

Applying the Evidence Ecosystem concept as a tool to demonstrate the successful implementation of Evidence-Based Practice in international aid: the example of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

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Background

The Belgian Red Cross (BRC) is an aid organization with a wide range of activities, from blood collection and banking over first aid education to international disaster and development aid. Evidence-based decision-making is embedded in the long-term strategic vision of BRC for all its activities.

Objectives

- 1. To scientifically underpin BRC activities by implementing the principles of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in its international aid activities.
- 2. To demonstrate how we scientifically underpin the WASH activities of our International Cooperation Department via the Evidence Ecosystem. [1]

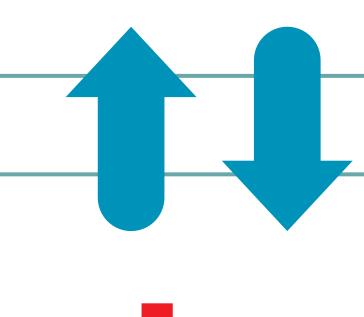
Methods





Since 2010, BRC invested in a Centre for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP) where 10 full-time researchers in EBP support the international aid activities by conducting

- Type A research (Monitoring and Evaluation),
- Type B research (systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines),
- Type C research (impact evaluations such as randomized controlled trials)



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BRC employees are being trained (blended learning, journal clubs, webinars, etc.) to implement EBP in the following ways:

- Translation of an operational question into a research question
- Contribution in the dissemination of the evidence conclusions
- Implementation of evidence conclusions in daily practice and programs
- Data collection to evaluate daily practice and programs
- Contribution in the operational aspects of field research

Results

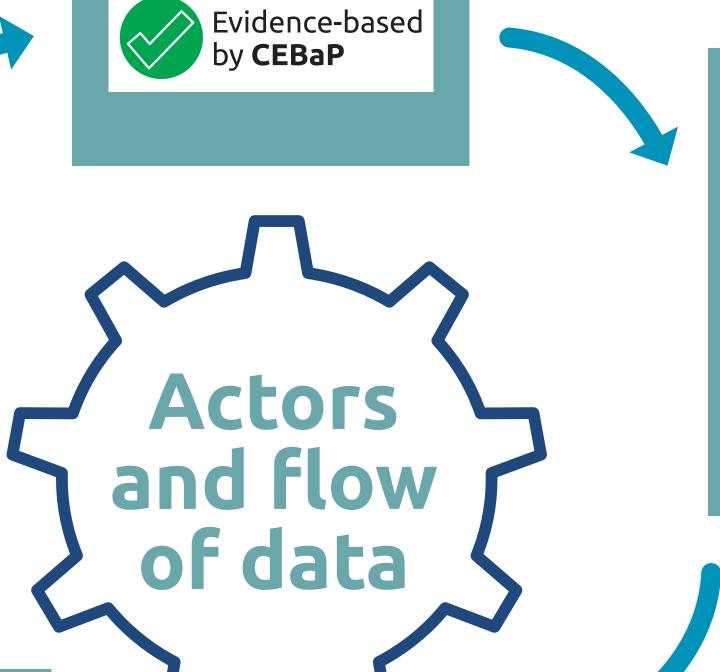
Conducting a systematic review to show which promotional approaches are effective to change handwashing and sanitation behaviour in LMIC. [2] (Type B).

Evidence

synthesizers

Based on evidence gap map analysis: conducting an impact evaluation in Tanzania to investigate the (cost-) effectiveness of add-on theory-based elements to improve handwashing and sanitation behaviour. (Type C).







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webinar [4]websites [5]

review results via:

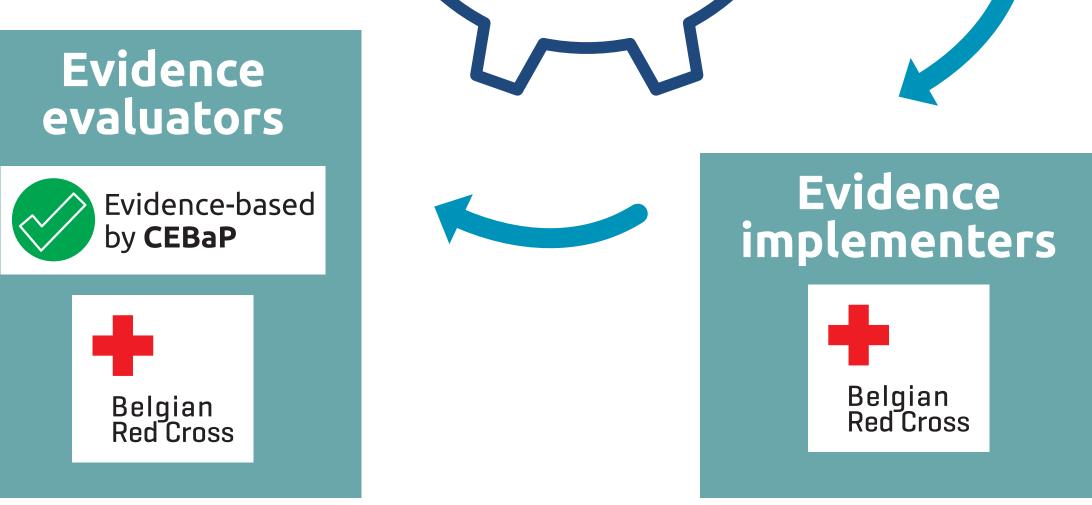
Disseminating systematic

face-to-face stakeholder

- social media
- conferences [6]
- peer-reviewed publications[2], [7]

Target group: lay people, volunteers, other Red Cross societies or NGOs, academic institutions, funding or governmental bodies.

Measuring output, outcome and impact indicators in BRC WASH programs + appropriate data-analysis (sample size calculation, statistical analysis) (Type A).



Incorporating SR results in BRC WASH programs:

- Community involvement
- Adding elements of psychosocial theory
- Barriers and facilitators of implementation

Conclusions

- The Evidence Ecosystem demonstrates that the EBP principles are succesfully implemented in the International Cooperation Department of the BRC.
- A top-down managerial focus on EBP increased the awareness of all employees and volunteers and resulted in a positive attitude towards EBP.
 This evidence-based approach further supports the quality of BRC research projects, will result in more (cost-)effective interventions, ultimately benefitting the beneficiaries of these projects/programs.

References: [1] http://magicproject.org/research-and-tools/the-evidence-ecosystem [2] De Buck et al. Campbell Systematic Reviews 2017:7; [3] 5-7 December (Geneva, Switzerland), 20 stakeholders: 12 development practitioners and consultants (Red Cross UK/Malawi/Netherlands/Philippines, WaterAid, Oxfam, WSUP, Helvetas), 3 policy-makers (IFRC, ICRC, World Bank), 1 topic expert (LSHTM) and 4 donors (WSSCC, 3ie, BRC); [4] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nofUO3IOn7Q; [5] websites of 3ie (www.3ieimpact.org), WSSCC (www.wsscc.org), Campbell Collaboration (www.campbellcollaboration.org) and CEBaP (www.cebap.org); [6] Emergency environmental health forum 2017 (Kathmandu, Nepal), Cochrane Colloquium 2016 (Seoul, South Korea), European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry 2017 (Leuven, Belgium), Global Evidence Summit 2017 (Cape Town, South Africa), Water Engineering and Development Centre conference 2017 (Loughborough, United Kingdom); European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health 2017 (Antwerp, Belgium); [7] De Buck et al. Int J Environ

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