends to be an emphasis on novelty and newness when describing innovation (Betts et al., 2012; Churruca Muguruzat, 2015), others distinguish between 'inventions' and 'innovations' (Betts & Bloom 2014; UN, 2013). While the former is about inventing completely new things, the latter refers to context-specific and adapted solutions which do not necessarily require the introduction of, for instance, new technologies (Betts & Bloom, 2014). Innovation is moreover often presented in terms of change, transformation and adaptation (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Betts et al. 2012; Churruca Muguruza, 2015; Obrecht & Warner, 2016) and is described as requiring new and out of the box-thinking (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Betts et al., 2012; Obrecht & Warner, 2016).

In line with the scientific literature, technology is described to be a predominant feature of HI (Sandvik, 2017), both as a means to support innovation and as innovation in itself (UKAID, 2014a). Most examples of HI are of technologies, either specifically developed for the humanitarian context, or existing technologies introduced, adapted and applied to it for improving humanitarian aid (Searle, 2017; UKAID, 2014a). The tendency to focus on new technology and product development is argued to stem from general innovation thinking (Betts & Bloom, 2013). Examples of technological innovations in the literature include Information and Communications Technology (Betts & Bloom, 2013), 3D-printing (Elrha, 2017a; Searle, 2017; UN, 2013), AI and unmanned aerial vehicles (Searle, 2017), drones (Elrha, 2017a), as well as real-time disaster mapping and mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (Searle, 2017). Concerns have however been raised towards this technological focus. For instance, tech-based innovations are argued to risk being contextually irrelevant to existing needs (Nelis et al., 2020; Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; Searle, 2017), overly optimistic and glorifying newness (Scott-Smitt, 2016), and oversimplifying complex issues and related solutions (HIF & Elrha, 2017). Instead, one paper argues for the need to steer away from product development to system changes and service improvements (Fladvad Nielsen, 2016).

A common concern is that traditional understandings and practices of innovation, as well as research on HI, tend to be disproportionately focused on organizational improvements, mainly serving aid workers rather than aid beneficiaries (Ong & Combinido, 2018; Scott-Smith, 2016). This is explained by Bloom & Faulkner (2016) as a lingering effect of the early focus on general innovation management, and it is further argued that "it is often the humanitarian community rather than the beneficiary community who request, drive and benefit from the innovation"

(Scott-Smith, 2016:2239). In line with this, Ong & Combinido (2018) argue that while local actors are occasionally responsible for testing and implementing remotely designed solutions, it is still donors and international stakeholders who will ultimately gain from them. Betts and Bloom (2013) describe approaches to HI as divided into two worlds, one top-down and one bottom-up. The dominant approach is argued to be top-down and mainly focused on incremental changes to improve international organizations' practices (Betts & Bloom, 2014; UKAID, 2014a), as actors from the Global North, such as private actors or INGO's, are said to be key actors influencing funding and decision making around HI (Elrha, 2017b; Skeels, 2020). HI initiatives are also described as commonly approached in short-term project formats with externally identified problems and solutions (Betts & Bloom, 2014).

4.3 What is known about localized HI?

Gray literature

There is a clear lack of available scientific literature on localized HI, and while localized HI is not a common concept within the gray literature, a number of synonyms and related concepts can be outlined. These all refer to the role of enhancing involvement of local actors in innovation processes, as seen in table 2.

Synonyms & related concepts	Explanation
User-centered design	Working closely with affected populations during the entire innovation process to find innovative solutions to their identified problems (Obrecht & Warner, 2016), particularly searching for grassroot ideas in the pilot stage (McClure & Gray, 2015). Key elements are acknowledging local innovative capacities and putting local communities at the center, independent of the origin of ideas (Betts & Bloom, 2014).
User-led design	Approach described as potentially increasing sustainability, community support and scalability by building on local capacities, relationships and cultures, acknowledging local creativity in the early consultation phase (Betts & Bloom, 2014).
Bottom-up innovation	A merge of innovation theory, design theory and participatory approaches, with a focus on local capacities and systems (Betts & Bloom, 2013). Its principles are "allowing people to make decisions and choices, and to be empowered to maintain their own livelihoods. People will also make the decision to adopt, use, adapt and inform innovations which are introduced by external actors..." (Betts & Bloom, 2013:30), which is believed to lead to increased sustainability and acceptance.
Participatory approaches	An approach seen as "offering an opportunity to reflect on how people's own ideas, problem-solving skills and decision-making can best be facilitated by external actors" (Betts & Bloom, 2013:4). It is aimed at "empowering affected populations to make their own decisions when defining problems and finding appropriate solutions to local challenges" (Ibid:28.).
User-focused innovation	Approach emphasizing a user focus throughout the innovation process. Needs, problems and solutions are to be identified and defined by the targeted communities to

	ensure appropriateness and sustainability (Betts & Bloom, 2013).
Co-innovation	This approach is aimed at "balancing organisational and beneficiary interests when innovating. Co-innovation is essentially the inclusion of local community members when devising, testing, and revising an idea" (Searle 2019:7).
Context-based approach to innovation	Problem recognition and ideation shall be rooted in local settings. Essential to engage local actors, who are familiar with the context, as well as enhance collaboration between local and national actors (HIF & Elrha, 2017).
In-country innovation (in the Global South)	The Response Innovation Labs (RIL) has been described as striving towards enhancing "in-country innovation" in the Global South (Skeels, 2020:72).
Local-level innovation	A term connected to a user-centered design process in which communities of risk are part of building local-level solutions (Start Network, 2021).

Table 2: Synonyms and related concepts to localized HI identified in the gray literature.

Recent papers suggest that localization is a systemic problem of HI (Skeels, 2020) and highlights the importance of engaging local actors throughout the HI process **(**HIF & Elrha, 2017; Skeels, 2020). Others recommend "localising innovation" (Churruca Muguruza, 2015:20) and Skeels (2020) finds that some efforts have been made in recent years to enhance local participation in HI and to generate "locally driven spaces for humanitarian innovation" (Skeels, 2020:69).

Although much general innovation management literature presents engagement with end-users in innovation processes as vital (UKAID, 2014a), and there is growing recognition of the benefits of involving local communities' knowledge, skills and capacities to enable innovation (Betts & Bloom, 2013), local actors are explained as still being excluded (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; Obrecht & Warner, 2016; Ramalingam et al., 2009; Skeels, 2020; UKAID, 2014a). UKAID (2014b) suggests that there has been an increase of innovation practices that take a user-led approach. However, the *user* often refers to front-line response workers and not the recipients of aid, which has received criticism (Sandvik, 2017). One paper shows that "only 33% of humanitarian innovators consult with affected populations during their innovation processes" (Konda et al., 2019:4). In line with this, UKAID (2014a) argues that there is a lack of practical examples of where beneficiaries have been included in innovation processes, which is confirmed by Ramalingam et al. (2009), stating that international actors rarely include their national partners when it comes to knowledge sharing and idea creation. Similarly, in a study on HI looking at 15 case studies, it was concluded that "there were no examples […] of affected people participating in Ideation activities" (Obrecht & Warner, 2016:62). Another report suggests that "there is [a] need to better understand which factors can enable relevant humanitarian innovation while ensuring inclusiveness and localization" (USAID, 2018:3). Lastly, it is argued that international actors "systematically miss opportunities to use collaboration with national partners to generate, develop and disseminate innovations" (Ramalingam et al., 2009:69).

4.4 The localization agenda

Scientific literature

Echoing the concerns around the innovation turn, the localization agenda is by some seen as merely a rhetorical shift rather than generating actual change (Jönsson & Bexell, 2020; Pincock et al., 2020; Roepstorff, 2019). Localization too has been termed an ambiguous buzzword by many (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Jönsson & Bexell, 2020; Melis & Apthorpe, 2020), partly due to the lack of practical guidelines and shared understandings among humanitarian actors (Patole, 2018; van Brabant & Patel, 2018).

Localization does not have an agreed upon definition (Pincock et al., 2020), but a relatively common definition found is "the need to recognise, respect, strengthen, rebalance, recalibrate, reinforce or return some type of ownership or place to local and national actors" (Barbelet, 2018:5, quoted in Barakat & Milton, 2020). This, as the humanitarian system is criticized for being too Northern-driven, top-down and centralized (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Kraft & Smith 2019; Melis & Apthorpe, 2020). Localization is in this sense about capacity building (Babister, 2020; Roepstorff, 2019), shifting governance, mandates and leadership (Roepstorff, 2019) and promoting local ownership (Melis & Apthorpe, 2020; Roepstorff, 2019), participation and inclusion (Babister, 2020). In essence, it aims to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of humanitarian aid by redistributing funds and power to affected populations (Betts et al., 2012; Wall & Hedlund, 2016) and emphasizes that international humanitarian actors should only play a supporting role (Melis & Apthorpe, 2020). However, despite growing attempts to localize humanitarian aid, McGoldrick (2015) states that international and local actors are still in an unequal relationship. Further, the focus on enhancing effectiveness and accountability towards donors is found to have been at the expense of local actors' needs (Roepstorff, 2019). This is also referred to as a "development-mindset" (Searle, 2019:3), in which delivering results is at the center, as contrasted to an "innovation-mindset" (Ibid.) requiring more flexibility.

4.4.1 Who is a local actor?

Scientific literature

According to the scientific literature, there are ambiguous understandings of who local actors are (Pincock et.al, 2020; Roepstorff, 2019). The terms local, national and international frequently occur as three separate dimensions of actors. However, Roepstorff (2019) argues that these concepts are vague, vast and oversimplifying. Critique is also raised towards the common binary delineation between actors in contemporary discourse, where the *international* becomes code for the global North, characterized by modernity and universality, whereas the *local* becomes code for the Global South and the traditional and exceptional (Ibid.). This delineation has been criticized for being constructed on a false dichotomy (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Roepstorff, 2019), which is problematic, not only due to the oversimplification of a more complex reality, but also because it constructs these concepts as value-laden opposites (Roepstorff, 2019). Most organizations tend to exist in multiple dimensions in parallel (Roepstorff, 2019) and both national and local levels could be captured in 'the local' (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Melis &

Apthorpe, 2020). Therefore, a more critical approach towards defining ‘the local’ is called for (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Roepstorff, 2019).

4.5 Operationalization of HI

As described in the beginning of the results section, there is currently a lack of both scientific and gray literature on the specifics of localized HI. This section will therefore present what was found in the gray literature on how HI more generally occurs and how it can be managed or facilitated, including what is known about the role of end-users or local actors in HI.

4.5.1 Proactive versus reactive HI

Gray literature

A fairly small number of established frameworks attempting to guide HI in practice emerged from the literature (see for instance: Ramalingam et al., 2009; Betts & Bloom, 2014; McClure & Gray, 2015; Obrecht & Warner, 2016). One framework, outlined by HIF & Elrha in 2019, is referred to as the only thorough guide to HI (Dodgson et al., 2020; Skeels, 2020) and emphasizes the importance of properly understanding a problem, as this will reduce the risk of developing and implementing irrelevant solutions (Dodgson et al., 2020).

As a consequence of the lack of best practices, HI is argued to risk remaining a marginal part of humanitarian action (Ramalingam, 2016). The lack of sector-specific guidelines has also meant that HOs generally have been unsuccessful when it comes to actively managing innovation processes (Sutton et al., 2018). However, guidelines exist in general innovation management literature and innovation theory stemming from the business sector (Ibid.). Authors emphasize how general innovation theory, evolved from years of usage across a variety of sectors, is what HI has drawn upon (Betts & Bloom, 2013) and argue for “innovation management capability” (UKAID, 2014b:4) as a key strand in traditional innovation management, but finds that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the need to build such innovation capacity systematically within the humanitarian system.

Many state that innovation has predominantly been reactive and ad hoc until recently (Skeels, 2020; UN, 2013) as it has rapidly developed in both theory and practice (Ramalingam et al., 2009). Attempts to promote and manage innovation both strategically and operationally through increased funding, development and testing of innovations, is argued to have increased within HOs (Betts & Bloom, 2013; Scriven, 2016; Skeels, 2020; UN, 2013), as seen for instance in the influx of innovation labs and funding initiatives dedicated to innovation (Skeels, 2020). Within the literature, there emerges a distinction between reactive and proactive innovation (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Skeels, 2020). Skeels (2020) for instance stresses the importance of specifying what type of HI one wants to see and creating parameters for how to achieve this in practice. Ramalingam et al. (2009) also suggest that actively searching for innovations can increase the potential to improve humanitarian assistance. The reactive component of innovation and what has been called “experimental entrepreneurialism” (UKAID, 2014b:31), as well as proactive innovation management, are both found to be needed, although it is argued that there is a tension between the two (UKAID, 2014b). Nonetheless, the key is suggested to be to find the right balance between the two, which will generate an enabling environment for innovation (UKAID, 2014b).

4.5.2 The HI process

Gray literature

While HI is often described as a process, there is a lack of documentation on what this process entails (OCHA, 2020). A few authors argue that the process is nonlinear without clear and fixed steps, but rather context-specific with overlapping phases (Betts & Bloom, 2013; Ramalingam et al., 2009). Moreover, it is stressed that feedback and learning are critical components at all stages, making the process iterative (Betts & Bloom, 2013; Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; Obrecht & Warner, 2016). Bearing this in mind, there are a few attempts to describe the innovation process. While some minor differences, most follow a similar general process, as seen in table 3 below.

Betts & Bloom (2013)	**HIF & Elrha (2017)**	**Tidd & Bessant (2009) cited in Betts & Bloom (2013).**	**Obrecht & Warner (2016)**	**Ramalingam et al. (2009)**
4 Stages 1. Problem definition and identification of an opportunity 2. Finding potential solutions 3. Testing, adapting and implementing a solution 4. Scaling the solution appropriately	**Lifecycle** 1. Problem framing 2. Developing solutions 3. Adapting & scaling solutions	**4 Steps** 1. Search 2. Select 3. Implement 4. Capture benefits	**5 activities or stages** 1. Recognition: Identifying a problem or a possibility that could improve humanitarian aid. 2. Ideation: Identifying what type of improvements that can be made. 3.Development: Exploring ways in which this can work. 4. Implementation: Exploring if the development works when implemented. 5. Diffusion: Exploring how ownership can be achieved in a broader sense.	**5 key elements** *Some or all included for successful HI:* 1. Problem, challenge or opportunity recognition 2. Invention of idea/solution 3. Developing innovation, generate plans and guidelines 4. Implementation (often using pilots and then scaling up) 5. Diffusion of the innovation

Table 3: Summary of innovation processes found within the gray literature.

4.6 Enablers of HI

Scientific and gray literature

Related to innovation management are key components of HI, or what may proposedly here be called enablers of innovation. These refer to aspects that are believed to facilitate or enhance successful HI. As can be seen in figure 4 below, a greater number of enablers emerged from the gray literature and a few enablers, such as collaboration, financial support and dedication, were found in both.

Enablers of innovation within scientific literature	Enablers of innovation within gray literature
Collaboration and partnerships (McGoldrick, 2015) Long-lasting financial support and other resources (Dobre et al., 2019) Long-term dedication (Dobre et al., 2019) Awareness of power dimensions related to experimental elements of HI (Sandvik et al., 2017)	Partnerships and collaboration (Obrecht & Warner, 2016; Ramalingam et al., 2009) Funding and greater investment (Churruca Muguruza, 2015; Nelis et al., 2020; Scriven, 2016) Dedication, commitment, and prioritization (Betts et al., 2012; Ramalingam, 2016; Ramalingam et al., 2009) Enabling and encouraging culture and internal structures (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Churruca Muguruza, 2015; Obrecht & Warner, 2016; UN, 2013) Willingness and possibilities to experiment and test innovations (UKAID, 2014b) Inclusion, engagement and participation of local actors and end-users (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Obrecht & Warner, 2016; Skeels, 2020) Guidelines, tools and training (Betts & Bloom, 2014) Skills, mindsets and capabilities (Searle, 2019) Information sharing (Betts & Bloom, 2013; Betts & Bloom, 2014; Ramalingam et al., 2009) Diversity (Sutton et al., 2018) Generating and integrating evidence (Obrecht & Warner, 2016) as well as time, space and other resources (Obrecht & Warner, 2016; UKAID, 2014b).

Table 4: Enablers of HI found within the gray and scientific literature.

4.7 Partnerships & collaboration

Gray literature

The literature argues that the humanitarian system has not taken enough advantage of humanitarian actors' different skills and assets, which can increase overall effectiveness (Betts & Bloom, 2014). Collaboration within and between organizations is described as vital to foster innovation (Betts & Bloom, 2014; UKAID, 2014b). Moreover, innovation is argued to be increasingly addressed on a system level (UKAID, 2014b), as "system-wide issues need system-wide collaboration" (Skeels, 2020:73) and complex humanitarian issues cannot be addressed in isolation (Betts & Bloom, 2014; HIF & Elrha, 2017; Skeels, 2020) or in silos (UKAID, 2014a). The ability to "connect the right people and organisations together at the right time" (UKAID, 2014a:3) is described as a key for effective innovation, and the roles of different actors as found in the literature will be presented below.

4.7.1 Local actors

Gray literature

The literature presents multiple arguments for why local actors are essential for HI. Primarily, local actors are believed to better know the context in which they operate, including needs and problems that innovations should address (Ramalingam et al., 2009; UNICEF, 2019). Further, they are assumed to be able to implement projects at a lower cost than their international counterparts (Ramalingam et al., 2009). Another paper argues that "engagement with local actors may provide a fertile ground for innovation to find new ways of addressing increasing needs" (UNICEF, 2019:11). According to some, partnering with local actors will open HI practices up for recognizing local innovative capacities within beneficiary communities, where appropriate solutions to identified problems are more likely to be generated (Fladvad Nielsen, 2016), thus enabling knowledge sharing beyond HOs' internal improvement procedures (Betts & Bloom, 2013). It is believed to generate more successful innovations (Obrecht, 2016), increase accountability to, and acceptance among, affected communities (UNICEF, 2019) and lead to more sustainable solutions centered around local capacities and systems (Betts & Bloom, 2013). Yet, although many argue for the need to shift the power to local actors, some stress that bottom-up HI must not be romanticized (Betts & Bloom, 2014) and that power inequalities are also evident locally (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Murphy et al., 2018). In addition, during emergencies, support from international actors can be vital (Bett & Bloom, 2014), and sometimes local innovation needs to be supported by other networks or partners in order to be able to perform at each phase of the innovation process (Betts & Bloom, 2013). However, there is currently found to be a lack of research and guidelines on how to establish fruitful partnerships in which skills and competencies of different actors can be utilized efficiently (Ramalingan et al., 2009).

Betts and Bloom (2013) stress that the innovation process in itself does not include nor exclude any actors, as various actors are able to participate in all different phases. However, when and how to engage local actors or end-users is not self-evident (Skeels, 2020). Skeels (2020) finds that a current issue is identifying when during the innovation cycle local actors should be included. Betts & Bloom (2013) argue that it is vital to focus on the end-users in each phase, and throughout the entire process. Innovating with a bottom-up lens is claimed to be one way of addressing the alleged gap of how to achieve involvement of end-users in practice (Ibid.). Ramalingam et al. (2009) also argue that the engagement of beneficiaries is defined too narrowly, with an unproportionate focus on involvement in needs assessments and not in the design process. Obrecht & Warner (2016) go more into detail when describing the importance of directly engaging end-users in the ideation phase, where broader problems and ideas are brainstormed and generated. This is believed to assure relevance and appropriateness of ideas, as end-users or local populations are able to provide contextual information of importance, such as preferences, needs and capacities (Ibid.). Local actors could for instance provide useful information through directly participating in ideation activities, or via representatives of local perspectives either via advisory groups, partnerships or via secondary references (Ibid.).

Skeels (2020) agrees that greater inclusion and engagement of local communities in the problem recognition phase may lead to greater possibilities of generating cutting edge innovations. It is further argued that local actors must be placed at the center of innovation processes, independent of whether initiated internally or externally (Betts & Bloom, 2013). Thus, there are claims for complementary and dynamic partnerships in which questions of ownership are considered for innovation to be successful (Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; Ramlingam et al., 2009).

4.7.2 Humanitarian organizations & donors

Gray literature

Humanitarian organizations (HOs) and donors are described as important actors for HI as they are key allocators and providers of resources crucial for innovation (UKAID, 2014a). Yet, this is also lifted as critique, as a few major actors have an unproportional influence, authority and power within the system (Scriven, 2016). For instance, authors find that within international-local partnerships, HOs often view local and national partners as subcontractors (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Roepstorff, 2019). This has partly been ascribed to the current funding structure in which international actors channel funding to local partners, therefore inherently limiting the innovation space of local communities (Robillard et al., 2020). Further, it is argued that centralizing innovation capacity at HOs headquarters (HQs) is problematic, as it can increase the risk of bringing inappropriate solutions to the field (Scriven, 2016).

Although HOs' support can be vital, it is stressed that their involvement must be based on dialogue and willingness to listen to and learn from local partners (Betts & Bloom, 2013; UKAID, 2014b). UKAID (2014b) argues that the success of multi-actor innovations are dependent on HOs' ability to share information and facilitate local innovation processes, rather than providing predefined projects or solutions. The idea is that international actors should neither replace local actors nor be excluded, but rather provide an enabling environment in which existing local innovative capacities can be acknowledged (Betts & Bloom, 2013). Similarly, Scriven (2016) believes that reaching system-wide changes through HI will not occur unless powerful HOs see the shift in power as something of their concern. Commitments to bottom-up innovation by such actors in both theory and practice are therefore seen as vital (UKAID, 2014b). One example is to reallocate innovation capacity from organizations' HQ staff to field level staff, in which the role of HOs and donors primarily could be to mobilize resources, advocate and provide relevant tools and guidance (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Scriven, 2016). Ultimately, it is believed that HOs could better enable field level staff to lead innovation processes (Ramalingam et al., 2009).

4.7.3 The private sector

Gray literature

The private sector is emphasized as a key actor in HI, and collaboration between humanitarians and private enterprises is seen as gradually but steadily increasing within the system (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; UKAID, 2014b). Bringing new ideas in from the outside is described by some as necessary in order to solve the operational challenges following the growing needs and scarce resources within the humanitarian system (Churruca Muguruza, 2015; Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; Skeels, 2020). The private sector is also said to provide more opportunities to experiment which "frees up the innovation process" (Searle, 2019:7), due to the general lack of regulations. Additionally, Fladvad Nielsen (2016) suggests that more actors entering the stage means moving towards a more horizontal, inclusive, less top-down and donor driven system. However, the implications of this shift is disputed. A few refer to the humanitarian principles and standards, and the risk of bringing in non-humanitarian actors who may not adhere to these (Betts et al., 2012; Skeels, 2020). The light regulations may be at the expense of the protection of subjects of innovations (Searle, 2019). The private enterprises' underlying motivations for innovating is also argued to risk being incompatible with those of humanitarians, as for instance start up companies' own business viability are prioritized over beneficiaries' interests (Ibid.). An additional challenge is that many innovations in terms of novel technologies or services tend to not be sustained and rarely survive post the pilot phase (Fladvad Nielsen, 2016).

4.8 Challenges to HI

When scanning the two types of literature, three central challenges to HI could be identified: top-down and Northern biased approach to HI; experimentation and ethical concerns, and; lack of effective feedback mechanisms. Lastly, emerging challenges with localizing HI will also be presented.

4.8.1 Northern biased & top-down approach to HI

Scientific literature

One of the most frequently mentioned challenges regards the dominant approach to HI and its tendency to be Northern biased and predominantly focused on external donor solutions applied to the field (Jagtap & Larsson, 2018). It has been found that most innovation initiatives rarely include direct contact with end-users (Sheather et al., 2016) and ignore existing local capacities

(Kent, 2012). Jagtap & Larsson (2018) further argue that remotely designed solutions implemented in a project format within a context are more likely to fail after the actors responsible for the design and implementation process have left.

As research on the topic is growing, literature shows an interest in shifting the focus from using innovation to foster organizational improvements to instead encourage end-users or beneficiaries to innovate (Bloom & Faulkner, 2016). Many agree that the innovation process should not only involve, but also be driven by, end-users and affected communities (Sheather et al., 2016). In line with this, Bloom & Faulkner (2016) argue that an organization's ability to involve end-users in the decision-making and design process is what determines whether the outcomes of an initiative will be positive or negative. The most commonly raised solutions to tackle this issue, is that innovation processes should have a good representation of actors (Scott-Smith, 2016), be participatory and take into account power dynamics among involved actors (Sheather et al., 2016). As concluded by Jagtap & Larsson (2018), there is a need to better understand the role of beneficiaries in the innovation design process. That includes exploring “whether the products are designed for them, by them, or with them” (Ibid.:2658).

Gray literature

Many challenges raised within the gray literature could also be ascribed to the overall structure of the humanitarian system. For instance, humanitarian actors often operate in high-pressure and dangerous contexts (Ramalingam et al., 2009), characterized by complexity and uncertainty (UKAID, 2014a). The consequent time and resource shortages are believed to hinder humanitarian actors from developing and testing new ideas (Ramalingam et al., 2009), thus inhibiting HI (UKAID, 2014b). In addition, it is noted that there is a tendency of the system to want to preserve the status quo, which slows down innovation (Ramalingam et al., 2009). Another inhibiting factor is argued to be the system’s financial structure, in which large donor organizations are perceived as “key players” (UKAID, 2014a:2). This structure is described as lacking flexibility (Betts & Bloom, 2014), agility (Sutton et al., 2018) and having a short-term focus (UKAID, 2014a), with lack of consistent investment in innovation (Sutton et al., 2018) and funding models which are: ”largely designed for delivery and not for innovation” (UKAID, 2014a:35). The gray literature also emphasizes the need for “demand-driven solutions to context-specific needs” (Churruca Muguruza, 2015:20) and the need to reallocate innovation capacities from HQs to local levels, allowing end-users to have greater influence on innovation processes (Churruca Muguruza, 2015).

4.8.2 Experimentation & risks

Scientific literature

Another frequently mentioned challenge concerns experimentation and its subsequent risks. Experimentation is described as an inherent feature of innovation as it normally contains a testing phase before a project or product is accepted and implemented (Sandvik et al., 2017). Researchers argue that experimentation comes with a high risk of failing (Madianou, 2019). Despite this notion, Sandvik et al. (2017) state that the experimental elements of innovation and the risks related to failure are not fully recognized within the humanitarian system. It is for instance stated that the vast majority of research on the subject lives up to a “pro-innovation bias” (Haavisto & Kovács, 2015:143), as research articles exploring potential consequences of innovation only made up 0.2%-0.5% of the total amount of articles on the subject in 2015 (Ibid.). While concerns are raised about experimentation jeopardizing the well-being of the subjects involved (Sandvik et al., 2017), much research still encourages HOs to become more open to taking risks and adopting the business sector mindset of *failing fast*, as this is believed to foster organizational improvement (Madianou, 2019; Sandvik et al., 2017).

The effects of experimentation within the system are said to be hard to predict as it will vary depending on the context and actors involved and/or affected (Sandvik et al., 2017). Nonetheless, Sheather et al. (2016) list three factors that, if not considered, can increase the risk of causing harm. These are: not taking varying contextual factors and possible impacts of the innovation on the context into account; not fully involving end-users or those expected to be impacted by the end result of the innovation, and; not paying enough attention to solutions created within the local context or by local communities. In conclusion, it is emphasized that “parachuting innovations into complex environments without working collaboratively with affected individuals and populations can be perceived as patronizing, undermine trust, and result in failure” (Sheather et al., 2016:2), and that HI therefore must be exercised with respect for the ones that are ‘experimented’ on.

Gray literature

Ethical concerns with experimentation and the risk of causing harm or failing also occur in the gray literature (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Kirshbaum & Gonsalves, 2019). It is argued that 90-95 percent of all innovations within any sector will fail (Kirshbaum & Gonsalves, 2019), and this risk appears to be well-recognized among authors (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Kirshbaum & Gonsalves, 2019). While seen as vital for innovation, experimentation within the system is believed to bring risks to affected vulnerable populations and potentially cause human suffering (Betts & Bloom, 2013; Kirshbaum & Gonsalves, 2019). The humanitarian system is repeatedly described as risk averse (Betts & Bloom, 2014; UKAID, 2014b), a trait that by some is viewed as hindering innovation which requires risk tolerance (McClure & Gray, 2015). However, this viewpoint has received much critique, largely focused on the unequal distribution of both power and risk that comes with an increased risk tolerance. It is recognized that innovations need to be tested at field-level prior to implementation (Searle, 2017), and the most common suggestion for how to address the subsequent issues of risk, is better inclusion of local actors and communities in innovation processes and in assessments of any innovation introduced (Searle, 2019), and that affected communities themselves should lead HI processes “as only they can determine what risks are worth taking” (Kirshbaum & Gonsalves, 2019:46).

4.8.3 Lack of feedback mechanisms

Gray literature

Another concern raised by many is that HOs and donors often lack direct feedback mechanisms from affected communities in order to measure the impact of an innovation and to make improvements (Betts & Bloom, 2013; Betts & Bloom, 2014; Fladvad Nielsen, 2016), despite it being argued that amplifying voices of communities and absorbing it into organizational decision making is critical in creating effective feedback loops for innovations (McClure & Gray, 2015). According to Searle (2019), end-users feedback is often underacknowledged, whereas responders' preferences are prioritized. As a consequence, the influence of local communities is argued to be reduced (Fladvad Nielsen, 2016). Scriven (2016) makes the case that the humanitarian system will not make real improvements in supporting local communities unless meaningful and supportive feedback channels are created, where innovations from the ground can be directly transferred and integrated into the practices of HOs.

4.8.4 Challenges with localizing HI

Gray literature

Most of the above identified challenges to HI necessitates better and more inclusion of local actors, corresponding with the localization agenda. A few challenges with enhancing inclusion of local actors emerged within the gray body of literature. Firstly, how to include and engage local actors is found to be difficult in practice (UKAID, 2014b) as this requires fundamental changes in the current structure and challenging the existing power hierarchies, which can be met with resistance and lack of incentives (Ramalingam et al., 2009; Wall & Hedlund, 2016). Another critical challenge is to acknowledge already existing local innovative practices and outcomes, as this is already occurring although not getting enough recognition (Wall & Hedlund, 2016; Betts et al, 2012). Tied to this is the lack of understanding and documentation of how local innovation occurs and can be facilitated (Betts & Bloom, 2013). This lack of visibility can be further exacerbated as sometimes international actors take credit for innovations that are local in origin (van Brabant & Patel, 2018).

5. The Case of the Movement: Interview results

This section presents the case study results and is structured as follows: Firstly, perceptions of HI followed by understanding of localized HI will be presented. Thereafter, answers regarding innovation management within the Movement, as well as partnerships around HI, will be presented.

5.1 Familiarity with and need for HI

All 11 respondents found HI to be a familiar or a somewhat familiar concept. It was described by two PNS respondents as a relative term, as what is considered innovative in one organization may in another be perceived as rather basic or standardized. It was further stressed that it is difficult to determine what is innovative or not, as there is no blueprint or certificate. Three PNS respondents found HI to be a quite fluffy term and somewhat of a buzzword. However, most respondents agreed that HI is needed in order to adapt to growing complexities, needs and uncertainties. One even argued that: "there is no other way to do it", as innovating is essential for remaining relevant as a humanitarian actor. A second respondent said: "If we do not adapt, if we do not look for options, we will not be able to meet the needs of people, and that is the most important and why we exist", and a third argued that: "[The humanitarian system] has to continuously innovate to be able to adapt, otherwise it is just going to die".

One respondent agreed that HI is needed and emphasized that hazards are becoming more exhaustive. This was echoed by a NS respondent who described growing and changing vulnerabilities and the need to evolve accordingly. It was also argued that innovation is needed to allocate resources more efficiently, to reduce organizational and institutional burdens. One IFRC respondent said that the size of the Movement means it must be quick to adapt, but found this challenging due to the intrinsic complexities of an organization of that size. The CADRIM respondent added that differences in local contexts requires an ability to innovate as international partners.

One PNS respondent was less certain about the actual need for HI and argued that saving lives and reducing suffering are, and should remain, priority. This was described as the "real challenges", whereas innovation was seen as secondary. While an uncertainty regarding whether HI should be something the PNS should prioritize was raised, it was added that what is needed could perhaps in fact be called innovation, in the sense of "thinking smarter" to work more efficiently to address the existing challenges and meet basic needs.

Different understandings of HI were described to not only exist within the humanitarian system at large, but also within the Movement. According to one NS respondent, HI is about adaptation, improvement and solutions to challenges or issues, but it was stressed that they have not worked with HI as a concept explicitly within their NS. Another NS respondent reasoned that innovation may be about introducing new things in order to make the job easier for responders, such as via technological innovations facilitating data collection. One PNS respondent stated that HI has not been an explicit focus of their own programming. Another PNS respondent said that innovations in the humanitarian system tend to be byproducts of the private sector, in which primarily technological innovation have increased over the last decade. One commonly mentioned example was the use of drones in emergency response to collect data where physical access has been restricted. Drones were described by two respondents as an innovation that has been used extensively and which has revolutionized communication with, and engagement of, donors and populations during disaster events. One respondent added that the word "innovation" sometimes has been received with caution due to its strong high tech-connotations.

Two IFRC respondents stated that innovation is a permanent effort within the Movement, via for instance a dedicated innovation team at the IFRC and by identifying existing innovative practices in the field. Innovation was described as part of the Movement's culture in terms of always pushing the boundaries to "go beyond" and make sure that the job gets done. Moreover, the CADRIM respondent found HI to have been reintroduced in one of the Movement's key strategies "Strategy 2030". Two NS respondents and one PNS respondent pointed out that the Movement has long had a vision of, and desire to, integrate HI both strategically and operationally. However, two of these respondents argued that despite this ambition, there is a gap between theory and practice. This was discussed as potentially being due to lack of capacity, funding, and mandates, and a slow trickle-down from strategic level to local NSs.

Respondents from both PNSs and NSs explained that more HI has emerged in the last year triggered by the current Covid-19 pandemic, as for instance travel restrictions have generated a need to "localize support". Two PNS respondents said that they have had to rethink how capacity assessments and data collection can be done remotely, and a NS respondent argued that they have been forced to rethink how to reach their goals with different strategies, for instance through the development of a disaster preparedness app replacing preparedness sensitization at field level.

5.2 Understandings of localized HI

The views varied on if and how the concepts of innovation and localization interrelate. One IFRC respondent argued that "there is nothing innovative in the concept of localization itself", but innovation rather comes in program approaches, such as through the implementation of innovative participatory and community-based approaches. It was further argued that although within the current thinking on localization "innovation is not the most common or familiar term", there is "room for using an 'innovative hat' when approaching and looking at the issue of localization". A second IFRC respondent stated that the concepts are intrinsically related and that they both should be embedded as part of everyday practice. It was stated that while there are some global agreements aiming to set common principles and goals and align ways of working, operationalizing this is difficult due to the many interests and agendas involved. Similarly, a NS respondent viewed the concepts as deeply connected, stating that:

> Innovation at the local level is organically established or created. Sometimes, it comes from the local practice, because local people know their context, vulnerabilities and capacities more than anything or anyone. So [...] in that sense, I think that localization and innovation are two sides of one thing.

A second NS respondent argued that the localization agenda is focused on local innovation in terms of "working with the local and national organizations to develop innovative solutions to locally defined problems".

One PNS respondent believed that local innovation entails "new ideas or new ways of doing things that emerge from the local, sort of super, super local level, the community level or the branch level of the NS". It was stressed that local innovation should be a priority and tailored to local needs. Another respondent defined it as "a community owning the innovation, and living it and breathing it [...] Innovations should be owned, designed and worked for and with the community it aims to serve". According to this respondent, an innovation is not local if it is run by a PNS. For a third respondent, local innovation is something that can easily be managed, maintained and replicated by local actors and which does not conflict with their cultural values or views of management. According to the fourth respondent, the word "local" in the term "local innovation" is simply a matter of geography, whereas "innovation" refers to "different ways of doing things that [have] some positive or added value". This respondent also believed local innovation to be poorly resourced and coordinated, and less connected to international networks. Lastly, one respondent said that there already exist numerous examples of local innovation, but that there needs to be a power shift in order for these to be acknowledged. According to one IFRC respondent, local innovation is about acknowledging local actors' capacities and expertise. It was further argued that any new practice should be well connected to ways of working at the communities to ensure sustainability after project deadlines have passed and supporting external functions have left:

> Of course we can support them with technology, with some innovation, that's always useful. But, we need to understand how things work for them, because if not [...] the next question is the sustainability of all these different efforts. How do we sustain?

For two NS respondents, local innovation entails "working with local and national actors to come up with solutions […] to their locally identified problems" and "innovation or innovative ideas or practices that work well locally, that are tailored and that are able to be edited and adapted to local contexts". For a third, local innovation means a careful scan of the environment and the mandates as an organization, and to "come up with strategies and ideas that help us get to the impact we need in a unique way, but with a sense of purpose to the communities that we serve".

One PNS respondent argued that innovation within the Movement most often serves local populations and affected communities. A NS respondent agreed that innovative solutions are about making life better for the beneficiaries. A second PNS respondent laughed while suggesting that the biggest beneficiary of innovations is likely the person holding the "innovation position", and continued by critiquing the top-down approach to HI, questioning whether western-based NSs really are the ones coming up with the best innovative solutions. Some top-down innovation was described as potentially useful, yet at times too complex for local NS actors to manage. A NS respondent believed that innovation within the Movement best serves DRM staff, in terms of making their jobs easier. It was also believed to serve volunteers of NSs.

5.2.1 Who is considered "local"?

Although a majority stated that there are varied understandings of who local actors are, there appeared to be a fairly shared view among the PNS respondents. Three argued that to a PNS and to the Movement, NSs are considered local actors. However, two stressed that there are varying degrees of "local" within each NS. One described how each NS is structured in branches and has a number of "sub-regional, more local organizations", where the NS's HQ is often located in larger cities. This respondent therefore emphasized the need to support not only HQs, but also regional and local NS branches. The following quote suggests that a discussion of who is considered "local" is crucial when talking about supporting local partners: "If you only strengthen the [NS] HQs, and we have done that many times, you have a really strong HQ that maybe cannot reach all corners of the country".

Additionally, one respondent argued that NSs are simultaneously local and national, as they are coordinated nationally, but local in terms of where their human and material resources are. Volunteers were also described as having a dual role of being local actors as community members while also being Movement actors. The third respondent emphasized that it is difficult to agree on one understanding, but argued that people living in communities close to disaster settings are the "real" local actors. The fourth respondent suggested that anyone passionate about their community is a local actor.

Both IFRC respondents agreed that there are different interpretations of who local actors are, but both found local communities, authorities and organizations to be included in the term. According to one respondent, frontline responders, local NGOs, local and national governments, private foundations, academic institutions and other civil society actors, are all local actors. In addition, it was argued that these actors are the ones "sustaining" efforts once international partners have left as they belong to and have a long-term presence in their communities. The second respondent argued that all community members are local, and that NSs therefore are local actors in their territories. Similar to the previous answers, one NS respondent viewed local actors as involving local communities, i.e. the persons whose risk they are seeking to reduce, as well as other entities that perform functions locally. Two respondents stated that governmental agencies should be viewed as local actors as NSs are auxiliary to the state. Another NS respondent assumed that it would be most common for NSs to refer to local communities when talking about local actors, as the level of involvement of governments differ. In addition, one respondent mentioned private organizations and corporations as potentially local actors.

5.3 Innovation management within the Movement

5.3.1 Reactive versus proactive innovation

The PNS respondents had varied opinions on whether innovation happens organically or needs to be facilitated. A distinction emerged on innovation as something proactive or reactive, which was apparent in the way respondents referred to HI's role in various phases of DRM, such as proactively facilitated during preparedness work, or reactively and organically emerging during crisis response. For instance, one PNS respondent was convinced that innovation happens organically after having observed innovation as something mainly occurring during disaster response. This respondent stated that "it would be very unusual to see the seeds or kernels of innovation initiating in the preparedness phase". It was further argued to be difficult to plan for innovation and that "when you are trying to be innovative, that is when you are not". Another PNS respondent stated that while good innovations do happen organically, some level of facilitation is needed. It was further argued that in order to move away from maintaining the status quo and for innovation to happen, a problem needs to reach a certain threshold. In line with this, an IFRC respondent suggested that innovation sometimes happens organically and sometimes is facilitated. Similar answers were found among the NS respondents. One respondent argued that innovation definitely needs to be facilitated, as the continuation of everyday practices of the organization happens organically, whereas doing things differently takes convincing, and therefore has to be purposefully pursued. Another argued that it depends on contextual factors and stated that "I have experienced both and seen wonderful results from both, and would not say that one is better than the other".

One NS respondent stressed that within the Movement there is currently an "anticipatory boom" with a focus on preparedness, but that innovative solutions also emerge during disaster response as time pressure and unexpected difficulties in the field can work as triggers. This was exemplified with local communities innovating with plastics to build houses as they "need to live somewhere and cannot wait until somebody will come and sort it out". Another NS respondent emphasized HI's role in disaster preparedness in terms of new data collection and information gathering methods as well improvements of hazard tracking, and two NS respondents emphasized innovation within disaster recovery and how it can help communities to "bounce forward" instead of only going back to how things were pre-disaster. One of these also emphasized how creativity and local innovative capacity is particularly evident during this phase. The four NS representatives agreed that all phases of DRM, e.g. preparedness, response and recovery, need innovation.

5.3.2 The innovation process

One PNS respondent stated that innovation processes are often top-down and largely start with private companies working on innovative solutions who later collaborate with PNSs, who then try to "roll out or test those" with relevant NSs. One issue raised with this top-down process was that involved actors sometimes do not get back to the communities in which an innovation has been tested to receive feedback. Another PNS respondent hoped that the innovation process is consultative in order to ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the problem. An IFRC respondent specified that their work around innovation mostly starts with a discussion paper drafted by the department manager influencing priorities. In this paper, key issues that the department should be looking for or advocate are defined, then discussed and analyzed by a team of employees with different expertise and backgrounds. The generated ideas are thus described as mixed and harnessed from a combination of perspectives. One PNS respondent more specifically described their approach to innovation, which is based on design thinking and normally consists of scoping and identifying a problem, unpicking it and creating a clear problem statement, then discovering and researching that problem through for instance interviews with people from outside the organization. Later, multiple ideas to address the problem are tested and piloted and if the testing is successful, the final solution is scaled up. The respondent emphasized that an innovation process "is not rocket science, it is a creative process", but since it is a complex and nonlinear process, people with creative mindsets are needed.

There seemed to be no unanimous answer among the respondents on who is typically involved in problem identification activities within the Movement. According to one PNS respondent, problem identification can happen at multiple levels and who is involved will depend on the scale of the problem, as some problems, such as delivering goods to beneficiaries in response operations, are "localized", and others, such as coordination of shared resources, are on a regional or global level. Another PNS respondent found donors to be key actors, as innovation necessitates funding. According to a third PNS respondent, problems are more complicated and difficult to find than one could think. Within the PNS of this respondent, a problem identification process is said to start with searching for and identifying a potential problem which is then presented and discussed with the executive leadership team, who either proceed working with the identified problem or reject it, in which case new problems are to be searched for. This process was however critiqued by the respondent who stated that "we spend more time thinking about things than actually learning by doing". One IFRC respondent argued that problems can be identified in many ways, although most of the time, NSs are part of this. However, as NSs sometimes receive complementary support from IFRC or PNSs, these actors may also be part of identifying existing problems within the NS context and suggesting solutions based on their experiences.

One NS respondent explained that all project designs, issues and potential solutions, are developed at the NS's HQ, and later rolled out and implemented to the branches. The respondent was unaware of the opposite flow happening, that is, ideas or innovative solutions starting at NS branch level and then being adopted by the NS HQ. However, it was noted that: "that does not mean that it should not happen. Ideally I would love to see ideas come from the ground up, but that has not been the experience."

The answers also varied greatly regarding who is typically involved when implementing innovations. According to a PNS respondent, the "internationals talk about it more, but the local responders are usually likely the ones that are stimulating and implementing innovation". The CADRIM respondent however stated that it is in their mandate to assist NSs in implementing programs and projects within their regions. According to one NS respondent, all program designs are developed at the NS's HQ and then rolled out and implemented through the NS branches. Similarly, another respondent described that if the Movement has a larger intervention ongoing, the NS HQs are the ones to spearhead that. However, if a NS branch is located in the area of implementation, this branch would be involved, along with relevant government agencies.

5.3.3 Enablers of localized HI

One frequently mentioned unit within the Movement described as dedicated specifically to innovation was the Solferino Academy. While this unit was described as a good first step in addressing facilitation of HI within the Movement, one PNS respondent argued that issues may arise if such a centralized unit is disconnected from the practical experiences of people on the ground who better understand which problems are the most pressing. Echoing this was another PNS respondent, who stated that identifying problems and creating solutions without involving the end-users apart from in the implementation, does not work. Moreover, it was argued by one NS respondent that there is a need for greater involvement of local actors throughout the entire innovation process. In order to enable or facilitate this, a few key factors emerged from the interviews, namely: enabling environment; leadership; investment and funding, and; feedback mechanisms and monitoring.

Enabling environment, culture and resources

One PNS representative argued that the Movement can and should strive to facilitate innovation. Another respondent argued that a supporting environment in which new ideas can grow is needed for innovations to scale. This supporting environment could ensure that involved actors have the right resources, in terms of funding and time, to innovate, as innovating is "a luxury" that requires additional resources. Two respondents argued that although organizations strategically may commit to support innovation and creativity, time is rarely allocated in practice. In line with this, an IFRC respondent viewed it as vital to provide space, opportunity and resources for people to "go outside the box" and to think beyond the existing routines and be creative. It was further argued that innovations happen when involved actors are inspired and continuously challenged to be creative, although this is not always possible due to heavy workloads and tight deadlines. One suggestion was to find space outside of regular meetings for brainstorming sessions, where colleagues with multiple backgrounds could explore and discuss issues with one another to increase joint learning and increase incentives to be creative. For the CADRIM respondent, the essence of the Movement champions innovation and always goes an extra mile to ensure that the work is neutral, inclusive and relevant. These measures are not only taken on a community level, there is also great support and backup from the strategic levels of the Movement.

In order to foster local innovation, one PNS respondent argued that there needs to be an openness to doing things differently. Working at a large INGO means working in a cross-cultural setting where many different routes are taken to reach the same goal. The respondent emphasized that all routes must be recognized and valued equally and argued that the Movement needs to reflect more on the power dynamics within the system. Echoing this is a respondent who argued that the key to fostering local innovation is to give up power and listen to the needs of the people:

> If you are really driven by people, communities, you have to listen. And it is not a one size fits all, you cannot replicate. Every community and every local area is a microcosm of different needs. For it to be successful, it has to be grassroot led, and that is a big challenge.

One NS respondent added that apart from access to funding, an environment where people feel free to create innovative ideas is needed. This "fertilized environment" could be created by having open spaces for development within organizations, without bias or putting issues into predetermined boxes. And linked to this is funding, to ensure that ideas that are created are feasible and sustainable and that they can grow and be implemented.

Funding

Two NS respondents emphasized the importance of funding to foster local innovation. One stated that "coming up with new ideas is great, but if you do not have the funding to implement that idea, the idea will be left on the shelf". The other raised two challenges regarding innovation and funding. First, there are sometimes donor requirements that have different priorities than NSs. For instance, if the donor of a project does not prioritize involving local actors throughout the innovation process, it will not be possible for the NS to drive that agenda in the particular project. Second, funding is often delivered through projects with a set time frame, meaning that monitoring and evaluation rarely is conducted beyond the scope of the project, in turn reducing the sustainability.

While funding was argued to be essential for innovation as "out of the box thinking requires money", one PNS representative stated that there is a lack of it. This, despite that another PNS respondent argued that donors are interested in finding and investing in "something that is cool and new". The current back donor funding structure, with earmarked funding was mentioned by another PNS respondent as discouraging innovation as it is hard to deviate from long-term programming plans once already funded. Another respondent added that a more flexible funding model could potentially lead to more innovation. What could be done better is to encourage local partners to share ideas for which funding could be explicitly sought after. One PNS respondent argued that another issue is that donors often want to fund projects and predetermined solutions rather than starting from the other end, with the identification of real humanitarian issues. The issue of donor obligations was identified as a potential factor discouraging localized HI. This, as innovative, out of the box-ideas often come with a certain level of risk and may therefore be less interesting for donors. Additionally, handing over control to local actors also means handing over money, which many view as "risky". Hence, there is a need to find a balance between the localization agenda and the accountability to donors.

Leadership

Having a leadership that is open to innovation was raised by one NS respondent as a critical component of successful innovation. The leadership should enable and foster new ideas and solutions so as to create a fertile ground for innovation within the organization, because "if a team is met with closed doors when it comes to discussing new ideas and strategies, the team is instead going to stop producing ideas". It should also be open to constructive criticism that can challenge the team to make greater improvements.

Feedback & monitoring

Monitoring was argued by one NS respondent to be key. This respondent argued that "innovative ideas are sometimes developed and handed over to the National Societies without any long term monitoring and evaluation of the progress and no follow-up to see if there is a need for alterations". Similarly, a PNS respondent argued that there is a lack of measures to ensure that there are local setups and structures within communities to sustain efforts after international partners have left, as what is built up is said to often collapse after project deadlines have ended.

5.4 Partnerships

5.4.1 Facilitating localized HI as a partner

The views differed among the PNS respondents regarding how they currently support NSs in their innovation processes. One respondent said that they are supportive in many different ways, whereas two other respondents argued that they are not supporting local innovation to a great extent as, from their perspectives and positions, there appears to be a focus on more foundational and conventional work when it comes to partnership practices, aiming to enhance NSs disaster preparedness or response capacity. As one respondent phrased it: "all the attention is diverted to fixing those foundational pieces and there is very little room left thinking outside the box". Another explanation for why current support was described as relatively low was that it is difficult to specify a concrete approach towards innovation in concept notes and proposals.

One respondent problematized PNSs driving innovation in their international operations, as this should be run by the local NS and be community-led. The international partners' role should rather be capacity building and financial support. A similar issue brought up relates to the local communities' priorities, wants and needs regarding new technologies and externally brought in innovations. This respondent argued that sometimes partners try to bring in new ideas and prioritize these over addressing existing, fundamental local needs such as shelter. A PNS respondent envisioned more drastic changes ahead in which partnerships will be completely rethought and that "there's going to be a time when we question our role and how we support communities".

The two IFRC respondents emphasized the size of the Movement and how this means a great variation of practices as well as challenges to innovation, due to its complexity and operational mindset. One PNS respondent believed that the wide reach of the Movement is beneficial for innovation in theory, but the question of whether the organization utilizes it in an efficient way was raised. According to the respondent, there tends to be a general lack of coordination, which was described as a potential challenge when it comes to coordinating innovations as well. The IFRC respondents described their roles to be about collecting learnings and ideas, sharing information, resources and updates within the wider Movement. Knowledge and experience sharing among NSs was found to be valuable and IFRC's role is to facilitate such an exchange and not to be "an operationality". The NSs were described as being not only members of the Movement, but the "reason for [IFRC's] existence". It was further described how the NSs' realities must be at the center, as they are ones "doing the work". Moreover, identifying existing local solutions and investing in developing and expanding those was argued to be key. The respondent argued that such investments must be "as close as possible to the ones that are facing the challenges". The role of the IFRC was further described as being a representative of the NSs voices. However, due to the vastness with 192 NSs, "what works for one does not necessarily work for all". Therefore, it was described that they:

> Need to have a relationship with our members that allows us to influence, guide and support [...] and to work for common solutions. We cannot impose, we cannot say 'from now on you will all use this in this way'. That is a challenging environment and we deal with complex situations, and sometimes we need to deal with complex solutions.

The CADRIM respondent argued that they provide support in various ways, such as by adapting materials, courses and training to the local context. It was stressed how externally developed materials and tools are translated and adapted to local contexts. Listening to the NSs' perspectives was described as essential, as a lack of contextual awareness risks generating harm instead of doing good. Participatory and interactive approaches to learning were also emphasized as part of the center's approach. The respondent also said that each project is geared towards including innovation and moreover explained that the community-based approach used helps keep innovative ideas at the forefront. Similarly, a NS respondent found that Movement-wide tools and approaches can be localized and contextualized by NSs, and positively stated that: "I believe the movement has successfully presented tools in a way that allows local NSs to be able to edit and contextualize, which is good and encouraged."

5.4.2 Receiving support for enhanced innovative capacity

From the NS perspective, all four found that their local innovative capacity is being supported by partners and donors, or that there is some effort and extent of this happening. However, two respondents emphasized the need for more support. One explained it as: "they support us and we are the implementer", and mentioned technical and financial support coming from partners. Another described how innovation sometimes is explicit in the aims and requirements from partners and donors. The same respondent acknowledged an interest from partners to expand both internally and externally identified and developed innovations. Why this has not been done sufficiently was elaborated on as potentially being due to donors lacking awareness of the existing local innovations. A NS respondent mentioned that there exist many innovative practices at local level with a lot of potential that go unnoticed. Hence, fostering local innovation should focus on identifying and raising awareness about existing practices and knowledge, and to document it for learning.

Another NS respondent, who found support only partially happening, elaborated on how there may have been some efforts that could be called innovative, such as forecast-based financing and community based disaster risk reduction initiatives, but not much for explicitly recognizing local innovation capacity. Innovations were described by the respondents as normally coming from the IFRC, as their primary supporting partner. Once “gifted” with a new innovation and trained accordingly, the NS was then described as able to cascade and scale this to their branches and communities. However, an exchange and an opposite flow was also argued to exist by one respondent, stating that local innovations also sometimes are shared with the IFRC.

From the NS perspective, one key area for partners to improve their support emerged, namely, ensuring more and earlier involvement of and consultation with local actors, for instance in the early planning and ideation phase. One respondent explained that it is quite common that a NS will be informed about being selected for a project once it has already been developed by the IFRC or another Movement entity. The respondent argued that before any project document is even written, partners should reach out and ask whether there are any local innovations or existing practices that could be utilized. Essentially, what was called for was “greater involvement of local [actors], rather than planning and then informing afterwards”. Lastly, it was argued that donors must understand that each NS has unique strengths and weaknesses and that support is critical but must be tailored accordingly, as they said that:

> Part of the solution is understanding that we cannot do it alone, we need our partners and stakeholders and communities [...] on this journey with us in order to deliver and to have the impact that we desire.

5.4.3 Partnership with actors outside the Movement

A few examples of partners outside of the Movement regarding innovation emerged. Three PNS respondents mentioned private sector partnership and one stressed that there have been growing encounters over the last years. Many respondents were positive towards this trend and one stated how this was something they as a PNS wish to do more consistently. One respondent argued that more consistent cross-sector engagement would be beneficial for an innovation agenda as this would bring new ideas and another argued that cooperating with the private sector for HI is critical. It was stressed by many respondents that governments and local authorities are important partners as the NSs plays an auxiliary role. One IFRC respondent also argued that it is the local government that has the primary responsibility of investing in local innovation. Other actors mentioned were academic institutions, NGOs and the Start Network.

5.4.4 Power imbalances

One PNS respondent described good partnerships as equal, consistent, equitable and having a culture in which open dialogue and freedom to test new and radical ideas are supported. However, power dynamics was seen as a potential hindrance by three PNS respondents. Breaking out of existing partnership dynamics was further described by one PNS respondent as challenging, as there is a tendency to want to remain status quo. In order to address this, regular reviews of partnerships was recommended, in addition to giving explicit attention towards identifying power imbalances and encouraging and facilitating local voices to be heard. While the Movement's principles are clear on the fact each NSs should be at the center of all operations and decision making, this was argued to not always be the case in reality.

According to one PNS respondent, the Movement is now more than ever recognizing the importance of local voices, including local innovation, in various international forums. Despite this, it was argued that there is still work to do when it comes to addressing power imbalances within the system. Another respondent exemplified that many times "experts from the developed world" can take up over 50-60% of meeting time, despite being a minority of the total number of participants. While each NS should have full autonomy and ownership, NSs dependency on partners for funding means that partners might influence the work and direction, reducing NS ownership in practice. The current practice was described as "less affluent NSs receiving funding from more affluent NSs". Another NS respondent argued that another issue is the tendency to rely too heavily on the IFRC and to "anticipate that we will be shown a map and be shown the direction on how to get there". The respondent argued that ownership is something that must be taken, captured in the following quote:

> We need to take ownership and realize that it starts locally before it can get globally, and that to make the changes we need to start internally and organize ourselves. You cannot just wait for the IFRC to say 'this is the solution'. We really need to look at ourselves and create a plan that gets us closer to realizing some of the goals that are set globally. We anticipate that we will be shown a map, and be shown the direction on how to get there.

One PNS respondent further argued that while there are naturally different understandings of what HI entails within and between NSs, as "it differs based on the needs and the culture of the organization", this can also be problematic in terms of end-goals not being aligned. How success is defined, and whether innovations are outcome-focused or output-focused, was argued to be critical questions to ask:

> Success for me is helping more people in crisis. My success factor is how many more people we help. Now, if your success factor is to do something with AI, you can lose your way, because your success factor is an output, not an outcome

The respondent stated that an end-goal for their PNS's "innovation hub" is that it should be phased out by having developed an overall innovative culture in which a dedicated innovation hub would be redundant. This was contrasted to other NSs, in which the end-goal of their innovation units is to always exist in order to continuously develop new products and ideas. The respondent stated that whether a NS has an innovation unit and an innovation agenda or not is an issue of budget and mandate, as more wealthy NSs can afford this and less affluent cannot. It was argued that this is an imbalance which must be addressed.

6. Discussion

6.1 The “what” and the “why” of localized HI

This subsection elaborates on the available knowledge and the perception of the concept of localized HI, as emerged from the research findings. The understings of localized HI will hereafter be referred to as the “what”, and the perception of, as well as the motivations for it, will be referred to as the “why”.

6.1.1 Terminological and conceptual ambiguity

The scoping study largely supported that there is a research gap around what localized HI entails, how it occurs and how it can be managed. However, it was evident that in the last few years there has emerged a growing body of gray literature on the topic, in which a number of similar concepts to localized HI appear, all emphasizing the role of local actors in innovation processes (see table 2).

This research has further shown that there appears to be a lack of a unified definition of and terminology around localized HI. Moreover, there appears to be an ambiguity around what the concept entails. For instance, HI emerged as a highly relative term, as evident through the differing answers regarding what could be considered innovative within the Movement, ranging from drones, process tools like the EVCA, to the creation or implementation of wider approaches. Betts and Bloom (2014) further suggested that there is a conceptual confusion in which *innovation*, which is an encompassing concept focused on implementation of context-specific and adapted solutions, is commonly seen as synonymous to *invention*. The emphasis on newness, novel technologies and innovation hubs found both within the literature and the case of the Movement supports a viewpoint that to great extent equates *innovation* with *invention*, confirming this conceptual confusion. This predominant focus on newness could perhaps be related to the concern raised in both literature and the case of already existing practices of localized HI largely going unnoticed or unrecognized. It may arguably also risk leading to a higher frequency of contextually irrelevant tech-based innovations being introduced by international actors (Fladvad Nielsen, 2016; Nelis et al., 2020; Searle, 2017), as was also mentioned as problematic by a few respondents. The views also differed on whether HI is something essential or something secondary and more of a luxury. The tendency to view HI as a luxury might stem from the above discussed technological bias and understanding of HI as externally introduced by international and private sector actors. This may also relate to the false value-laden dichotomy of the local and the international (Roepstorff, 2019), where international tends to be connoted with modernity and the local with the traditional. Although the findings show a trend of more consistently involving the private sector when it comes to HI, what implications this might have for localized HI is uncertain and goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

Interestingly, despite the identified terminological and conceptual ambiguity, as well as the relative newness of the research field and the lack of best practices and frameworks, a strong commitment and willingness to pursue localized HI emerged. This arguably has implications for managing localized HI as the findings suggested *mindsets* to be a key enabler (see figure 6). The following main motivations for why it is needed emerged: to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and the ability of the humanitarian system to adapt to growing complexities, and; normative drivers focusing on power imbalances.

6.1.2 Degrees of local

Another finding concerns the aspect of who is considered a local actor. Overall, the views were not unanimous as the findings from the case differed from the literature, as well as among the individual respondents. However, what role local actors can or should play in the innovation process emerged as critical issues both in the scoping study and case study. For instance, within the literature, 'the local' largely refers to end-users and/or aid beneficiaries, and some suggest that actors tied to INGOs, such as the Movement, are not to be considered 'local'. An emerging concern was the false dichotomy between the local and the international. While critical to acknowledge different operational and geographical levels of actors when talking about issues of power and resource distribution, these levels are not as clear cut as one might initially have expected. The overall findings showed that these levels often overlap or intersect, such as NSs being both national, regional and local in character and outreach, or local Movement volunteers being end-users or beneficiaries while simultaneously being local responders during disasters. In this sense, who is local appeared to be a highly relative term. This is arguably an important issue to consider when seeking to outline what localized HI entails and who innovations serve, as the literature largely found a disproportionate focus on benefiting aid workers and not beneficiaries, when in reality, aid workers and beneficiaries may be the same. Subsequently, the findings showed that it may be vital to broaden one's understanding and take a critical approach when defining 'the local' in accordance with Roepstorff (2019), as this presumably has implications for how to make sure power imbalances are addressed successfully.

6.1.3 Reconciling the concepts

Although a few authors in recent years have emphasized the need to combine the efforts of HI and localization in mutually beneficial manners, localized HI appeared to be a difficult concept to discuss and grasp. One possible explanation to this is that both localization and HI have been found to be ambiguous concepts, without unified definitions, understandings or practical guidelines for implementation. One issue that emerged when investigating localized HI is that it arguably can be addressed from multiple perspectives and angles. For instance, integrating localization in HI can be seen as a key enabler to create successful and contextually relevant innovations. Simultaneously, localized HI can be seen as an end-goal in itself. A third option is to see HI as an enabler of localization. There is arguably no right or wrong angle, instead, a holistic and unified approach to the topic has been called for in order to not overly simplify the inherent complexity of the concepts. The findings of this research showed that HI and localization are two emerging concepts within the humanitarian system, although the ideas are not new, as “humanitarians have always innovated” (Sandvik, 2017:1) and “localization is part of the [Movement's] DNA”.

The research findings however showed that there appears to be a relatively shared understanding of what localized HI should or do entail. Below, in figure 5, is an attempt to summarize and outline what is known about localized HI and how it is perceived within both the literature and by practitioners. By combining what is known about localized HI with some key traits of localization raised within the literature, an attempt was made to clarify what the concept can entail (see figure 5).

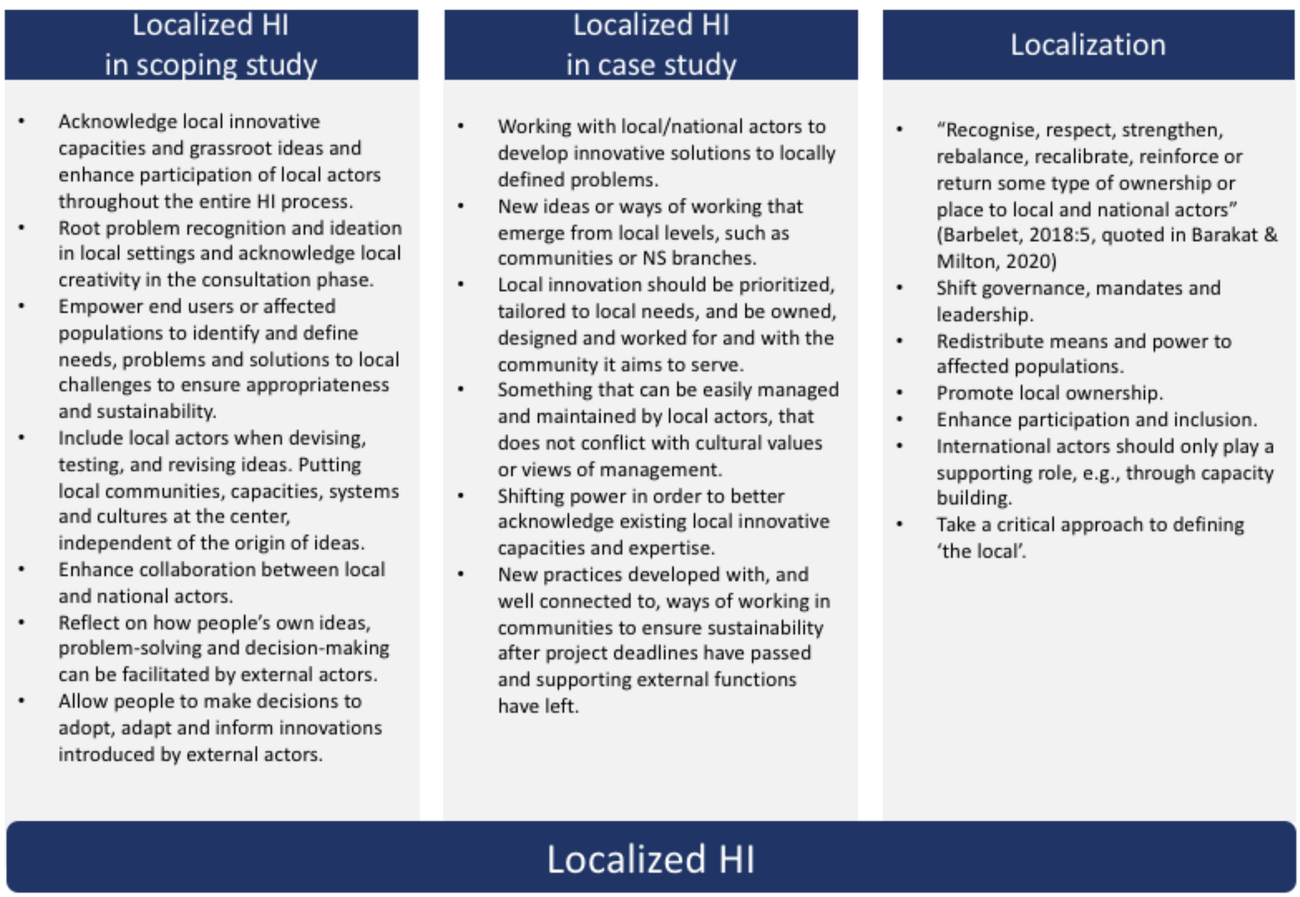

Figure 5: Summary of the “what” of localized HI as found in the scoping respectively case study.

Figure 5 suggests that while localized HI according to literature should focus on acknowledging local innovative capacities, inclusion of local actors in all parts of innovation processes and enhancing collaboration between various actors, the case as well as the literature on localization more clearly emphasize a focus on shifting power and mandates to local actors. This includes acknowledging innovative ideas and practices emerging from local levels. When attempting to outline what localized HI entails, these appear to be key complementary components. When attempting to outline what localized HI entails, these appear to be key complementary components.

6.2 The "how" of localized HI

Despite the terminological and conceptual ambiguity described above, the findings still showed that local HI does occur and can be managed. However, a key discovery emerging from the findings was that despite growing acknowledgement and awareness of localized HI, little has been done to manage it in practice. This subsection elaborates on the findings of how localized HI occurs and how it can be managed in terms of enablers and challenges.

6.2.1 How localized HI occurs: Organically or facilitated?

As evident in the result section, there was no unified understanding of how localized HI occurs. However, three general perspectives were found. The first perspective views local innovation as something happening organically, such as reactively during disaster response, when a problem reaches a certain threshold or when basic needs must be met despite lacking resources. Some respondents pointed towards the current Covid-19 pandemic as an example of such a trigger for local innovation. This view therefore emphasizes local innovation as nothing new, as it occurs regularly and naturally. The second perspective views local innovation as something that can, and should be facilitated, for instance in disaster preparedness or development initiatives. This view largely supports an approach that is proactive and suggests that localized HI can be managed in order to reach its full potential to adapt to growing challenges. A third perspective finds these to not be mutually exclusive but rather compatible, and the issue is more about identifying the complementary roles of these two perspectives. The rationale behind this is that organically occurring local innovation has largely been underacknowledged despite the already existing innovative capacity residing within local communities. However, localized HI has also been found to need various additional resources to flourish and to fulfill its true potential. This viewpoint is arguably more compatible with the realities of DRM, in which preparedness and response efforts cannot be divided as isolated phases, but are rather overlapping. It is therefore argued that the third perspective should be adopted for a future localized HI agenda that is dynamic and acknowledges the complex realities of the humanitarian system.

6.2.2 Managing localized HI: Enablers & challenges

While there was found to be a lack of guidelines and frameworks for localized HI, some general recurring phases appeared within a processes view of HI (see table 3). It was also stressed how a process view of innovation does not necessarily include nor exclude any actors, as the stages enable actors at various levels to participate. In this sense, the process view is compatible with both top-down as well as bottom-up ideas on innovation (Betts & Bloom, 2013). This arguably suggests that the innovation process is not inherently localized, but that it must rather be actively pursued and facilitated. As presented in the result section, a few enablers of and challenges with localizing HI emerged, as seen in figure 6. This shall not be seen as a complete list, and it is by no means argued that these are the only factors that play a role. However, the figure provides an overview of identified key factors to consider if seeking to enhance work in line with commitments to localized HI in practice.

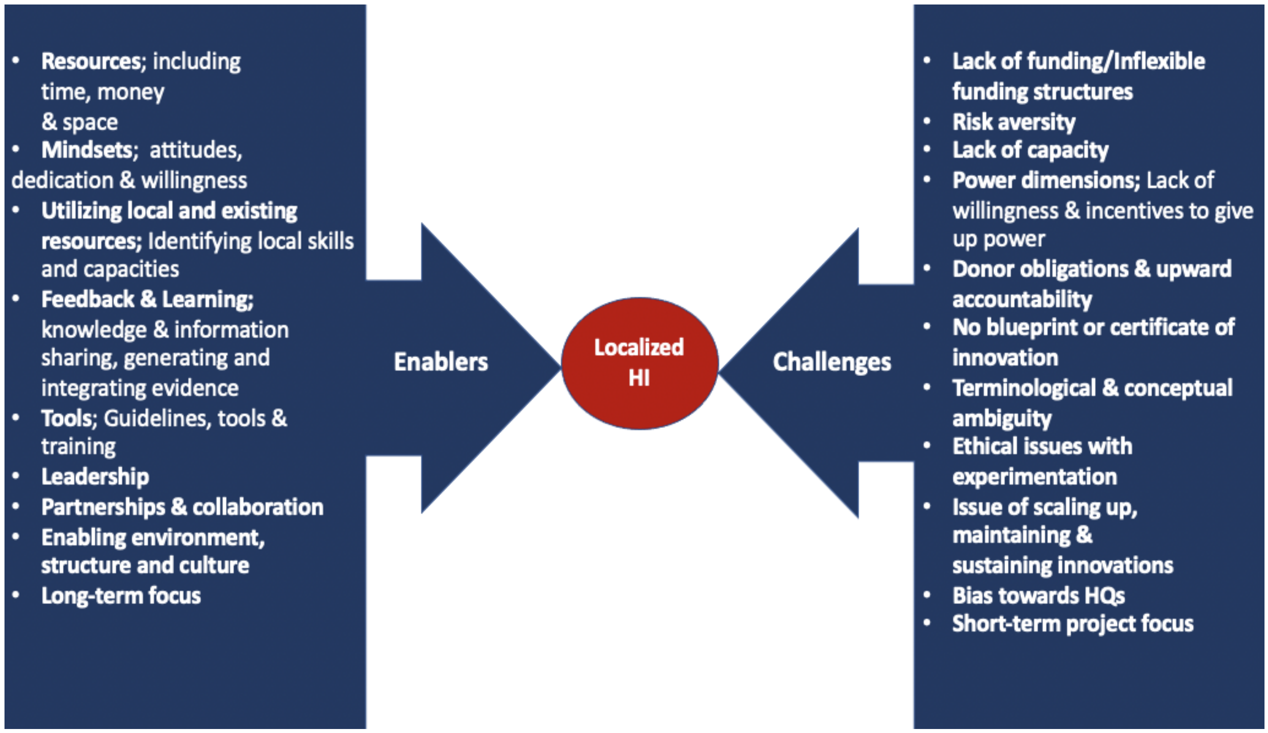

Figure 6: Summary of enablers and challenges for managing localized HI as emerging from the research findings.

It is suggested that to manage localized HI, attempts should be made to address the challenges and make sure that the enabling factors are in place. Interestingly, as seen in figure 6, many enablers correspond directly to the challenges. For instance, while funding is an enabler of localized HI, the inflexible funding structures of the humanitarian system and current lack of funding constitute challenges. Similarly, localized HI needs long-term dedication, whereas the current short-term project focus was viewed as challenging.

6.2.3 Partnerships and roles

The research findings suggested that there is a tendency to expect innovations to emerge from international partners or from the NS HQs. Another respondent representing a NS said that the opposite flow would be good, that is innovations emerging from more local levels, but that it had not been experienced. This was for example evident through the phrasings of one respondent describing "a slow trickle-down from strategic level to the NSs", which suggests a top-down view of HI. Others explained how the NS HQs tend to roll out innovations to local NS branches, suggesting it starting at higher and more centralized organizational levels.

It appeared from the findings that there are different degrees of inclusion and participation of local actors in HI processes, rather than it being a question of either/or. As one paper presented, the roles of beneficiaries in the innovation design process can differ and it is important to consider "whether the products are designed for them, by them, or with them" (Jagtap & Larsson, 2018:2658). Obrecht and Warner (2016) delineated between direct involvement of local actors and involvement through primary or secondary representation. The findings of this research found that the views on how and when to include local actors were quite scattered. There was a strong consensus that local actors should be at the forefront of HI. However, whether this meant that they should be driving and owning the process via direct involvement, or whether NS HQs could represent local communities, or the IFRC could represent the NSs, was less clear.

The calls for more and better inclusion in the early planning and ideation phases of innovation processes appeared to be stemming from this lack of shared view on how and when to engage local actors, in this case referring to NSs. Findings for both the literature and the case suggested that local actors tend to be on the receiving end of innovations or rather part of implementation once projects have already been designed and funding has been approved. "Inclusion" does in this sense need to include decision-making power. The findings therefore suggest that this should be explicitly discussed and documented within future partnerships in order to facilitate localized HI more efficiently, in a way that is built upon common understandings and aims. Ownership and decision-making power necessitates power shifts, and Scriven (2016) emphasized the need for HOs' to see power shifts as something of their concern. This mindset was evident in the case of the Movement, and a majority of respondents representing international partners were well aware of the dimension of power imbalances and stressed the need to address this, in line with commitments to the localization agenda.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore the concept of localized HI, in light of the research gap and lack of practical guidelines. An attempt to answer the research questions has been made through the scientific and gray scoping study and the case study of the Movement. Research question 1: “What is currently known about localized HI and how is it perceived?”, has above been referred to as the “what” and the “why” of localized HI. Research question 2: “How does localized HI occur and how can it be managed? What are the challenges and enablers?”, has been referred to as the “how” of localized HI.

The “what” and the “why”

This research finds a terminological and conceptual ambiguity around the concept of localized HI, arguably stemming from the inherent ambiguity and confusion tied to the two individual concepts ‘HI’ and ‘localization’, as well as to the lack of practical guidelines for localized HI. However, a few core traits emerged when seeking to outline what localized HI entails. This includes a thorough and consistent inclusion of local actors throughout the entire innovation process, acknowledging local innovative capacity, equitable partnerships, and local decision-making power and ownership, as visualized in figure 5. One of the key challenges to localized HI has been found to be a lack of knowledge or confusion over when and how to include local actors in innovation processes. While this appeared to be a vital part of enabling and facilitating localized HI, this research has also identified another challenge apparent in this discussion. That is, that there appears to be a disproportionate focus on enhancing involvement, inclusion and participation of local actors in innovation processes, rather than on reallocating the power and decision-making around these processes to local actors, which is more in line with the aims of the localization agenda. This research has suggested that more needs to be done to decentralize innovation capacity and reallocate decision-making from HQs to local levels. Yet, this research has also shown that it is as important to establish equal partnerships in which the capacities of all actors are acknowledged and utilized efficiently.

The “how”

Asking questions about when and how to include local actors, and whether local actors are involved directly or via representation, is arguably important in any attempt to manage localized HI within the frames of a partnership. Similarly, discussions about who is considered local should be explicit. The importance of clarifying who “the local” refers to becomes especially evident in the case of the Movement, as if not explicitly addressed there appears to be bias towards supporting NS HQs as primary local partners. As discussed above, the local has been found to be a relative concept as for instance, a NS HQ and the same NS’s local branches can be seen as different degrees of local.

Moreover, the findings showed diverse understandings of how localized HI occurs, that is whether it happens organically or needs to be facilitated. This is arguably a challenge, as working towards common objectives and aligning ways of getting there necessitates a shared understanding of how change happens. This, as it will likely dictate what resources are dedicated and which efforts are made. The diverse understandings of how localized HI happens, together with the ambiguous understandings of what the concept entails, may be one explanation to why progress has been slow.

Multiple other challenges as well as enablers to localizing HI emerged from this research, as can be seen in figure 6. It was found that enablers and challenges are evident at various levels, ranging from systemic to more minor or mundane. For instance, issues were found tied to the structure of the humanitarian system, such as inflexible funding models, while also residing with individual practitioners in terms of for example dedication. These challenges present a possible explanation for why localized HI may be making slow progress. Moreover, the current lack of feedback channels was found to be both a challenge in itself and may in addition have obscured other challenges and enablers as understood by local actors.

Lastly, the findings have confirmed the existence of what has been referred to as a "pro-innovation bias" (Haavisto & Kovács, 2015:143), as a majority of both practitioners and literature has primarily raised benefits with enhancing HI capacities. What has also been identified, is that localizing HI is frequently presented as a necessity for HI to reach its full potential in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, acceptance, and sustainability, as well as to address resource scarcity, power imbalances and inclusion within the humanitarian system at large. The findings also show that localizing HI is rarely criticized or problematized. If for instance looking at the findings regarding localization, one can see that questions around defining the local, existing power imbalances at local levels and the occasional need for support by international actors while ensuring ownership, are vital to consider. Not asking these questions means that the localized HI agenda will likely remain misdirected, scattered, vague and difficult to operationalize going forward.

Summarizing conclusion and recommendations for future research

To conclude, the findings strongly suggest that without a clear and shared understanding of *what* localized HI is and *why* it is needed, the *how* of localized HI will likely remain vague, obscured and undocumented. This does not mean however that it will not occur, as has been found in both the literature and the case. In light of the growing interest in this issue and the lack of common understandings and best practices, this research is arguably relevant and timely. Although we cannot draw generalizable conclusions beyond the scope of this research due to the limited dataset, the findings are believed to contribute to the broader and emerging discussion on localized HI within the humanitarian system. It is suggested for future research to further the attempt to investigate the concept. It is especially encouraged to investigate already existing examples of localized HI as this has repeatedly been found to be under acknowledged and lacking documentation. Additionally, it would be interesting to approach localized HI with a critical lens, for instance investigating values attached to 'the local' in the conceptualization of localized HI.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Excel sheet documenting the scoping study process including number of results per search string

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Scientific literature on Humanitarian Innovation							
2	Date of search	Search engine	Search words	Nr of articles	Code for search term	Comment	Nr of relevant articles to read abstract of	Nr of relevant articles to read
3	18/01-21	Scopus	"Humanitarian innovation"	15	A	Read titles	10	
4	18/01-21	Scopus	Humanitarian AND innovation	122	B	Read titles	41	
5	18/01-21	Scopus	Innovative AND Humanitarian	112	C	Read titles	29	
6			Total:	249			80	43
7								
8	Scientific literature on Localization							
9	Date of search	Search engine	Search words	Nr of articles	Code for search term	Comment	Nr of relevant articles to read abstract of	
10	18/01-21	Scopus	Localization AND Humanitarian	28	D	Read titles	9	
11	18/01-21	Scopus	"Localization agenda"	7	E	Read titles	4	
12	18/01-21	Scopus	Localization AND agenda	63	F	Read titles	10	
13	18/01-21	Scopus	Localization AND humanitarian AND aid	10	G	Read titles	6	
14	18/01-21	Scopus	"Local actors" AND Humanitarian	8	H	Read titles	5	
15			Total:	116			34	19
16								
17	Scientific literature on Localization & Humanitarian Innovation							
18	Date of search	Search engine	Search words	Nr of articles	Code for search term	Comment	Nr of relevant articles to read abstract of	
19	18/01-21	Scopus	"Humanitarian innovation" AND Localization	0	I			
20	18/01-21	Scopus	Humanitarian AND innovation AND Localization	0	J			
21	18/01-21	Scopus	Localization AND Innovation	441	K	Read titles - many irrelevant, focus on other sectors	2	
22	18/01-21	Scopus	"Bottom-up innovation"	23	L	Read titles	9	
23	18/01-21	Scopus	"Localized innovation"	11	M	Read titles - focus on health care	0	
24			Total:	475			11	10
25								
26								
27	Gray literature on Humanitarian Innovation							
28	Date of search	Search engine	Search words	Nr of results	Code for search term	Comment	Nr of relevant articles to read abstract of	
29	28/01-21	Google	Humanitarian AND innovation	134	N	Read titles	48	
30	03/02-21	Google	Humanitarian AND innovation AND localisation	109	O	Read titles	75	
31			Total:	243			123	71

Appendix B: Interview guide for NSs

Area of focus:	Interview questions
Background information	Can you please introduce yourself: - Job title and your area of work? - How long have you worked at that position?
Conceptual understanding of humanitarian innovation	1. Are you familiar with the concept of humanitarian innovation, and what does it mean to you? 2. Is innovation needed within the humanitarian system according to you? Why/Why not? 3. What role does innovation play within your organization, if any? - *How about in the Movement in general?* 4. Are you aware of any recent innovations within the Movement at any level? - *Ask for supporting documents.* 5. Where in DRM does innovation fit in?
Innovation processes	6. According to you, is innovation something that happens organically or something that is being facilitated? Can you exemplify? 7. Who is most often involved when it comes to problem identification for DRM within your national context? 8. How about for identifying solutions to that 'problem', and for implementing such solutions? *(When new tools/approaches are adopted, who would you say are generally implementing this?)* 9. According to you, who do innovations within the Movement most often serve? Can you give any examples?
Partnerships & Collaboration	10. Would you say that your partners and donors recognize and support local innovative capacity? Can you give any examples? 11. How could they *better* support you to initiate and lead innovation processes? - *What are the challenges and opportunities, if any?* 12. Would you say that the Movement structure is supportive of innovation? Why/why not?

	13. How do you cooperate with other actors outside of Movement when it comes to innovation, both national and international? - *Are there any challenges with cooperating with the private sector as a humanitarian actor?*
Understanding of localized HI	14. Who is a 'local actor' according to you and to your Red Cross/Red Crescent Society? - *Would you say that this view is shared within the Movement in general?* 15. What does 'local innovation' mean to you? Can you exemplify? 16. According to you, what is needed to foster or facilitate local innovation? Are there any challenges? 17. In a broader sense: What are your views on integrating the concepts of localization and humanitarian innovation? - *What are the challenges and opportunities, if any?*
Summarize	- Do you have something you want to add? - Is there something you think that we are missing? - Do you have any questions for us? - Can we email you with follow-up questions if any?

Appendix C: Interview guide for partners; PNSs, IFRC and CADRIM

Area of focus:	Interview questions
Background information	Can you please introduce yourself: - Job title and your area of work? - How long have you worked at that position?
Conceptual understanding of humanitarian innovation	1. Are you familiar with the concept of humanitarian innovation, and what does it mean to you? 2. Is innovation needed within the humanitarian system according to you? Why/Why not? 3. What role does innovation play within your organization, if any? - *How about in the Movement in general?* 4. Are you aware of any recent innovations within the Movement at any level? - *Ask for supporting documents.* 5. Where in DRM does innovation fit in?
Innovation processes	6. According to you, is innovation something that happens organically or something that is being facilitated? Can you exemplify? 7. Who is most often involved when it comes to problem identification for DRM within the Movement? 8. How about for identifying solutions to that 'problem', and for implementing such solutions? *(When new tools/approaches are adopted, who would you say are generally implementing this?)* 9. According to you, who do innovations within the Movement most often serve? Can you give any examples?
Partnerships & Collaboration	10. How are you currently supporting NSs in their innovation processes? Can you give any examples? 11. How could you *better* support NSs to initiate and lead innovation processes? - *What are the challenges and opportunities, if any?* 12. Would you say that the Movement structure is supportive of innovation? Why/why not?

	13. How do you cooperate with other actors outside of the movement when it comes to innovation, both national and international? - *Are there any challenges with cooperating with the private sector as a humanitarian actor?*
Understanding of localized HI	14. Who is a 'local actor' according to you and to your Red Cross/Red Crescent Society? - *Would you say that this view is shared within the Movement in general?* 15. What does 'local innovation' mean to you? Can you exemplify? 16. According to you, what is needed to foster or facilitate local innovation? - *Are there any challenges to this?* 17. In a broader sense: what are your views on integrating the concepts of localization and humanitarian innovation? *- What are the challenges and opportunities, if any?*
Summarize	- Do you have something you want to add? - Is there something you think that we are missing? - Do you have any questions for us? - Can we email you with follow-up questions if any?