

## HERE-Geneva: Reflections on the 10-Year Review and the Way Forward

### Geneva, May 2025

HERE-Geneva marked its tenth anniversary in late 2024. To independently assess how well we have fulfilled our mandate to close the gap between policy and humanitarian practice, HERE's Board of Trustees commissioned an external review of our work. This note shares HERE-Geneva's key takeaways and forward-looking reflections in response to the 10-year review conducted by Humentum. The review, provided to us in March 2025, when humanitarianism was under extreme stress with the recent decisions of the USA and other key donors to withdraw and reduce funding, has served to strengthen HERE's commitment to play a key role in ensuring that lessons learnt from HERE's work with partners, translates into practice in the humanitarian sector within a realistic but ambitious timeline.

### Overall Appreciation

- **A clear, thorough report with valuable insights on our work, strategy alignment and influence.** HERE-Geneva welcomes the review for its clarity, thoroughness, and valuable insights. Its organisation around four interconnected thematic areas—strategic alignment, research and influence, audience engagement, and exchange and convening—provides a useful framework for understanding how HERE has carried out its mission and strategy since its founding. The articulation of four types of influence—instrumental, conceptual, agenda-setting, and network—offers a clear lens through which to assess our current and future impact. Notably, the review revealed that our influence has, at times, exceeded our own awareness.
- **The review recognises HERE's high performing team, quality output, and our strategic convening of partners.** We are pleased that the review recognises the high calibre and commitment of our team, the collaborative spirit of our work, and our alignment with strategic priorities. It also highlights the formidable quality and volume of output produced by a core team of just 5.5 full-time staff or fewer. In terms of our convening role, we value the recognition of our evolution from “foundational dialogue to strategic convening,” which accurately captures how dialogue has become a central element of both our research and partner engagement.
- **The report stresses the need to safeguard HERE's independence, to ensure that all work is aligned with our strategic intent, to HERE's Theory of Change, to explore more diverse financing opportunities, and to expand partnerships beyond Geneva.** Many of the issues raised in the review resonate with our ongoing internal reflections. These include the importance of safeguarding our independence—particularly in the face of shrinking core funding opportunities—the need to ensure that commissioned assignments align with our agenda and strategy, and the tension between offering concrete, immediate recommendations versus contributing to long-term systemic change. We acknowledge the need to expand our research partnerships beyond Geneva, working more closely with institutions and individuals in regions closer to crisis-affected communities.

### The Way Forward

- **The recommendations will influence HERE's next strategy for short and long-term influence.** The review's findings are timely and will inform the development of our strategic direction for the future. Its recommendations provide solid recommendations to strengthen HERE's work, influence, and relationships with partners and donors. Several recommendations—such as refining our Theory of Change to better communicate our vision externally—will be incorporated into our new strategy. The report's recommendations will receive our full attention in developing our new strategy (2026-2029). Their feasibility will be examined in relation to the current dynamic context and our resources.
- **HERE's role as a humanitarian think tank is vital in the rapidly changing humanitarian context.** The report's insights arrive at a moment of unprecedented challenge for the humanitarian sector, as drastic funding reductions demand a fundamental rethinking of structure, operations, and overall effectiveness. If there were ever a time for a humanitarian think tank to provide analysis, foster collective reflection, and help chart a path forward, it is now. In the weeks and months ahead, we will integrate the review's analysis into our work and explore the internal changes needed to remain relevant and continue demonstrating our added value.