

What happened next? Impact analysis of presentations from MSF Scientific Days 2020



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Background

Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) Scientific Days is an annual conference that showcases research and innovation from across MSF and partner organisations. The aim is to share and learn from others, encourage discussion and debate, and ultimately improve the quality of care provided to patients and populations. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all events took place online, and we were joined by over 2500 people from 108 countries.

Tracking the impact of research has increasing ethical importance. One year after being presented at the MSF Scientific Days, we explore the impact of the research and innovation projects that were presented.

Methods

In February 2020, 21 people that presented their research studies or innovation projects at Scientific Days 2020 were asked to complete a short online survey. Each presenter was asked to report: whether their project had been further disseminated, and in what format; whether the study/project impacted programmes or policies; and whether presentation at the event was of value. Follow up emails were sent to those that did not respond initially. Data from the research and innovation days were analysed separately in Microsoft Excel.



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Conclusions

Most research and innovation projects were disseminated beyond the MSF Scientific Days and impacted on programming, policy or other aspects. Two-way discussions with the community, support from working groups, and the engagement and momentum of MSF enabled projects to have an impact, while the COVID-19 pandemic was a barrier to several projects.

Results

Figure 1. Number of presenters from each day that reported an impact on policies or programmes

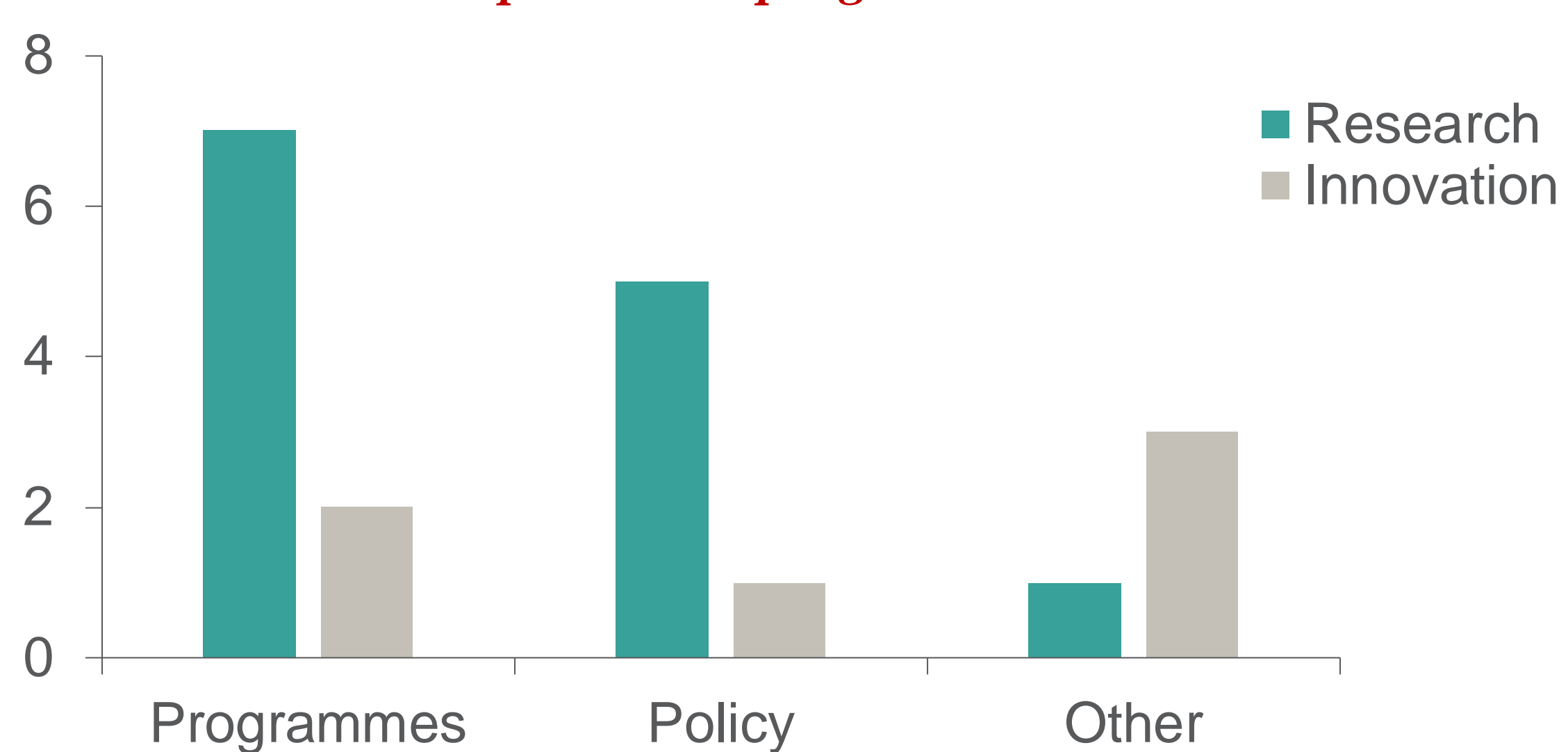


Figure 2. Examples of impacts of research studies and innovation projects

Research studies	Innovation projects
Programmes: scale-up of differentiated service delivery	Programmes: Mainstreaming of the innovation in MSF Watsan operations
Policy: adaptation of guidelines within a national programme around person-centred care	Policy: Revision of water quality monitoring recommendations
Other: Expansion of collaboration with community workers from Ministry of Health	Other: Increase in sustainability of activities at the organisational level of MSF

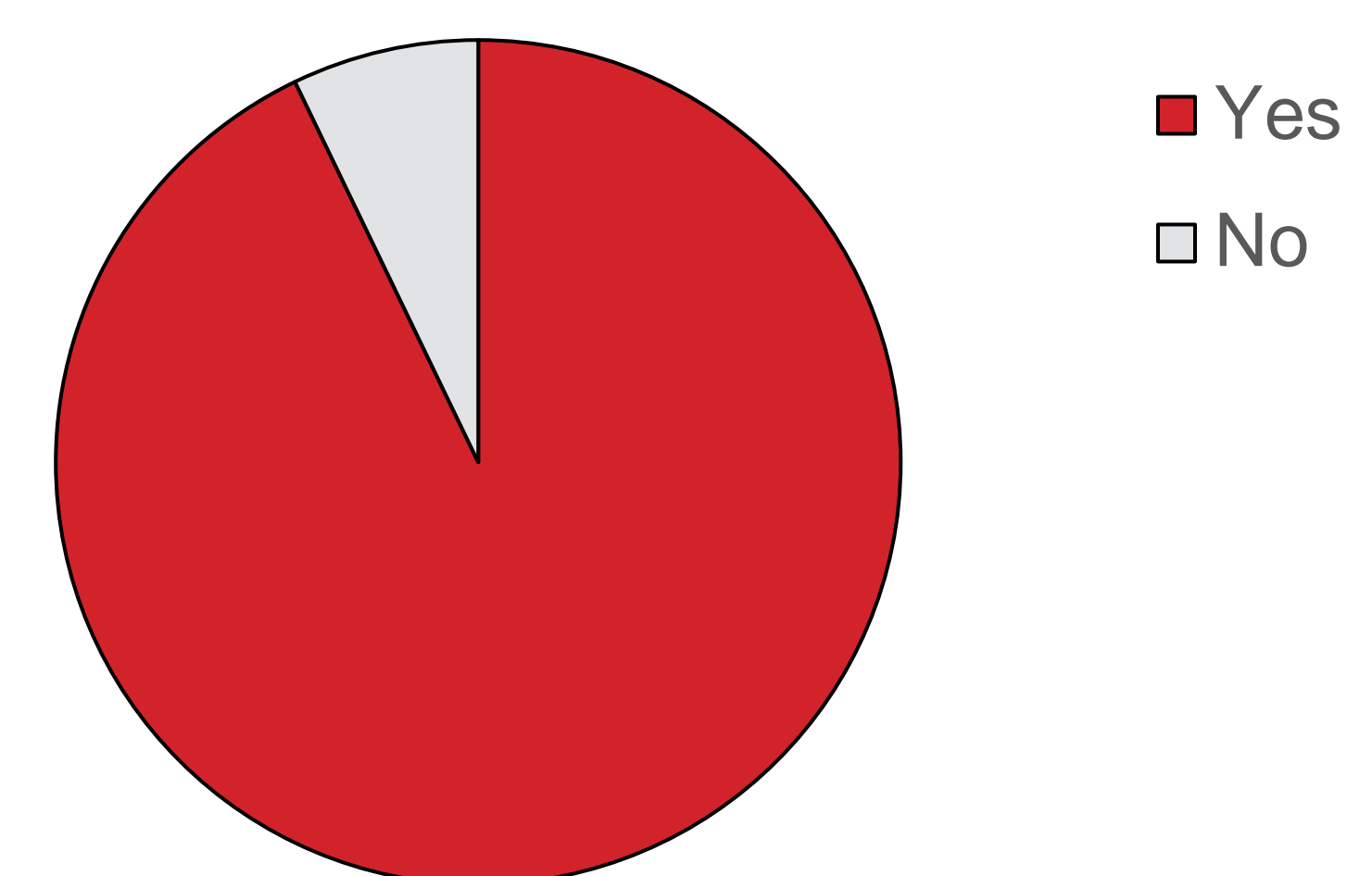
Impact

Research: 9 (90%) respondents reported an impact, with 1 (11%) unsure. Of respondents reporting an impact, 7 (78%) impacted MSF or external programming, 5 (56%) MSF or external policy, and 1 (11%) had other impacts.

Innovation: 3 (75%) respondents reported an impact, and 1 (25%) did not respond. Of respondents reporting an impact, 2 (67%) impacted MSF or external programming, 1 (33%) MSF or external policy, and all 3 (100%) reported other impacts.

Overall, 10 of 12 (83%) people responded from the research day, and 4 of 9 (44%) from the innovation day. 7 (50%) studies were completed and 7 (50%) were ongoing.

Figure 3. Proportion of respondents that said a presentation at MSF Scientific Days benefited their project



Wider dissemination

Research Day: 5 of 9 (56%) presenters reported dissemination of their studies elsewhere. Of these, 2 (40%) reported presentation at another scientific conference, 3 (60%) reported publication in a scientific journal or press release, and 1 (20%) reported wider dissemination through roundtable discussions. 4 of 9 (44%) presenters are currently preparing a manuscript.

Innovation Day: 3 of 4 (75%) presenters reported that their projects had been disseminated elsewhere. Of these, all 3 (100%) reported presentation at a scientific conference, 1 reported publication in a scientific journal (33%) and 1 (33%) reported wider dissemination through webinars, association meetings and external meetings.

Limitations

- Results may not be representative of all oral presentations due to the low response rate for the survey.
- Posters and innovation demonstrations presented orally were excluded, limiting the generalisability of results to studies presented at Scientific Days.
- Achieving impact takes time and therefore impacts of these studies may not yet be apparent.
- Research presented at the Scientific Days is highly selected, and therefore this analysis is not representative of impact for MSF research overall.

Acknowledgements

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