

FEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL CENTER

STRATEGY
2019–2022

Strengthening the humanity
and dignity of people in crises
through evidence and learning



Tufts
UNIVERSITY

FRIEDMAN SCHOOL OF
NUTRITION SCIENCE AND POLICY

Feinstein
International Center



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The Center's in-depth research has been and will continue to be a foundation for evidence-based programs and policy making. I relied on it throughout my career at USAID and we are dedicated to ensuring that others can rely on us in the future.

*Gregory Gottlieb
Director, Feinstein International Center
Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor in
Nutrition and Human Security*



Contents

04 Overview

07 Increasing the Feinstein International Center's impact

09 Transforming the way evidence is used

10 Thematic research and policy areas for 2019-2022

12 Our values

20 Where we work

22 History and achievements

24 Experts and collaborators

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Overview

MISSION

We aim to protect and strengthen the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of people affected by or at risk of humanitarian crises.

VISION

Decision-makers at every level will more actively engage with evidence and learning to bring about positive change among at-risk and marginalized populations.

Evidence and learning should be the cornerstones of good policy and programming decisions everywhere. In crisis settings, generating evidence and facilitating learning are critical, yet particularly challenging. That is why the Feinstein International Center (FIC) focuses on such settings.

As a research and teaching center based at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, we offer a unique combination of skills and expertise. We adapt the rigor of a major research university and deep experience in the field to each context to find the right balance of thoroughness and practicality. This process allows decision-makers to depend on our work to make assured choices that help disaster-affected communities.

In 2018, the Feinstein International Center undertook a nine-month strategic planning process. This document describes the outcomes of that process, our 2019–2022 Strategic Plan. The plan builds on our long experience and pushes us to play a larger role in enabling the humanitarian field to use the best evidence available.



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Increasing the Feinstein International Center's Impact

Increasing need to understand and respond to crises



Sources: OCHA, Institute for Economics and Peace

The humanitarian field is rapidly growing and changing. The increasing numbers of people in need, intensified risks to humanitarian workers, and rising budgets have resulted in the massive growth of and demands on the system. Further, the areas of resilience, conflict transition, human rights, and gender and generational rights are increasingly recognized as central to humanitarian response. In the era of information overload, sifting through information to find the best evidence is challenging. These shifts mean we need new models of effective warning, response,

and assistance and more informed leaders across diverse fields to develop and implement them.

We will bolster our efforts to support effective local, national, and international decision-making by generating:

- Evidence on the experiences of people affected by or at risk of crises;
- Evidence on the effectiveness of the systems that impact these populations;
- Access to the evidence that exists; and
- Dialogue between academic researchers and humanitarian decision-makers and practitioners.

Key Terms

Decision-makers: We work with people at all levels who make or influence decisions that impact the lives of people affected by crises. These include individuals, community leaders, humanitarian practitioners, government officials, donors, academics, current and future policymakers, and students.

Evidence: We define evidence as information that can contribute to assessing the validity of a claim. We seek to use and generate the highest-quality evidence possible in complex contexts. However, we recognize that the quality of evidence varies depending on where and how it is generated. Our academic background enables us to effectively assess different types of evidence in order to use it effectively and to help others assess the quality of evidence.

Humanitarian crises and related challenges: Our work focuses on areas that are affected by or at risk of events that threaten the health, safety, or well-being of a population. Such crises typically require a local, national, and/or international response. Sometimes we provide evidence to support a timely and effective response during an active crisis. Other times our evidence supports longer-term decision-making in areas dealing with protracted crises or facing likely future crises.

Learning: Learning is the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study, and teaching. Without learning, evidence is useless. To us, learning is reciprocal. We share knowledge with communities, leaders, and decision-makers. They also share knowledge with us. The exchange enables us to consistently improve our work to better understand the needs of communities and to inform decision-making processes.

Transforming the way evidence is used

Far too often, politics alone, not evidence, drive policy and program decisions by donors, international organizations, and practitioners. We are determined to change this.

We will continue to work with crisis-affected people by generating and sharing evidence and learning about the crises, the experiences of people impacted by them, and the systems that affect people's abilities to recover. At the same time, we will improve our understanding of the ways in which evidence is used, accepted, or overlooked and why rigorous evidence is often interpreted in different ways. We seek to develop efficient and effective ways to improve research processes to ensure that decision-makers are aware of, trust, and understand research and how it can inform their choices. We will use this knowledge to promote learning, foster dialogue, and influence decision-makers whose work impacts affected populations.

Ultimately we aim to transform the way evidence is used in humanitarian systems by empowering decision-makers at every level to more actively engage with evidence to bring about positive change for at-risk and marginalized populations through four strategic priorities. These priorities sharpen our focus on the way we generate evidence and how we promote learning.



Elevate

- Influence humanitarian and development actors to design and implement responses that are context-appropriate and people-centered;
- Convene current and future leaders to increase understanding and use of research and evidence to better respond to conflicts and crises.



Educate

- Educate and guide current humanitarian and development practitioners, policymakers, and leaders to support improved use of evidence in decision-making;
- Influence and educate the next generation of leaders in the classroom and through educational programs and opportunities.



Disseminate

- Strategically spread the Center's research and collective learning—to policymakers, practitioners, and academics—to ensure access to high-quality, contextual policy and community-based information and analysis.



Generate Evidence

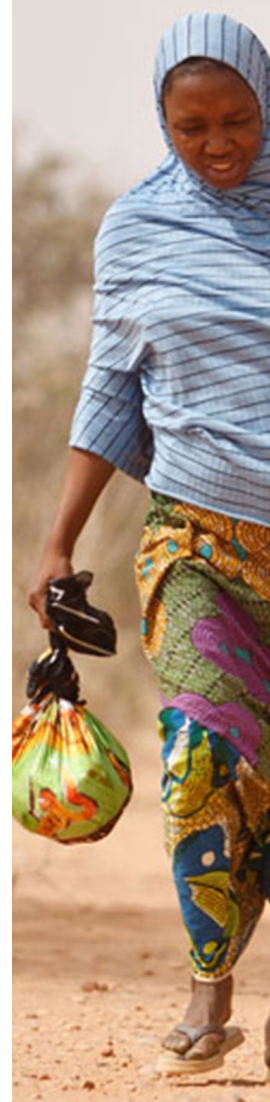
Conduct original research and unearth existing, but difficult to access, research to:


- Generate knowledge and analysis of local responses in complex settings;
- Support flexible and dynamic responses that are tried and tested;
- Promote further understanding of complex problems among a spectrum of stakeholders.

Thematic Research and policy areas for 2019–2022

To transform the way evidence is used, we will focus on the following:

- Increasing our research on the nature of crises to provide evidence on how the humanitarian system can better anticipate and respond to crises;
- Expanding the geographic areas in which we study livelihoods, food security, nutrition, and governance for populations at risk of or affected by disasters;
- Increasing research in conflict, transitional, and post-conflict settings;
- Expanding and strengthening existing knowledge on child marriage in humanitarian settings to better inform policy and practice;
- Further developing work on the use of research and data for supporting victims of violence in justice processes;
- Expanding our audiences' abilities to effectively use research by understanding, documenting, and implementing effective research uptake practices;
- Increasing academic offerings and learning opportunities in humanitarian and related fields.



A woman is seen from the side, carrying a young child on her back. She is wearing a blue and white striped headscarf and a colorful, patterned skirt. The child is wearing an orange and white striped shirt. They are walking on a dry, dusty path in a hazy, arid landscape. The background is a soft, out-of-focus view of dry vegetation and a hazy horizon.

We will continue to deepen our work in critical areas and aim to expand into new areas, particularly as new crises begin and current crises evolve. Although we present each research area separately, there are many connections between them that help us understand research findings and operational and policy impacts.

Changing dimensions of poverty and vulnerability: Economic, social, and political changes are transforming urban and rural areas. We seek to better understand these forces so that relief, resilience, and development programs and policies can be more effective for vulnerable communities. This research focuses on East and Central Africa. We plan to expand this work into West Africa.

Conflict and its impact on civilians: We engage in research involving conflict analysis, stabilization, transition, conflict mitigation, protection, and peacebuilding. We aim to improve policies and interventions that support stabilization and transitions from war to peace, working closely with survivors and at-risk populations. This work focuses on the Horn of Africa, East Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. We plan to expand this work into West Africa.

Food security and famine: We seek to understand the causes and consequences of famine and food insecurity, the experience of people facing famine, and the longer-term impacts of famine on demographics, power balances, livelihood systems, and national economics. This work focuses on geographic areas most at risk of or in the midst of food security or famine crises.

Nutrition: This research seeks to understand the causes of all types of malnutrition, often driven by a combination of lack of food, diet, health, livelihoods stresses, conflict, gender dynamics, and economic situations. This research focuses on East and Central Africa.

People on the move: We explore and document the experience of people displaced by armed conflict, persecution, and environmental change. We examine the national and international humanitarian and political systems' responses to migration flows. The scope of this work is worldwide.

Resilient livelihoods: We seek to understand how livelihoods are changing and the impact of these changes on the well-being of households and communities, what factors make households more or less resilient to trends and shocks, and what policies and interventions are most effective in supporting livelihood resilience. Our research currently focuses in East Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. We plan to expand this work into West Africa.

Our values

People focused

We put people affected by or at risk of humanitarian crises at the center of our work.

We are committed to developing the next generation of leaders and researchers.

We promote the development and well-being of all those associated with Feinstein International Center through an inclusive, flexible, and supportive work culture.



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I count on the Feinstein Center to raise the humanitarian issues or policy changes needed to save the lives of the most vulnerable—women and children who are most likely to be affected by crisis and conflict.

Lauren Landis
Nutrition Director,
World Food Programme



Our values

Ethical, rigorous, and transparent



Our research adheres to the highest ethical standards.

We use the most rigorous methods that are suitable for each context.

We work within national, regional, and international frameworks and promote open and transparent relationships with authorities.

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I would rank FIC as among the best in terms of field research...it is extremely well-done, analytical, very close to the ground, but also raises its eye up enough to get a more global view of the implications.

Christina Bennett
Head, Humanitarian
Policy Group, ODI

Our values Collaborative



We seek genuine partnerships with local, national, and international stakeholders.

We are committed to working with and developing local research capacities.

We strive to effectively communicate our research findings to crisis-affected communities, policymakers, and practitioners.



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Tufts research has directly led to increased budget allocations and improved planning for rangeland and water management to support pastoralism in Sudan.

*Dr. Ammar ElSheikh Idriss
Director General of
Planning and Livestock
Economics at the Federal
Ministry of Animal
Resources in Sudan*





The background of the image is a blurred photograph. The upper portion shows a dark, textured thatched roof, likely made of palm fronds or similar natural materials. The lower portion shows a white fabric with a small, colorful geometric pattern, possibly a traditional garment. The overall lighting is soft and natural.

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My masters program at Tufts
taught me to think better,
upgraded and expanded my
knowledge, and shaped the way I
consume information.

*Andy Shaver
Coordinator, International Organization
for Migration Somalia
Master of Arts in Humanitarian
Assistance 2010*

Where we work



FIC Offices




Current and Past Projects





History and achievements

The Feinstein International Center was founded in 1997 as the Feinstein International Famine Center and was focused on famine in the U.S. Early on, we recognized that while there was significant research on hunger in the U.S., evidence on famine, food insecurity, and livelihoods in developing countries was weak. We therefore applied the expertise of the Center in that direction. Subsequently, our research showed that famine and food security could not be understood without knowing more about the wider livelihoods and policy contexts. Therefore, we broadened the scope of our research to include nutrition and food security, livelihoods analysis, forced displacement and migration, pastoralism, child protection, gender, human rights, and post-conflict transitions.



Since 1997 we have been dedicated to conducting high-quality research in complex settings, training others to conduct and interpret research, and sharing knowledge with policymakers and practitioners. Examples of achievements of our affiliated faculty and researchers include:

- We **led the development of one of four companion standards to the Sphere Standards**, the *Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards* (LEGS). LEGS has been used in almost 50 countries. In the Horn of Africa alone, 17 organizations have formally incorporated LEGS into their policies and procedures.
- Our faculty **co-authored the UN report that formed the bedrock of UN Security Council Resolution 1325**. This resolution is the most influential international soft law promoting women's active participation in peace and security issues. It has resulted in over 55 countries and NATO creating national action plans and is used around the world to improve the rights of women and girls.
- We developed the Urban Profiling Methodology, which **transformed the field's understanding of displacement in urban centers**. The methodology enables humanitarian agencies to estimate numbers of displaced people and design appropriate assistance programs for refugees and other displaced people.
- We are **the home of the Coping Strategies Index (CSI)**, a revolutionary index of food security. The CSI enables those responding to crises to understand the food security status of large numbers of people in a quick, transparent, low-cost way.
- We introduced the use of **academic research to the International Criminal Court (ICC)** proceedings. Our research and testimony at the ICC in 2018 proved that victims of war crimes in Uganda continue to suffer the effects of these crimes 14 years after they took place. We are now working with those supporting victims to further integrate research into ICC proceedings.

Experts and collaborators

We are accomplished researchers, who have been humanitarian practitioners, policymakers, donors, and consultants. We bring diverse experiences, perspectives, research tools, and relationships to our multidisciplinary work. We are known for our field-based research and long-term commitment to communities in overcoming crises. We all believe that we can improve the way decision-makers access and understand evidence, which, in turn, will improve the way people prepare for, respond to, and overcome crises.

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The things we learn from people are indispensable in informing efforts to uphold their rights and dignity and prevent future harms.



Dyan Mazurana
*Ph.D., Professor and
Research Director for
Women, Children,
and Armed Conflict*

Our research programs are led by Tufts faculty, including:

Gregory Gottlieb, J.D., Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor in Nutrition and Human Security and Director of the Feinstein International Center

Karen Jacobsen, Ph.D., Henry J. Leir Professor in Global Migration

Dan Maxwell, Ph.D., Henry J. Leir Professor in Food Security, Co-director, Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance

Dyan Mazurana, Ph.D., Professor and Research Director for Women, Children, and Armed Conflict, Co-director of the Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance Program

Helen Young, Ph.D., Professor and Research Director for Nutrition, Livelihoods, and Conflict

Andy Catley, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Research Director for Policy and Process

Kimberly Howe, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Research Director for Conflict and Governance

Elizabeth Stites, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Research Director for Conflict and Livelihoods

The Feinstein International Center team also includes researchers, program managers, and administrators:

Berhanu Admassu, Chief of Party, Ethiopia

Darlington Akabwai, Senior Researcher

Merry Fitzpatrick, Senior Researcher

Charles Hopkins, Senior Resilience Advisor, Uganda

Roxani Krystalli, Program Manager

Anastasia Marshak, Researcher

Mesfin Molla, Chief of Party, Uganda

Ann O'Brien, Administrative Manager

Anne Radday, Research Program Manager



We're not just talking about an isolated case. With this research, we're looking at the big picture, comparing the general population of the entire sub-region with this population of victims.



Teddy Atim
Researcher, on her testimony at the International Criminal Court (ICC) about research on war crimes in Uganda

Jarvice Bukirwa Sekajja, Social Resilience and Conflict Advisor, Uganda

Charles Simpson, Program Administrator

Fasil Yemane, Country Representative, Ethiopia

Our research programs are supported by a network professionals who specialize in quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis, writing, knowledge management, and research uptake. They include:

Teddy Atim, Researcher

Margie Buchanan-Smith, Visiting Fellow

Shibani Ghosh, Research Associate Professor, Friedman School

Peter Hailey, Visiting Fellow

Musa Adam Ismail, Visiting Fellow

Jeeyon Janet Kim, Visiting Fellow

Nisar Majid, Visiting Fellow

Hassan Alattar Osman, Visiting Fellow

Hussein Sulieman, Visiting Fellow

Bapu Vaitla, Visiting Fellow

While our teams change over time, the above represents our faculty and research teams during the development of this strategy.

The Feinstein International Center is a research and teaching center based at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. We promote the use of evidence and learning in operational and policy responses to protect and strengthen the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of people affected by or at risk of humanitarian crises.

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