

Starting
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ActivityInfo

Getting started with evaluation in humanitarian
assistance

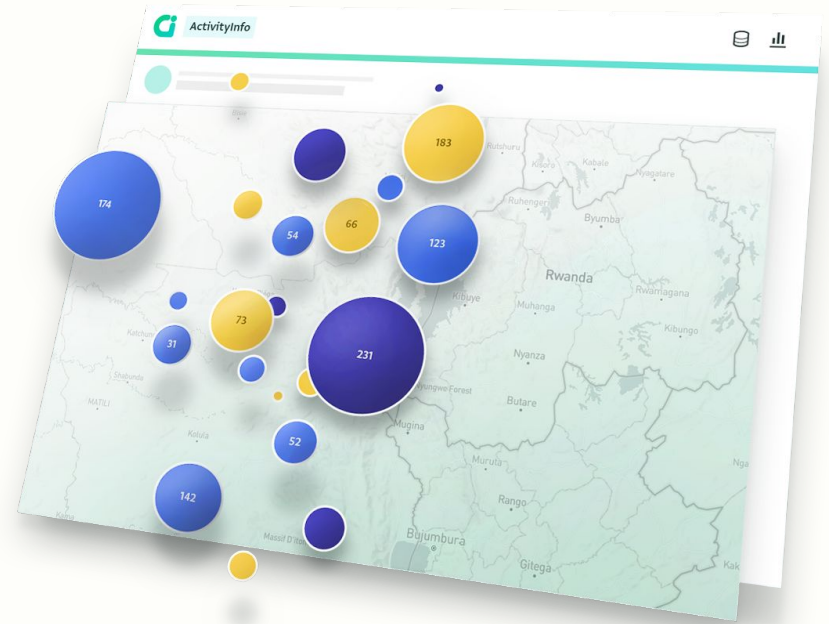


ActivityInfo

Presented by the ActivityInfo Team

Software for Monitoring & Evaluation

- ★ Track activities, outcomes
- ★ Beneficiary management
- ★ Surveys
- ★ Work offline/online



Webinar series outline



First Webinar

Getting started with Evaluation in Humanitarian Action



Second Webinar

Evaluation planning and design in humanitarian assistance



Third webinar

Implementation of evaluation in humanitarian assistance

Today's session outline

- **What is the evaluation of humanitarian action?**
 - *What is different about EHA?*
 - *How does monitoring associate with evaluation?*
 - *A brief history of EHA*
 - *What are the key challenges and the future of EHA?*
- **Deciding to perform an evaluation**
 - *What is the purpose of evaluation?*
 - *How to decide when and what to evaluate?*
 - *What are the ethics considerations of evaluation?*
- **Case studies: Real time evaluation**
- QandAs

Incentive for this webinar series

Incentive for this webinar series

- ❑ Demand for EHA was increased due to the **escalating number and impact of humanitarian crises**.
 - ❑ A third of all countries in the world are currently managing one or more internal crises that require humanitarian assistance.

- ❑ The **growing demand for accountability** in humanitarian action has been a driving factor behind EHA's rise to prominence
 - ❑ Stakeholders, whether donors or affected populations, want to be assured that investments in humanitarian action are used efficiently, make a difference and uphold ethical principles such as Do No Harm.

What is the evaluation in Humanitarian Sector?

What is the Evaluation in Humanitarian Sector?

Definition

Definition

The **systematic and objective assessment** of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results... to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of **lessons learned** into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors (OECD-DAC)

What is the Evaluation in Humanitarian Sector?

What is different in Evaluation in Humanitarian Action

Characteristics of Humanitarian Action which affect the evaluation in nature



- ❖ Humanitarian action includes both assistance and protection, while maintaining human dignity
- ❖ Humanitarian action includes responding to a crisis, supporting preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR) before a crisis, and recovery and rehabilitation afterwards
- ❖ Humanitarian action should be guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence
- ❖ Humanitarian actions should follow the principle of “Do No Harm”

The definition of Humanitarian Action impacts **the decision to perform an evaluation and the scope of the evaluation**

What is the Evaluation in Humanitarian Sector?

Purpose

Purpose

- ❑ **Learning** : The process through which experience and reflection lead to changes in behaviour or the acquisition of new abilities.
- ❑ **Accountability**: The process of taking into account the views of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily the people affected by authority or power

What is the Evaluation in Humanitarian Sector?

Monitoring and Evaluation in response cycle

Monitoring

systematic data collection of data to provide stakeholders with indications of the extent of progress, achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds

Evaluation

Evaluation of humanitarian projects and programmes is usually a one-off activity, undertaken at a key point in the humanitarian emergency response cycle in order to inform that cycle as well as future responses

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are complementary tools for helping determine how well an intervention is doing

If an intervention has not been properly monitored from start, it may not be possible to subsequently evaluate satisfactorily

What is the Evaluation in Humanitarian Sector?

Monitoring and Evaluation : example

Example - cash transfer

As a general rule, those who are implementing a programme are responsible for **monitoring** it in order to ensure that it remains on track. In a cash-transfer programme, monitoring might capture

- how many people received the money (output)
- how much they received (output)
- what people did with the cash transfer (outcome)

This is focused on inputs and outputs. Monitoring may also extend to outcomes

An **evaluation** is usually conducted by people who are not involved in implementing the programme to give it more credibility. In a cash-transfer programme, evaluation might capture

- consequences of providing the transfer to women
- wider impacts such as the impact on market
- wider impacts such as the impact on trade activity

Evaluation focuses particularly on outcomes and impact

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Brief History

The practice of EHA is relatively new in the timeline of humanitarian aid: humanitarian evaluation practice is 25 years old whereas humanitarian aid has a much longer history that traces back to 1863 when the ICRC was created

Evaluation has become an **established practice** for many humanitarian organisations, networks and communities of practice. This includes the institutionalisation of the evaluation function in all UN humanitarian organisations – such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which institutionalised its evaluation function in 2000.

Evaluation has also become **more professional as a practice**. The creation of standards, principles and ethics to guide how evaluations are conducted is testament to this professionalisation of evaluation as a field and of EHA specifically.

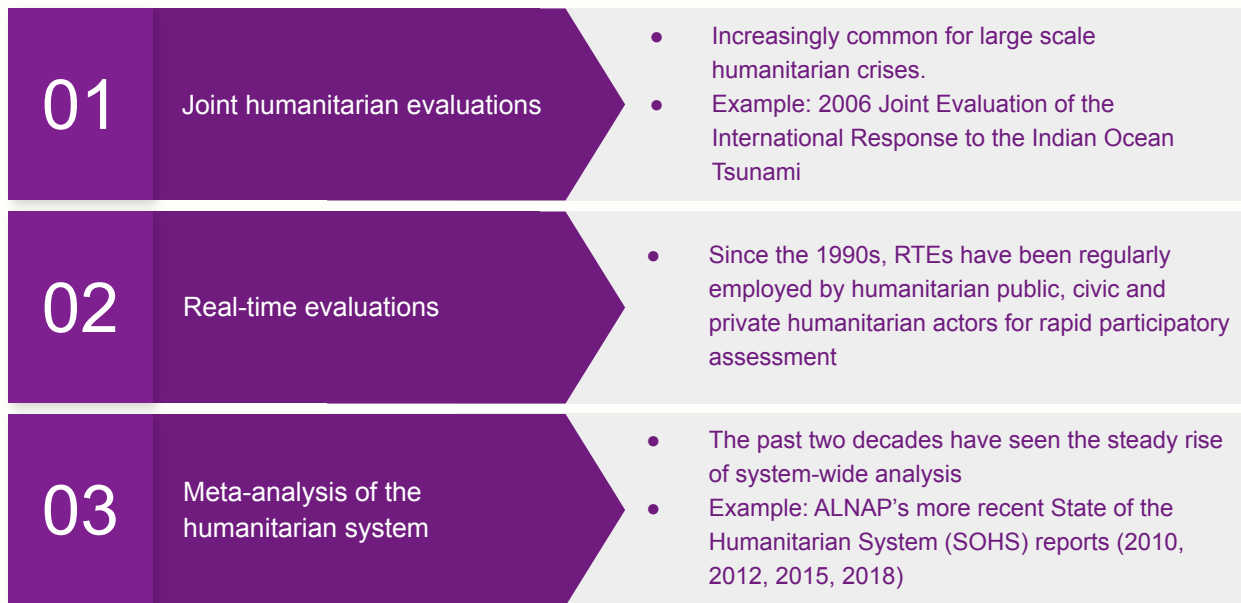
The humanitarian community has **agreed standards and frameworks** to guide how humanitarian action is provided. These have inevitably influenced the criteria and metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of that action.

Whether through publications, online webinars, discussion groups, or some other medium, evaluation guidelines support EHA, good practice and capacity development

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Brief History: EHA Methodologies

The evolution and influence of evaluation methodologies is an important aspect of EHA's history



What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

01

Evaluation quality and methodology

- Relate to the complex nature of the humanitarian evaluand, which is emergent, dynamic and unpredictable
- Baseline data often unavailable
- MandE system measure only deliverable without supporting actively higher -level outcomes and impact

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

02

Limited participation

- Limited access to local population
- Limited participation of humanitarian workers- high staff turnover and lack of time

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

03

Evaluation finding use and uptake

- Evaluation as donor accountability “tick-box”
- Lack of meaningful evaluation follow up

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

04

Limited disaggregation of data

- Attention to cross-cutting issues such as protection, gender-based violence and Do No Harm has increased
- it is still challenging at times to collect disaggregated data for these priorities

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

05

Lack of coordination

- humanitarian organisations often pursue these independently, resulting in duplication and even competition

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

06

Safety and wellbeing of evaluators

- attention to safety of humanitarian workforce
- evaluation capacity development to ensure ethical and reliable data collection, analysis and use

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

07

Emergencies urbanisation

- complexities under each urban context need to be considered
- characteristic of urban areas: density and heterogeneity of urban neighbourhoods, and the presence and proximity of different governance actors

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

Key challenges

08

Power dynamics

- Increased calls for humanitarian aid to better address social inequalities and injustice have led to parallel calls for evaluators to interrogate power structures.

What is the evaluation in humanitarian sector?

The predictions for the future

- Incorporating remote evaluation approaches. This result in more creative remote evaluations and the use of a variety of technology-based approaches
- Developing the evaluation capacity of local partners. Evaluation capacity development will be important not only for local partners, but also for localising evaluation, improving engagement with communities, and making better use of participatory evaluation approaches.
- Decentralising evaluation. Capacity development is linked to the idea of localising evaluations and decentralising the evaluation function. The future of EHA would move towards evaluations that are locally designed and locally led.
- Fomenting a culture of learning from evaluation. There will be more emphasis on improving the culture of learning in organisations to make better use of evaluation findings, learn from challenges, and share lessons across organisations.

Deciding to perform an Evaluation

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Should we perform an evaluation?

Should we perform an evaluation?

Money for evaluation is well spent if it leads *to improvements in humanitarian action*, but it can do this only if the findings are acted upon. It is therefore important to choose the right tool for the job.

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Purpose

01

Accountability

- responsibility to report to others, such as its board of directors, donors, or the affected population
- Accountability often has both external and internal dimensions

Key questions

- Which type of accountability are you principally concerned about, and accountability to whom?
For example, managerial accountability? (use of resources within agency),
Financial accountability? (to donors)
- Is an evaluation the best way of fulfilling this?
- Should an evaluation be linked to any other accountability processes?

<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-eha-guide>

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Examples of alternatives

01

Accountability to the affected population

- Evaluation: Yes if appropriately designed
- **Other accountability process:** Ongoing consultation with the affected population, and feedback mechanisms used throughout the life of the project/programme may be more effective ways

02

Strategic accountability

- **For example:** to agency's mandate and objectives
- **Evaluation:** Yes
- **Other accountability process:** Strategic review

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Purpose

02

Learning

- Learning-oriented evaluations are intended to facilitate, group, individual and/or organisational learning
- They can be very effective in examining what worked, what didn't, and how performance can be improved
- focus is often programmes that are in the initial and implementation phase
- Any time on the project cycle, if other sources are not available

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Examples of alternatives

01

After Action Review (AAR)

- process for those involved in the programme to reflect on what happened, successes, challenges and learning.
- This could be facilitated by the evaluators, as part of a learning-oriented evaluation, and the learning included in the evaluation report

02

Most Significant Change (MSC)

- 'significant change' stories are collected at field level. The most important of these are selected by panels of designated stakeholders as a way to capture project outcomes and impact
- MSC technique can be used with those affected by a crisis to identify changes that they attribute to the intervention

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Balancing accountability and learning

Achieving both purposes can be difficult in practice

Key questions

- Which purpose is more important – accountability or learning?
- If accountability is the main purpose, accountability to whom and for what?
- If learning is the main purpose, learning by whom? And how is the learning supposed to happen?

Example

An accountability-oriented evaluation is likely to place greater emphasis on objectivity and independence and adopt a more investigative style, seeking to attribute responsibility for both success and failure. But this may not be conducive to learning if it makes those who need to learn feel defensive.

Learning needs a safe psychological environment where it is acceptable to acknowledge difficulties and admit mistakes.

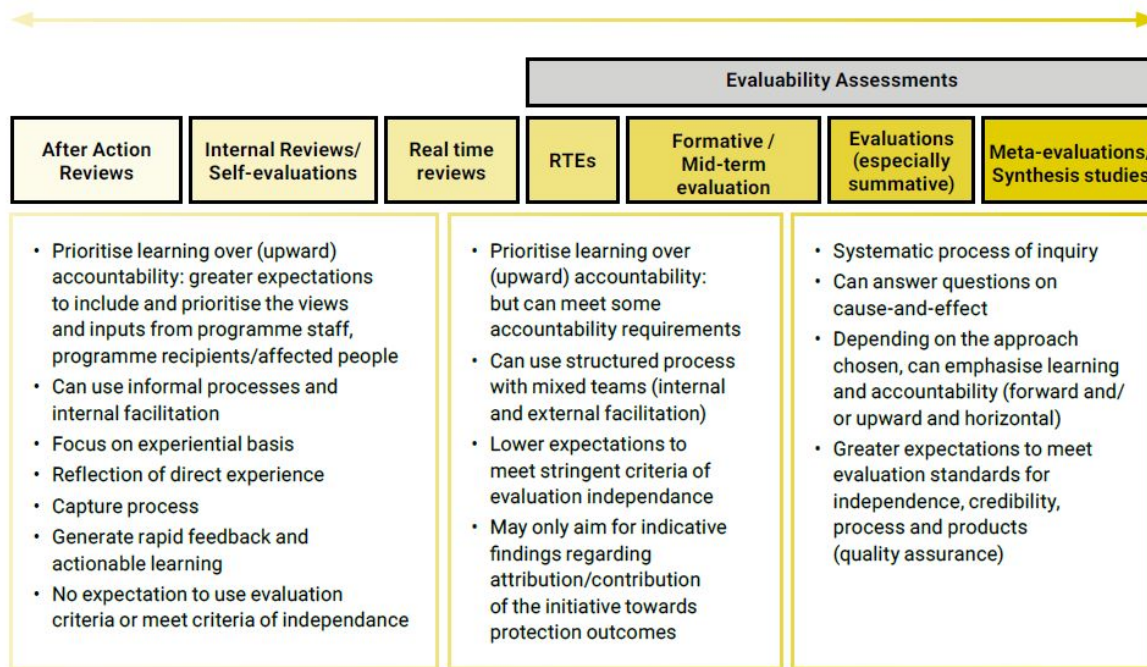
A learning-oriented evaluation is likely to use a more facilitative style, encouraging those involved in implementation to participate and reflect.

<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-eha-guide>

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Allow for less structure and more informality:
Less stringent requirements to adhere to evaluation standards and use evaluation criteria

Call for greater structure:
Expectations to adhere to standards for design and analysis process and deliverables



Source: Christoplos and Bonino (2016) expanded from Scharbatke-Church (2011: 7)

Deciding to perform an evaluation

What and When?

Key Questions

- How can the evaluation process add value to the organisation as a whole?
- How many evaluations does the organisation have the capacity to absorb?

It may be **particularly appropriate** to conduct an evaluation:

- For a programme with unknown or disputed outcomes
- For large and expensive interventions
- For pilot initiatives, or to test a new programme idea
- Where the agency has a strategic interest
- Where stakeholders are keen on an evaluation.

It is **inappropriate to conduct** an evaluation:

- When it is unlikely to add new knowledge
- When security issues or lack of data would undermine its credibility.

Tip! Planning for evaluation early in the implementation programme means that relevant monitoring systems can be established from the outset. This may also inform and influence the design of the final evaluation.

Deciding to perform an evaluation

What and When? The usefulness of an evaluability assessment

Purpose

The main purpose of the assessment is both to decide whether the evaluation can be undertaken or not, and to ensure steps are taken during implementation so that the conditions are in place to facilitate the evaluation process.

The assessment is a descriptive and analytical process intended to produce a reasoned basis for proceeding with an evaluation.

Note: In practice, a dedicated evaluability assessment is generally used in large scale humanitarian programmes and for multi-agency evaluations.

Deciding to perform an evaluation

What and When? The usefulness of an evaluability assessment

Define and identify

1. Define time period, geographical extent, and relevant stakeholders
2. Agree on expected outputs of the evaluability assessment
3. Identify documents and stakeholders

Review documents and engage with stakeholders

1. The programme logic and the clarity, plausibility involved
2. Information systems
3. Availability, relevance and quality of data, capacity of systems and staff to deliver what is needed
4. Identify stakeholders' understandings of programme purpose, design and implementation
5. Identify their expectations of an evaluation: objectives, process and use

Develop recommendations

Evaluability assessment recommendations should cover:

- Project logic improvements
- M&E systems and capacity development (if/as required)
- Evaluation questions of priority interest to stakeholders
- Possible evaluation designs only if/as required

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Ethics Consideration

01

Do no harm [Humanitarian perspective]

- In the Sphere Handbook it is captured in Protection Principle 1: 'avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions', which includes both violence and rights abuses and also physical hazards.
- In common practice 'Do No Harm' has sometimes been used to mean avoiding or minimising any adverse effects from an intervention

02

Do no harm [Conflict sensitivity perspective]

- Conflict sensitivity means ensuring that an intervention does not contribute to conflict, and where possible, contributes to peace
- 'Do No Harm' is a specific seven-step framework that can be used to assess the conflict sensitivity of an intervention. It was developed by Collaborative for Development Action (now CDA), and is the most widely used 'tool' for assessing conflict sensitivity.

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Ethics Consideration

Evaluators should be aware of how it could exacerbate tensions by:

- Raising expectations that taking part in the evaluation (e.g. during data collection) will lead to more aid being provided, which could result in frustration.
- Triggering heated discussions, for example between different groups in the affected population, during the data-gathering process, raising issues that reinforce tensions and divisions.
- Being perceived to be involved in gathering intelligence for one of the parties in conflict.
- Presenting a biased analysis by inadequately representing the views of different stakeholders.

Deciding to perform an evaluation

Ethics Consideration

To conduct the evaluation in a 'conflict-sensitive' manner, evaluation managers and evaluators should from the outset consider:

- Assessing whether any steps in the evaluation process could contribute to tensions (this will need to focus on data-gathering and dissemination of the report in particular)
- For conflict settings, carrying out new (or updating existing) conflict analysis, to inform the planning and design of an EHA
- Revising evaluation plans in light of this analysis to ensure they do not contribute to tensions (where possible and within the organisation's mandate, trying to minimise them).

Case study

Case Study

Real time Evaluation of Haiyan Response - Philippines

The context and the decision:

- Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda), one of the strongest typhoon ever that hit the Philippines
- The humanitarian impact was massive; a total of 3.4 million families were affected in 12,122 villages.
- IFRC mobilized the full resources of its global network

IFRC is committed to quality assurance, standards and a strong culture of learning in its disaster response. To fulfill this commitment, IFRC commissions a Real Time Evaluation (RTE)

Case Study

Real time Evaluation of Haiyan Reporse - Philippines

Purpose and scope

RTEs aim to improve service delivery and accountability to beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders and to build lessons for the improvement of the International Federation disaster response system.

- i) The **relevance and effectiveness** of delivery of the International Federation's support to the National Society response to date, with a focus on the overall performance of the response.
- ii) The **quality and efficiency** of the IFRC coordination with its Movement partners and external actors aimed at optimizing the response.
- iii) The **effectiveness and usefulness** of the humanitarian diplomacy tools used vis a vis other stakeholders (partner organisations, governmental, etc).

Case Study

Real time Evaluation of Haiyan Response - Philippines

When: from February to March 2014

Who: one external evaluator and three Red Cross and Red Crescent staff

Methodology:

- review of existing secondary data
- direct observation
- Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Focus Groups Discussions (FDGs)
- Workshop
- Survey

Case Study

Real time Evaluation of Haiyan Response - Philippines

Learning

Following the RTE, the RTE conducted workshops that led to the consolidation of recommendations. These recommendations are prioritized based on the Frameworks for Future Action that was developed by the RTE workshop participants.

Strategic recommendations

Example: “Establish a Standard organization structure, with related job descriptions and reporting lines and adjust that structure to match future response contextual requirements”

- IFRC should establish a typical organization structure for major global responses that require the mobilization of global resources. Evaluation findings indicate that the funds were not available in advance and when a[provided, they were not used as expeditiously as possible.

IFRC established an action plan following the evaluation with clear timeframe and responsibilities.

Case Study

Real time Evaluation of Haiyan Response - Philippines

Constraints and limitations

- The timing did not enable real-time relief operational evaluation; IFRC was in the middle of transitioning from the relief to recovery phase. Thus, they retroactively identify issues relevant to the IFRC response.
- **staff turnover**; IFRC surge capacity staff had already departed by the time the RTE reached the Philippines. Most IFRC staff were no longer available to meet in person. Data collected via phone interviews.
- The use of internal staff introduced relevant perspective but also bias.
- The participation of all relevant stakeholders was challenging due to scheduling conflicts

What is evaluation in humanitarian sector

Key Messages

- ★ The definition of Humanitarian Action impacts **the decision to perform** an evaluation and the **scope of the evaluation**
- ★ *Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are complementary tools for helping determine how well an intervention is doing*
- ★ Determine whether there are other alternatives to evaluation. There should be a careful consideration of the added value of the evaluation. Performing an evaluation has a cost in terms of resources.
- ★ Evaluation has two main purposes; accountability and learning. Achieving both at the same time is challenging.
- ★ It may be **particularly appropriate** to conduct an evaluation: For a programme with unknown or disputed outcomes, for large and expensive interventions, for pilot initiatives, or to test a new programme idea, where the agency has a strategic interest or where stakeholders are keen on an evaluation.

What is evaluation in humanitarian sector

Resources

Evolving evaluation practice: past, present and future challenges

<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/evolving-evaluation-practice-past-present-and-future-challenges>

State of humanitarian system

<https://sohs.alnap.org/help-library/2022-the-state-of-the-humanitarian-system-sohs-%E2%80%93-summary>

Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide

<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-eha-guide>

REAL--TIME EVALUATION OF THE PHILIPPINES HAIYAN RESPONSE

<https://www.ifrc.org/media/14036>

Time for Q&A!

Thank you!