

# EVALUATION IN ACTION: Assessing the Effects of Delayed Food Assistance in Niger

HAEC-Funded Impact Evaluation



## Background

Niger is facing a complex humanitarian crisis, with 4.3 million people in need of humanitarian aid. Households in Niger face many challenges, including armed violence, poverty, climate change, seasonal floods, droughts, and epidemics. These all exacerbate food insecurity among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host populations.

To address these challenges and improve food security in Niger, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is implementing the “Multi-sectoral emergency and early recovery response for protracted displaced and host populations in Diffa and Tillaberi regions” program. The program, funded by USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), works to strengthen early recovery strategies, and enable conflict-affected populations to begin their recovery. At the same time, with the support of the World Food Program (WFP), DRC delivers unconditional food assistance to households that otherwise only receive shelter support from BHA-funded activities.

## Evaluation Overview

Originally, DRC was interested in conducting an impact evaluation to assess the synergistic effects of shelter protection combined with food assistance compared with food assistance alone. To do so, DRC received funding from the Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle (HAEC) and established a partnership with an independent researcher to conduct the evaluation. However, the food assistance from the World Food Program (WFP) was delayed by several months in the areas receiving shelter protection. Therefore, the evaluation team pivoted to assess the impacts of the delay.

**Adapted Research Question:** What is the impact of **delayed food assistance** relative to on-time food assistance?

To answer this question, the team is conducting a **quasi-experimental impact evaluation** focused on food assistance in the Diffa region, where DRC planned to deliver food assistance to 724 households with BHA funding and 181 households with WFP funding during the 2023 and 2024 lean seasons.

In May and June, the research team leveraged targeting data from DRC and WFP to serve as baseline data. The BHA-funded program began distributing food vouchers monthly, for three months, starting in July 2023, and the research team conducted follow-up surveys roughly two weeks after each distribution. WFP signaled that there would be a delay in food distribution in June 2023, thus, the team did not conduct any follow-up surveys. Prior to WFP-funded distribution, the research team will repeat the baseline survey with targeted households. Once distribution begins, the research team will conduct follow-up surveys two weeks after delivery, as was done for the households receiving on-time assistance.

## Quick Facts

**TITLE**  
Assessing the Effects of Delayed Food Assistance in Niger

**TYPE OF EVALUATION**  
Impact Evaluation

**EVALUATION METHODS**  
Matching

- EVALUATION ARMS**
- 724 households in areas that received on-time food assistance
  - 181 households in areas that received delayed food assistance

**COUNTRY**  
Niger

**DONORS**  
USAID/BHA, WFP

**PARTICIPANTS**  
724 households

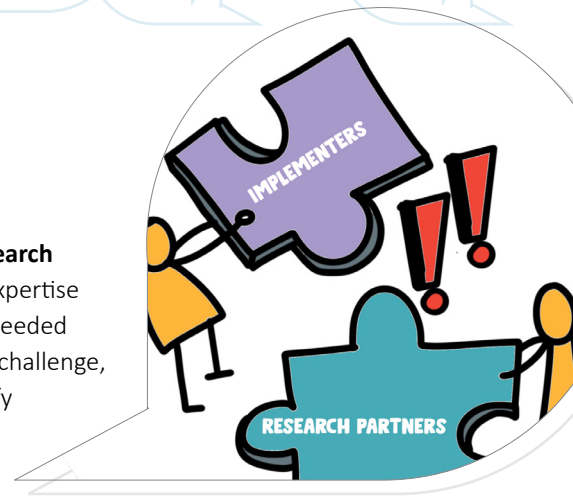
**IMPLEMENTING PARTNER**  
Danish Refugee Council

**EVALUATION/RESEARCH PARTNERS**  
Chris Moser, Western Michigan University, and HAEC



## Navigating Evaluation Constraints

In designing this impact evaluation, DRC faced challenges **identifying a suitable research partner**. In particular, it was difficult to find a research partner with the necessary expertise in evaluation methodologies, data analysis, and research design, in addition to the needed French language skills and knowledge of the local contexts in Niger. To navigate this challenge, HAEC worked with DRC through a co-creation and research design process to identify possible solutions. Ultimately, DRC was able to leverage HAEC's network of skilled researchers and partner with an independent consultant. This well-aligned partnership creates an evaluation that successfully balances academic rigor and real-world relevance.



## Evaluation Purpose & Audience

Timely food assistance for displaced persons is critical for supporting food security and health. Unintended delays in delivery are expected to have negative impacts in the short run, and may have long-run implications if the households cannot recover once food assistance resumes. It is normally not possible to study the effects of such delays. In this case, however, the baseline surveys in both delayed and on-time assistance groups were conducted before the delays were announced. This provided an opportunity to gain valuable insights on the impact of the delayed delivery. This research will assist humanitarian organizations when considering the impact and cost of disruptions and delays in assistance delivery.

## Context and What's Next

Once distribution of the WFP-funded food aid resumes, the research team will collect additional rounds of data in the delayed-assistance areas. There will be three rounds of food distribution, with three corresponding rounds of data collections, two weeks delivery. The research team anticipated published the findings and recommendations from this impact evaluation by June 2024, before the next lean season. Thus, DRC will use these findings to support the implementation of their next round of programming in the region.

For further information, contact Laurent Palustran Country Director, DRC Niger at [laurent.palustran@drc.ngo](mailto:laurent.palustran@drc.ngo) or visit <https://pro.drc.ngo/where-we-work/west-north-africa/niger/> to learn more about DRC's programming in Niger.

## Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle

This brief is brought to you by the [Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle \(HAEC\)](#) Associate Award. HAEC works to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency food security activities funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) by increasing the use of cost-effective and timely impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts.

HAEC is a three-year activity (2021-2024) funded by USAID/BHA and issued through the Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis, and Learning (IDEAL) activity. HAEC is implemented by [TANGO International](#), in collaboration with [Save the Children](#), [3ie](#), and [Causal Design](#).

This brief is part of HAEC's Evaluation in Action series highlighting ongoing impact evaluations from around the world. Do you have an ongoing impact evaluation in a humanitarian context that you want to share?

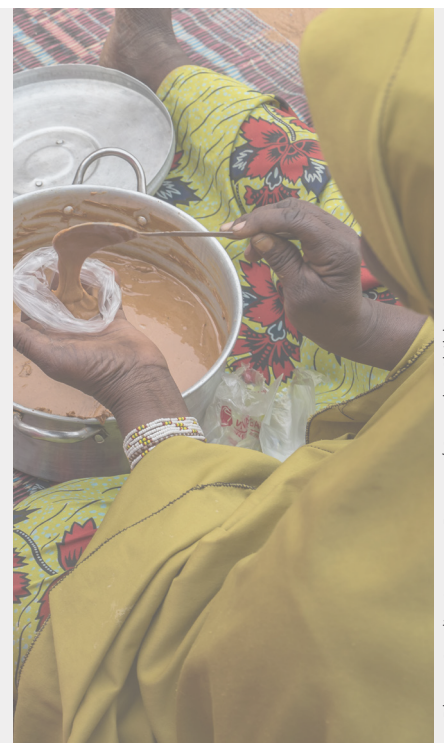


Photo Credit: Apsatou Bagaya / Save the Children