

**global  
humanitarian  
assistance  
report 2021**

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Colombia, 2020

As Colombia braced for the arrival of Covid-19, MedGlobal volunteers provided basic medical care to nearly 1,500 Venezuelan refugees and internally displaced Colombians living on the outskirts of Cúcuta.

Credit: MedGlobal Colombia Medical Brigade March 2020



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# acknowledgements

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**thank you**



Ethiopia, 2021

Misra is a teacher at one of the temporary learning spaces in Qoolji established by the IRC through EU funding. She provides Somali and English lessons to displaced children in the camp.

Credit: Mekbib Tadesse/IRC  
(with project funding from the EU)



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# foreword

## overlapping crises increase risk to the most vulnerable

The *Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) Report 2021* continues to provide a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of the global financing landscape for humanitarian response. Our analysis highlights how persistent underfunding of humanitarian response became more acute in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, existing humanitarian need was compounded by the impacts of the pandemic, inhibiting people from breaking out of a cycle of crisis, as the number of countries experiencing protracted crisis continued to grow. Others were drawn into crisis for the first time because of the pandemic.

The unanticipated shock of the Covid-19 pandemic intensified the strain on a humanitarian system struggling to cope with existing challenges. The number of UN-coordinated appeals rose from 36 in 2019 to 55 in 2020. At the same time, the financial foundations on which the humanitarian system rests were also threatened as global recession driven by the Covid-19 pandemic weakened the economies of donor nations. While some donors sustained and even increased humanitarian funding in 2020, significant cuts are evident, highlighting the fragility of a system dependent on a small number of donors for a large portion of its support.

As we consistently highlight in our GHA reports, the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable people are those most threatened by crisis, whether caused by global pandemics, disasters associated with natural hazards or political instability. There is a basic moral imperative to assist those in need. As the Covid-19 pandemic has starkly highlighted, and as climate change will increasingly show, in our interconnected world we cannot afford to turn inwards. Global stability and prosperity are in all our interests. This requires a collective commitment to financing humanitarian assistance sufficiently, and to support long-term development. In response to the pandemic, this commitment is needed for vaccinations and to support those suffering further waves of infection. But it is also needed for wider crisis recovery and resilience-building against future shocks, not least the impacts of climate change.

People vulnerable to crisis often face multiple risks. As we highlight in this year's report ([Chapter 1](#)), extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile countries particularly at risk from systemic shocks – both sudden, like Covid-19, and slower in onset, like climate change. Within local populations, the exposure to risks and the impacts of crisis can be greater for particular groups, such as young women and girls. This means responses must be tailored for and targeted to the needs of these more vulnerable groups. It also means that we must be able to monitor the sufficiency and effectiveness of these responses. For this, we need more and better disaggregated and real-time data.

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For humanitarians, the imperative is to respond to urgent need wherever it arises. However, the intersection of factors driving crises, particularly the overlaying of poverty and fragility, means that those supporting longer-term recovery and resilience need to engage in crisis settings. As we highlight in the report (Chapters 2 and 3), where we examine the roles of wider development finance and multilateral development banks, and in other recent research,<sup>1</sup> there are some encouraging shifts in this regard. However, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors need to do much more to deliver coherent, efficient and joined-up programming in crisis settings.

With little prospect of humanitarian need reducing, accelerating the pace of long-called-for reform within the humanitarian system is critical. As the *GHA Report 2021* highlights, through unique analysis on localisation, unearmarked funding, cash programming and multi-year funding, progress over the five years of the Grand Bargain has been faltering. The Grand Bargain 2.0 must deliver. Positive small-scale shifts in how financing is organised and delivered, for instance through pre-arranged financing and anticipatory and early action, need to be taken to scale.

Development Initiatives will continue to provide independent, data-driven analysis to support these urgent reforms. This includes technical guidance to enable improvements to the reporting and monitoring of crisis financing. As ever, we welcome feedback from our readers and hope that our analysis and technical guidance will help our partners to respond more effectively to the needs of people affected by crisis.

Thank you for your interest.

**Harpinder Collacott**  
Chief Executive Officer





Bangladesh, 2020

Rohingya women produce masks in UN Women-AAB Multi-Purpose Women Centre, Cox's Bazar, to protect their community from Covid-19 and earn an income to support their families.

Credit: Nadira Islam/UN Women



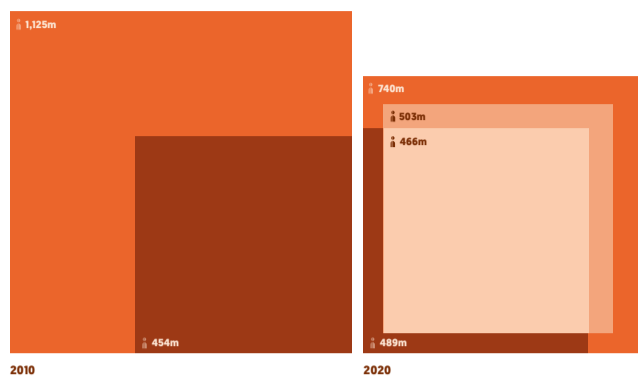
# **executive summary**

# humanitarian assistance in numbers

## crisis risks and vulnerabilities

2010 vs 2020

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of people living in **extreme poverty in non-fragile states** decreased 63% but the number of people living in **extreme poverty in fragile states** increased 9%.

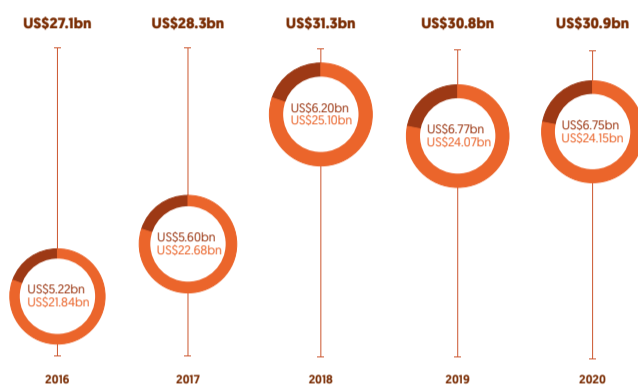


■ number of people living in extreme poverty  
 ■ number of people living in extreme poverty in fragile states  
 ■ number of people living in extreme poverty in countries with high risk of impacts from Covid-19  
 ■ number of people living in extreme poverty in fragile states and countries with high risk of impacts from Covid-19

## international humanitarian response\*

2016–2020

● governments and EU institutions ● private

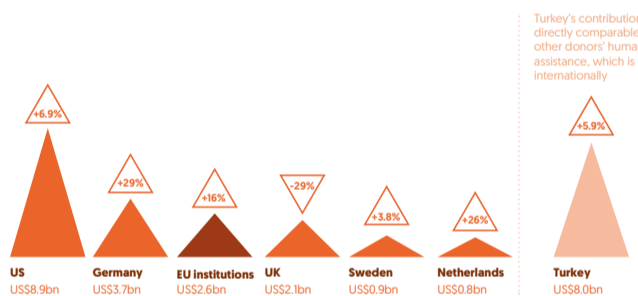


## where does it come from?

2020

largest five donors by volume\*\*

▲ % change, 2019–2020

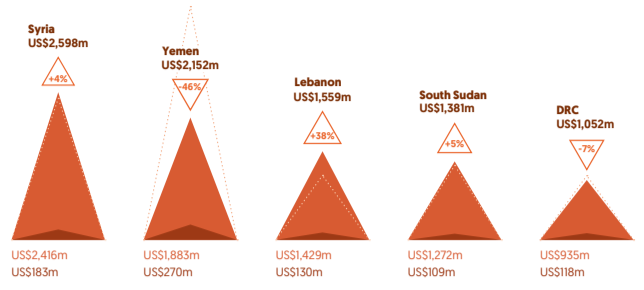


## where is it going?

largest five recipients by volume

2020

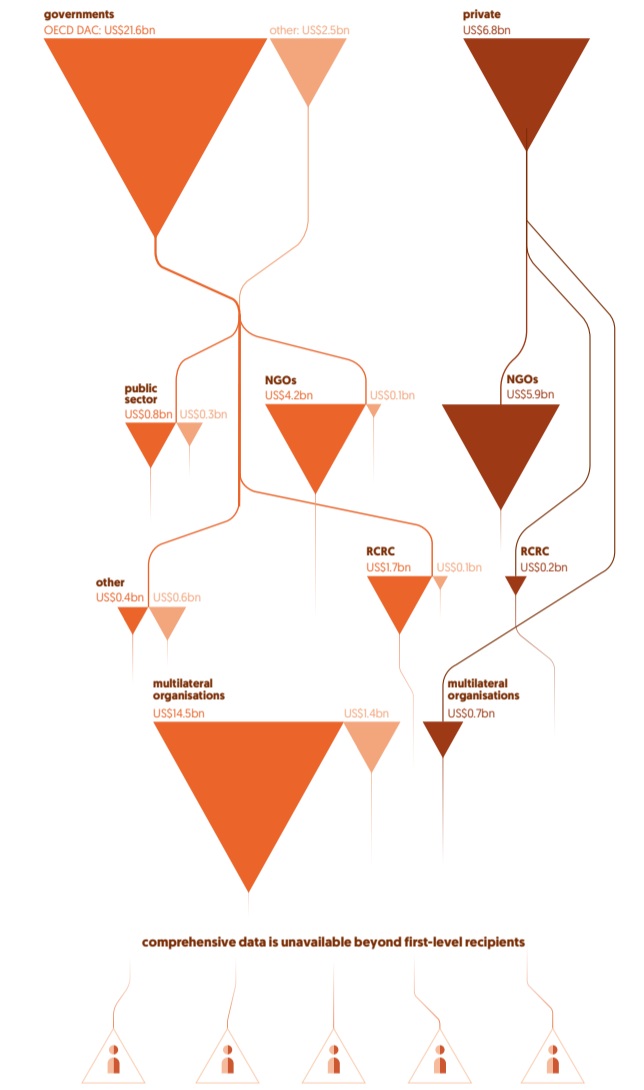
▲ funding for Covid-19 response  
 ● 2019 total funding  
 ▲ % change, 2019–2020



## how does it get there?

funding channels

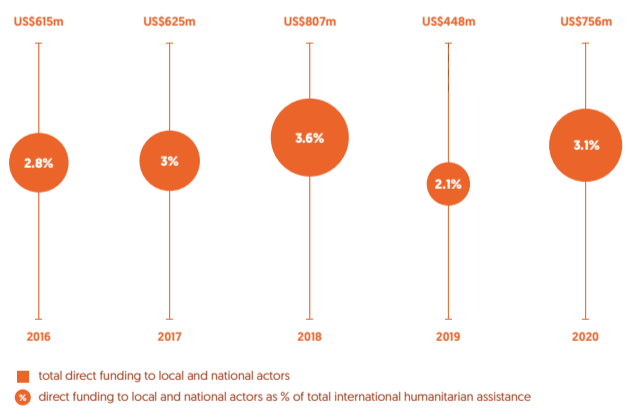
2019



## efficiency and effectiveness: what progress is being made on the Grand Bargain?

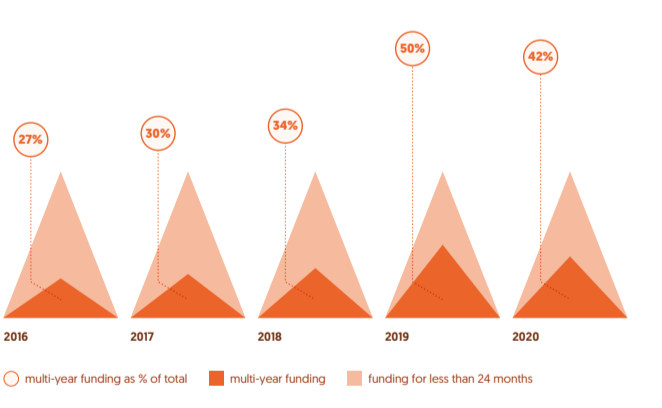
### direct funding to local and national actors

2016–2020



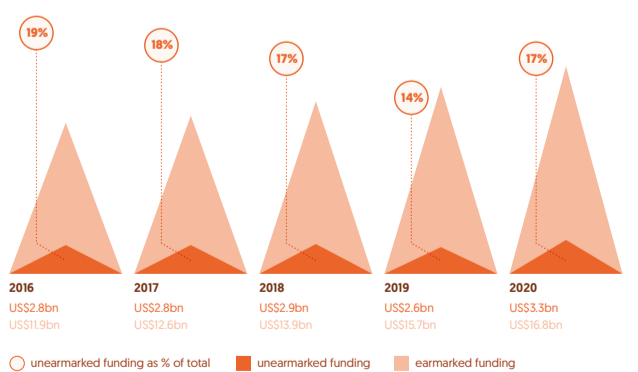
### multi-year funding

2016–2020



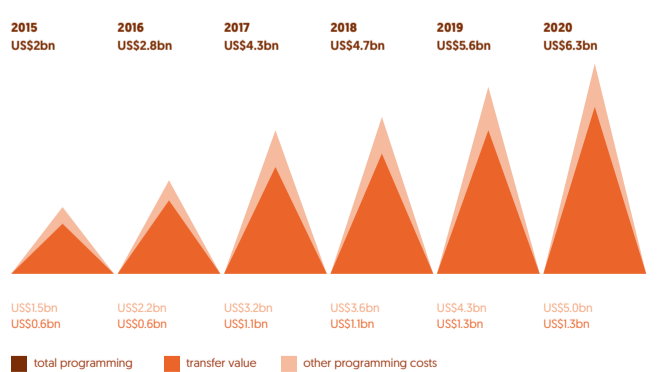
### unearmarked funding

2016–2020



### cash and voucher assistance

2015–2020



Notes: 2020 data is preliminary. Data is in constant 2019 prices. \*Data consists only of humanitarian assistance directed internationally by donors. \*\*Contributions of EU member states include an imputed amount of their expenditure [see our online 'Methodology and definitions', Chapter 5]. EU institutions are also included separately for comparison and are shaded differently to distinguish from government donors. Turkey is shaded differently because the humanitarian assistance it voluntarily reports to the DAC is largely expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey, and so not strictly comparable with the international humanitarian assistance from other donors in this figure.

For full sources and full notes see Figures 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7.

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## executive summary

The *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021* looks at an exceptional year. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic gripped the world, compounding existing needs and fuelling new crises. Millions more people became in need of humanitarian assistance, and the number of UN humanitarian appeals rose by more than half [from 36 in 2019 to 55 in 2020]. Yet, international humanitarian assistance has flatlined for a second consecutive year.

Needs emanating from the impacts of Covid-19 are diverting resources away from other needs, although both are woefully underfunded – far too many people are going without vital support. How the financing response has played out exposes the weaknesses in the current system and its ability to meet people's needs, as well as highlighting the key role of non-humanitarian actors in crisis contexts to ensure an effective response and recovery. This report sheds light on the current crisis financing landscape, what progress has been made, and where attention must be focused if we are to realise the aim of building back better.

### **The impacts of Covid-19 on top of existing crises meant humanitarian needs were higher and further reaching than ever in 2020.**

- In 2020, an estimated 243.8 million people living in 75 countries were assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance. This is an additional 19 million people and 10 more countries compared with 2019. Seven countries had the equivalent of over half their populations in need.
- The number of countries experiencing protracted crisis has doubled to 34 in the last six years.<sup>1</sup> Populations living in these countries have an average single-dose vaccination rate of 2.4%, considerably lower than the rate of 12.5% for other developing countries.
- The number of displaced people continued to grow, up 3.4% to 82.1 million, with more than half living in countries at high risk from the impacts of Covid-19.
- The vulnerability of women and girls in humanitarian settings is being compounded by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, our research highlights that they are often missing in data, limiting how well their current and future needs can be met.

### **The implications for poverty reduction are significant, with extreme poverty rising in fragile states over the last decade.**

Poverty and crisis have always been inextricably linked, and this relationship stands stark in the current context. The poorest populations in fragile states, countries inherently vulnerable to shocks, have the least capacity to manage when crisis hits. While many countries are starting to focus their sights on pandemic recovery, the poorest populations are falling behind.

Between 2010 and 2020, extreme poverty in fragile states grew 8% while falling 63% in non-fragile states.<sup>2</sup> Fragile countries now account for two thirds of the world's people experiencing extreme poverty.

- Almost all people in extreme poverty living in fragile countries are in places identified as being at either high or very high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 
- Covid-19 has increased food insecurity, something that disproportionately impacts people in poverty and is driving greater humanitarian needs. Our analysis shows that, in regions where there is a food crisis, emergency or famine, 82% of the population live below the international poverty line [\$3.20 a day].

Against this backdrop of rising, complex and intersecting needs of people living in countries affected by crisis, we look at the financing response.

**In 2020, international humanitarian assistance plateaued at US\$30.9 billion and support for non-Covid humanitarian needs fell.**

This report's unique analysis shows that, despite unprecedented need, international humanitarian assistance has flatlined. International humanitarian assistance had been growing by an average 12% per year between 2012 and 2018, putting the last two years at odds with earlier trends.

- Between 2019 and 2020, international humanitarian assistance from governments and EU institutions stagnated at US\$24.1 billion, as the UK reduced contributions by almost a third (29%) and Saudi Arabia reduced contributions by more than half (53%).
- 14 of 20 public donors increased funding and Germany stepped up contributions the most, by 29%. However, all donors except Switzerland reduced their levels of funding for humanitarian needs not related to Covid-19, compared to 2019.
- Funding from private donors also stalled in 2020, at US\$6.7 billion.

**Record levels of humanitarian need were met by record shortfalls in funding, with Yemen worst hit.**

UN-coordinated appeals show the scale of need and adequacy of the funding response.

- UN-coordinated appeal requirements grew by 27% in 2020, reaching a record US\$38.8 billion. Appeal requirements for countries experiencing protracted crisis in 2020 grew on average by 39% compared to 2019. The number of appeals also grew, from 36 to 55, 17 of which were solely in response to the impacts of the pandemic.
- These appeals were only 52% funded overall, resulting in the largest funding shortfall ever seen of US\$18.8 billion. Within that, requirements related to Covid-19 were even worse funded, having just 40% of required funding provided.

The ten largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance remain largely unchanged, but their share of total funding has gone down to its lowest level in a decade. Billions have been diverted towards humanitarian impacts of the pandemic, although this funding also fell far short of amounts needed.

- This group of countries received 57% of total international humanitarian assistance in 2020, down from 66% in 2019.
- They received US\$3.0 billion less for needs not related to Covid-19 in 2020 than in 2019, showing that their funding was diverted due to the pandemic.
- Yemen in particular saw a significant drop in total funding received, of US\$1.9 billion from the year before.

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Chronic and growing underfunding alongside the increasingly long-term nature of crises makes it critical to join up humanitarian, development and peacebuilding responses. It is also crucial to harness different types of finance, ensuring their coherence with humanitarian responses to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations.

**Development actors, including multilateral development banks, have become increasingly active in countries experiencing crisis, and are delivering a growing proportion of assistance in the form of loans.**

Official development assistance (ODA) to countries experiencing crisis has sharply increased in recent years. While humanitarian ODA is growing, development ODA remains the largest source of international assistance.

- Total ODA to countries experiencing crisis has risen from 47% of total country-allocable ODA (US\$51 billion) in 2010 to 65% (US\$94 billion) in 2019.
- Multilateral development banks play an increasingly important role in crisis contexts, with a growing suite of specifically designed crisis response financing mechanisms. For example, the World Bank's Crisis Response Window disbursed US\$3.0 billion between 2011 and 2018, in response to 27 crises.
- Financing from multilateral development banks to countries experiencing crisis is increasingly in the form of loans, which have more than doubled in volume over the last decade, to 87% of total ODA from multilateral development banks to the 20 largest recipients of humanitarian assistance.
- While allocating significant volumes of finance for crisis response, development actors can be slow to provide it. For example, within six crisis case studies, the World Bank committed 43% (US\$1.9 billion) of financing, yet after 18 months had disbursed only 28% of this.

It is not possible to track development finance flows in the same way as humanitarian flows, especially at subnational level. Improved data availability in this regard would help to enhance the coherence and coordination of development and humanitarian responses, and the overall effectiveness and efficiency of assistance to countries in crisis.

**Covid-19 has increased impetus for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian response. There has been some promising progress on this, but Grand Bargain commitments remain far from being met.**

- Unearmarked funding enables more flexible and responsive programming, and increased significantly to nine UN agencies to a record US\$3.3 billion. However, this falls short of the target of 30% of all funding by 2020, being just 17% of the total received by these nine UN agencies.
- Multi-year funding is crucial to giving agencies predictable levels of resources. In 2020, it fell from 53% to 42%, but overall growth over the last five years has been significant – up from just 27% in 2016.
- Humanitarian assistance in the form of cash and vouchers rose for a fifth consecutive year in 2020, and was often the delivery mode of choice during the Covid-19 pandemic response.

- 
- Significant improvements to transparency have been made through the Grand Bargain, with more and better-quality publishing to the International Aid Transparency Initiative. However, a continued commitment to further improvements is required to monitor progress and enable accountability. For key Grand Bargain commitments, there is still a lack of comprehensive, publicly available data. Development Initiatives has had to independently collect data on unearmarked and multi-year funding, and cash and voucher assistance.

**Setting out the financing response to crisis in 2020 serves as a stark reminder of the unprecedented global challenges we now face.**

The humanitarian system was struggling even before the pandemic. There has always been less financing available than needed, and too much reliance on reacting when crisis hits rather than anticipating and reducing risk from shocks. Covid-19 would have likely placed unmanageable strain on even the most effective system, and it has thrown current weaknesses into the spotlight. To build back better, to provide support to all people experiencing crisis when they need it most, progress in reforming the delivery of humanitarian assistance needs to be consolidated and accelerated. This needs to be accompanied by and coordinated with more effective development and peacebuilding interventions in countries experiencing crisis. The data and analysis set out in this report provide a comprehensive evidence base on humanitarian assistance to help show where attention and action is needed, and facilitate accountability for those we rely on to make greater progress.



Sudan, 2020

Portable handwashing facilities for homeless persons have been set up in Khartoum as part of the International Organization for Migration's emergency response to Covid-19.

Credit: Yasir Elbakri/IOM Sudan



منظمة صندوق إعانة الرعس  
International Relief and Development

وزارة الصحة الاتحادية

### أعراض فيروس كورونا

سعال  
حمى في الحلق  
ضيق وصعوبة في التنفس  
صداع

### لوقاية من فيروس كورونا

تجنب مخالطة أي شخص لديه أعراض نزلة برد أو أنفلونزا.  
عند السعال والعطس قم بتغطية الأنف والفم بالتمديل أو العطس داخل الكوع.  
اغسل يديك بالماء والصابون جيداً أو معقم يدين كحولي.

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# chapter 1

## people and crisis

People living in poverty are disproportionately at risk of experiencing humanitarian crisis. Those living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.90 a day), with reduced capacity to manage and respond to shocks, are increasingly concentrated in countries facing intersecting vulnerabilities, living in fragile states and at high risk from the impacts of Covid-19.<sup>1</sup>

In 2020, 66% of people living in extreme poverty also lived in fragile countries. Nearly all (95%) of people living in extreme poverty in fragile states were in countries at high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic shocks of the pandemic have exacerbated rising food insecurity, with people living in poverty disproportionately affected. Over 80% of people living in areas experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) are estimated to live below the international poverty line of \$3.20 a day.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic both compounded existing need and fuelled new crises in countries not previously in need of humanitarian assistance, with increases in both the total number of people requiring humanitarian assistance and the number of countries experiencing humanitarian crisis. An estimated 243.8 million people living in 75 countries were assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2020, 14 countries had UN-coordinated appeals solely to address needs related to Covid-19.

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated need in many existing crises. The number of countries experiencing protracted crisis grew from 31 in 2019 to 34 in 2020.<sup>2</sup> Of these 34 countries, 25 were assessed to be at high or very high risk from the impacts of Covid-19. Despite this high level of risk, countries experiencing protracted crisis have some of the lowest rates of Covid-19 vaccination coverage in the world. In May 2021, populations living in countries experiencing protracted crisis have an average single-dose vaccination rate of just 2.4%. In other developing countries covered by the COVAX scheme, this rate is 12.5%.

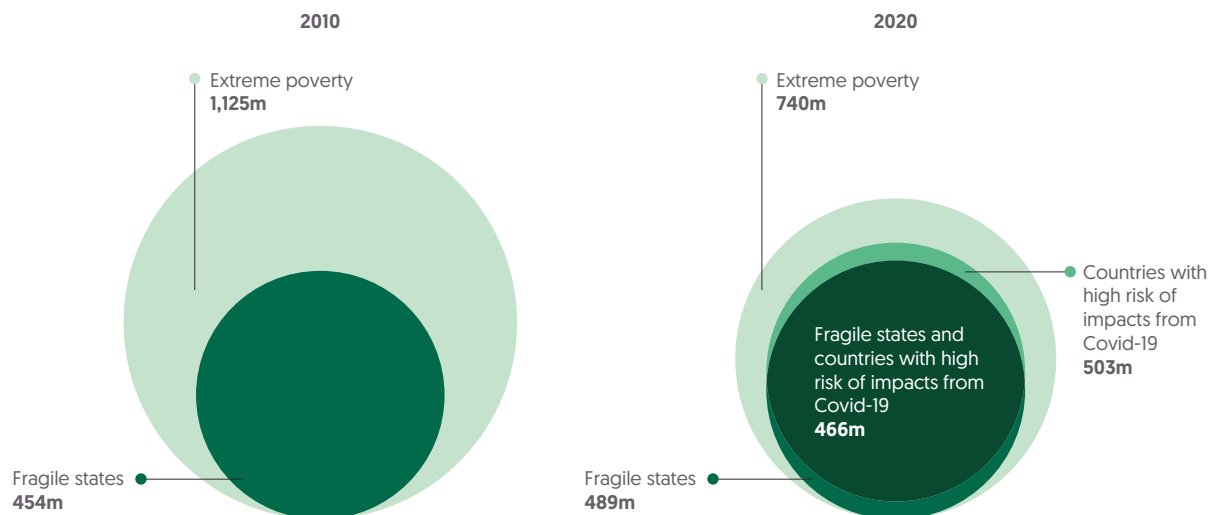
The numbers of displaced people in the world grew for the ninth consecutive year. In 2020, the total number of displaced people increased to 82.1 million (a 3.4% rise). More than half (52%) of displaced people lived in countries at very high or high risk from the impacts of Covid-19. Exposure to the risks of the Covid-19 pandemic is particularly stark for people displaced in sub-Saharan Africa, where 99% of the displaced people were living in countries assessed to be at high or very high risk of the impacts of Covid-19.

## crisis risks and vulnerabilities

**Figure 1.1**

People living in extreme poverty are increasingly concentrated in fragile countries at high risk from the impacts of Covid-19

Number of people living in extreme poverty in fragile states and/or countries with high risk of impacts from Covid-19, 2010 vs 2020



People living in extreme poverty are often the most vulnerable to shocks. By definition, those living in extreme poverty have very low socioeconomic resilience but they also often have limited access to the services and infrastructure that can help when shocks occur. When shocks overwhelm communities and crisis develops, the heightened vulnerability of people living in poverty makes recovery from crisis situations harder to achieve, with increasing numbers of countries experiencing protracted crises.<sup>3</sup>

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the challenges posed by systemic shocks to the current systems and structures of humanitarian and wider development assistance.<sup>4</sup> The complex immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic, beyond the immediate health crisis, have highlighted the importance of a coordinated response, and one that coherently addresses both immediate needs and the underlying causes and drivers of crisis. This requires better coordination and collaboration between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance – as outlined for instance in the nexus recommendation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC) – and engagement and partnership among actors with differing expertise in crisis contexts [see section entitled, '[Global development funding and the role of multilateral development banks](#)', Chapter 2; and section entitled, '[Multilateral development bank financing to countries experiencing crisis](#)', Chapter 3].

**Source:** Development Initiatives based on World Bank PovcalNet, national sources, INFORM Index for COVID Risk and OECD.

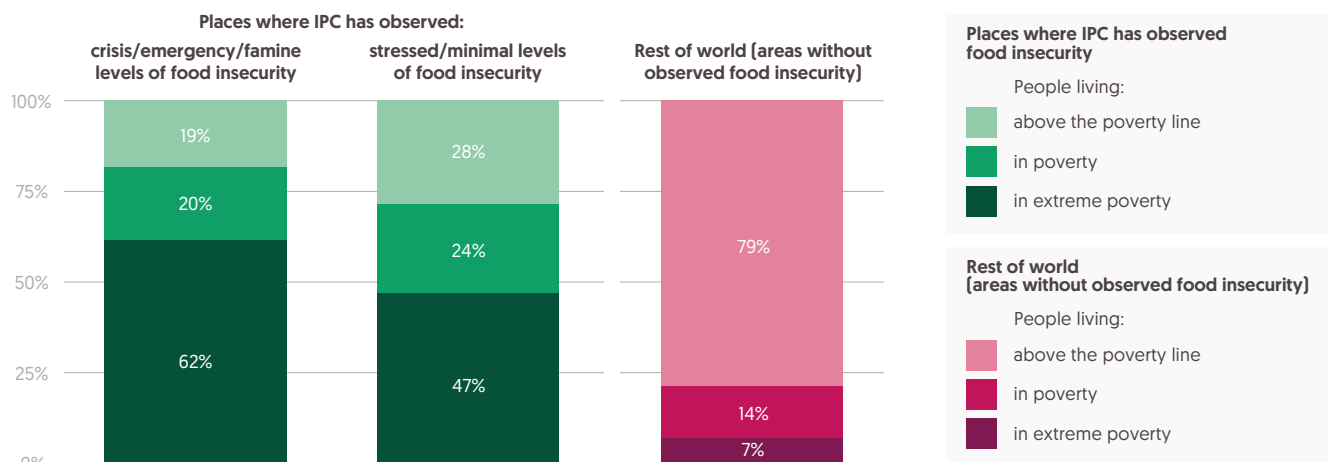
**Notes:** Fragile states are 52 countries classified as 'fragile' or 'extremely fragile' in 2016, 2018 and 2020 by OECD States of Fragility reports. People living in extreme poverty are defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP).

People living in extreme poverty, with reduced capacity to manage and respond to shocks, are increasingly concentrated in countries facing intersecting vulnerabilities. They often live in fragile countries, at high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and already experiencing protracted crisis.

- Many people living in extreme poverty are already experiencing humanitarian crisis. In 2020, of the 52 countries identified as consistently fragile, 36 had UN-coordinated humanitarian appeals and 28 were experiencing protracted crisis.
- People living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.90 a day) are increasingly concentrated in fragile countries. In 2010, 40% of the world's poorest people lived in fragile countries. By 2020, this share had risen to 66%.
- This increased concentration has been driven by unequal progress in poverty reduction, which has disproportionately occurred in countries that are not fragile. The total number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen from 1.1 billion in 2010 to 740 million in 2020. However, the number of people experiencing extreme poverty in fragile states grew by 8%, while in non-fragile states it fell by 63%.
- Those experiencing extreme poverty are more susceptible to intersecting risks: 95% of people (466 million of 489 million) experiencing extreme poverty and living in fragile countries are in countries identified as being at either 'high' or 'very high' risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

**Figure 1.2**  
Acute food insecurity disproportionately impacts the poorest

Percentage of people living in poverty and extreme poverty in places where there is food insecurity



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), demographic health surveys, UNICEF multiple indicator cluster surveys, World Bank PovcalNet and national sources.

**Notes:** Acute food insecurity score based on average mapped phase for subnational regions analysed by IPC, 2019–2021. Food insecurity phase and poverty data are aggregated to the lowest common administrative subnational level with representative data; where no representative subnational poverty data exists at any level, the national average is used; where subnational data does not align exactly, the closest match is used. Subnational poverty data is estimated using the approach described by the P20 initiative.

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High and rising rates of food insecurity in recent years have been exacerbated by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic,<sup>5</sup> with the risk that food insecurity will become an even more significant driver of humanitarian need.<sup>6</sup>

- In 30 countries with subnational regions classified by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system<sup>7</sup> as being in Phase 3 or above (facing crisis, emergency or catastrophe/famine), almost half of these countries (14) were already experiencing protracted crisis in 2020.

IPC analysis includes 425 million people, of which 142 million live in areas with an IPC classification of 'Crisis' or higher (Phase 3 or above). People living in poverty, who often have reduced capacity to cope with shocks, are disproportionately represented in areas of severe food insecurity.

- Of the 142 million people living in subnational regions identified as experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), over three fifths (62%, or 87.5 million people) are estimated to be living below the extreme poverty line. This compares to 47% in areas which are Phase 1 or 2, and just 7% of the rest of the world with no observed acute food insecurity.
- Over 80% of people living in areas experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) are estimated to live below the international poverty line of \$3.20 a day: 10 percentage points higher than for those living in Phase 1 and 2 areas. By contrast, just 22% of the rest of the world's population lives below the \$3.20 a day poverty line.
- Subnational regions experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) have consistently and significantly higher poverty rates than those at lower phases within the same country.



### Box 1.1

#### Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and girls

Information available on the experience of women and girls in humanitarian crisis settings points to a number of negative trends likely to worsen following the Covid-19 pandemic. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) identified nearly 48 million women and girls, 4 million of them pregnant, in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020.<sup>8</sup> Before the pandemic, estimations of women's and girls' needs in humanitarian settings showed their disproportionate vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV). In its 2021 *Global Humanitarian Overview*, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to report that women and girls in conflict zones are twice as likely as those not affected by conflict to experience GBV.<sup>9</sup> They are also less likely to survive natural hazards than men, and are often the last to get food during droughts.<sup>10</sup>

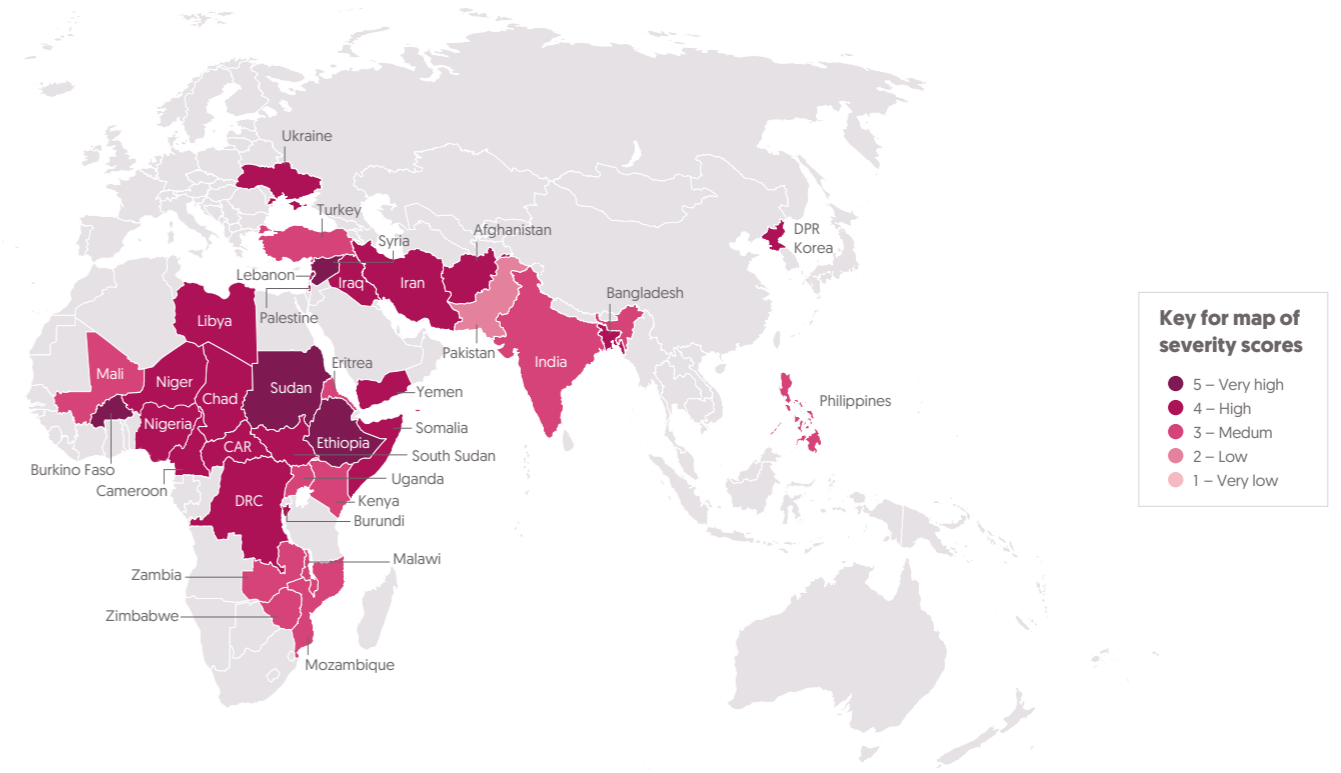
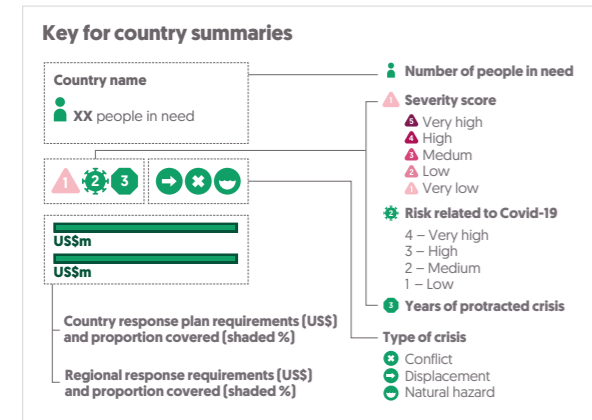
More recent research undertaken during the Covid-19 crisis indicates that this gender gap in humanitarian contexts is likely to increase. UNFPA has highlighted the higher risk of Covid-19 infections in women – as they represent 70% of the global health force – and the long-term challenges to their physical wellbeing that this could pose.<sup>11</sup> UNFPA also warns that the pandemic could result in 13 million child marriages between 2020 and 2030 that otherwise would not have occurred.<sup>12</sup> This concern is echoed by international non-governmental organisation Plan International, which estimates that millions of girls have already opted out of school in 2020 following the financial recession, most of them to alleviate the economic pressure on their families by joining the workforce or getting married at an early age.<sup>13</sup>

Addressing current and future needs of women and girls will require increased efforts in collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data from crisis contexts. The estimations and qualitative evidence mentioned above show worrying trends regarding the impact of Covid-19 on women and girls. However, none of the available estimates or projections on poverty rates identified by Development Initiatives showed a gender disaggregation based on data gathered at an individual level. Estimates based on household-level data, which are otherwise available, necessarily mask gender differences and intra-household inequalities in access to income and resources. Existing poverty statistics that exclusively utilise household-level data cannot accurately measure gender differences in deprivation.

Enhanced reporting of official development assistance specifically targeted to GBV could also make future humanitarian assistance more effective. Donors within the OECD DAC could improve their reporting of gender-related aid, even if this is often implemented as a cross-cutting theme rather than in specific projects, by making better use of codes and markers in the Creditor Reporting System. Development Initiatives' research has identified a gradual increase<sup>14</sup> in the use of the OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker and the marker related to GBV, which can provide a more comprehensive picture of official development assistance aimed at addressing gender needs.

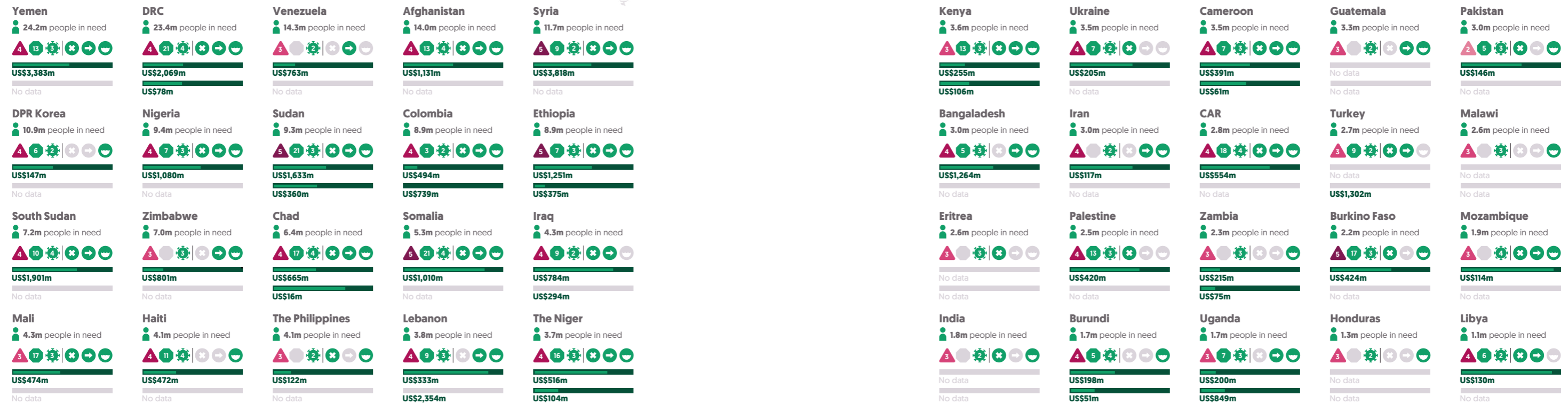
# people affected by crisis

**Figure 1.3**  
The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates humanitarian crises, with more people in more countries affected  
People in need, type and severity of crisis, and funding requirements, 2020



## Country summaries

Ordered by number of people in need



Source: Development Initiatives based on ACAPS, Food and Agriculture Organization, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, INFORM Index for Risk Management, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) data.

Notes: HRP = humanitarian response plan; RRP = regional response plan. Countries selected using ACAPS data and corresponding estimates of people in need. Countries with fewer than an estimated one million people in need are not shown. Level of risk indicates whether these countries are at risk from health and humanitarian impacts of Covid-19 that could overwhelm current national response capacity, and therefore lead to a need for additional international assistance. For further information on coding crisis types see our online 'Methodology and definitions' (Chapter 5). For Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon, data is not available for what proportion of the total regional response requirement under the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan was covered for each country component.

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In 2020, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic compounded existing crises for many people. Protracted, complex crises persisted in Yemen, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. In some contexts, like Iran, the Covid-19 pandemic was the primary driver of humanitarian need. In 2020, the number of people needing humanitarian assistance and the number of countries experiencing humanitarian crisis grew.

- In 2020, an estimated 243.8 million people living in 75 countries were assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance. This compares to 224.9 million people living in 65 countries in 2019.
- The increased level of humanitarian need driven by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 was evident in the number of countries covered by UN-coordinated appeals, which increased from 36 in 2019 to 55 in 2020 [see [Figure 2.2, Chapter 2](#)]. Nearly all country appeals had needs associated with Covid-19, with 14 requiring assistance solely to address the impacts of the pandemic.

Because the Covid-19 pandemic has compounded existing crises in many countries, recovery becomes even more difficult.

- In 2020, the number of countries experiencing protracted crisis grew to 34, from 31 in 2019.
- Of these 34 countries, 25 were assessed to be at high or very high risk from the impacts of Covid-19.

In many countries, people experienced a number of intersecting crisis risks and vulnerabilities (see [Figure 1.1](#)), often resulting in complex crises with different forms of crisis overlaying one another. The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to the challenges posed by conflict, displacement and other disasters associated with natural hazards.

- Among the 40 countries with high levels of humanitarian need (identified as having more than 1 million people in need), two thirds (27 of 40) were assessed to be at 'high' or 'very high' risk of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In many of these countries where the risks from the impacts of the pandemic were high or very high, the Covid-19 pandemic was overlaying an already complex crisis context. Three quarters (20 of 27) of countries experienced more than one form of crisis – conflict, displacement or disasters associated with natural hazards – with more than half experiencing all three (15 of 27).
- In total, among the 40 countries with high levels of humanitarian need, 33 experienced disasters associated with natural hazards, 27 experienced conflict, and 27 experienced displacement.

While the numbers of people and countries affected by crisis grew in 2020, high numbers of people in need continued to be concentrated in a small number of countries.

- More than half of those in need in 2021 lived in just nine countries.
- Six countries each had more than ten million people in need living in their territory: Yemen (24.2 million), DRC (23.4 million), Venezuela (14.3 million), Afghanistan (14 million), Syria (11.7 million) and DPR Korea (10.9 million).
- The numbers in need were largely unchanged from 2019 in most of these countries. However, significantly more people were identified as requiring humanitarian assistance in 2020 in DRC (7.5 million more) and Afghanistan (2.7 million more).

- Among these nine countries, seven are experiencing protracted crisis, the exceptions being Colombia and Venezuela where the growth in the numbers of people in need has been driven by the millions displaced from Venezuela since 2018.

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance relative to the size of a domestic population of a country – noting the limitations of collecting population data in some crisis contexts – can give an indication of the extent of crisis and need.

- In 2020, seven countries had a total number of people in need equivalent to more than half of their domestic populations: Yemen (81%), Eritrea (73%), Syria (67%), South Sudan (64%), CAR (58%), Lebanon (55%) and Venezuela (50%).



### Box 1.2

#### Covid-19 vaccination projections in countries experiencing crisis

The speed and scale of vaccination against Covid-19 are critical to the recovery of individual countries from the pandemic, as well as to the overall global recovery. Countries experiencing crisis, often with reduced capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks, have already suffered from the impacts of Covid-19. Coping with the ongoing impacts of the pandemic is further undermining their capacity to respond to and recover from other shocks. Countries with high levels of fragility and experiencing crisis are disproportionately at risk in this regard (see [Figure 1.1](#)). However, to date, the availability and delivery of vaccines has not been equitable.

Countries experiencing protracted crisis have some of the lowest rates of vaccination coverage in the world. Based on data from Our World In Data in May 2021, populations living in countries experiencing protracted crisis have an average single-dose vaccination rate of just 2.4%; in other developing countries covered by the COVAX scheme, the average rate is 12.5%.<sup>15</sup>

COVAX (or Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access) is a global programme aiming to provide equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines to 92 eligible low- and lower-middle-income countries, and forms part of the Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator.<sup>16</sup> It also includes a humanitarian buffer through which 5% of COVAX's advance market commitment<sup>17</sup> funding will be reserved to fund vaccines in 'acute outbreaks' or for use by humanitarian groups.<sup>18</sup> As of May 2021, vaccines have been allocated to some countries experiencing protracted crisis but not all. 20 countries experiencing protracted crisis have begun receiving vaccines through the COVAX programme, with 66.2 million doses currently allocated between them – across a combined population of 1 billion people.<sup>19</sup> A further 14 countries experiencing protracted crises are in line to receive vaccines through the COVAX programme and are awaiting an official allocation.

Where vaccines have been allocated to countries experiencing protracted crisis, just under a quarter had been received by May 2021. Of the 66.2 million doses currently allocated through the COVAX facility, just over 15 million (22.7%) have been received. The rate at which vaccines have been received in other countries experiencing crisis (but not defined as experiencing protracted crisis) is slightly higher at 34.6% (24.7 million of the 71.3 million allocated doses).

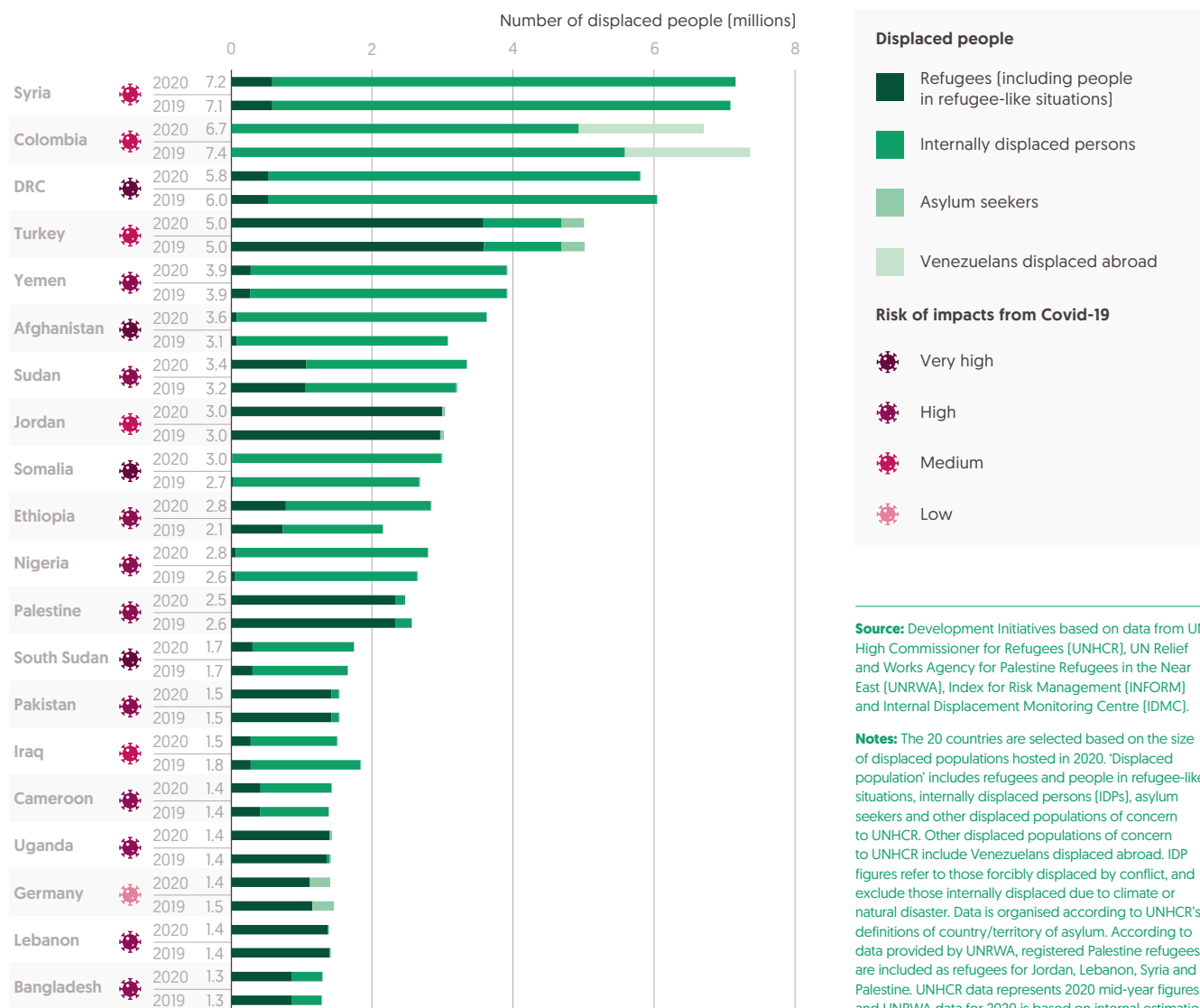
More funding is required to realise the goals of the Accelerator programme and the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines to the world's most vulnerable people. By May 2021, US\$14.6 billion had been pledged towards the programme.<sup>20</sup> However, this represents just 44% of the identified US\$33.1 billion funding required.<sup>21</sup>



# forced displacement

**Figure 1.4**

The number of forcibly displaced people grew for the ninth consecutive year  
20 countries with the largest forcibly displaced populations and risk of impacts from  
Covid-19, 2019 and 2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on data from UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Index for Risk Management (INFORM) and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

**Notes:** The 20 countries are selected based on the size of displaced populations hosted in 2020. 'Displaced population' includes refugees and people in refugee-like situations, internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum seekers and other displaced populations of concern to UNHCR. Other displaced populations of concern to UNHCR include Venezuelans displaced abroad. IDP figures refer to those forcibly displaced by conflict, and exclude those internally displaced due to climate or natural disaster. Data is organised according to UNHCR's definitions of country/territory of asylum. According to data provided by UNRWA, registered Palestine refugees are included as refugees for Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. UNHCR data represents 2020 mid-year figures, and UNRWA data for 2020 is based on internal estimation.

The numbers of displaced people worldwide grew for the ninth consecutive year in 2020, with many in enduring situations of displacement requiring long-term humanitarian assistance, as options for safe return home remain closed. However, the numbers displaced in 2020 may be even higher as the Covid-19 pandemic impeded data collection while fear of infection may have deterred some people from seeking emergency protection and shelter.<sup>22</sup>

- In 2020, the total number of displaced people increased to 82.1 million, by 3.4% [2.7 million] from a total of 79.5 million in 2019.

- 
- Three fifths (58%, or 48.0 million people) of this total were people forcibly displaced internally; 32% were refugees (26.3 million); 5.1% were asylum seekers (4.2 million); and 4.4% (3.6 million) were Venezuelans displaced abroad.
  - Continuing the trend of recent years, the majority of displaced people were internally displaced, with around one third being refugees.
  - The overall rise in the number of people displaced in 2020 was driven by an increase in those internally displaced, rising by 2.4 million (a 5.2% rise) from 2019. The number of refugees, asylum seekers and Venezuelans displaced abroad remained largely unchanged from the previous year.

Displaced people are often among the most vulnerable to shocks. They are consequently particularly at risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, in living conditions often lacking access to water, sanitation and health facilities – which increases risks of infection and of dying if the virus is contracted.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the transient nature of displacement enables the spread of the virus as populations move.<sup>24</sup> Quantifying these increased risks is challenging, as data on Covid-19 cases will often not include displaced people.<sup>25</sup> The majority of displaced people live in countries at high risk from the impacts of Covid-19.

- In 2020, more than half (52% or 42.9 million) of displaced people lived in countries assessed to be at high or very high risk of the impacts of Covid-19.
- A further 39% (32.2 million) were living in countries assessed to be at medium risk.
- Exposure to the risks of the Covid-19 pandemic is particularly stark for people displaced in sub-Saharan Africa, where 99% of the displaced population lives in countries assessed to be at high or very high risk from the impacts of Covid-19.

As in previous years, a small number of countries hosted the majority of all displaced people. Most countries with the largest populations of displaced people have experienced rises in the number they hosted in 2020.

- In 2020, 10 countries hosted over half (54%, 44.4 million) of all displaced people, a similar proportion to 2019 (55%).
- Among these ten countries, only two saw a notable decrease in the number of displaced people: in Colombia by 654,482 people (8.9% of the total displaced population in the country), and in DRC by 242,561 people (4.0%).<sup>26</sup>
- The largest increases in displaced populations were seen in Ethiopia, as conflict in the Tigray region contributed to an increase of 683,799 (31%) from 2019, and in Afghanistan where the displaced population grew by almost a fifth (18.1%), a rise of 533,988 people, as a result of conflict and violence.

Sub-Saharan Africa again had the largest number of displaced people, as the trend seen in recent years of an increasing concentration of the global displaced population in this region continued in 2020.

- The number of displaced people in sub-Saharan Africa continued to grow in absolute terms, rising by 2.8 million from 2019 to 28.9 million (a 11% increase) in 2020, and as a proportion of all those displaced globally, up from 33% in 2019 to 35% in 2020.
- Driving this growth in sub-Saharan Africa was the increase of 2.6 million in the number of internally displaced people.

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- The displaced populations also grew notably as a proportion in South Asia, rising 9.1% to 7.2 million, and in North America, increasing 6.5% to 1.5 million.
  - Slight falls were seen in the size of the displaced populations in Latin America and the Caribbean, down 5.1% to 10.7 million, and in the Middle East and North of Sahara region, decreasing 2.8% to 21.3 million.

The protracted nature of many of the largest displacement crises is evident in the largely unchanging picture seen when analysing the countries of origin of refugees and asylum seekers over the past five years. Venezuela is, however, the one notable exception.

- In 2020, Syria was the country from which the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers originated (6.7 million), followed by Afghanistan (3.0 million), with little change year-on-year in the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from these countries over the period 2015 to 2020.
- Since 2015, Venezuela has seen by far the fastest growth in numbers of refugees and asylum seekers produced, with numbers growing by a yearly average of 126%. However, in 2020 the pace of growth slowed to 6.6% (an increase of 59,004 from 2019). In 2020, a total of 946,812 refugees and asylum seekers were registered as originated from Venezuela.
- Also since 2015, the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers have grown significantly from South Sudan, almost tripling to 2.3 million (up 192%), and from Myanmar, almost doubling to 1.0 million (up 99%).



Ethiopia, 2019

Abdi, Health Extension Worker at Horefadi Health Post, Somali Region, talks to ECHO, UNICEF Ethiopia and other partners.

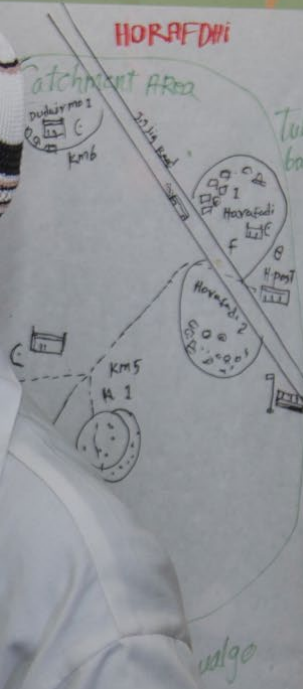
Credit: UNICEF Ethiopia/Tadesse

post ACTION PLAN 2012

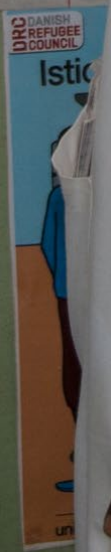
	F-plan	258	258	258	258		Total
2012							1142
22.85	ANC	39	39	39	39		158
3.18	Delvuy	39	39	39	39		158
2.94	MC	39	39	39	39		147
10.10	PCV1	36	36	36	36		147
7.95	PCV3	36	36	36	36		
44.14	Mcasles	36	36	36	36		
23.77	Fulu vaccinated in House	83	83				
52.55	FT2	39	39				
3.16	Peres FT2	246	246	246			
3.16	New p latrine	83	83	83	83		
3	Rota 1	36	36	36	36		
33.55	Rota 2	38	36	36	36		
8.50	Vita A						
6.6							330

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FIVE YEARS	YEARRE	QUARTER Children	MDUHTI BISHA	TOTAL
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	1575	378	125	1515
	30	8	3	30
	220	55	18	220
	36	9	3	36
	249	62	20	249
	505			





Jordan, 2018

Syrians enrolled in the cash-for-work programme craft jewellery at the Oasis Center for Resilience and Empowerment of Women and Girls operated by UN Women in the Za'atari refugee camp.

Credit: Christopher Herwig/UN Women

MOW



# chapter 2

## humanitarian and wider crisis financing

In 2020, global humanitarian needs grew faster than ever, as the Covid-19 pandemic compounded pre-existing and protracted humanitarian crises and sent shockwaves through the global economy.

This chapter highlights key trends in international humanitarian assistance and its sufficiency to meet growing needs. It then analyses how anticipatory approaches and wider development finance provided by multilateral development banks to countries experiencing crisis are contributing to addressing longer-term needs and improved efficiency of responses.

In 2020, total international humanitarian assistance plateaued at US\$30.9 billion, despite escalating levels of need. There was significant variation between governments but, overall, contributions from public donors flatlined, reflecting shifting and competing domestic priorities as well as the wider economic implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The failure to materially increase humanitarian assistance has serious implications for countries in crisis. As an indication of overall levels of need, analysis of UN-coordinated appeals shows that humanitarian assistance requirements grew quicker than ever before in 2020, increasing by 27% compared to 2019 and totalling a record US\$38.8 billion. There were 19 new appeals in 2020, bringing the total to 55, including US\$9.5 billion in appeal requirements specifically to address the impacts of Covid-19.

Despite this substantial increase in humanitarian need, funding of appeals fell far short of targets. In total, the proportion of requirements met fell to a record low (52%), resulting in a shortfall of US\$18.8 billion. Funding for the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for Covid-19 fell even further short, with just 40% (US\$3.8 billion) of the target met.

Within this context of growing humanitarian funding gaps, escalating needs and the failure to address underlying drivers of crisis in many countries experiencing protracted crisis, wider development finance to countries experiencing crisis is key. Multilateral development banks (MDBs) have become increasingly active in crisis contexts in recent years, with volumes of official development assistance (ODA) from MDBs to countries experiencing crisis doubling since 2014 to over US\$10.7 billion in 2019. The type of ODA has also changed, with an increasing proportion of ODA to countries experiencing crisis being delivered as loans rather than as grants.

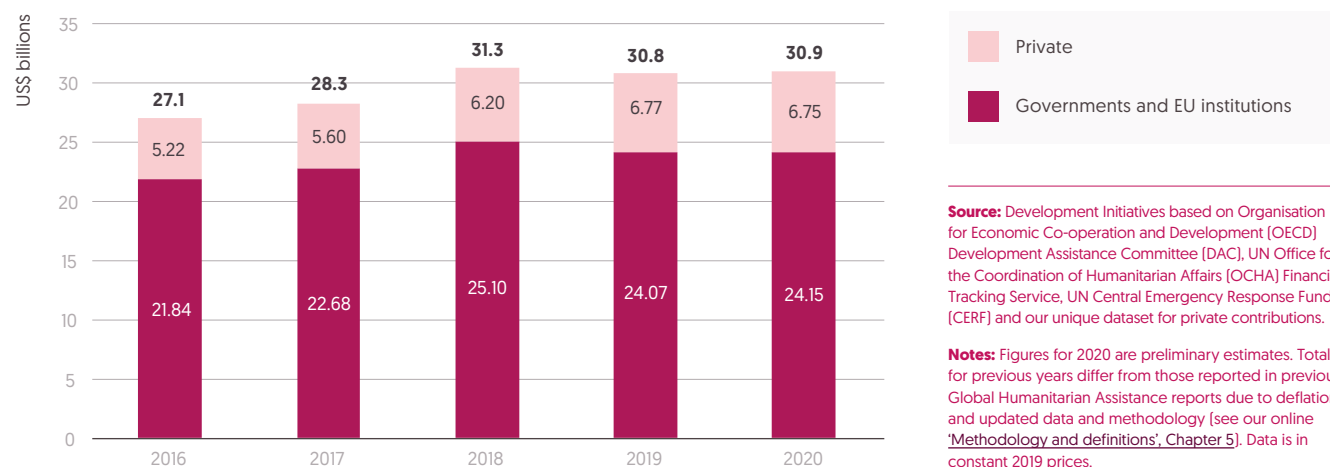
The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated weaknesses in current approaches to crisis financing, with finance often found only after a disaster strikes, and where disbursements can be slow, poorly coordinated and therefore inequitable. Anticipatory finance seeks to address this through pre-agreed funding and release protocols. Despite some promising pilots, however, this is yet to be fully mainstreamed along with the necessary mechanisms to track funding.

## international humanitarian assistance

**Figure 2.1**

International humanitarian assistance plateaued, despite escalating levels of need in 2020

International humanitarian assistance, 2016–2020



Despite the increased levels of need in 2020, growth of international humanitarian assistance has stalled. Funding from public donors flatlined, reflecting shifting domestic priorities and the wider economic implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. Estimated contributions from private donors also failed to increase.

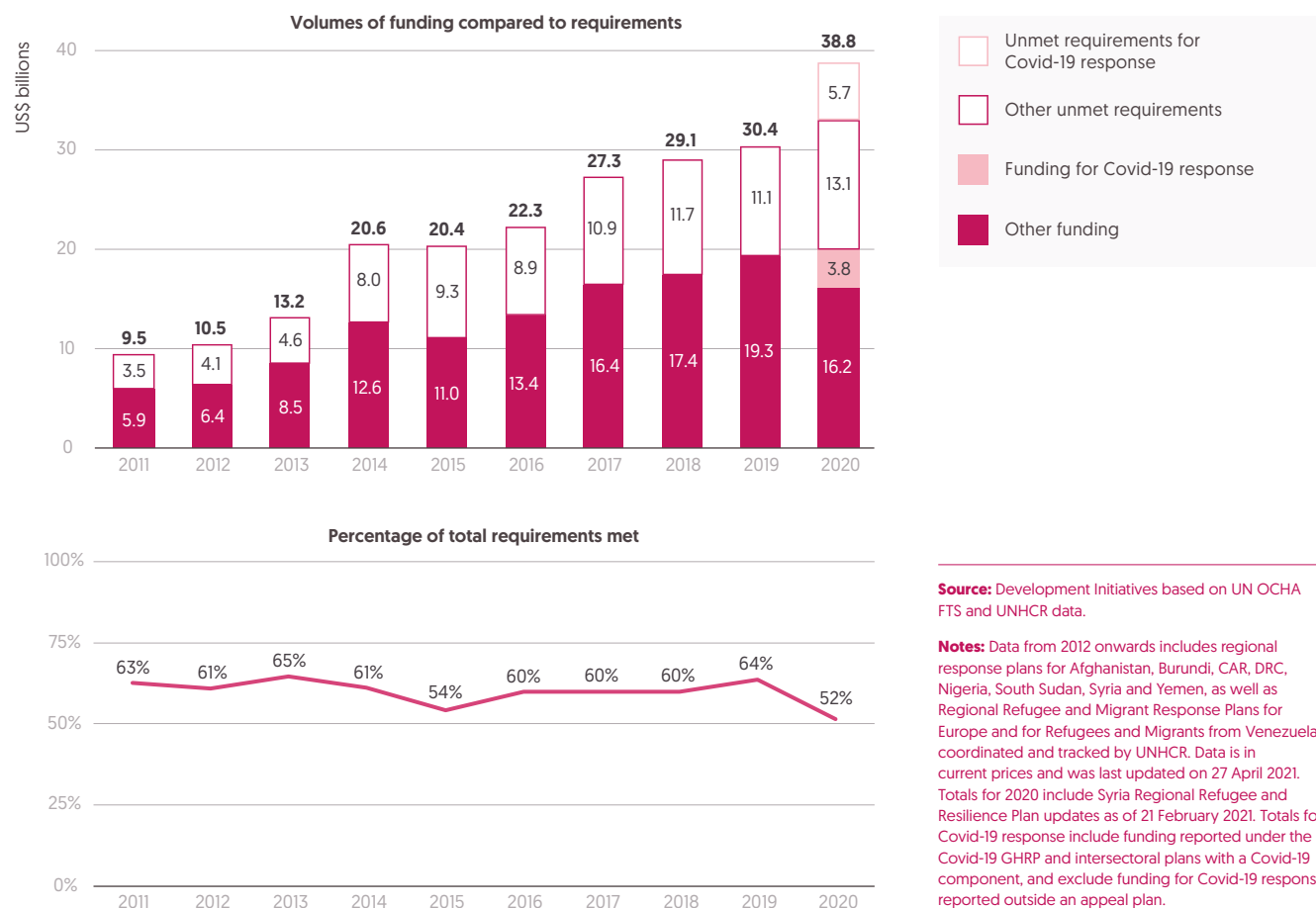
- In 2020, total international humanitarian assistance from governments and EU institutions and estimated contributions from private donors was US\$30.9 billion, similar to 2019 levels.
- Funding from governments and EU institutions stagnated from 2019, standing at US\$24.1 billion in 2020. This followed a large fall of US\$1.0 billion in 2019.
- Volumes of international humanitarian assistance had been steadily increasing in the years 2012 to 2018, peaking in 2018 at US\$31.3 billion. Between 2012 and 2018, funding grew on average by 12% per year.
- Estimated funding from private donors also stalled in 2020, amounting to US\$6.7 billion. This plateauing follows increased growth in 2018 (up 10.8% from the previous year) and 2019 (up 9.2%).

# volumes of assistance compared with appeal requirements

**Figure 2.2**

The appeals funding gap grew faster than ever in 2020 as Covid-19 response requirements increased overall need

Funding and unmet requirements, UN-coordinated appeals, 2011–2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS and UNHCR data.

**Notes:** Data from 2012 onwards includes regional response plans for Afghanistan, Burundi, CAR, DRC, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, as well as Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plans for Europe and for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela coordinated and tracked by UNHCR. Data is in current prices and was last updated on 27 April 2021. Totals for 2020 include Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan updates as of 21 February 2021. Totals for Covid-19 response include funding reported under the Covid-19 GHRP and intersectoral plans with a Covid-19 component, and exclude funding for Covid-19 response reported outside an appeal plan.

UN-coordinated appeals provide a summary of funding required by UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to meet humanitarian need in major crises. The aim of the coordinated appeals process is to facilitate a strategic approach to financing the humanitarian response.

In 2020, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic compounded existing crises, particularly in protracted crisis contexts, resulting in a significant increase in requirements for humanitarian assistance. Despite this, the shortfall in appeal funding grew more quickly than ever in 2020 and, for the first time in five years, funding fell for requirements not related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- A total of US\$38.8 billion was requested through UN-coordinated appeals in 2020, of which US\$9.5 billion was to address the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic through the GHRP.



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- The number of UN-coordinated appeals grew to 55 in 2020, a notable increase from 36 in 2019. This included 23 appeals which were specifically for the Covid-19 response and had no additional humanitarian assistance requirements, of which 3 were global appeal envelopes.
  - An increasing proportion of country appeals are for countries experiencing protracted crisis (that is countries with five or more years of UN-coordinated appeals – see our online [‘Methodology and definitions’, Chapter 5](#)). Of the 45 individual country appeals, 31 (69%) were in countries experiencing protracted crisis.

## **growth in appeal requirements**

Appeal requirements grew faster than ever in 2020. While targets for humanitarian assistance not related to Covid-19 fell slightly, the additional need caused by the pandemic significantly impacted overall appeal requirements.

- Total appeal requirements grew for the fifth consecutive year in 2020 and were 27% (US\$8.4 billion) higher than in 2019 as a result of the additional funding required to mitigate the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. This represents the highest rate of growth since 2014, when the Ebola outbreak and conflicts in Syria, South Sudan and Iraq drove up requirements, and was significantly greater than growth in 2018 (7%) and 2019 (5%).
- Funding requested through UN appeals has increased year on year: appeal requirements in 2020 almost doubled (90% higher) from 2015 (a rise of US\$18.4 billion) and were over four times higher (310%) than requirements in 2011 (a rise of US\$29.3 billion).
- The highest appeal targets in 2020 were for the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) (US\$6.0 billion), the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) (US\$3.8 billion) and the Yemen HRP (US\$3.4 billion). Requirements increased for the Syria appeals: the Syria 3RP grew by 11% from US\$5.4 billion in 2019, while the Syria HRP grew by 16% from US\$3.3 billion the previous year. In contrast, the Yemen HRP appeal requirements fell by 19% in 2020, from US\$4.2 billion in 2019.
- In 2020 there was one new HRP for Colombia, totalling US\$493.6 million (including Covid-19 response requirements). There were also new flash appeals in Lesotho, Djibouti, Lebanon and Cabo Delgado Province in Mozambique, and a new humanitarian appeal in Zambia. Madagascar was the only country with an appeal in 2019 but not in 2020.
- In 2020, most appeal requirements for countries experiencing protracted crisis increased, on average by 39%. The largest increases in appeal requirements for countries experiencing protracted crisis in 2020 compared to 2019 were for Haiti, where appeal requirements reached US\$472.0 million in 2020 (274% increase) and Burkina Faso, where appeal requirements reached US\$424.3 million (127% increase).

## **requirements related to Covid-19**

To address the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the GHRP was launched in March 2020. As an umbrella appeal, the GHRP consisted of 44 individual country appeals, 7 regional Covid-19 response appeals and 3 global funding appeals. Of the total GHRP appeal target (US\$9.5 billion), US\$6.6 billion (69%) was for specific country requirements.

- The largest GHRP targets were for the Syria regional appeal (US\$758 million) and the global famine prevention appeal (US\$500 million). The countries with the largest Covid-19 response funding targets were Afghanistan (US\$396 million) and Yemen (US\$386 million).
- Of those countries included in the GHRP, over half (24) also had additional funding requirements through a humanitarian response plan (HRP). On average, countries with a HRP had higher Covid-19-related requirements, while targets for those countries with only a Covid-19 response appeal tended to be smaller, from US\$12.0 million (Republic of Congo) to US\$255.0 million (Kenya).
- The number of countries experiencing protracted crisis has more than doubled since 2015, to 34 countries in 2020. Higher Covid-19 response appeal requirements in countries with pre-existing crises suggests they are more vulnerable to the social and economic impacts of the pandemic.
- Despite several years with no country-specific humanitarian needs, five countries had to launch a country appeal specifically to address the impacts of Covid-19 in 2020. Three of these were already experiencing protracted crises (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and North Korea). Furthermore, in one case (Pakistan), the humanitarian assistance required to address the impacts of Covid-19 tipped it into a state of protracted crisis.<sup>1</sup>

## funding commitments

Total funding commitments did not keep pace with the increase in appeal requirements. The overall volume of assistance received for requirements not related to Covid-19 fell for the first time since 2015 and, coupled with low commitments to Covid-19 appeal requirements, resulted in a larger-than-ever funding gap.

- Despite overall levels of international assistance plateauing in 2020 (see this chapter's section on '[International humanitarian assistance](#)'), assistance specifically for UN-coordinated appeals slightly increased to a record US\$20.0 billion in 2020, a 3.4% increase in overall funding from 2019.
- The sharp rise in appeal funding requirements in 2020 (27%, US\$8.4 billion), however, meant that, despite more funding being contributed to UN appeals than ever before, only 52% of total requirements were met. Overall, the shortfall between requirements and funding grew in volume, increasing from US\$11.1 billion in 2019 to US\$18.8 billion in 2020.
- In total, US\$16.2 billion was provided for humanitarian assistance not related to Covid-19 in 2020, 55% of total appeal requirements unrelated to Covid-19. Following four years of growth, this returned funding to below 2017 levels, resulting in a shortfall of US\$13.1 billion.
- Total volumes of funding to countries in protracted crises grew only fractionally in 2020, by 0.4% to US\$14.3 billion. As a result, the overall proportion of requirements met fell to 57% in 2020, compared to 70% coverage in 2019, leaving a shortfall of US\$10.9 billion.

Funding for needs related to Covid-19 fell further short of appeal targets than funding for other appeal requirements.

- In total, US\$3.8 billion of funding was received for the GHRP in 2020, 40% of total requirements.

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- The funding shortfall for the GHRP was US\$5.7 billion. Within the specific appeals, the highest volumes of funding received were for the Global Operational Support Covid-19 appeal (US\$289.0 million, 77%) and the Yemen appeal (US\$271 million, 70%).

The levels of funding and coverage varied widely between individual appeals.

On average however, most appeals received less than half the total funding requested.

- Of the 55 appeals (for Covid-19 and other needs) in 2020, only 7 received 75% or more of funding required. The number of appeals with less than a quarter of funding requirements met considerably worsened in 2020, with 17 appeals (31%) receiving less than 25% coverage. In comparison, between 2016 and 2018, an average of 10% of appeals received less than a quarter of requirements and, in 2019, no appeals were funded less than 25%.
- In general, countries experiencing protracted crises with larger appeals were better funded than those with smaller appeals in 2020. Countries experiencing protracted crisis with appeal targets of over US\$1.0 billion were covered on average at 57%, while countries with targets of under US\$250 million had an average coverage of 40%.
- The appeals that received the highest amount of funding were for the Syria 3RP (US\$3.2 billion, 53% of total requirements), the Syria HRP (US\$2.2 billion, 59%) and the Yemen HRP (US\$1.9 billion, 56%).
- The proportion of total requirements met in 2020 ranged from 100% for the Cabo Delgado Province Mozambique appeal, to 7% for the DRC RRP.<sup>2</sup>
- Within the GHRP, the highest volumes of funding reported against a specific activity or country response plan in 2020 were for the Global Operational Support Covid-19 appeal (US\$289.0 million, 77% of total requirements) and the Yemen appeal (US\$270.5 million, 70%).
- The GHRP appeals with the highest coverage were for Niger (92%) and Mozambique (91%). The most poorly funded GHRP appeals were for the Horn of Africa and Yemen RRP (1%) and the global NGO Covid-19 envelope appeal (2%).

## **funding outside appeals**

- UN-coordinated appeals do not represent all identified humanitarian needs and funding, particularly as not all countries and crises have a UN-coordinated response. Significant funding is therefore provided outside appeals. Analysis of the funding reported outside UN-coordinated appeals can provide a proxy for the extent of humanitarian coordination.
- Funding provided outside appeals is decreasing over time. Analysis of funding reported to UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) shows that the amount of international humanitarian assistance captured through appeals has increased from over a third of total funding (38%) in 2011, to more than two thirds (68%) in 2017, decreasing slightly to 65% in 2020.
- This pattern of declining funding outside appeals is seen in the largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance. Countries with a UN-coordinated appeal received the majority of funding (80%) through those appeals in 2020. Funding outside appeals in the largest crises predominantly flowed to Red Cross Red Crescent organisations, as well as contributions to UN agencies, NGOs and some private sector companies.

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- On the other hand, volumes of funding outside appeals to smaller recipients of international humanitarian assistance (receiving less than US\$40 million) has increased. In 2020, the vast majority of funding (85%) reported to smaller country recipients was reported without appeal information. This represents more than double the amount reported to the same group of recipients in 2019 – from US\$421.1 million in 2019 to US\$1.1 billion in 2020 – although it is a similar proportion.
  - In 2020, four countries without a UN-coordinated appeal received volumes of humanitarian assistance over US\$40 million: Mauritania (US\$73.1 million, 48% increase from 2019), Guatemala (US\$55.6 million, 148% increase), Madagascar (US\$45.8 million, 3% decrease) and Indonesia (US\$41.7 million, 37% increase).

### Red Cross appeals

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC) sets out its requirements separately from the UN-coordinated appeals. In 2020, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) appeal requirements grew sharply, reaching a record high, while the funding shortfall continued to increase. Funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also slightly increased in 2020.

IFRC emergency appeals relate mostly to disasters associated with natural hazards.

- In 2020, IFRC appeal requirements grew to over US\$1 billion, a record increase of 61% from 2019 (US\$630 million).
- To meet this growing need, funding to the IFRC grew by 47%: from US\$399 million in 2019 to US\$584 million in 2020.
- Despite the increase in funding received, the coverage of IFRC appeals decreased to 58% (from 63% in 2019), well below the average coverage of 74% in the years 2016 to 2020.

ICRC appeals respond mainly to conflict-related situations.

- The ICRC received US\$1.8 billion in 2020, a slight increase from 2019 (2%). Between 2016 and 2020, ICRC funding has grown every year, increasing by 21% over this period.
- With this increase in funding, the ICRC was able to cover 87% of its US\$2.1 billion appeal requirements. Since 2016, coverage has averaged 91%.

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## global development funding and the role of multilateral development banks

Crises are becoming longer-term in nature, with needs too great for the humanitarian sector alone to finance. With the growing concentration of poverty in countries affected by crisis, the role of wider development actors is increasingly important in addressing the underlying causes of crisis and lifting people out of poverty.

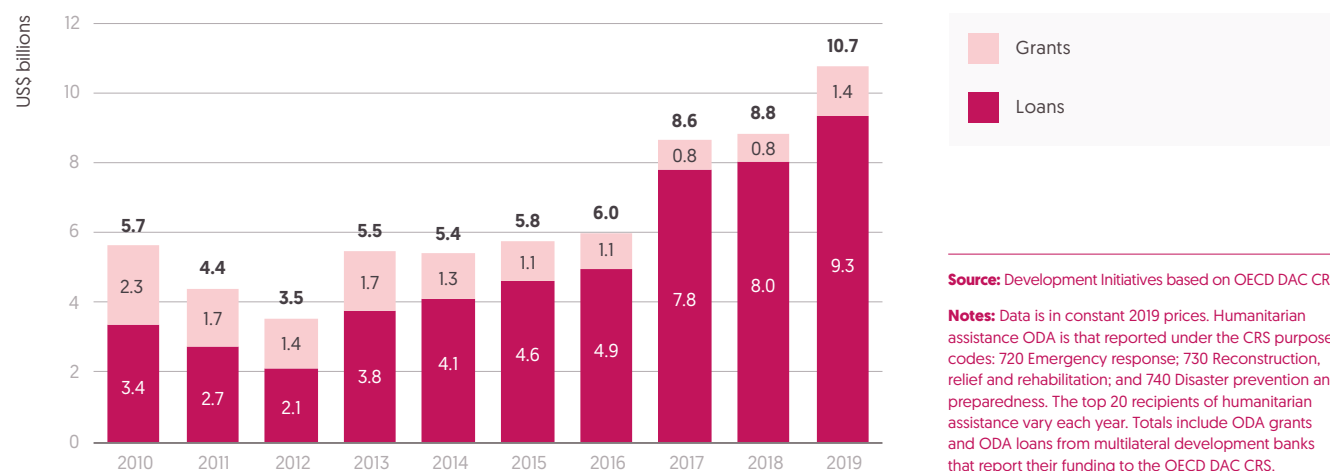
There is a growing commitment around the need to strengthen synergies between humanitarian, development and peace action, including around crisis financing. Recent research conducted by Development Initiatives, 'Development actors at the nexus: lessons from crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia',<sup>3</sup> found that, while there are examples of increasing collaboration in protracted crises, this is not yet systematic.

There is a need to ensure that crisis financing is coherent with broader development financing strategies, recognising the differing mandates of development actors and reconciling development finance with humanitarian action. Indeed, while humanitarian assistance is a critical resource for responding to the immediate needs of people affected by crisis, overall volumes of developmental ODA to countries experiencing crisis are larger.

- Countries experiencing crisis receive substantially more development funding than humanitarian funding, although humanitarian assistance is growing more quickly. Total ODA to countries experiencing crisis has scaled up in the past decade, from 47% of total country-allocable ODA (US\$51 billion) in 2010 to 65% (US\$94 billion) in 2019.
- Most ODA to countries experiencing crisis has been development financing, although the proportion of ODA reported as humanitarian assistance has doubled, from 15% (US\$7.6 billion) in 2010 to 29% (US\$27.2 billion) in 2019.
- Total volumes of ODA to countries experiencing protracted crisis (with five or more years of UN-coordinated appeals – see our online [‘Methodology and definitions’, Chapter 5](#)) have grown much faster than ODA to countries in other crisis and non-crisis contexts over the last decade.
- The proportion of total country-allocable ODA to countries experiencing protracted crisis has grown from 21% (US\$22 billion) in 2010 to 52% (US\$75 billion) in 2019. While development assistance makes up the majority of ODA, countries experiencing protracted crisis have a higher proportion of humanitarian assistance (33% in 2019).

While developmental ODA to crisis-affected countries has increased, the extent to which this funding is targeting crisis-affected populations is unclear due to a lack of data (see [Box 2.1, Issues and challenges of tracking ODA financing in crisis contexts](#)). This information gap poses challenges to the coordination and coherence of humanitarian and other financing in crisis contexts.

**Figure 2.3**  
**Lending from multilateral development banks to countries in humanitarian crisis is increasing**  
 ODA from multilateral development banks to the 20 largest recipients of humanitarian assistance, 2010–2019



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC CRS.

**Notes:** Data is in constant 2019 prices. Humanitarian assistance ODA is that reported under the CRS purpose codes: 720 Emergency response; 730 Reconstruction, relief and rehabilitation; and 740 Disaster prevention and preparedness. The top 20 recipients of humanitarian assistance vary each year. Totals include ODA grants and ODA loans from multilateral development banks that report their funding to the OECD DAC CRS.

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Multilateral development banks (MDBs) have become increasingly active in crisis contexts, channelling growing volumes of ODA to countries experiencing crisis.

- MDB ODA disbursements to the annual largest 20 humanitarian recipients have doubled since 2014, from US\$5.4 billion to over US\$10.7 billion in 2019. MDB funding to countries experiencing humanitarian crisis has accelerated quicker than total MDB ODA disbursements, which grew overall by 28% between 2014 (US\$19.9 billion) and 2019 (US\$25.4 billion).
- The largest MDB donor to countries experiencing crisis is consistently the International Development Association (IDA), which disbursed 73% of total MDB ODA funding to the top 20 recipients of humanitarian assistance across the decade.
- The largest recipient of MDB ODA from the top 20 recipients of humanitarian assistance is Ethiopia, receiving 28% of disbursements across the same period. Despite being within the top 20 for all years, Syria received less than US\$5 million from MDBs over the decade – less than 0.01% of MDB disbursements to the top 20 recipients since 2010.
- The vast majority of ODA from MDBs to countries experiencing crisis is reported as development assistance. Since 2010, humanitarian assistance as a proportion of total ODA from MDBs to the top 20 recipients of total humanitarian assistance has been below 5%, with the exception of 2011 when it reached 15% due to a single disbursement from IDA to Pakistan for earthquake recovery.

The majority of assistance from MDBs to countries experiencing crisis has been in the form of loans. In recent years, the volume of lending to crisis contexts has increased.

- While the overall volume of ODA disbursements to the largest humanitarian recipients has increased, the share of these disbursements in the form of grants has significantly reduced. Between 2010 and 2014, grants made up an average of 35% (US\$1.7 billion) of ODA disbursements by MDBs, and 14% (US\$1.0 billion) from 2015 to 2019. In 2018, the volume of grants dropped to US\$767 million, the lowest since the beginning of the decade, representing less than 9% of disbursements that year.
- Meantime, total lending from MDBs to countries experiencing crisis has steadily grown over the last decade, reaching a record US\$9.3 billion in 2019. This reflects overall trends in MDB disbursements: between 2010 and 2019, grant disbursements decreased by a quarter (26%) from US\$5.1 billion to US\$3.8 billion, while loan disbursements almost doubled (191%), from US\$11.3 billion to US\$21.6 billion.

Analysis of total ODA from bilateral donors mirrors this trend. While grants make up the majority of bilateral ODA, lending has steadily increased over the last decade.

- The proportion of ODA from bilateral donors in the form of loans and equity has increased, from 14% in 2010 to a provisional 21% in 2020.

The extent to which recipients can manage this debt is important. While lending to countries in crisis may in the short term create greater fiscal space and enable governments to support humanitarian and development response to crises, it may also in the longer term be undermined through debt distress. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were concerns that the growth in ODA lending was leading to a debt crisis. A decade ago, almost a quarter of low-income countries were in or at risk of debt distress, which grew to half in 2019. In the group of countries classified as 'least developed', debt service as a proportion of non-grant government revenue has more than doubled, from 7% of government revenue in 2020 to 21% in 2019.

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## **multilateral development bank financing to the Covid-19 pandemic response**

Lending can provide countries experiencing crisis with access to significant volumes of financing to address immediate and longer-term needs. The increasing engagement of MDBs in crisis contexts was reaffirmed in their response to the Covid-19 crisis, providing significant resource flows in the form of loans to countries experiencing crisis.

- Analysis of seven international financial institutions by the Centre for Disaster Protection (CDP) identified total funding of US\$120 billion as of April 2021 towards the pandemic response.<sup>4</sup> Of this, 95% [US\$115 billion] was in the form of loans and 5% [US\$5.5 billion] was grants. As a comparison, total humanitarian grants in support of the pandemic response, as reported to FTS as of 16 May 2021, totalled US\$6.7 billion.
- The IMF was the biggest contributor to the Covid-19 response in the CDP study, so far committing US\$50.4 billion, 42% of total MDB support.
- Of the total support from MDBs in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, over half (55%, US\$66.1 billion) was provided to countries under the Covid-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP),<sup>5</sup> including almost three quarters (72%, US\$4.0 billion) of the total grant funding provided by MDBs.
- There is a significant degree of variation in terms of which countries covered by the GHRP received funding from MDBs as part of their Covid-19 response. Five countries received upwards of US\$5.0 billion each, almost exclusively in the form of loans: Ecuador (US\$9.3 billion), Egypt (US\$9.3 billion), Ukraine (US\$6.1 billion), Nigeria (US\$5.4 billion) and the Philippines (US\$5.2 billion). At the other end of the scale, five countries received no funding to date from the MDBs for Covid-19 (Libya, Iraq, Syria, Venezuela and DPR Korea), although Syria has the third-largest Covid-19 appeal.<sup>6</sup>

This variation in MDB funding to different countries covered by the GHRP raises questions about the extent to which MDB funding for the Covid-19 pandemic response aligns with funding needs as identified by the humanitarian sector.<sup>7</sup>

- Analysis of funding provided by MDBs per capita compared with response funding requirements, for the 45 GHRP country appeals, suggests that countries with greater humanitarian funding needs might have been less likely to receive MDB funding.
- Countries with higher humanitarian need receive less funding from MDBs for a variety of reasons including political instability and high levels of debt distress. Of the ten countries with the largest GHRP requirements in 2020, five have either high levels of debt distress or are in debt crisis, while a further four are classified as extremely fragile by the OECD States of Fragility 2020 index.
- Given that MDB grant funding is limited, constrained ability to borrow reduces these countries' access to MDB financing flows. As set out by the CDP, this would suggest a need to rethink international crisis financing, to ensure countries are not left behind due to their limited ability to borrow.<sup>8</sup>
- Discussions are currently underway around using the IMF's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to provide an additional funding boost for global recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic after the International Monetary and Finance Committee called on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to propose a new allocation of SDRs equivalent to US\$650 billion.<sup>9</sup>

- New general allocations of SDRs would be distributed among the IMF's 190 members according to each country's IMF quota, meaning high-income countries would obtain around two thirds of those reserves.<sup>10</sup> As a result, there are calls for the wealthier countries [e.g. the G7] to make their share available to lower-income countries, or those suffering greater impacts on poverty levels.<sup>11</sup> However, the role of crisis resilience and vulnerability is unclear in discussions around allocating IMF resources to countries most in need.

While humanitarian actors and MDBs increasingly operate in similar contexts, it is important to recognise their different mandates. MDBs primarily supply long-term financing to governments and the private sector in order to boost a country's socioeconomic development. They also support countries in times of major macroeconomic shocks to alleviate the consequences of crises, which can overlap with the mandate of traditional humanitarian actors. For instance, social protection or emergency healthcare funded by MDBs might intersect with humanitarian cash transfers and health services provided by humanitarian actors. It is important to understand how MDBs make funding decisions to crisis responses, as they did during the Covid-19 pandemic at a large scale, and for effective coordination to take place with humanitarian actors to ensure a more joined-up, equitable financing system.



### **Box 2.1**

#### **Issues and challenges of tracking ODA financing in crisis contexts at national and subnational levels**

There are currently significant challenges in accurately tracking the scale, purpose, and timeliness of development finance beyond national-level aggregates. While ODA flows are comprehensively tracked at a national level, more precise subnational allocations and real-time tracking of development finance flows to crisis-affected countries are not available. This is particularly problematic when tracking development finance to countries experiencing protracted crisis, where localised acute needs cannot be matched against up-to-date information on development assistance flows. This risks poor coherence and coordination with parallel humanitarian assistance flows to the same crisis-affected countries and regions.

Data on both humanitarian and development financing is comprehensively reported at only the national level. While OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) provides curated data on humanitarian financing in real time, development finance flows to recipient countries are comprehensively reported by the OECD DAC's Creditor Reporting System (CRS) with a year's delay. The implications of this delay in access to up-to-date information have been exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Comprehensive information on the scale and targeting of development financing to countries most at risk from the impacts of the pandemic will not be known until early 2022.

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) fills an important gap in development finance tracking with detailed, real-time data published by many, though not yet all, leading donors and implementing agencies. Data on subnational allocations of development finance can also be voluntarily published to IATI and some national aid management systems. Encouragingly, based on 2020 reporting to IATI, 60% of country-allocable disbursements to countries experiencing protracted crisis contained subnational location information; and 75% of disbursements contained this information for other countries. However, in many cases, location information was limited to the capital or principal city, rather than providing accurate subnational information on where spending was directed. Continuing to improve publishing to IATI, including ensuring that reporting is more consistent and complete for disbursements to countries experiencing crisis, needs to be a priority for donors and implementing agencies.



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## anticipatory approaches to crisis financing

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses in the current international financing system, with reactive and often slow disbursements of funding in response to urgent humanitarian needs. Pre-arranged funding, such as anticipatory finance triggered by pre-agreed protocols, seeks to address this. Even though pilots of anticipatory action have increased in number and volume of funding, this and other forms of pre-arranged funding are yet to be scaled up and remain a small proportion of total crisis financing.

Analysis of financing from multilateral development banks (MDBs) for the Covid-19 response by the CDP found that only 2% of total funding came from pre-agreed financing.<sup>12</sup> This included disbursements in April 2020 from catastrophe-contingent loans, such as the World Bank's Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option, and from the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility. This small proportion of pre-arranged funding from MDBs meant that, for many countries, the pandemic response relied on their ability to borrow after the macroeconomic shock from the crisis had already started to manifest. The limited volume of pre-arranged crisis financing from MDBs in response to Covid-19 reflects a similar pattern across other slow- and rapid-onset crises analysed by the CDP and Development Initiatives:<sup>13</sup> based on nine case studies, only 2.3% of crisis response funding was pre-arranged.

One example of an anticipatory finance pilot<sup>14</sup> is being undertaken by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The CERF has pledged up to US\$140 million to scale up a shift towards anticipatory action.<sup>15</sup> Anticipatory action framework pilots were initiated in five countries in 2020 (Bangladesh, Chad, Ethiopia, Malawi and Somalia). They have already been triggered in Bangladesh (US\$5.2 million) and Somalia (US\$15 million) in response to floods and food insecurity, respectively. Preliminary evidence from Bangladesh showed that the fast release of CERF funding to protect productive assets facilitated a quicker, more cost-effective response compared with previous years, and contributed to longer-term livelihood outcomes.<sup>16</sup> The pilot also showed that shifting from reactive to proactive humanitarian response requires not only employing new funding instruments, but also developing interagency planning and coordination. One early lesson learned is that this will have to be a long-term and inclusive process to ensure it informs and accommodates the respective priorities for national disaster management and response.

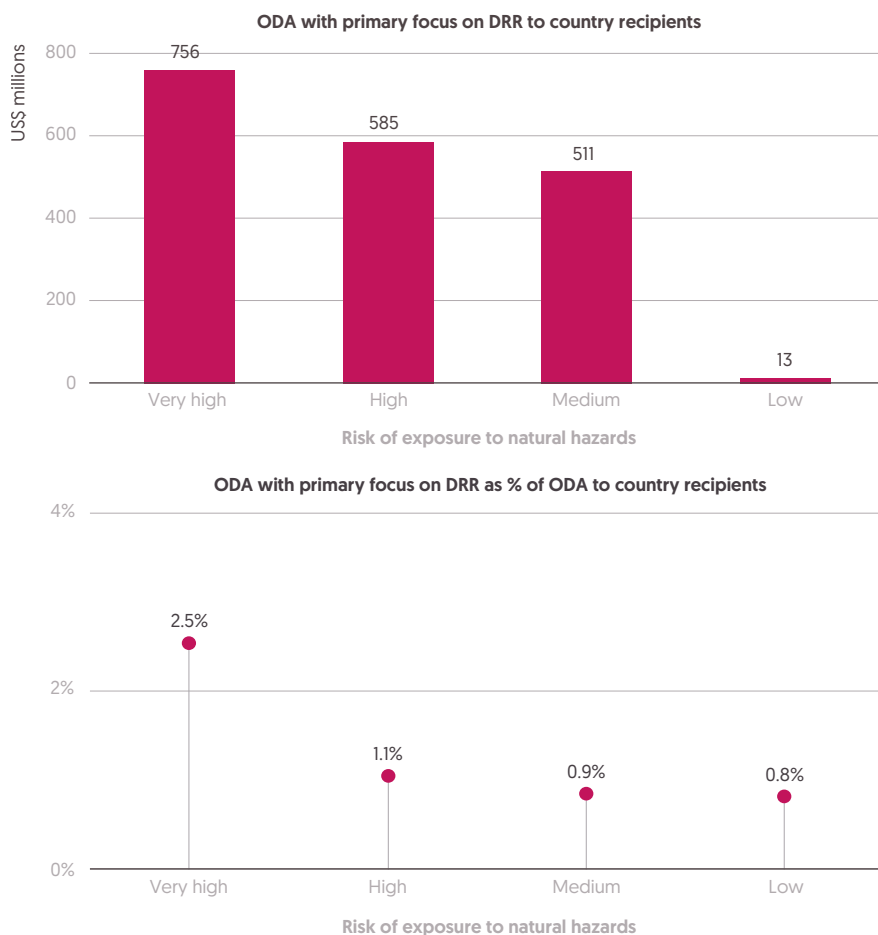
Anticipatory financing feeds into a wider discussion around quality funding, which emphasises the importance of predictability and flexibility in response financing. Pre-arranged funding modalities allow greater visibility of available future funding, and allow implementers to respond more quickly. However, there is currently no tracking system in place to comprehensively quantify pre-arranged humanitarian funding modalities, crisis modifiers or other forms of contingency funding, without which it is hard to monitor progress against commitments to a more proactive funding landscape. We need a discussion within the humanitarian system and beyond of which types of crisis financing enable a more timely and cost-effective response, and how to track progress in scaling them up. This should also include development actors with increasing engagement in crisis contexts, such as MDBs, to provide greater clarity on the division of responsibilities in future.

# development financing for disaster risk reduction

**Figure 2.4**

Countries most at risk of natural hazards received more ODA focused on disaster risk reduction in 2020 than those at lower risk, but volumes remain low and vary significantly between recipients

ODA with a primary focus on disaster risk reduction (DRR) by risk of exposure to natural hazards, 2019



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on OECD Development Assistance Committee [DAC] Creditor Reporting System [CRS] and INFORM Index for Risk Management.

**Notes:** Data is in constant 2019 prices. ODA totals are calculated from CRS 2019 projects under the DRR purpose code, marked as 'principal focus' with the DRR marker, or identified by a tailored keyword search. Figures include country-allocable ODA only. ODA refers to total gross bilateral ODA as recorded in the CRS. Countries are grouped by INFORM exposure to natural hazards indicator, with countries scored 6.9 or higher grouped as 'Very high', countries between 4.7 and 6.8 grouped as 'High', countries between 2.8 and 4.6 grouped as 'Medium', and countries scored 2.7 or lower grouped as 'Low'. In 2019, 12 countries were identified as 'Very high', 48 as 'High', 63 as 'Medium' and 13 as 'Low'.

Extreme weather- and climate-related events have become more frequent, resulting in more people needing to rely on humanitarian assistance.<sup>17</sup> In 2020, 33 of 40 countries with the largest populations in need of humanitarian assistance were affected by disasters associated with natural hazards (see [Figure 1.3, Chapter 1](#)). Disasters associated with natural hazards frequently occur in countries experiencing protracted, complex crisis. This exacerbates other risks and vulnerabilities, driving the demand for assistance higher and increasing the strain on an overburdened humanitarian system. Investing in disaster risk reduction (DRR) is therefore critical to build resilience against the risks of natural hazards.

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Data on ODA with the primary purpose of DRR has been reported against a purpose code and marker for 2018 and 2019 on the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System.

In 2019, the volume of ODA with a primary purpose of DRR grew, with the majority targeted to countries at 'very high' and 'high' risk of experiencing natural hazards.

- The total volume of ODA with the primary purpose of DRR grew from US\$1.4 billion in 2018 to US\$1.9 billion in 2019, accounting for 1.2% of total country-allocable ODA received by these countries.
- Of this total, 41% [US\$756 million] went to 12 countries at very high risk of experiencing natural hazards in 2019, up from 36% [US\$503 million] in 2018 directed to 11 very-high-risk countries.
- A further 31% [US\$585 million] of this funding was targeted to 48 countries at high risk of natural hazards in 2019, a slight increase by volume from 2018 [US\$566 million to 49 countries] but a reduction as a proportion of all ODA with a primary purpose of DRR from 40% in 2018.

Better subnational data on vulnerability to disaster risk and funding for risk reduction is needed to establish a complete picture. The available data shows that a small number of countries received a large proportion of the total ODA allocated with a primary purpose of DRR, but significant differences are evident in the total volumes received by countries within the same risk category, as well as in the per person volume (so taking into account the size of the recipient country's population).

- Among the 60 countries at high and very high risk of experiencing natural hazards, 10 accounted for more than two thirds [71%] of all funding.
- The two largest recipients, Vietnam receiving US\$195 million and Kenya receiving US\$144 million, accounted for 25% of all funding to the 60 countries at high and very high risk of experiencing natural hazards.
- Vietnam and Haiti, along with Ecuador and Somalia, among countries at very high risk, also received significantly higher per person volumes of ODA with a primary purpose of DRR. These four countries all received more per person than US\$1.8 [Ecuador US\$4.96, Somalia US\$3.78, Vietnam US\$2.01 and Haiti US\$1.89]. The remaining eight countries all received less per person than US\$1, with India and China receiving just US\$0.05 and US\$0.01, respectively.
- A similar pattern of per person funding is evident among countries at high and medium risk, with close to two thirds of countries in each risk category receiving less than US\$1 per person [32 of 48 high-risk countries, and 41 of 63 medium-risk countries].
- Ten countries among those at high or medium risk of experiencing natural hazards – all small island states, with the exception of Bhutan – received much higher per person volumes of ODA with a primary purpose of DRR. The range is from Fiji, which received a total of US\$11.1 million [US\$12.40 per person], to Tonga, which received US\$9.4 million [US\$88.57 per person], Dominica which received US\$14.3 million [US\$199.06 per person] and Tuvalu which received a total of US\$3.5 million [US\$445.88 per person].

Large volumes of funding for ODA with a primary purpose of DRR are provided by both bilateral and multilateral donors. A small number, however, account for the majority of this funding.

- In 2019, bilateral donors provided 61% of total funding for DRR, and multilateral organisations provided 34%, compared to 53% and 28% in 2018.

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- Ten donors accounted for more than four fifths (83%) of total ODA allocations for DRR activities in 2019.
  - The three largest donors in 2019 were the IDA (US\$453 million), the UK (US\$399 million) and the EU (US\$243 million). For IDA, these allocations marked a doubling (99% increase) of contributions for DRR activities, while for the UK the rise was even more pronounced, increasing fourfold (315%) from 2018.



Yemen

The World Bank and UN Development Programme have partnered with the Yemen-based Social Fund for Development and Public Works Project to create jobs linked to the repair of key basic services for people most vulnerable to impacts of the worsening crisis.

Credit: UNDP



# chapter 3

## donors and recipients of humanitarian and wider crisis financing

Faced with growing need for international humanitarian assistance, driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, public donors are having to make difficult domestic and international economic and political decisions. This chapter highlights individual public donor behaviour in the pandemic year, and the recipients of humanitarian assistance, as well as the evolving role of private donors and multilateral development banks (MDBs) in crisis contexts.

While total international humanitarian assistance plateaued in 2020, there was significant variation in contributions between individual donors. Most of the largest public donors increased their contributions in 2020, including the US and Germany. However, substantial reductions in the volumes of assistance from the UK and Saudi Arabia meant that overall funding from the largest 20 donors stagnated at US\$23.1 billion. Funding from the largest 20 public donors that was unrelated to Covid-19 pandemic response fell below 2019 levels.

Contributions of international humanitarian assistance from private donors grew by 9% to US\$6.8 billion in 2019, driven by an increase in funding from private individuals. The pandemic has reinforced the need for a broad crisis-financing base, and the role of private donors is expected to grow and evolve, including person-to-person giving and support from corporate philanthropic trusts and foundations.

MDBs are increasingly important actors in crisis contexts (see [Chapter 2](#)), with the ability to mobilise large volumes of finance. It is therefore important for humanitarian actors to understand how MDB finance operates in crisis contexts, to what extent it aligns with humanitarian funding and how this could evolve. One important funding mechanism is the World Bank's Crisis Response Window, which, between 2011 and 2018, provided US\$3.0 billion in crisis response funding, of which nearly two thirds (65%, US\$1.9 billion) went to the 20 largest recipients of humanitarian assistance.

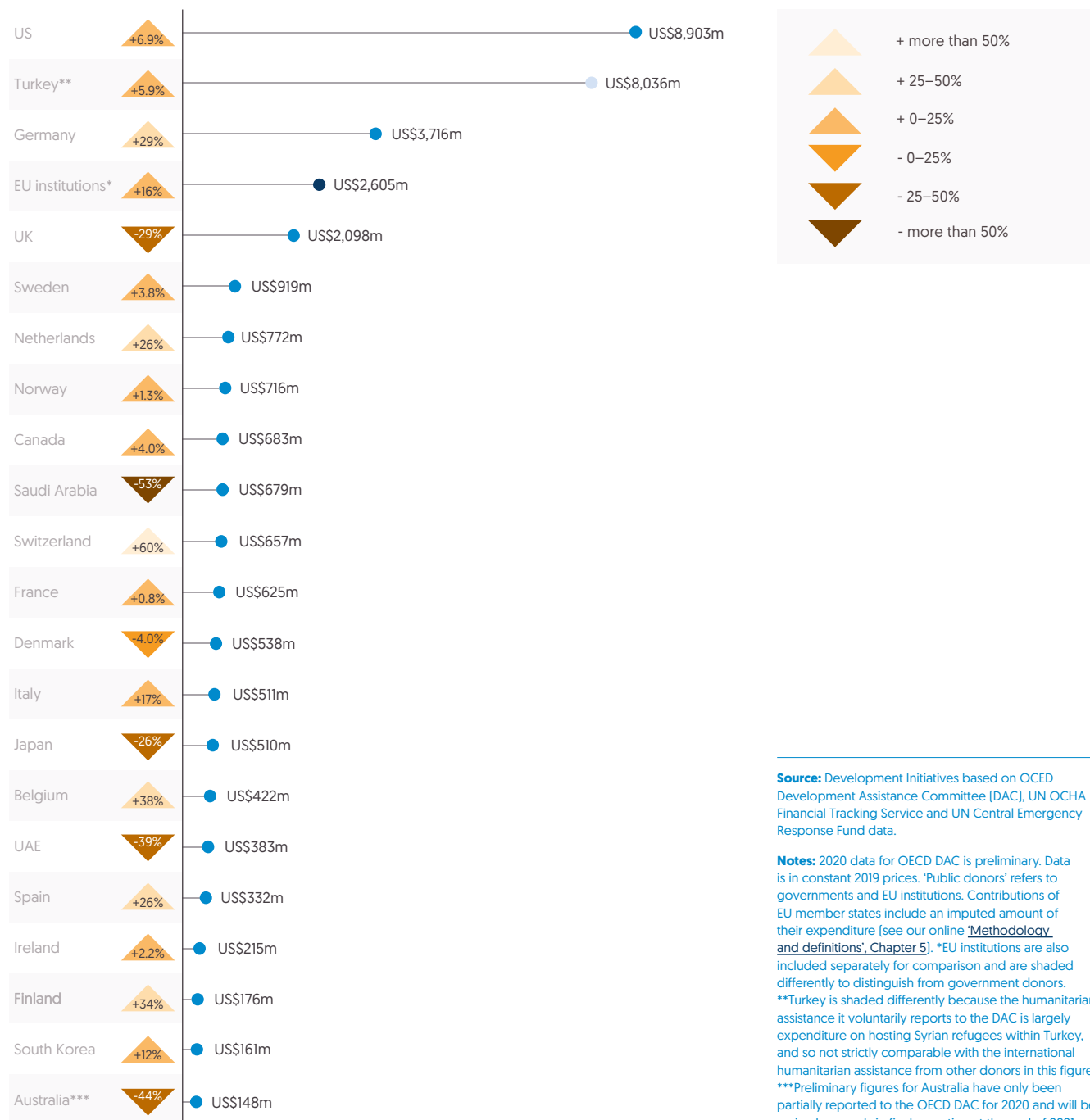
A small number of crises continued to receive the majority of all international humanitarian assistance in 2020. However, as more countries required assistance, the 10 largest recipients in 2020 received less: 57% of all international humanitarian assistance in 2020, the smallest proportion for almost a decade, down from 66% in 2019. Funding for humanitarian needs unrelated to Covid-19 fell below 2019 levels; among the ten largest recipients, funding for these needs was US\$3.2 billion (21%) less in 2020 than in 2019.

# international government funding: largest donors

**Figure 3.1**

Most government donors increased contributions in 2020 but there were large reductions from a small number of key donors

20 largest public donors of humanitarian assistance in 2020 and percentage change from 2019



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service and UN Central Emergency Response Fund data.

**Notes:** 2020 data for OECD DAC is preliminary. Data is in constant 2019 prices. 'Public donors' refers to governments and EU institutions. Contributions of EU member states include an imputed amount of their expenditure (see our online [Methodology and definitions](#), Chapter 5). \*EU institutions are also included separately for comparison and are shaded differently to distinguish from government donors. \*\*Turkey is shaded differently because the humanitarian assistance it voluntarily reports to the DAC is largely expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey, and so not strictly comparable with the international humanitarian assistance from other donors in this figure. \*\*\*Preliminary figures for Australia have only been partially reported to the OECD DAC for 2020 and will be revised upwards in final reporting at the end of 2021.

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To meet the increased humanitarian need as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, funding from most of the largest public donors increased in 2020. However, substantial reductions in contributions from the UK and Saudi Arabia meant that total volumes of international humanitarian assistance flatlined. This continues a trend of slowing growth in humanitarian assistance allocations from public donors since 2015 (with the exception of 2018) and is in contrast with the faster-growing funding requirements. Additionally, while specific funding for the Covid-19 response increased overall contributions from many donors, other funding assistance from donors fell compared to 2019.

- The volume of international humanitarian assistance from the largest 20 public donors in 2020 flatlined at US\$23.1 billion.
- As in previous years, the largest 20 public donors in 2020 contributed 96% of all international humanitarian assistance allocations. Within that, the three largest government donors, the US, Germany and the UK, accounted for 61% of total public donor contributions, a slight increase from 2019 (59%).

The slight reduction in overall funding from public donors masks significant fluctuations in the volumes of assistance provided by individual donors.

- In 2020, the majority (14) of the 20 largest donors increased their international humanitarian assistance contributions, with 8 increasing by more than 10%. The largest two donors in 2020 increased their contributions: US funding rose by 6.9%, from US\$8.3 billion in 2019 to US\$8.9 billion in 2020, while funding from Germany notably climbed by 29%, from US\$2.8 billion to US\$3.7 billion.
- These increases were offset by reductions in funding from 6 of the 20 largest donors, including 5 who reduced their contributions by more than 30%. UK contributions fell substantially by 29%, from US\$2.9 billion in 2019 to US\$2.0 billion in 2020.
- Other significant reductions in assistance came from Gulf donors: contributions from Saudi Arabia more than halved (53%), from US\$1.4 billion in 2019 to US\$679 million, while funding from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) fell by 39%, from US\$625 million to US\$383 million. Over the past four years, contributions from Saudi Arabia and UAE have fluctuated considerably, focused largely on the Yemen crisis. In 2020, volumes returned to levels significantly below the peak of 2019.

## Covid-19 funding

In 2020, donors allocated a significant portion of contributions to address the impacts of Covid-19. In most cases, donor contributions to the pandemic response drove up their overall assistance in 2020. However, analysis of data provided to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), suggests that this additional Covid-19 funding came at the expense of existing humanitarian assistance, with funding unrelated to Covid-19 from the largest 20 public donors in 2020 falling below 2019 levels.

- Based on FTS data, the donors providing the largest contributions to the Covid-19 response were the US (US\$1.1 billion, 13% of total contributions), Germany (US\$923 million, 26%) and Japan (US\$599 million, 51%).
- Additional funding for the pandemic response in 2020 resulted in all donors (except Switzerland) reducing their levels of humanitarian assistance unrelated to Covid-19 when compared to 2019. Five countries reduced their humanitarian assistance unrelated to Covid-19 by more than US\$500 million in 2020: Saudi Arabia (a fall of US\$931 million, 64%), the UK (by US\$699 million, 35%), the EU institutions (by US\$594 million, 20%), UAE (by US\$578 million, 93%) and the US (by US\$551 million, 6.7%).



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While budgetary documents for the coming year are not made publicly available by all donors, published donor budgets for 2021 give an emerging picture of humanitarian assistance, following a year of unprecedented humanitarian need in 2020. The UK announced cuts of over US\$6.3 billion to its overseas aid budget, reducing total spending on official development assistance (ODA) from 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) to 0.5%.<sup>1</sup> Within this, the UK has allocated US\$1.3 billion to humanitarian preparedness and response,<sup>2</sup> US\$0.9 billion lower than in 2020. In contrast, four G7 members are projected to increase their ODA spending in 2021, including the second-largest donor, Germany.<sup>3</sup>

### spending on in-country refugee hosting

Many donor countries also hosted refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons in 2020. Most expenditure by governments on efforts to support refugees within their own borders is not reported, although donors can report some of their spending in the first year of hosting refugees as ODA to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED). In 2020, the available data indicates that spending on hosting refugees in-country decreased for the fourth consecutive year.

- In 2020, the volume of reported ODA spent on in-country refugee hosting costs decreased by 9%, from US\$9.7 billion in 2019 to US\$8.8 billion in 2020. This decrease represents the fourth consecutive fall in expenditure on refugees and more than half (52%) of the total spending in 2016, when it peaked at US\$16.8 billion.
- In 2020, three countries accounted for nearly two thirds of all expenditure on in-country refugee hosting: Germany (29%), the US (21%) and France (13%).
- Among the 10 countries with the highest expenditure on in-country refugee hosting, large increases in expenditure, in excess of US\$100 million, were seen for Canada (up 34% to US\$638 million) and the UK (up 23% to US\$752 million). Large decreases were seen for Germany (down 17% to US\$2.5 billion), Italy (down 50% to US\$222 million), Sweden (down 45% to US\$143 million) and Spain (down 38% to US\$185 million).

### humanitarian assistance as a percentage of GNI

The proportion of gross national income (GNI) spent on international humanitarian assistance indicates the significance of humanitarian spending relative to the size of a country's economy and other spending priorities. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic put additional pressures on the budgets of donor governments. While most donors slightly increased the share of GNI spent on international humanitarian assistance, there were sizeable drops from others.

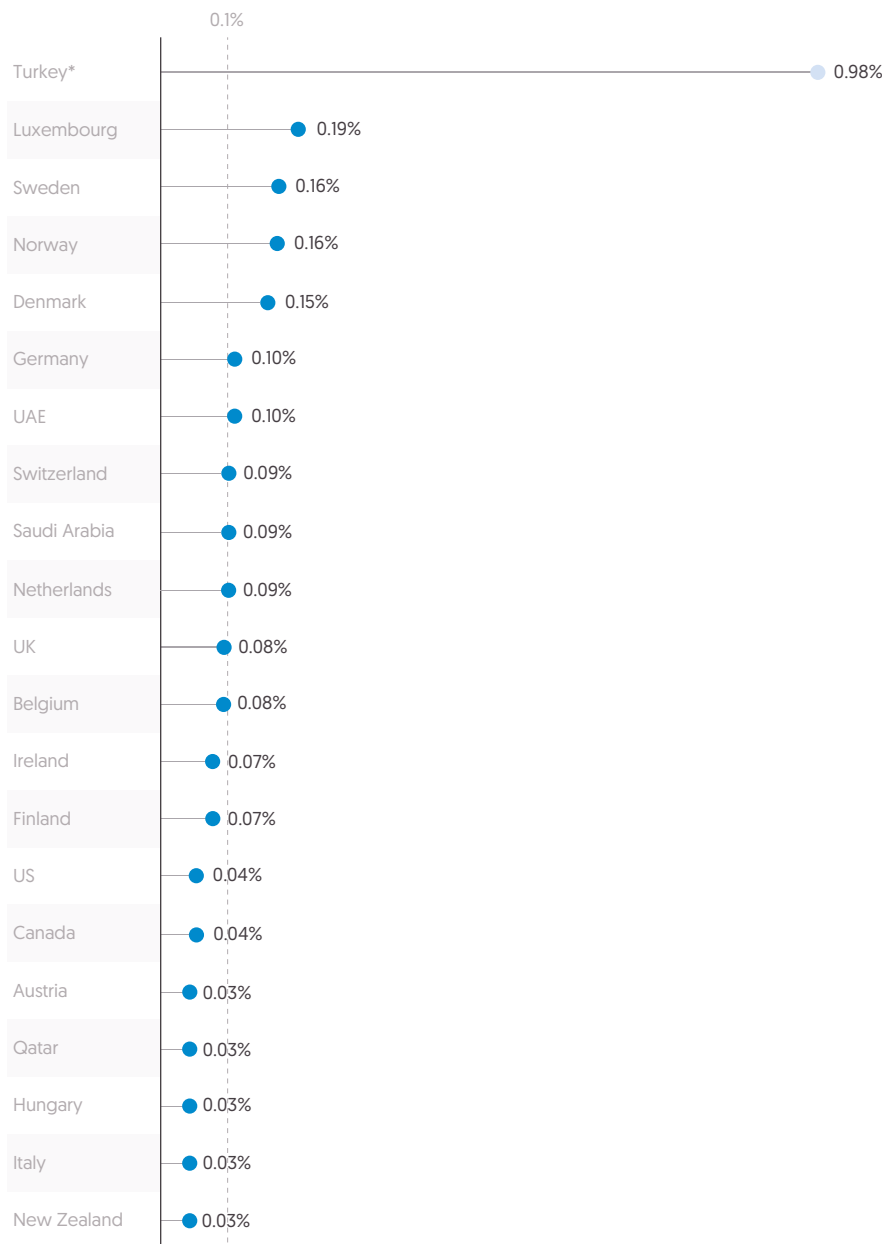
- Five countries in total contributed more than 0.1% of GNI as international humanitarian assistance: Turkey (0.98%), Luxembourg (0.19%), Sweden (0.16%), Norway (0.16%) and Denmark (0.15%). In 2019, eight donors provided more than 0.1% of GNI.
- In 2020, Turkey continued to spend the largest share of GNI on humanitarian assistance (0.98%), increasing by 0.04% compared to 2019. Turkey's reported contributions are not directly comparable with those of other donors, as the assistance voluntarily reported to the DAC largely comprises spending on hosting Syrian refugees in Turkey.

- In line with overall funding trends, three countries notably reduced their contributions of GNI as international humanitarian assistance: Saudi Arabia by half in 2020 to 0.09%, the UK from 0.10% to 0.08% and the UAE from 0.15% to 0.09%.
- While the US is the largest donor by volume, its ODA contributions are low relative to its economic size. In 2020, the US contributed only 0.04% of GNI as international humanitarian assistance, the sixth-smallest share of GNI among the top 20 donors.

### Figure 3.2

#### Five donors provided more than 0.1% of GNI as international humanitarian assistance in 2020

20 donors providing the most humanitarian assistance as a percentage of GNI, 2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC, UN OCHA FTS, UN CERF, World Bank World Development Indicators and International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook data.

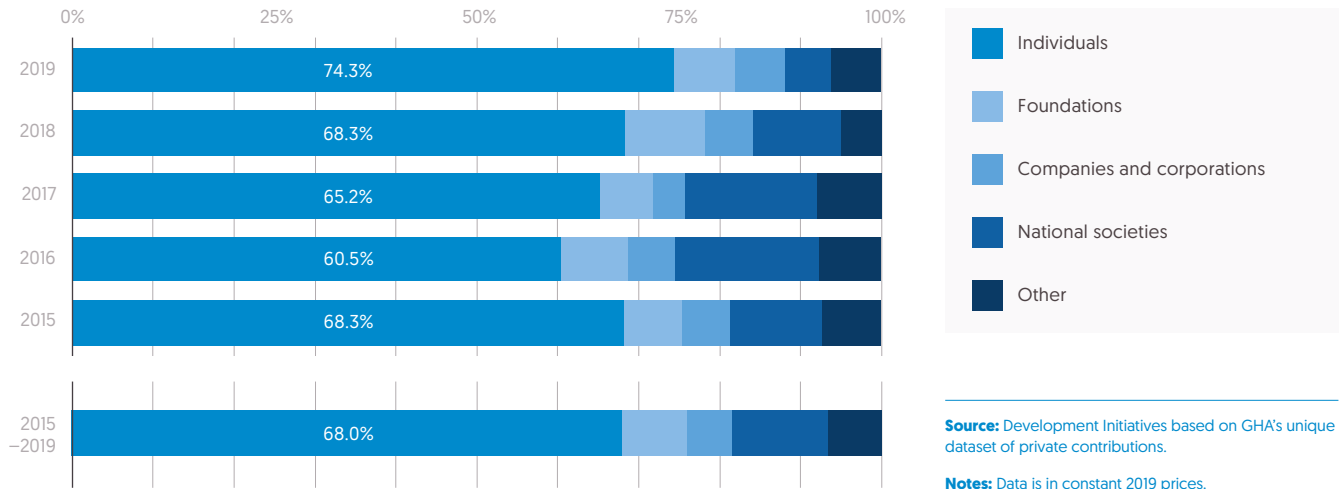
**Notes:** GNI data for 2020 has been estimated using historical data on GNI and real GDP growth rates for 2020. 2020 data for OECD DAC is preliminary. Data is in constant 2019 prices. \*Turkey is shaded differently because the humanitarian assistance it voluntarily reports to the DAC is largely expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey, and so not strictly comparable with the international humanitarian assistance from other donors in this figure.

# private donors

**Figure 3.3**

The proportion of total private funding coming from individuals continues to grow

Sources of private international humanitarian assistance, 2015–2019



Private donor contributions make up a substantial portion of total international humanitarian assistance and play an important role in financing response to crises (see [Figure 2.1, Chapter 2](#)). The largest source of private donations has consistently been from individuals, and in 2019 (the latest year for which a breakdown by donor type is available) this share is estimated to have grown considerably.

- In 2019, international humanitarian assistance from private donors increased by 9%, from US\$6.2 billion in 2018 to a record US\$6.8 billion in 2019.
- Individual giving remained the largest single source of private humanitarian funding, increasing significantly by volume, up 19% from US\$4.2 billion in 2018 to US\$5.0 billion in 2019, and as a proportion of total private contributions from 68% to 74%.
- Funding from national societies continued to fall in both volume and proportion of total private giving, from 11% [US\$675 million] in 2018 to 6% [US\$391 million] in 2019. Funding from foundations also fell, from 10% [US\$615 million] in 2018 to 8% [US\$513 million] in 2019.
- As in previous years, non-governmental organisations continued to receive the largest proportion of funding from private donors: 85% in 2019, compared to just 12% for UN agencies.



### Box 3.1

#### Large private trusts and corporations

Private corporations and their philanthropic trusts and foundations accounted for 14% (US\$4.1 billion) of total international humanitarian assistance provided by private donors between 2015 and 2019. Historically, private trusts and corporations have focused the majority of their funding on natural disaster preparedness and response, with less engagement in protracted crisis and conflict contexts.<sup>4</sup> However, as alternative sources of finance are sought to close the humanitarian financing gap, the role of international corporations in all settings is anticipated to grow.<sup>5</sup> Private actors are also expected to continue moving beyond a donor mentality toward a 'corporate partnership' approach, encompassing a wide range of activities, from sharing technical expertise to providing logistical support in crisis settings.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, FTS data provides limited and inconsistent insights into the behaviour of private trusts and corporations. Large gaps in donor reporting year-to-year limit the reliability of the data, and comprehensive information on aid flows from private trusts and corporation aid is not available.

#### private trusts and corporations' response to Covid-19

The pandemic has required an unprecedented response from all humanitarian actors, and evidence suggests that private trusts and foundations have adapted quickly to increase flexibility and ensure predictability of funds. An OECD report on the behaviour of private trusts and foundations in the immediate aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic found that, by the end of April 2020, around US\$1.0 billion had been allocated to pandemic response efforts in developing countries and globally.<sup>7</sup> FTS data shows that in 2020, 70% (US\$219 million) of contributions from foundations and private corporations went to the Covid-19 cluster. As well as financial contributions, foundations provided non-financial assistance, such as increased flexibility to grantees, large-scale fundraising, continuation of usual pay-outs, and guidance on crisis management and training to support teleworking. A more recent survey by the Association of Charitable Foundations found that 84% of UK foundations would continue to offer the flexibility around reporting and payments that was introduced in 2020.<sup>8</sup>

#### case study: the IKEA Foundation

The IKEA Foundation was established in 1982 and is funded by the INGKA Foundation. According to CRS, the IKEA Foundation was the second-largest humanitarian private donor in 2019, contributing US\$56 million. One third of contributions had information on country recipients and, for 2019, CRS reports that the IKEA Foundation provided assistance to 12 countries, the bulk of which went to East Africa. The largest recipients were Ethiopia (US\$5.6 million), Kenya (US\$3.3 million) and Uganda (US\$2.7 million). The Foundation has supported long-term development projects and provided grants for emergency relief, and exemplifies a private actor increasingly interacting with the humanitarian sector in different ways.

The IKEA Foundation had committed up to EUR 10 million in funding for the Covid-19 response by the end of April 2020.<sup>9</sup> In support of the Covid-19 response, the Foundation also provided a EUR 1.5 million grant to kickstart the global Start Network Covid-19 Fund, with the aim of providing rapid funding to address underfunded aspects of the Covid-19 crisis at a local level.

The IKEA Foundation has also demonstrated a 'corporate partnership' approach increasingly seen from private trusts and foundations. In 2017, the IKEA Foundation partnered with the Jordan River Foundation, a national non-profit organisation, providing textiles training and employment for Syrian refugee women and Jordanian women in need of livelihood opportunities.<sup>10</sup> The textiles are sold in IKEA stores worldwide. By bringing traditional 'beneficiaries' of humanitarian assistance into the company's supply chain, the partnership sought to empower refugee and host communities while also offering a revenue stream for the Jordan River Foundation and IKEA.

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## multilateral development bank financing to countries experiencing crisis

International financial institutions traditionally associated with development activity are increasingly active in countries experiencing humanitarian crises and play an increasingly important role in crisis response. With MDB funding to countries experiencing humanitarian crises growing (see [Figure 2.3, Chapter 2](#)), it is critical to understand how MDB finance operates in crisis contexts, how it aligns with humanitarian assistance and how it addresses the short- and long-term impacts and drivers of crisis.

The World Bank is responsible for a large amount of funding that goes to low- and middle-income countries, with its International Development Association (IDA) focusing on the poorest countries in the world.<sup>11</sup> The IDA is funded through replenishments every three years from public donors, the World Bank and funds raised from capital markets. The World Bank's engagement in crisis contexts is driven by its focus on promoting sustainable growth for people living in poverty, recognition of the negative impact of crises on development and the need to build resilience to shocks. Its mission is not directly humanitarian. World Bank funding is usually for long-term development projects, however it provides funding when IDA countries are affected by crises. In the year after the Covid-19 pandemic began, the World Bank Group committed US\$36 billion for the crisis response in low- and middle-income countries, which made up 29% of total multilateral humanitarian and development Covid-19 response funding.<sup>12</sup>

### tracking World Bank financing for crisis responses

Research carried out by the Centre for Disaster Protection and Development Initiatives looked at crisis events between 2015 and 2020, and the international funding flows in response to these events – including humanitarian funding, funding from international financial institutions and bilateral development funding (see [Figure 3.4](#)).<sup>13</sup>

- The World Bank committed significant volumes of crisis response funding within 18 months of the crises starting. Across six crises, the World Bank committed US\$1.9 billion, representing 43% of the overall humanitarian and development funding for the response.<sup>14</sup>
- World Bank crisis funding is disbursed much more slowly than funding from other sources. While nearly a quarter (24%) of total humanitarian and development assistance was disbursed within the first two months of the crisis event, the World Bank had disbursed only 28% of committed funds after 18 months.<sup>15</sup> Improving the timeliness of responses is currently flagged as a priority by the World Bank, and crisis preparedness is a central theme for the IDA20 cycle (July 2022 to June 2025).



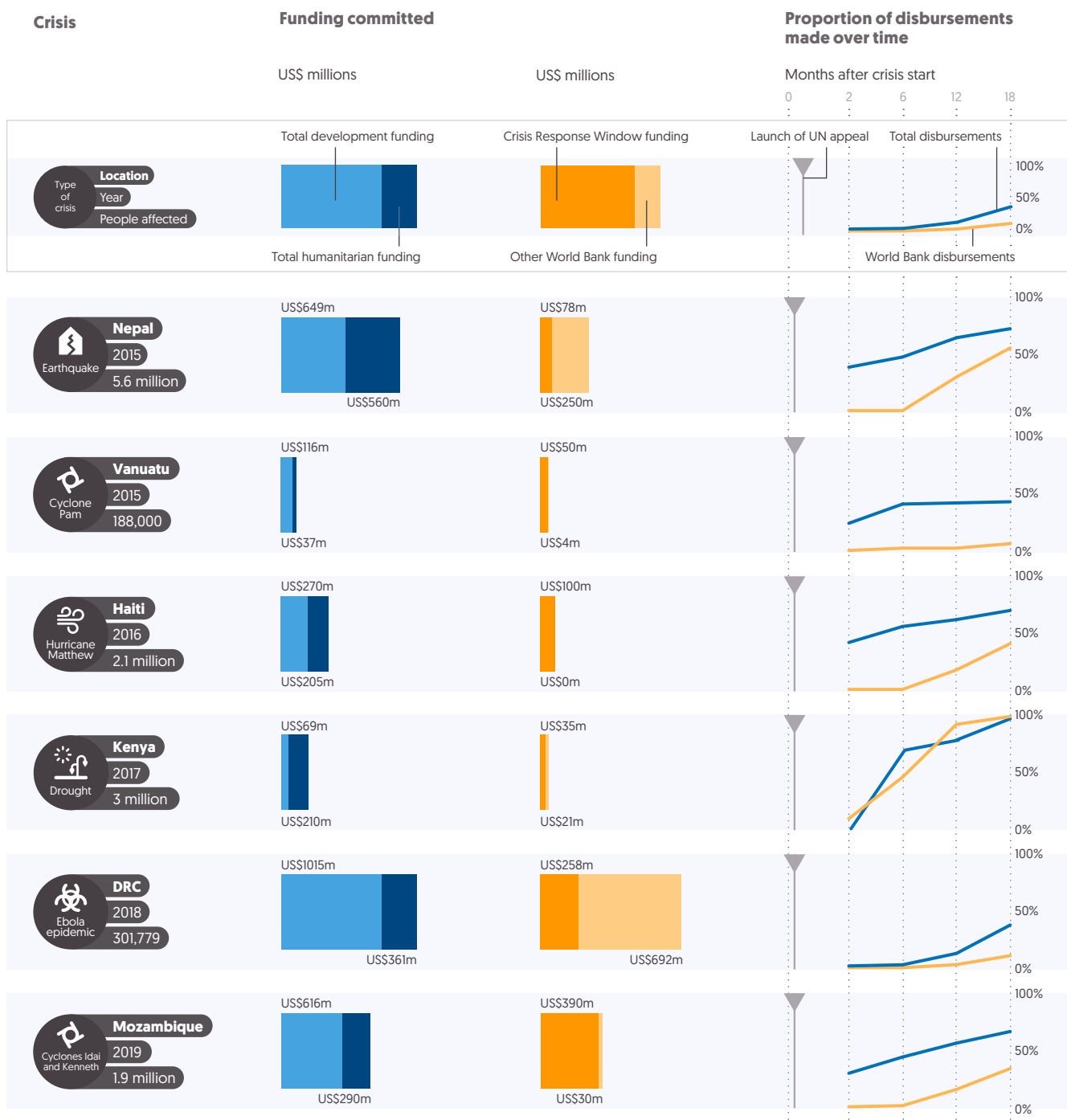
### **Box 3.2**

#### Issues with tracking World Bank financing for crisis responses

There are currently significant barriers to tracking development finance flows (see [Box 2.1, Issues and challenges of tracking ODA financing in crisis contexts](#)) and creating a coherent picture of financing to countries affected by crisis. Removing these barriers is critical to enabling effective coordination, planning and financing at the humanitarian–development–peacebuilding nexus.

There are challenges in understanding the relative importance of different financing instruments within the overall World Bank system, including the rationale for activating instruments in certain contexts (or not), and their effectiveness. The World Bank publishes information on all its projects, including monthly overviews of disbursements per project, and broad information on funding sources and allocations to different project components. However, there is no easy way to aggregate across projects or by instrument or mechanism (globally or at the country level), and there is limited project-level reporting. For example, the use of Crisis Response Window funding is often not evaluated separately on a project or country level.<sup>16</sup> The same is true for information on how exactly different funding instruments complement each other in practice.

**Figure 3.4**  
 The World Bank plays an important role in financing crisis responses  
 Case studies for World Bank crisis response



**Source:** Centre for Disaster Protection and Development Initiatives, 2021. Funding disasters: tracking global humanitarian and development funding for response to natural hazards. Available at: <https://www.disasterprotection.org/funding-disasters-tracking-global-humanitarian-and-development-funding-for-response-to-natural-hazards>. Icons by UN OCHA.

**Notes:** Data is for the 18 months after crisis onset. The number of people impacted is taken from EM-DAT, the international disasters database ([www.emdat.be/](http://www.emdat.be/)), except for Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as the number of people affected was not available. The number of people vaccinated in DRC has instead been used here as a proxy measure of people at risk. Data is in current US\$ prices.

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## World Bank crisis financing mechanisms

The World Bank uses various financing mechanisms and tools to support countries affected by crises. The Crisis Response Window (CRW) [see [Figure 3.5](#)] has been in place since 2010 to support IDA countries. It has addressed the economic impacts of global financial crises and economic shocks, as well as natural hazards, public health emergencies and slower-onset crises. The latter include disease outbreaks and food insecurity and are covered by the early response financing framework, which has been part of the CRW since the IDA19 replenishment cycle (July 2020).

CRW funding is usually requested by and channelled to country governments. However, there have been some exceptions in fragile contexts. The CRW has provided direct support to humanitarian health responses in Yemen and Somalia, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and humanitarian actors, rather than country governments.<sup>17</sup>

- Based on publicly available data, from 2011 to 2018 the CRW committed a total of US\$3.0 billion, which included funding for crises in 27 countries.

The World Bank's Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (Cat DDO) allows countries to pre-arrange financing that can be activated following a natural hazard or health-related crisis. To be eligible, countries should have a credible disaster risk management plan in place. A major advantage of this type of financing is that it can be disbursed within weeks, sometimes days, of activation.

- In the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Bank disbursed US\$1.7 billion through Cat DDOs; the majority of this became available in April 2020, unlike other financing in response to Covid-19 which was not pre-arranged and thus took longer to disburse.<sup>18</sup>
- Cat DDOs have also been used to respond to natural hazards, such as the 2019 flooding in Kenya (US\$70 million)<sup>19</sup> and the 2011 typhoon Washi in the Philippines (US\$500 million).<sup>20</sup>

The World Bank also has processes in place that allow project budgets to be reallocated to finance a crisis response. This funding can be either disbursed through new projects or added to existing projects that have a Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC), which allows for rapid disbursements. This happens either by reallocating financing within a project to a CERC, or by using the Immediate Response Mechanism, which takes financing from other projects.

- In 2019, cyclones in Mozambique led the government to request the activation of the Immediate Response Mechanism. As a result, US\$55 million was reallocated from other projects to support immediate response activities through CERCs.<sup>21</sup>

The Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) was created in 2016 after the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and consists of a cash and insurance window that can release funding for IDA countries if faced with a pandemic. However, it is not clear whether the PEF will continue.

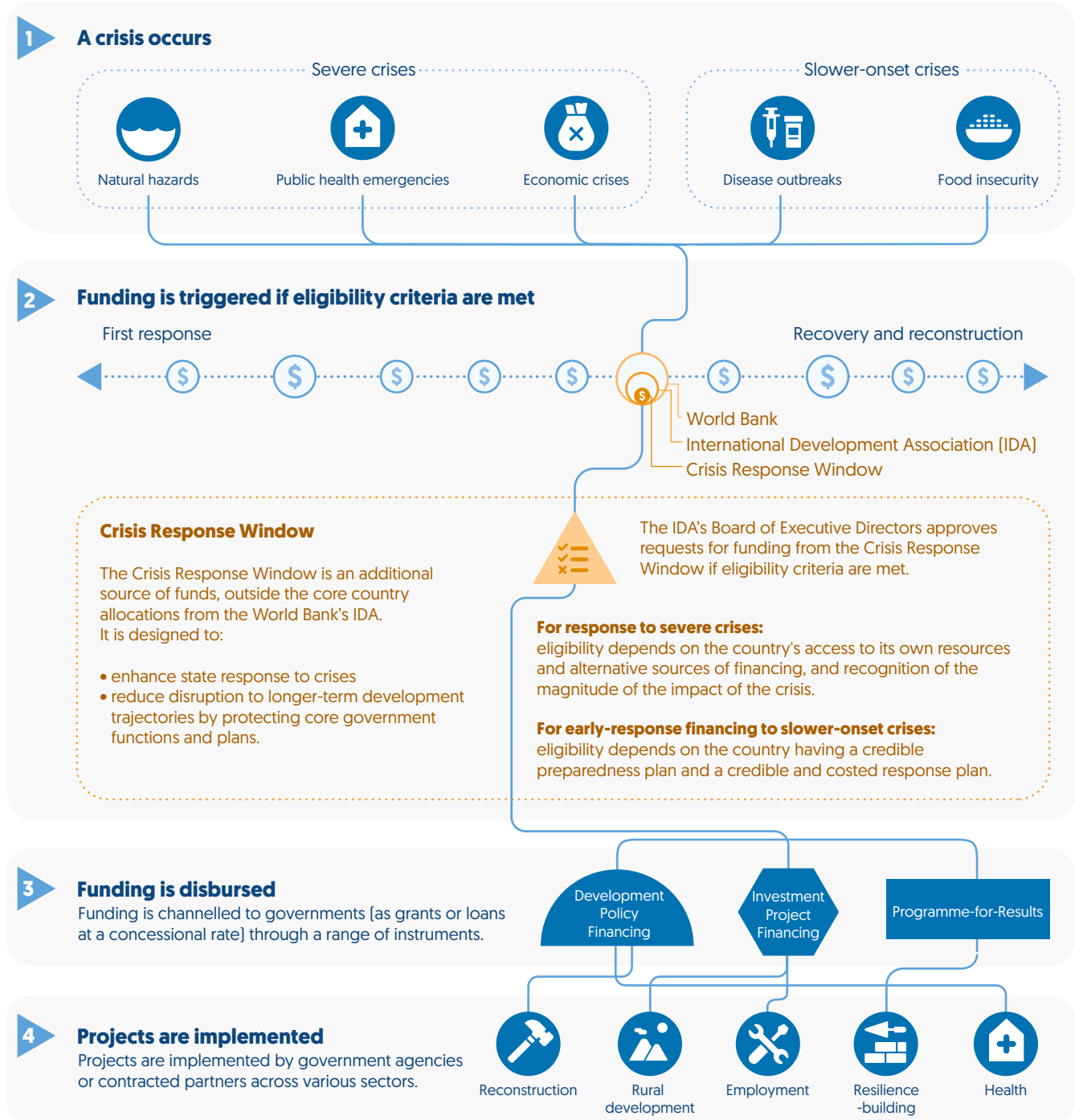
- In response to the Ebola outbreak, the PEF released a total of US\$61 million to DRC from its cash window.
- In response to Covid-19, the PEF released US\$196 million through its insurance window. This supported response activities in 64 countries through government bodies and international organisations such as the World Health Organization, UN International Children's Emergency Fund, and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 3.5**

The Crisis Response Window aims to complement wider crisis financing in severe and slow-onset crisis contexts

How the World Bank Crisis Response Window is triggered and operates in an unfolding crisis



Source: Centre for Disaster Protection. Icons by UN OCHA.

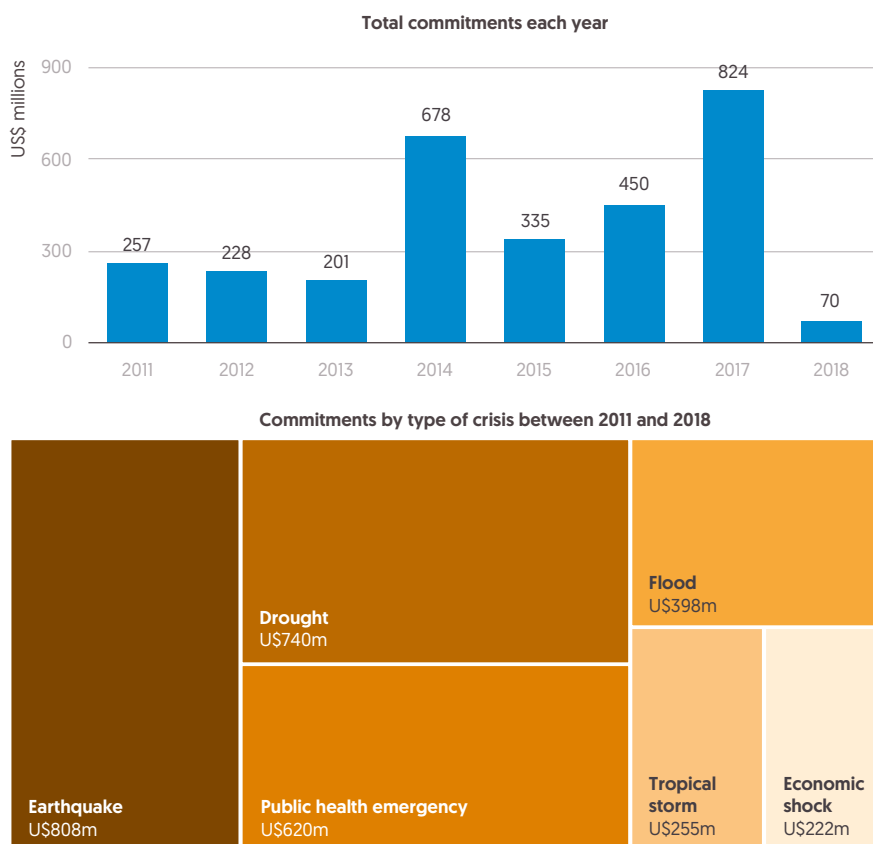
Notes: Data is for the 18 months after crisis onset. Data is in current US\$ prices.

## case study: Crisis Response Window

**Figure 3.6**

Between 2011 and 2018 the Crisis Response Window committed US\$3.0 billion to crisis responses, of which over a third was to countries experiencing protracted crises

World Bank Crisis Response Window, commitments by year and type of crisis, 2011–2018



**Source:** Centre for Disaster Protection.

**Notes:** Data is based on CRW funding between 2011 and 2018. Data is in current US\$ prices. Data relates to CRW responses to 4 public health emergencies, 14 droughts, 5 economic shocks, 7 tropical storms and 7 floods.

The CRW has provided significant amounts of funding to countries experiencing humanitarian crises, with the majority of funding committed in response to earthquakes, drought and public health emergencies.

- Based on publicly available data, from 2011 to 2018 the CRW committed a total of US\$3.0 billion, which included funding for crises in 27 countries.
- Almost two thirds (65%) of CRW funding (US\$2.0 billion) went to nine countries, which were also large recipients of humanitarian assistance (among the 20 largest).
- Most recipients of CRW funding (21 out of 27) were not experiencing protracted crises. However, the six countries that were received 40% of the total CRW funding between 2011 and 2018 (US\$1.2 billion).
- 2017 saw the highest commitments made from the CRW (US\$824 million), with the cholera outbreak in Yemen (US\$200 million), the drought in Yemen (US\$125 million) and the drought in Ethiopia (US\$100 million) receiving the largest amounts.

- 
- The substantial increase in funding in 2014 (US\$678 million) was largely driven by the Ebola crisis. While the response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake has been the largest to date (US\$508 million), many of these grants were committed years after the crisis event.
  - The crisis types that received the most CRW funding were earthquakes (US\$808 million), droughts (US\$740 million) and public health emergencies (US\$620 million). This includes two earthquakes and 14 drought events, which indicates the varying size of CRW funding per crisis.

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## direct giving for humanitarian response

Direct giving, or 'person-to-person' giving (P2P), is a form of crowdfunding in which money is transferred between individuals without an intermediary. It allows individuals to give directly to people affected by crisis, or to projects supporting humanitarian action.

The increase in direct giving in recent years has been facilitated by a number of factors: technological advances in areas such as mobile money and distributed ledger technology, growing diaspora populations<sup>23</sup> and a desire for individuals to establish a more direct connection with recipients of their donations.<sup>24</sup> Crowdfunding and P2P online platforms such as Give Directly and GlobalGiving allow individuals to learn about and support specific individuals and local organisations through direct donations or peer lending (e.g. KIVA).

Direct giving is recognised as part of the growing diversity in humanitarian and development funding streams.<sup>25</sup> It is also linked to the emergence of network humanitarianism, of which the removal of intermediaries ('disintermediation') is a key characteristic.<sup>26</sup> The World Bank estimates that, by 2025, crowdfunding to developing countries could reach the value of US\$96 billion,<sup>27</sup> but there is little data available that aggregates total direct giving to countries experiencing humanitarian crisis. However, trends in giving from single online fundraising platforms are available and give an indication of the volumes of direct giving over time.

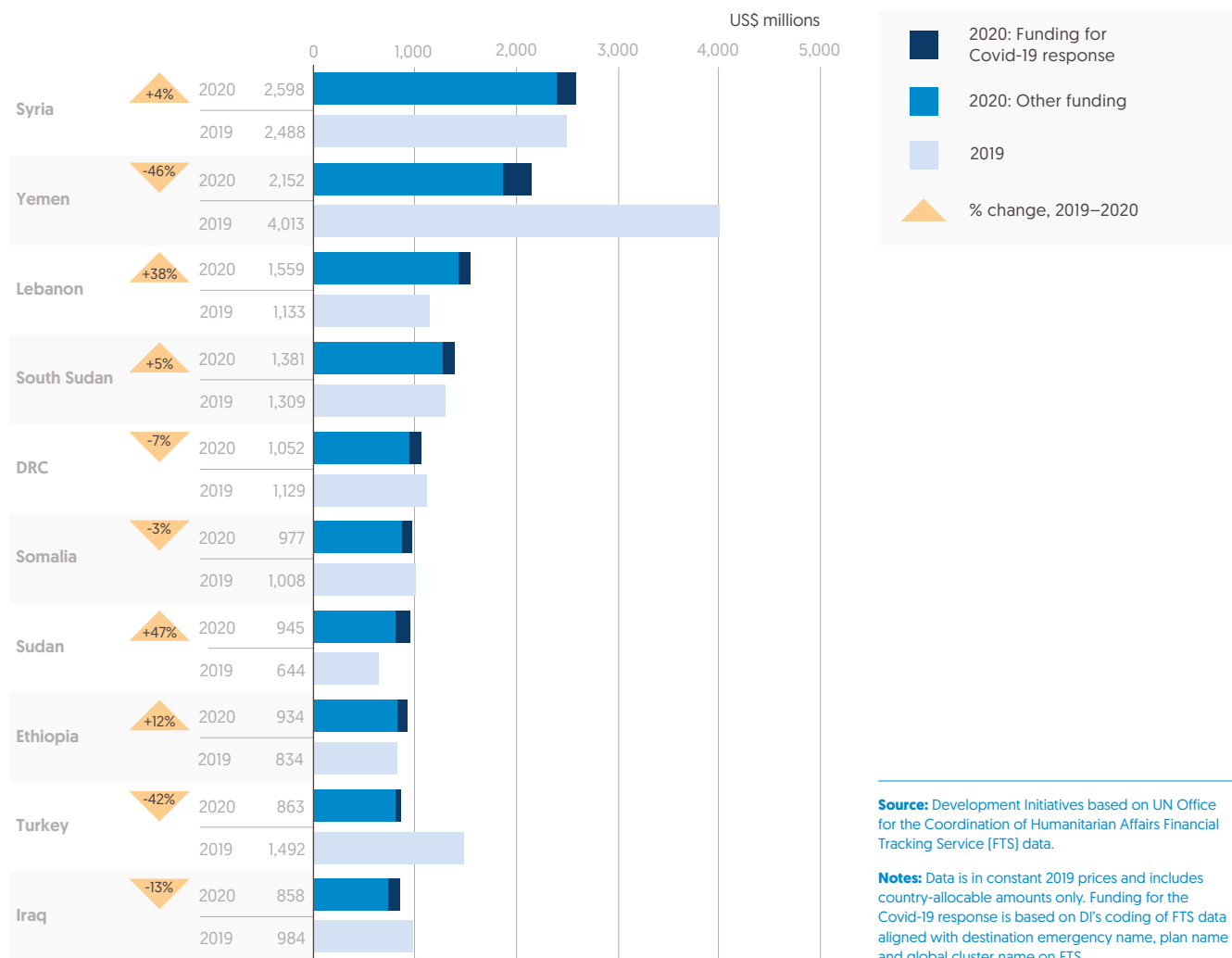
- According to GlobalGiving's data (published to IATI), total funding donated through the platform increased from US\$31.2 million in 2011 to US\$98.4 million in 2020.<sup>28</sup> 2020 saw a large overall increase (63%) in funding compared to 2019.
- The proportion of total GlobalGiving donations being channelled to ODA-eligible countries has increased, from 8.0% (US\$2.5 million) in 2011 to 28% (US\$28.0 million) in 2020. The top five ODA-eligible countries supported by GlobalGiving in 2020 were China, India, Kenya, Mexico and South Africa. Together they received US\$12.8 million via GlobalGiving in 2020, 13% of total funding through the platform.
- Funding flows to countries experiencing humanitarian crisis are more limited though increasing. Donations via GlobalGiving to the top 20 annual recipients of international humanitarian assistance reached US\$4.4 million in 2020 (4.4% of total), up from US\$1.6 million (3.2%) in 2015. However, whether the purpose of this funding was for humanitarian or development activities is unknown.
- By contrast, GlobalGiving donations to countries experiencing humanitarian crises identified in ECHO's 2020 Forgotten Crisis Assessment<sup>29</sup> accounted for 13% (US\$13 million) of total funding in 2020. This suggests that individuals could be more inclined to fund projects in countries with less well-supported humanitarian crises.

# Largest recipient countries for humanitarian assistance

**Figure 3.7**

Most of the largest recipients received less humanitarian assistance for needs unrelated to Covid-19 in 2020 than they did in 2019

10 largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance, 2019–2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service (FTS) data.

**Notes:** Data is in constant 2019 prices and includes country-allocable amounts only. Funding for the Covid-19 response is based on DI's coding of FTS data aligned with destination emergency name, plan name and global cluster name on FTS.

In 2020, total international humanitarian assistance remained at levels similar to those in 2019 [see [Figure 2.1, Chapter 2](#)], despite the sharply increased demand for humanitarian funding to meet the needs of more people in more countries, driven by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic [see [Figure 2.2, Chapter 2](#)]. In 2020, significantly more countries, however, received humanitarian assistance than in 2019.

- In total, 112 countries received more than US\$5 million of humanitarian assistance in 2020. This compares with 69 countries in 2019.

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## concentration of funding

In 2020, a shift in how funding was targeted among countries was evident, as total funding was less concentrated among the largest recipients. While the number of countries receiving some humanitarian assistance increased, many received relatively small amounts. The majority of country-allocable humanitarian assistance – funding flowing both inside and outside appeals – continued to be received by a small number of large-scale crises. However, funding to the 10 largest recipients in 2020 accounted for the smallest proportion of total humanitarian assistance for almost a decade.

- In 2020, the 10 largest recipients received 57% of all funding to countries in 2020. This is the smallest proportion of funding received by the 10 largest recipients since 2012 and compares to 66% in 2019.

It is largely the same countries year-on-year that are present in the group of 10 largest recipients. All the members of this group in 2020 experienced protracted crisis.

- In 2020, the only change among the 10 largest recipients from 2019 was Sudan replacing Bangladesh.
- Using the existence of a UN-coordinated appeal as proxy for experiencing humanitarian crisis, 9 of these 10 largest recipients have experienced crisis for 9 or more consecutive years. The DRC, Somalia and Sudan have experienced crisis for 21 consecutive years.

## Covid-19 funding

In aggregate, the 10 largest recipients received less funding targeted to countries than in 2019, and when funding specifically allocated for Covid-19 is accounted for, humanitarian assistance for other needs reduced significantly.<sup>30</sup>

- In 2020, the 10 largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance received US\$13.3 billion, a decrease of 11% from the US\$15.0 billion received in 2019.
- Taking into account funding directed to respond to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, for which US\$1.3 billion was provided, these countries received US\$12.0 billion for other pre-existing or emerging humanitarian needs in 2020, US\$3.0 billion less than for other humanitarian needs (not related to Covid-19) in 2019.

The largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance in 2020 received a relatively small proportion of their total funding for Covid-19 needs, compared to other countries.

- Of the total funding received by the 10 largest recipients, 10% (US\$1.3 billion of a total US\$13.3 billion received) was allocated to meet needs related to Covid-19.
- This compares to an average of 28% (US\$2.8 billion of a total US\$9.9 billion received) of the total humanitarian funding received by other countries.
- Visibility of where all funding for the Covid-19 emergency response was directed in 2020 is limited. Of the total US\$6.3 billion reported as targeted to the Covid-19 emergency response, a third (35%, US\$2.2 billion) was not allocated to a specific country destination but reported as delivered to global, multi-country or unspecified destinations.

In aggregate, countries not among the 10 largest recipients received more funding in 2020 than in 2019. However, when funding for Covid-19 is discounted, they still received less for other humanitarian needs (unrelated to Covid-19) than in 2019.

- Funding to the next 20 largest recipients of humanitarian assistance (the 11th- to 30th-largest recipients) increased from US\$6.5 billion (28% of total country-allocable assistance) in 2019 to US\$7.4 billion (32%) in 2020.
- However, in aggregate, less funding was provided to this group of countries for other needs (unrelated to Covid-19) in 2020 (US\$5.9 billion) than in 2019 (US\$6.5 billion).

### patterns of funding to individual recipients

The fall in assistance provided to Yemen in 2019, following a very sharp increase in 2018, continued in 2020, resulting in Syria becoming the largest recipient of international humanitarian assistance.

- Funding to Yemen reduced by 46% (a fall of US\$1.8 billion) to US\$2.2 billion, down from a high of US\$5.1 billion in 2018. While UN appeal requirements for Yemen also reduced, the level of underfunding within the Yemen appeal increased, with 42% of requirements unmet in 2020 compared to 12% in 2019.
- Driving this fall in funding were decreases from a number of donors. The largest reductions were from Saudi Arabia, whose funding decreased by US\$891 million from 2019 (a 65% reduction), and the UAE, with a US\$476 million decrease (a 95% fall). Funding from other donors also contributed to the overall reduction, with the US reducing funding by 26% (a US\$230 million decrease) and the UK by 21% (a US\$54 million fall).
- Among other large recipients, significant increases in funding in 2020 were evident to Lebanon, where funding grew 38% to US\$1.6 billion, and to Sudan, where funding increased by 47% to US\$945 million.

Outside the 10 largest recipients, there were large rises and falls in funding received by a number of other countries.

- Four countries outside the 10 largest recipients had increases in funding in excess of US\$100 million compared with 2019; Burkina Faso increasing by US\$184 million, Niger by US\$161 million, Colombia by US\$154 million and Afghanistan by US\$123 million.
- Funding to 15 countries outside the 10 largest recipients rose notably by volume (by more than US\$20 million), also more than doubling in comparison to volumes received in 2019. Covid-19 funding was the main driver of increases in over half of these countries (8 of 15), with 50% or more of funding for Covid-19 needs. These countries were: Cambodia, Fiji, Greece, Iran, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Tunisia.
- The largest increase by volume among these 15 countries was in Iran, where funding grew by US\$71 million, an increase of 253%.
- Only two countries experienced reductions in funding of more than US\$50 million: Mozambique decreasing by US\$245 million and Bangladesh by US\$57 million.



Jordan, 2020

The International Labour Organization and partners are implementing workplace learning in the agricultural sector that aims to enhance workers' employability and improve their living conditions.

Credit: Abdel Hameed Al Nasier/ILO



# chapter 4

## funding for effectiveness and efficiency

Sufficient volumes of funding and effective delivery mechanisms are key to the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian responses. The aspirations of the Grand Bargain, to drive greater efficiency and effectiveness, have yet to be fulfilled. Progress has been made over the past five years but has been uneven against key commitments. Critically, the ability of the humanitarian community to understand and monitor progress is impeded by limited accessible, accurate and granular data.

The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of funding to local and national actors to provide responsive assistance to people in need. Patterns of funding to first-level recipients remained largely unchanged in 2019, with most funding from public donors going to multilateral organisations (66%, US\$15.8 billion). Funding given directly to local and national actors continues to constitute only a small proportion of total international humanitarian assistance – just 3.1% in 2020. The volume of funding channelled directly to local and national actors increased in 2020 (US\$756 million), recovering after a fall in 2019. For all funding channels, there continues to be insufficient data on secondary transactions beyond first recipients.

Pooled funds allow for a collective and flexible response. Total contributions to UN-coordinated pooled funds fell in 2020 by 18% to US\$1.5 billion, after significant growth in 2019. This was primarily due to a US\$449 million reduction in contributions from the UK. While overall funding to country-based pooled funds decreased in 2020, the proportion directed to national organisations continued to grow, up from 24% in 2016 to 34%.

Unearmarked and multi-year funding provide flexibility and predictability to recipients. Data collected by Development Initiatives (DI) from nine UN agencies shows that between 2016 and 2020 unearmarked funding increased by US\$535 million, reaching US\$3.3 billion in 2020. The proportion of total humanitarian funding provided to these agencies as unearmarked funding grew in 2020 – rising for the first time in five years to 17%, though remaining below 2016 levels of 19%. More positively, comparable data from eight leading donors shows multi-year funding increased as a proportion of the total assistance they provide, from 27% in 2016 to 41% in 2020, despite a fall between 2019 and 2020.

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) continued to grow in 2020. The ability to scale up and deliver remotely meant that many implementers preferred to use cash to deliver humanitarian assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic response. In 2020, total programming costs for CVA grew to US\$6.3 billion, having grown consistently year on year from US\$2.0 billion in 2015.

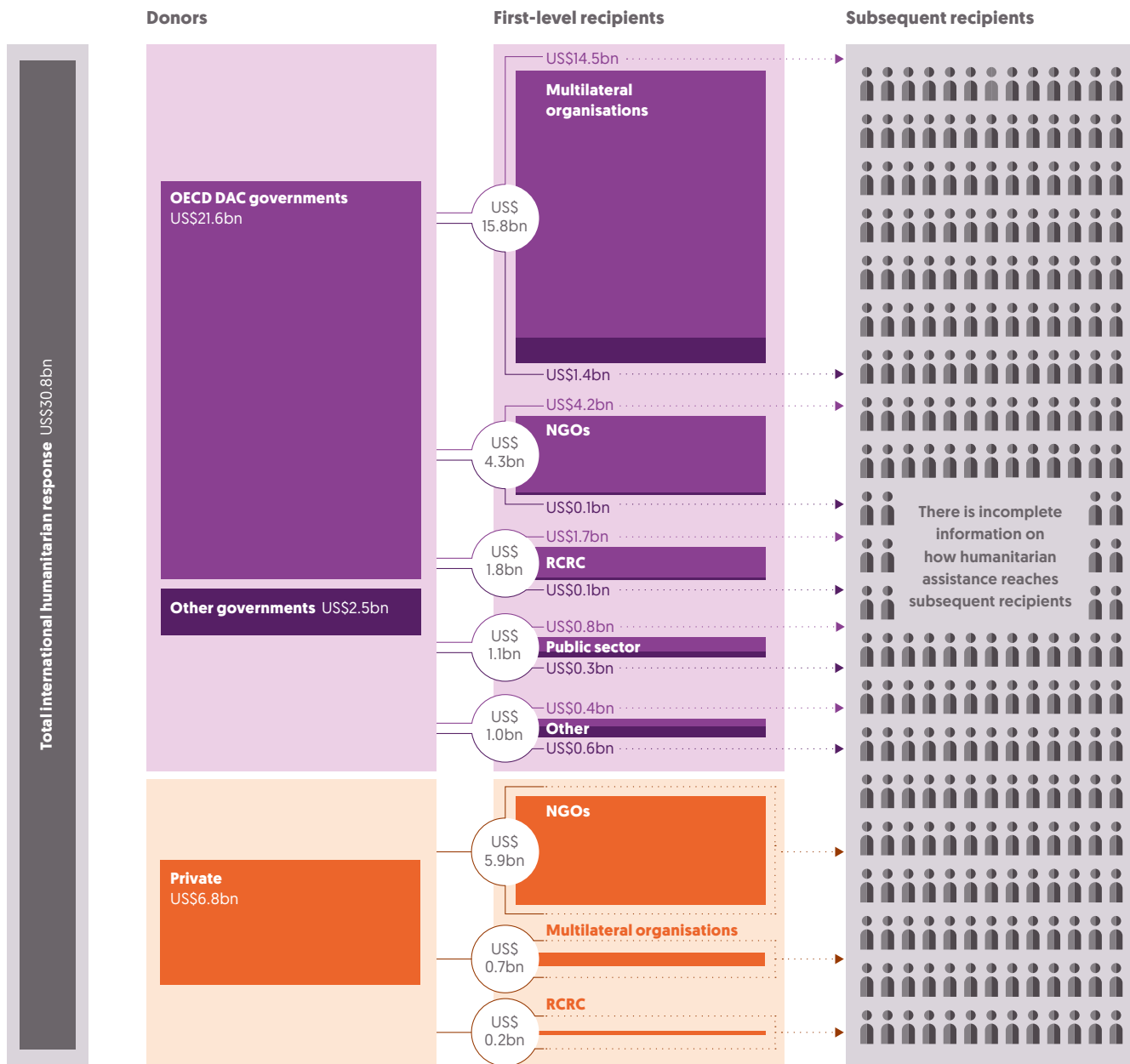


# channels of delivery

**Figure 4.1**

Most public assistance goes to multilateral organisations, while most private assistance goes to NGOs

Channels of delivery of international humanitarian assistance, 2019



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) data and Development Initiatives' unique dataset for private contributions.

**Notes:** RCRC = International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Our first-level recipient data from government sources and EU institutions uses OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS), CERF and UN OCHA FTS data. The figures in our calculations for total humanitarian assistance from OECD DAC donors use data from OECD DAC Tables 1, 2a, and 'Members' total use of the multilateral system', so totals may differ. 'Public sector' refers to both the OECD definition and reporting to the FTS. OECD DAC CRS codes 'other', 'not reported', 'public-private partnerships', 'private sector institutions' and 'teaching institutions, research institutes or think tanks' are merged to 'other'. Data is in constant 2019 prices.

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International humanitarian assistance was delivered in 2019 in largely the same way as in previous years. Overall, multilateral organisations received most of the funding from public donors, while non-governmental organisations (NGOs) received the majority of assistance from private donors. While funding can often be passed through multiple intermediaries before reaching the final recipient, there continues to be a lack of data around how funding is channelled beyond first-level recipients.

- In 2019, two thirds (66%, US\$15.8 billion) of international humanitarian assistance from government donors was channelled through multilateral organisations, an increase on the volume and proportion provided in 2018 (62%, US\$15.5 billion). This represents the highest proportion of funding channelled to multilateral organisations in the last five years, an increase from 58% in 2015.
- A further 18% (US\$4.3 billion) of international humanitarian assistance from governments was channelled to NGOs, of which the majority came from governments in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (US\$4.2 billion).
- Private sector international humanitarian assistance was predominantly channelled through NGOs (86%, US\$5.9 billion), with multilateral organisations receiving just 11% (US\$742 million).
- The majority of funds (85%, US\$1.7 billion) channelled to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC) in 2019 came from DAC donor governments. Overall, funding to the RCRC fell in 2019 by US\$1.2 billion, due to a drop in funding from non-DAC public donors, however this returned levels of funding to those of previous years, after a significant jump in 2018.
- The public sector received 44% less funding in 2019 (US\$1.1 billion) compared to 2018 (US\$2.0 billion), due to a decrease in funding from both DAC and non-DAC governments.

The OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System provides data on recipients of international humanitarian assistance only after two years. For more up-to-date information on channels of delivery in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs provides an indicative, though not comprehensive, picture.

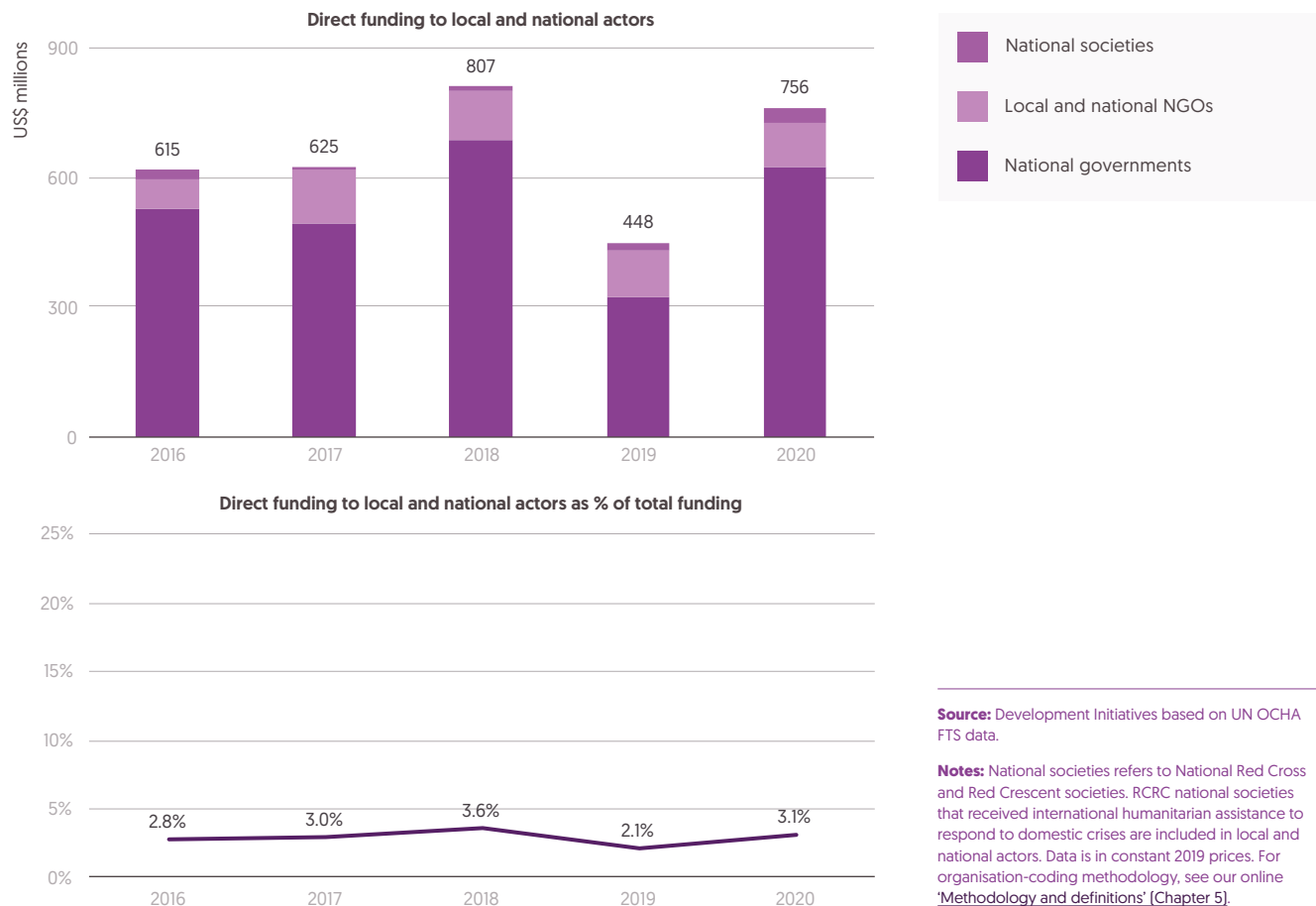
- FTS data suggests that the proportion of international humanitarian assistance from government donors channelled to multilateral organisations remained constant from 2019 (66%) to 2020 (67%), with some variation between donors. Of the 10 largest DAC government donors, the Netherlands saw the greatest increase in the proportion of funding for multilateral organisations, from 63% in 2019 to 74% in 2020. The donor allocating the lowest proportion of assistance to multilaterals in 2020 was Norway (55%).
- On the other hand, FTS data shows that the proportion of government funding to NGOs increased in 2020, from 12% in 2019 to 19% in 2020, while the proportion channelled to 'others' decreased. Following a drop in 2019, the three largest donors (the US, Germany and the UK) all increased their proportion of funding to non-governmental and civil society organisations in 2020 to varying degrees. The US increased contributions from 14% of its total funding in 2019 to 27% in 2020.
- In total, four of the top ten donors contributed over 20% of their international humanitarian assistance to NGOs: Norway (28%), the US (27%), the Netherlands (26%) and Sweden (20%). Additionally, over the last five years, Norway and Sweden have contributed the highest proportion of assistance to the RCRC.

## direct funding to local and national actors

**Figure 4.2**

The volume and proportion of direct funding to local and national actors recovered in 2020 but remains far below global targets

Direct funding to local and national actors reporting to UN OCHA FTS, 2016–2020



Local and national actors, including governments, NGOs and societies, are often the first to respond to crisis. The scale of need as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent restrictions on access for international actors, has reinforced the centrality of local and national actors in humanitarian response.

Through the localisation agenda, there has been a growing focus on enhancing the role of local and national actors in decision-making and coordination processes, as well as access to funding. Commitments made at the Grand Bargain included a global target of 25% of total international humanitarian assistance to be passed to local and national actors “as directly as possible” by 2020.<sup>1</sup> Five years on from the Grand Bargain, absolute volumes of international humanitarian assistance passed directly to local and national responders have increased. However, in the context of the scale of change desired, this growth falls far short of aspirations.

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- Between 2016 and 2020, direct funding to local and national responders increased by 23%, from US\$615 million to US\$756 million. However, despite this growth, this represents just 3.1% of total international humanitarian assistance and only a marginal increase from 2.8% in 2016 when the Grand Bargain commitment was made.

Total volumes of funding channelled directly to local and national actors recovered in 2020 after a significant fall in 2019.

- Direct funding to local and national responders grew by 69% in 2020, from the previous year. As a result, the share of total international humanitarian assistance passed directly to local and national actors increased to 3.1% (US\$756 million) in 2020, from 2.1% (US\$448 million) in 2019, recovering to nearer 2018 levels after a substantial drop in 2019 funding.
- Most funding to local and national actors in 2020 continued to be directed to national governments (83%, US\$624 million). This follows a sharp drop in funding received by national governments in 2019, which occurred mainly because of a large decrease (68%) in assistance to the Yemeni government.
- Direct funding to local and national NGOs reduced by volume and as a proportion of total assistance in 2020 to 14% (US\$103 million), from 24% (US\$109 million) in 2019.

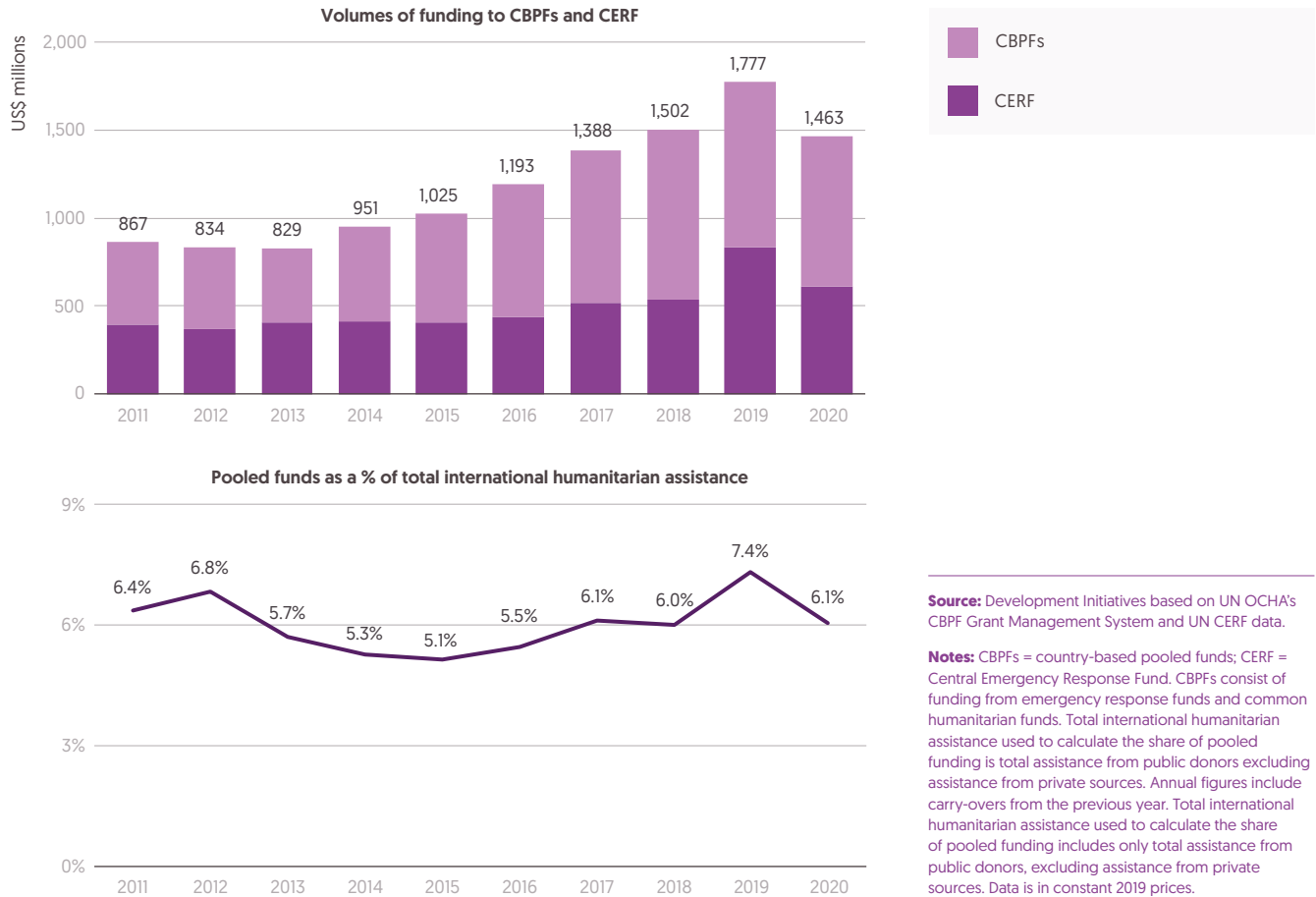
Funding is also passed indirectly to local and national actors through intermediaries. For example, country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) are an effective way of channelling greater volumes of funding to local and national actors in crisis contexts. While indirect funding is thought to represent a greater proportion of funding than direct flows, inconsistent reporting means data on exact volumes is limited and insufficient to establish a full understanding of funding to local and national actors.

# pooled funds

**Figure 4.3**

Funding to UN pooled funds falls in 2020

Total funding to UN-managed humanitarian pooled funds, 2011–2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA’s CBPF Grant Management System and UN CERF data.

**Notes:** CBPFs = country-based pooled funds; CERF = Central Emergency Response Fund. CBPFs consist of funding from emergency response funds and common humanitarian funds. Total international humanitarian assistance used to calculate the share of pooled funding is total assistance from public donors excluding assistance from private sources. Annual figures include carry-overs from the previous year. Total international humanitarian assistance used to calculate the share of pooled funding includes only total assistance from public donors, excluding assistance from private sources. Data is in constant 2019 prices.

Pooled funds are an increasingly important part of the humanitarian financing landscape. The responsiveness and flexibility of pooled funds allows assistance to be quickly targeted and delivered where it is needed most. Therefore, pooled funds are seen as playing a key role in delivering the Grand Bargain commitments, especially localisation, and have seen consistent growth in support from donors over the past six years. However, overall funding to pooled funds fell in 2020, driven by a large decrease in funding from one of the biggest donors to pooled funds.

- Contributions to UN pooled funds fell sharply in 2020 to US\$1.5 billion, compared to the record US\$1.8 billion received in 2019.
- This 18% decrease in 2020 represented a sharp departure from the growth seen in 2019 (when funding rose by 18%) and returned total volumes of contributions to below 2018 levels.

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- Both the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) saw a reduction in funding in 2020, although the fall in CERF contributions was higher (27%, US\$221 million) than for CBPFs (10%, US\$93 million).
  - With a fall in total volumes, pooled funds as a proportion of total public contributions also fell to 6.1% in 2020, from 7.4% in 2019. Consistent with previous years, funding to CBPFs in 2020 (3.5%) accounted for a slightly greater proportion of total international humanitarian assistance than funding to the CERF (2.5%).

UN pooled funds receive the majority of contributions from a small group of public donors. Several key donors increased their contributions in 2020. However, the UK – the largest donor to UN pooled funds in 2019 – cut its funding in 2020, with significant impact on overall volumes received.

- The fall in contributions to UN pooled funds in 2020 was predominantly due to a 63% (US\$449 million) decrease in UK contributions, from US\$714 million in 2019 to US\$266 million in 2020. This fall follows a large increase in funding (US\$347 million) from the UK in 2019, an increase of 95% on 2018. While this is in line with overall cuts to UK aid (see [Figure 3.1, Chapter 3](#)), the proportion of the UK's total international humanitarian assistance to pooled funds fell from nearly a quarter (24%) of all spending in 2019 to 13% in 2020.
- In contrast, two thirds (10 countries) of the top 15 donors to pooled funds increased their contributions in 2020 from the previous year. Excluding UK contributions, funding from the top 15 donors increased by US\$143 million, a 14% rise. While a notable increase, this fell some way short of counterbalancing the reduction in UK contributions that drove the overall decrease in funding to UN pooled funds.
- The largest donors were Germany (US\$342 million) and the Netherlands (US\$167 million), which increased their contributions in 2020 by 26% (Germany) and 35% (Netherlands). Other notable increases in contributions to UN-managed pooled funds came from Switzerland (US\$51 million, an increase of 66%) and Finland (US\$16 million, an increase of 77%).

#### Figure 4.4

The proportion of funding from CBPFs to national organisations continues to grow despite overall decrease in volume of CBPF allocations

UN-managed country-based pooled funds by recipient type, 2016–2020



CBPFs are managed in-country and provide funding to delivery partners who can best respond to specific, identified need. As in previous years, NGOs received the highest share [75%] of CBPF allocations. Despite total volumes channelled to CBPFs falling by 13% in 2020, the proportion of total funding channelled to national organisations grew slightly.

- The share of total CBPF allocations channelled through local and national organisations continues to increase slowly. In 2020, 34% [US\$307 million] of CBPF funding was directed to local and national NGOs, up from 33% in 2019.
- Funding to national organisations through CBPFs is largely direct, although nearly a quarter (23%) in 2020 was in the form of sub-grants. This level of indirect funding to national organisations is consistent with the pattern seen in recent years, where the proportion of funding channelled indirectly has been between 20% and 24% in four of the past five years.

**Source:** Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA's CBPF Grant Management System.

**Notes:** CBPF = Country-based pooled fund; RCRC = Red Cross Red Crescent societies. 'Net allocations' includes funds provided to humanitarian organisations either as a primary recipient or as a sub-grantee (as some organisations may sub-grant part of their funding budget to another organisation). 'Indirect funding' refers to funding granted to national actors as a sub-grant (for example, from international NGOs). 'National actors' includes funding to national NGOs, governments and others as well as private contractors. 'National actors' may also include local ones. The organisation classifications in this figure are from CBPFs and may differ from DI's organisation-coding (see our online 'Methodology and definitions', Chapter 5). Data is in constant 2019 prices.

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- Allocations to national organisations varied significantly across different CBPFs and, to a lesser degree, across years. In 2020, the four largest CBPFs accounted for 57% of all CBPF funding to national organisations. The largest CBPF, the Syria Cross Border, drove overall volumes, accounting for over a third (41%) of total funding to national organisations from CBPFs. In total, the Syria Cross Border CBPF allocated 69% (US\$125 million) of funding to national organisations in 2020, an increase of 59% (US\$46 million) from 2019.
  - Allocations to national organisations in Yemen, the second-largest CBPF, fell by 81% (US\$67 million): from 34% (US\$82 million) of total Yemen CBPF funding in 2019 to 16% (US\$16 million) in 2020.
  - In total, seven CBPFs allocated less than a quarter of funding to national organisations (Central African Republic, Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Syria). As well as the Syria Cross Border CBPF, the Pakistan and Somalia CBPFs allocated over 50% to national organisations.

No new CBPFs were established in 2020, with a total of 18 operating in 2019 and 2020. Looking forward, allocations have been made to a new CBPF in Venezuela in 2021,<sup>2</sup> and discussions are underway around a new regional pooled fund for the Sahel.<sup>3</sup>

- The four largest CBPFs in 2020 accounted for nearly half of total CBPF allocations: Syria Cross Border (US\$182 million), Yemen (US\$97 million), Sudan (US\$74 million) and Democratic Republic of the Congo (US\$74 million). This followed a similar pattern to 2019 with the exception of the Iraq CBPF which decreased in funds by 67%, from US\$82 million in 2019 to US\$27 million in 2020, and the South Sudan CBPF which fell by nearly a quarter (23%) from US\$80 million in 2019 to US\$62 million in 2020.
- There were notable variations in funding to certain CBPFs. In line with overall reductions in international humanitarian assistance to Yemen, allocations to the Yemen CBPF in 2020 fell by 59% (US\$142 million) compared to 2019, while allocations to the Syria Cross Border CBPF increased by 56% (US\$65 million).





#### **Box 4.1**

##### **Pooled fund innovation: CERF Covid-19 disbursements**

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a global pooled fund designed to provide rapid access to flexible funding for countries in crisis. To support lifesaving activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the CERF provided US\$241 million in 2020, including US\$225 million in new allocations and US\$16 million in re-programmed funds. Allocations in response to Covid represent about 25% of the total 2020 CERF contributions.<sup>4</sup>

The CERF also piloted various innovations in disbursement practices to enable faster and more efficient allocation of funds for the Covid-19 response. Regular administrative practices were adapted, with streamlined application and reporting processes, and greater flexibility in adjusting CERF projects, for example by requesting project extensions and re-programming funds. Global block-grants were made available to UN agencies (a total of US\$95 million) early in the pandemic, allowing them the flexibility to prioritise the most critical country programmes. To address some of the secondary impacts of the pandemic, CERF provided US\$25 million in response to rising domestic and gender-based violence, and US\$80 million to support cash programming in response to rising hunger and food insecurity in several countries.

In addition, the CERF made its first-ever NGO allocation in 2020. Through a joint pilot with the International Organization for Migration in June 2020, the CERF allocated US\$25 million in Covid-19 response funding to 24 NGOs working in the health and water and sanitation sectors in six countries (Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Haiti, Libya, South Sudan and Sudan).<sup>5</sup> CERF funding was channelled through the International Organization for Migration, which allowed NGOs to benefit from similar contractual arrangements and conditions as UN recipients. In-country, an expert committee was established under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (or Resident Coordinator) to identify the best-placed front-line NGO responders. Of a total 24 recipient organisations, one third were national NGOs. The average individual allocation for international NGOs was US\$1 million, and US\$0.6 million for local and national NGOs. Initial findings from the dedicated learning exercise suggest that NGOs were satisfied with the process. CERF has also commissioned external reviews of the NGO, gender-based violence and food-security cash programming, which are currently underway.

# earmarking

**Figure 4.5**

Unearmarked funding increased significantly by volume in 2020, although as a proportion of total funding it remained below 2016 levels  
 Proportion of resources received by UN agencies reported as earmarked and unearmarked, 2016–2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on data provided bilaterally by UN agencies.

**Notes:** The calculations comprise earmarked and unearmarked humanitarian and humanitarian-related contributions given to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN OCHA, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO). 2020 data for IOM and UNDP is not available at the time of writing so values included are estimates. Data is in constant 2019 prices.

‘Quality funding’ refers to a range of properties that support and facilitate more responsive and effective programming, including multi-year planning and funding, reducing the earmarking of donor contributions [see the section entitled, ‘[Multi-year funding](#)’ in this chapter] and providing more flexible grant conditions. To this end, Grand Bargain commitments included a target of 30% of international humanitarian assistance to be unearmarked or softly earmarked funds by 2020.

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The urgency of the Covid-19 response, and its impact on ongoing humanitarian crises, has reinforced the need for better and more flexible funding arrangements. Following the outbreak of Covid-19, and aligning with existing Grand Bargain commitments, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee set out guidelines on how donors can better support the pandemic response and ongoing humanitarian operations through flexible funding and simplification of funding requirements. This guidance requested that donors increase the flexibility of both existing and new funding, for example through increased cost eligibility, re-programming of funds, simplified reporting processes and no-cost extensions, as well as streamlined funding negotiation and disbursement processes. In return, Inter-Agency Standing Committee members committed to transparent reporting on the use of funds and on cascading this flexibility and simplification downstream to partners, including local and national NGOs.

Donors responded positively to the call for greater funding flexibility in response to Covid-19, and the total volume and proportion of unearmarked funding received by UN agencies increased in 2020, reversing the drop in unearmarked funds in 2019. However, five years on from the Grand Bargain, the proportion of total funding that is unearmarked is well below the agreed targets, and below levels in 2016.

- Between 2016 and 2020, data collected by DI from nine UN agencies shows that unearmarked funding increased by US\$535 million, reaching a record US\$3.3 billion in 2020. The proportion of total humanitarian funding provided unearmarked to UN agencies grew to 17% in 2020, following a drop to 14% in 2019 and returning to levels similar to those of 2018.
- In total, six agencies reported an increase in volumes of unearmarked funding received in 2020, from the previous year. The increase in the proportion of unearmarked funding in 2020 was mainly driven by a sevenfold increase in unearmarked funding to the World Health Organization, rising from US\$98 million in 2019 to US\$699 million in 2020. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the largest recipient of unearmarked funds in 2020 (US\$1.3 billion), also saw a 7% increase, although the proportion of unearmarked funds within overall contributions to the agency fell from 30% to 29% in 2020.
- In addition to the World Health Organization, two other UN agencies reported receiving 30% or more of their humanitarian funding as unearmarked or softly earmarked in 2020, in line with the Grand Bargain target: the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (64%, US\$556 million) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (52%, US\$135 million).
- Between 2016 and 2020, UNRWA remained the UN agency receiving the greatest proportion of their funding unearmarked. Unearmarked funding as a proportion of total funding to UNRWA increased over the five years, from 60% in 2016 to 64% in 2020.
- However, while the proportion of total funding received unearmarked by UNRWA has increased, the volume of unearmarked funding has decreased, as the total volume of funding provided to UNRWA has fallen. In 2020, UNRWA received US\$221 million (28%) less in unearmarked contributions than in 2016. Over the same period, the only other agency to receive a reduced volume of unearmarked funding was UNHCR (a decrease of US\$56 million, or 4%).



#### **Box 4.2**

#### **Reporting challenges in tracking system-wide progress: the example of earmarking**

Localisation, predictability and flexibility of humanitarian funding are critical to efficient and effective humanitarian response. The Grand Bargain 2.0 is set to focus on driving further progress across these themes. However, five years on from the first Grand Bargain commitments, timely, disaggregated and comprehensive data on funding to local and national actors, multi-year and unearmarked funding, and on the pass-through of these funding flows, remains insufficient for monitoring progress and accountability. This is despite it being technically possible to report on such funding flows on publicly accessible reporting platforms such as UN OCHA's FTS or the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

Reporting on the degree of earmarking – an important indicator of funding flexibility – illustrates some of the challenges for the humanitarian system to be more transparent and accountable. Different degrees of earmarking were defined in the annex of the Grand Bargain agreement in 2016.<sup>6</sup> A significant proportion of total new funding with information on the degree of earmarking is captured on the FTS: 81% in 2019 and 73% in 2020. However, reporting to the FTS does not appear consistent with other data on earmarking. For instance, when comparing data collected directly from UN agencies on their humanitarian funding by degree of earmarking (see [Figure 4.5](#)) with that reported to the FTS, the proportions look different across the two datasets. The same divergence of results applies to a comparison of donor data reported to the FTS with that shown in the Grand Bargain independent annual report 2020.<sup>7</sup> This raises the question of the extent to which these earmarking categories are consistently applied and uniformly understood. This inconsistency makes it difficult to compare across agencies and draw conclusions from the data. Another challenge is the lack of data on second-level funding or sub-grants on the FTS,<sup>8</sup> which provides almost no visibility of progress in the aid organisations' commitments to reduce the degree of earmarking in funding channelled through their own partners.

Significantly less data is published to IATI on the degree of earmarking, with only a small number of actors (including only two donors, the Netherlands and Slovenia, and one UN agency, UNHCR) making this information available. Recent improvements to the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System's typology of 'co-operation modalities'<sup>9</sup> mean that it might in future be possible to partially map funding data for OECD DAC donors against the Grand Bargain earmarking categories. It is however uncertain whether the result of this exercise will provide useful information to inform policymaking or instead add a different set of numbers to the policy discussion that cannot be reconciled.

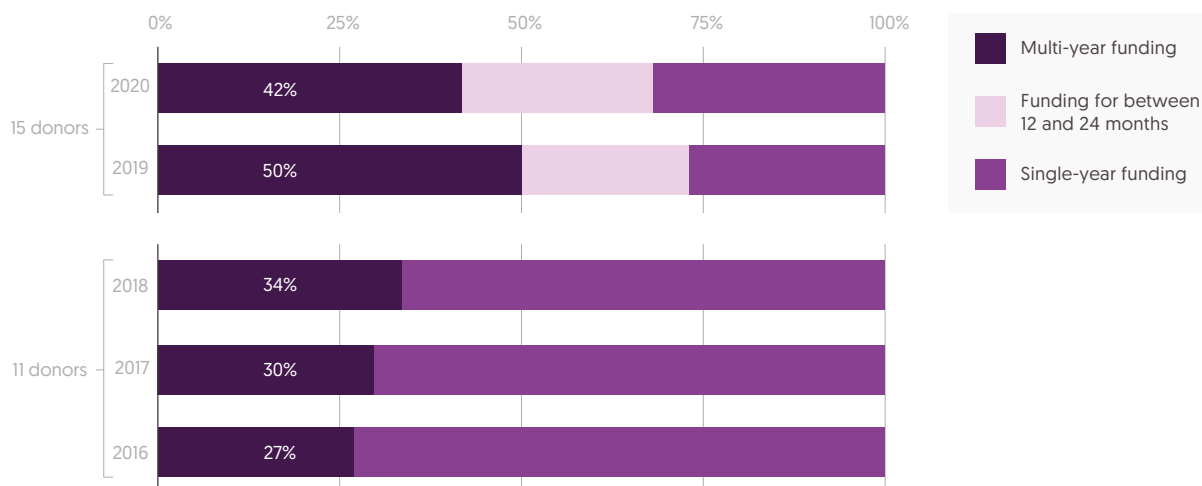
Ultimately, improving the quantity and quality of data on earmarking and other policy areas of interest first requires a consensus on the value of this data (i.e. how it can be used to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the humanitarian system), and clarity on the minimum criteria to report against. These considerations should form part of the Grand Bargain 2.0 to enable greater accountability for signatories on their commitments to improve the humanitarian system.

## multi-year funding

**Figure 4.6**

Donors have increased the proportion of assistance provided as multi-year funding since 2016, despite a reduction in 2020

Multi-year humanitarian funding as a proportion of overall funding provided by donors, 2016–2020



Multi-year funding provides implementing agencies with predictable levels of resourcing that can enable efficiency and effectiveness gains, by allowing them to plan ahead. Because of this, multi-year funding can support a transition from humanitarian to development programming and is regarded as a key property of quality funding. In 2020, the Grand Bargain Enhanced Quality Funding workstream agreed a definition of multi-year funding: funding that lasts for 24 months or more from the start date of the original funding agreement.<sup>10</sup>

In the continued absence of comprehensive public reporting of volumes of multi-year funding, DI collected data directly from 15 leading donors for 2019 and 2020, adding to an earlier data collection process from 11 donors for the period 2016 to 2018. Multi-year funding has grown since 2016 both in volume and as a proportion of the total funding from these donors. In 2020, multi-year funding made up a significant portion of total funding provided by 15 donors but the volumes provided had decreased from 2019.

- 15 donors, who provided 84% of total humanitarian assistance from governments in 2020, allocated 42% (US\$6.5 billion) of their humanitarian funding as multi-year in 2020. This represents a decrease from 2019 when these donors provided 50% (US\$7.3 billion) as multi-year funding.
- Just over half (8 of 15) of these donors reduced the volume of multi-year funding they provided in 2020.
- Larger decreases from the US (down 13%) and Germany (down 10%), the two largest public donors of total international humanitarian assistance, drove the overall aggregate fall. The proportion of total assistance provided as multi-year funding by the US had risen sharply in 2019 to 27%. While for Germany, despite the reduction in 2020, the proportion of multi-year funding provided remained high at 63%.

**Source:** Development Initiatives based on data provided bilaterally and from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Data was collected directly from government donors and the EU between April and August 2019 for the years 2016 to 2018, and during May 2021 for the years 2019 and 2020.

**Notes:** Data for 2020 is preliminary for some donors. The definition applied to multi-year funding is in line with that of Grand Bargain workstream on enhanced quality funding; it includes funding agreements that span 24 months or longer for all years shown in the graph. Data from 2016 to 2018 includes 10 government donors and the EU. Eight of these governments also provided data for 2019 and 2020, with seven additional Grand Bargain member states also providing data for those years that had not provided data for previous years. Data on funding for between 12 and 24 months was only requested for 2019 and 2020 and not all donors were able to provide this breakdown; where this breakdown was not provided, funding is captured as single-year.

- The notable increases from two donors in 2020 – Japan (up 35% to 40% of total funding provided as multi-year) and Norway (up 16% to 58%) – were not enough to counterbalance reductions from other donors.
- In 2020, the UK reported that 98% of its international humanitarian assistance was provided as multi-year, the largest proportion of funding from any donor.

While data for 2016 to 2018 was provided by 11 donors, which is less than the most recent sample of 15 donors covering 2019 and 2020, the overall trend of rising proportions of funding provided as multi-year appears consistent.

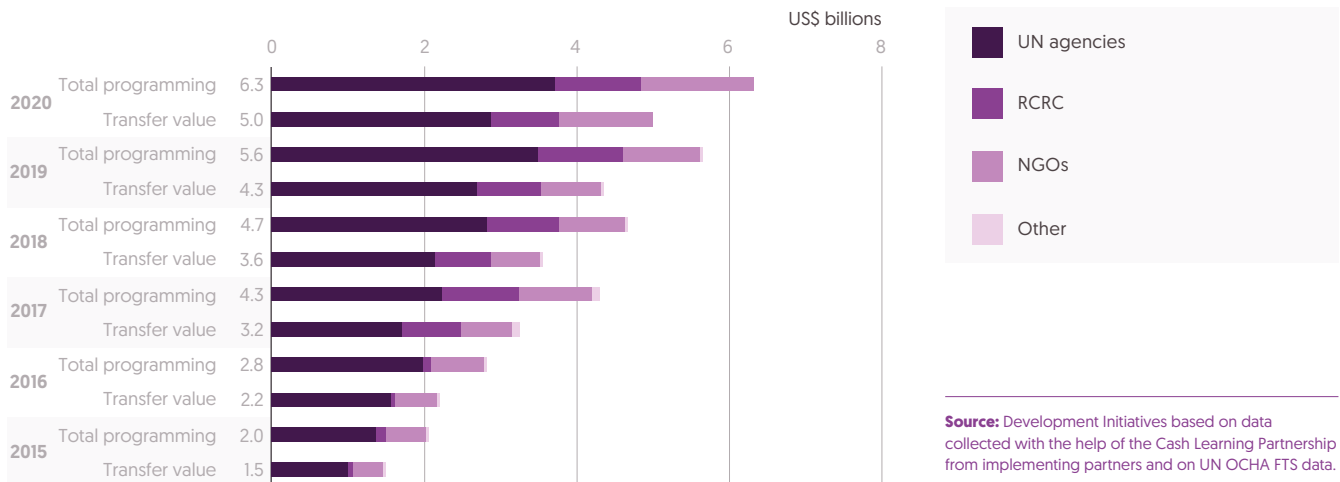
- A complete dataset covering the period 2016 to 2020 is available for eight donors (who in 2020 accounted for 75% of total international humanitarian assistance). In aggregate, multi-year funding from these donors grew from 27% in 2016 to 53% in 2019, before reducing to 41% in 2020.
- Several donors have made large increases since 2016, and in 2020 provided over half of their total humanitarian assistance as multi-year funding: Belgium rising from 20% to 73%; Canada from 9% to 52%; Germany from 26% to 63%; and the Netherlands from 48% to 78%.

## cash and voucher assistance

**Figure 4.7**

Growth in volumes of humanitarian cash and voucher assistance continued in 2020

Total funding for humanitarian cash and voucher assistance, 2015–2020



**Source:** Development Initiatives based on data collected with the help of the Cash Learning Partnership from implementing partners and on UN OCHA FTS data.

**Notes:** CVA = cash and voucher assistance; RCRC = International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Data for 2020 is preliminary as data for some organisations has not yet been provided or is based on estimations. Double counting of CVA programmes that are sub-granted from one implementing partner to another is avoided where data on this is available. Programming costs are estimates for organisations that provided only the amount transferred to beneficiaries. Data is not available for all included organisations across all years. For instance, the RCRC started to systematically track CVA only in 2017. Data is in current prices.

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- Both the volume of funding transferred to recipients (US\$5.0 billion, up 16%) and the overall volume of CVA programming (US\$6.3 billion, up 13%) increased in 2020, from 2019 levels.
  - The volume of CVA implemented by NGOs increased significantly in 2020, and this growth was the main driver behind the year-on-year increase. Growth in the total volumes of CVA in previous years was primarily driven by UN agencies.
  - The volume of CVA transferred by NGOs to recipients in 2020 rose from US\$0.8 billion to US\$1.2 billion, or 25% of the global total that year. Several NGOs reported that, in light of movement restrictions due to the pandemic and the possibility of providing assistance in the form of e-cash, e-vouchers or mobile money, CVA was central to their Covid-19 pandemic response.
  - UN agencies and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC) also increased the volumes of CVA transferred to recipients in 2020 by 7.5% and 5.2%, respectively.

Preferences for the use of cash or vouchers did not change in 2020 compared with 2019. However, the volume of CVA programming costs accounted for the highest proportion of total assistance in five years of global analysis.

- The breakdown of CVA in 2020 remained the same as in 2019, at 71% for cash and 29% for vouchers.
- According to approximate estimates, CVA programming costs accounted for almost a fifth (19%) of international humanitarian assistance in 2020. This is the highest share since 2015, the first year for which global volumes of CVA have been calculated.

Despite the agreement on minimum requirements for reporting on the volume of CVA, the data available on interagency reporting platforms remains inadequate for useful analysis.

- The Grand Bargain Cash workstream agreed minimum requirements and recommendations for tracking CVA in 2020.<sup>11</sup> Some reporting improvements have been made, for instance by incorporating data on CVA into the project registration process for humanitarian response plans. However, data on the transfer values of CVA – the minimum reporting requirement as per the workstream agreements – that is granular, close to real time and publicly accessible is still scarce.

Nationally-owned social protection systems expanded drastically in 2020 in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, with cash transfers forming an important part of these systems. However, the absence of timely and comprehensive data on CVA limits our understanding of how humanitarian CVA aligns with national social protection systems in practice.

- According to continuously updated research,<sup>12</sup> cash transfers have made up almost a quarter (23%) of these global social protection responses.
- Several donors, UN agencies, the RCRC and international NGOs are cognisant of the potential synergies with humanitarian CVA and jointly published high-level recommendations on aligning humanitarian CVA responses with national social protection programmes and systems where appropriate and as long as humanitarian principles can be maintained.<sup>13</sup>
- In the absence of timely and comprehensive data on humanitarian CVA programmes by recipient country, it is currently not possible to examine to what extent synergies are embraced or where opportunities might have been missed.



Kenya, 2019

The monthly cash assistance that Josephina Nyabena receives, as a Burundian refugee at Kalobeyei settlement, enables her to provide a varied diet for her family.

Credit: European Union/Brian Inganga







South Sudan, 2021

The Rumbek Centre is part of the  
FAO's Emergency Livelihood Response  
Programme, which organises cash-for-work  
activities to improve the food security and  
enhance the agricultural production of  
vulnerable communities hit by floods.

Credit: FAO/Mayak Akuot



# chapter 5

# methodology and definitions

## what is humanitarian assistance?

Humanitarian assistance is intended to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters associated with natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur. Humanitarian assistance should be governed by the key humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. These are the fundamental principles of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC), which are reaffirmed in UN General Assembly resolutions and enshrined in numerous humanitarian standards and guidelines.

In this report, when used in the context of financing data, international humanitarian assistance refers to the financial resources for humanitarian action spent outside the donor country. Our calculations of international humanitarian assistance are based on what donors and organisations report as such and do not include other types of financing to address the causes and impacts of crises, which we refer to as crisis-related financing.

There is no universal obligation or system for reporting expenditure on international, or indeed domestic, humanitarian assistance. The main reporting platforms for international humanitarian assistance are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Increasingly, data on humanitarian activities is also published according to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Standard.<sup>1</sup> OECD DAC members are obligated to report their humanitarian assistance to the DAC systems as part of their official development assistance (ODA), in accordance with definitions set out by the DAC.<sup>2</sup> Some other governments and most major multilateral organisations also voluntarily report to the DAC.

The FTS is open to all humanitarian donors and implementing agencies to voluntarily report contributions of internationally provided humanitarian assistance according to a set of inclusion criteria determined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

The analysis of international humanitarian assistance in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) Report 2021* draws largely on data reported to the OECD DAC and the FTS. Between these sources there is variation in inclusion criteria for humanitarian assistance, as well as volumes reported, so we aim to consistently explain and source the data that we use. Since the 2018 report, we have included humanitarian funding reported to FTS that has been provided by OECD DAC members as assistance to countries not eligible for ODA. We also use other sources to calculate international humanitarian assistance, including reports from UN agencies and NGOs on private humanitarian funding and data from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) on contributions from public donors; data sources and methodologies for these are also clearly marked and explained.

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## cash

Our global estimate of humanitarian assistance provided in the form of cash and vouchers in 2020 is based on data collected from 26 organisations with support from the Cash Learning Partnership. The data will be analysed in greater detail in a forthcoming publication.<sup>3</sup> The methodology used for these estimates builds on one developed by Development Initiatives (DI) for research in 2016. For more information on this methodology and research, see *Counting cash: tracking humanitarian expenditure on cash-based programming*.<sup>4</sup>

## channels of delivery

We use 'channels of delivery' to describe the first level of organisations receiving funding for the delivery of humanitarian assistance – multilateral agencies, NGOs, the public sector and the RCRC – whether they deliver the assistance themselves or pass it on to partner organisations. Our data on channels of delivery in [Figure 4.1 \(see Chapter 4\)](#) comes predominantly from the OECD DAC's Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the FTS. For private donors' channels of delivery, we use our own dataset (see this chapter's section on '[Private funding](#)').

## constant prices

Our analyses of trends in financial flows are in US\$ constant prices (base year 2019) unless otherwise stated. We use deflators based on OECD DAC and International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook (April 2021 release) data to convert financial data from current to constant prices. Consistent with our annual methodology, data in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2020* was shown in constant 2018 prices, so totals may vary between reports.

## country and region naming conventions

Country and region naming conventions used throughout this report are based on those used by the OECD DAC or the UN. Region naming conventions are based on those used by the OECD except the Middle East and North of Sahara regions, which have been combined. The conventions used do not reflect a political position of DI.

## Covid-19 pandemic response

At various points in the narrative of this year's *GHA Report* and in [Figure 3.7 \(see Chapter 3\)](#) we include analysis on international financing to support the Covid-19 pandemic response. The primary data sources and associated download dates are as follows:

- UN OCHA's FTS on humanitarian grant funding available to the Covid-19 pandemic response.<sup>5</sup> This is both inside the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for Covid-19 as well as funding directed outside the plan to support the response. Data includes commitments in the form of legally binding funding obligations and paid contributions. Data was downloaded on 16 May 2021. Global Humanitarian Response Plan funding requirements, received funding and proportion of requirements met were downloaded separately and are as of 29 April 2021.

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- Data collated and analysed by the Centre for Disaster Protection on financial reports to the Covid-19 pandemic response from seven major development finance institutions:<sup>6</sup> World Bank Group (including International Development Association, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Finance Corporation and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency), International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Inter-American Development Bank. This data includes concessional and non-concessional loans from these institutions, as well as grant support. Data included in this report is as of 8 April 2021.

### crisis categories

For our analysis of crises by category, we applied thresholds to several indicators and cross-checked with other data sources. We used information from the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research's Conflict Barometer 2020 to identify countries affected by conflict. For countries affected by disasters associated with natural hazards, we used indicators in the INFORM Index for Risk Management and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) data. And to identify displacement crises, we used data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

### disaster risk reduction

For our analysis of ODA to disaster risk reduction (DRR) in 2019 in [Figure 2.4 \[see Chapter 2\]](#) we include the following funding flows as reported to the OECD DAC CRS:

- Funding reported with the purpose code 43060 'Disaster Risk Reduction'.
- Funding reported with the value 2 under the 'Disaster Risk Reduction' marker, expressing DRR as principal objective of the associated activity.
- Additional funding with DRR as principal objective as expressed by the project information reported to the CRS. This additional funding was identified by DI through a search for DRR keywords in the project titles and descriptions of CRS entries. The output of the keyword search was then manually screened for relevance to DRR.

### earmarked funding

'Earmarked' funding comprises all non-core ['other'] funding directed to multilateral organisations. Unearmarked funding may include softly earmarked contributions where this data was provided, for instance by region, to better reflect progress against the Grand Bargain commitment of providing more unearmarked and softly earmarked funding. Our definitions of different levels of earmarking used in our data collection reflect those in the annex of the Grand Bargain document.<sup>7</sup>

Our calculation of earmarking to nine UN agencies – Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNHCR, UN OCHA, UNRWA, World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) – is primarily based on data provided directly to us by each agency, based on its internal reporting or extracted from annual reports.

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## exchange rates

To convert original currency values into US\$ values, we use exchange rates from the OECD DAC for currencies of DAC members and UN operational exchange rates for other currencies. The UN operational exchange rates are also used by UN OCHA FTS.

## funding for local and national actors

Our analysis of direct funding to local and national actors in [Figure 4.2 \[see Chapter 4\]](#) uses data from FTS that we then 'code' according to a set of organisational categories. Our analysis of recipient types of funding from country-based pooled funds in [Figure 4.3 \[see Chapter 4\]](#) uses the funds' own classifications of recipients, which might differ from the definitions below. For our own coding process, we use the following categories of local and national non-state actors and national and subnational state actors, as defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Task Team in its *Localisation Marker Working Group Definitions Paper* (January 2018):<sup>8</sup>

- National NGOs/civil society organisations (CSOs): national NGOs/CSOs operating in the aid recipient country in which they are headquartered, working in multiple subnational regions, and not affiliated to an international NGO. This category can also include national faith-based organisations.
- Local NGOs/CSOs: local NGOs/CSOs operating in a specific, geographically defined, subnational area of an aid recipient country, without affiliation to an international NGO/CSO. This category can also include community-based organisations and local faith-based organisations.
- Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies: national societies based in and operating within their own aid recipient countries.
- Local and national private sector organisations: organisations run by private individuals or groups as a means of enterprise for profit, based in and operating within their own aid recipient countries and not affiliated to an international private sector organisation.
- National governments: national government agencies, authorities, line ministries and state-owned institutions in aid recipient countries, such as national disaster management agencies. This category can also include federal or regional government authorities.
- Local governments: subnational government entities in aid recipient countries exercising some degree of devolved authority over a specifically defined geographic constituency, such as local/municipal authorities.

Other categories of first-level recipients featured in this analysis are:

- Internationally affiliated NGOs: NGOs affiliated to an international NGO through interlinked financing, contracting, governance and/or decision-making systems. This category does not include local and national organisations that are part of networks, confederations or alliances wherein those organisations maintain independent fundraising and governance systems.
- Southern international NGOs: NGOs based in aid recipient countries that are not OECD members, carrying out operations outside the aid recipient country in which they are headquartered and not affiliated to an international NGO. The same organisation is classified as a national NGO/CSO when carrying out operations in the country in which it is headquartered.

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## international humanitarian assistance

Our estimate of total international humanitarian assistance is the sum of that from private donors (see [Figure 3.3, Chapter 3](#)) and from government donors and EU institutions. Our calculation of international humanitarian assistance from government donors is the sum of:

- 'official' humanitarian assistance (OECD DAC donors)
- international humanitarian assistance from OECD DAC donors to countries not eligible for ODA from the FTS
- international humanitarian assistance from donors outside the OECD DAC using data from the FTS.

Our 'official' humanitarian assistance calculation comprises:

- the bilateral humanitarian expenditure of OECD DAC members, as reported to the OECD DAC database under Table 1
- the multilateral humanitarian assistance of OECD DAC members. This comprises:
  - the unearmarked ODA contributions of DAC members to ten key multilateral agencies engaged in humanitarian response: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN OCHA, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP and WHO, as reported to the OECD DAC under Table 2a and the CRS. We do not include all ODA to FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and WFP but apply a percentage to take into account that these agencies also have a 'development' mandate. These shares are calculated using data on humanitarian expenditure as a proportion of the total received directly from each multilateral agency.
  - the ODA contributions of DAC members to some other multilateral organisations (beyond those already listed) that, although not primarily humanitarian oriented, do report a level of humanitarian aid to OECD DAC Table 2a. We do not include all reported ODA to these multilateral organisations but just the humanitarian share of this.
  - contributions to the UN CERF that are not reported under DAC members' bilateral humanitarian assistance. We take this data directly from the UN CERF website.

When we report on the official humanitarian assistance of individual OECD DAC countries who are members of the EU, we include an imputed calculation of their humanitarian assistance channelled through the EU institutions, based on their ODA contributions to the EU institutions. We do not include this in our total international humanitarian assistance and response calculations to avoid double counting.

Our estimate for official humanitarian assistance in 2020 is derived from preliminary DAC donor reporting on humanitarian aid grants.

Turkey is captured and shaded differently in [Figures 3.1 and 3.2](#) (see Chapter 3) because the humanitarian assistance that it voluntarily reports to the DAC largely comprises expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey. We do not include Turkey's spending on Syrian refugees in Turkey in our total international humanitarian assistance and response calculations elsewhere in the report, as these include only amounts directed internationally by donors.

In this year's report we use data from the FTS on volumes of international humanitarian assistance by recipient countries for 2020 data, which will become available in the OECD DAC CRS only in December 2021. FTS data was downloaded on 16 May 2021.

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## multi-year humanitarian funding

Data on multi-year humanitarian funding for 2019 and 2020 was collected in May 2021 in support of the Quality Funding Grand Bargain workstream from government and inter-governmental donors that are Grand Bargain signatories. The definition applied to multi-year humanitarian funding in the survey and our analysis reflects that in the *Definitions guidance summary* by the Quality Funding workstream, referring to funding with a duration of 24 months or more based on the start and end dates of the original formal funding agreement.<sup>9</sup> 15 government donors provided data on their volumes of single- and multi-year humanitarian funding as part of this data collection exercise.

This data for 2019 and 2020 was combined with data for 2016 to 2018, which was also directly collected by DI from donors between April and August 2019 and published in DI's previous research on multi-year humanitarian funding.<sup>10</sup> Ten government donors and the EU provided data for 2016 to 2018, and eight of these government donors also provided data for 2019 and 2020 as part of this year's data collection.

## poverty

We refer to two poverty lines in this report: the international extreme poverty line of \$1.90 a day and a higher poverty line of \$3.20 a day; both of these poverty lines are expressed in 2011 purchasing power parity dollars. We use international poverty lines with most recent estimates for 2020 in this year's report to provide comparable, up-to-date analysis. Estimates are based on data from World Bank PovcalNet, World Bank Data Bank, International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook (April 2021), United Nations World Population Prospects and national sources. In order to produce estimates for 2020 based on existing poverty data sources, DI utilises the estimation approach detailed by the World Bank.<sup>11</sup> To produce comprehensive estimates from multiple comparable sources, DI uses its own methodology.<sup>12</sup>

## poverty and food security

We estimate the number of people living in poverty in areas of acute food insecurity based on household data available from demographic health surveys (DHSs) and multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICSs). Acute food insecurity classification data is from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

Adapting an established methodology developed by DI, we use the most recent DHS or MICS survey for countries with IPC data between 2019 and 2021 to estimate the number of people living below the \$1.90 extreme poverty line and \$3.20 poverty line – expressed in 2011 purchasing power parity dollars – in each subnational administrative region where representative poverty data is available.<sup>13</sup> Food insecurity phase and poverty data is aggregated to the lowest common administrative subnational level with representative household data. Where subnational data does not align exactly, the closest match is used, and where no representative subnational poverty data exists at any matching level, the national average is used (this accounts for 3% of the population covered by IPC data).

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## private funding

We directly request financial information from humanitarian delivery agencies (including NGOs, multilateral agencies and the RCRC) on their income and expenditure to create a standardised dataset. Where direct data collection is not possible, we use publicly available annual reports and audited accounts. For the most recent year, our dataset includes:<sup>14</sup>

- a large sample of NGOs that form part of representative NGO alliances and umbrella organisations such as Oxfam International, and several large international NGOs operating independently
- private contributions to IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN OCHA, UNRWA, WFP and WHO
- the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Our private funding calculation comprises an estimate of total private humanitarian income for all NGOs, and the private humanitarian income reported by the eight UN agencies, the IFRC and the ICRC. To estimate the total private humanitarian income of NGOs globally, we calculate the annual proportion that the NGOs in our dataset represent of NGOs reporting to UN OCHA FTS. The total private humanitarian income reported to us by the NGOs in our dataset is then scaled up accordingly.

Data is collected annually, and new data for previous years may be added retrospectively. Due to limited data availability, detailed analysis covers the period 2015 to 2019.

Our 2020 private funding calculation is an estimate based on data provided by four organisations that receive large volumes of private humanitarian funding year on year, pending data from our full dataset. These are: Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Plan International, Catholic Relief Services and Save the Children International. We calculate the average share that these four organisations' contributions represent in our private funding figure for the five previous years (2015–2019) and use this to scale up the private funding figure gathered from these four organisations to arrive at an estimated total for 2020. In previous years, we only used MSF's data on private funding to estimate volumes for the most recent year, given that the share of MSF's private funding remains relatively consistent year on year (ranging between 25% and 29% of the total amount over the last five years). However, due to 2020 being an exceptional year and the likelihood that an unusually large volume of private humanitarian funding might have been provided for MSF's health response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we estimate 2020 private funding data based on data gathered from more organisations, representing a greater average share of total private funding (37%) between 2015 and 2019.

## protracted crisis countries

Our definition of protracted crisis countries includes countries with five or more consecutive years of UN-coordinated appeals, as of the year of analysis. The types of appeals and response plans used to determine this classification are outlined in the 'UN-coordinated appeals' section in this chapter.

We have chosen this approach to give an indication of the countries that have consistently, for a number of years, experienced humanitarian needs at a scale that requires an international humanitarian response. Those needs can be limited to specific geographical regions or populations (such as forcibly displaced people).



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## **rounding**

There may be minor discrepancies in some of the totals in our charts and infographics, and between those in the text, because of rounding.

## **UN-coordinated appeals**

We use this generic term to describe all humanitarian response plans and appeals wholly or jointly coordinated by UN OCHA or UNHCR, including strategic response plans/humanitarian response plans, flash appeals, joint response plans and regional refugee response plans. We use data from UN OCHA's FTS and UNHCR for our financial analysis of UN-coordinated appeals.

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# data sources

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<b>ACAPS</b>	<a href="https://api.acaps.org/">https://api.acaps.org/</a>
<b>Catastrophes Naturelles.net</b>	<a href="https://catnat.net/">https://catnat.net/</a>
<b>Centre for Disaster Protection</b>	<a href="https://www.disasterprotection.org/funding-covid-19-response">https://www.disasterprotection.org/funding-covid-19-response</a>
<b>Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters</b> EM-DAT: International Disaster Database Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium	<a href="http://www.emdat.be/database">www.emdat.be/database</a>
<b>DHS Program</b> Demographic and Health Surveys	<a href="https://dhsprogram.com/Data/">https://dhsprogram.com/Data/</a>
<b>GlobalGiving</b>	<a href="https://www.globalgiving.org/open-data/">https://www.globalgiving.org/open-data/</a>
<b>Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC)</b>	<a href="https://hiik.de/data-and-maps/datasets/?lang=en">https://hiik.de/data-and-maps/datasets/?lang=en</a>
<b>INFORM</b> Index for Risk Management INFORM COVID-19 Risk Index INFORM Severity Index	<a href="https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index">https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index</a> <a href="https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Covid-19">https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Covid-19</a> <a href="https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Severity">https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Severity</a>
<b>Integrated Food Security Phase Classification</b>	<a href="http://www.ipcinfo.org/">www.ipcinfo.org/</a>
<b>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre</b> Global Internal Displacement Database	<a href="https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data">https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data</a>
<b>International Aid Transparency Initiative</b>	<a href="http://www.iatistandard.org/">www.iatistandard.org/</a>
<b>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)</b> IFRC's appeal reports	<a href="http://www.ifrc.org">www.ifrc.org</a>
<b>International Monetary Fund</b> World Economic Outlook Database Debt sustainability analysis	<a href="https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO">https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO</a> <a href="https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/dsa/index.htm">https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/dsa/index.htm</a>

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**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

OECD.Stat Extracts  
Development finance data  
OECD States of Fragility Platform  
OECD Creditor Reporting System

<https://stats.oecd.org/>  
[www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/)  
<https://www3.compareyourcountry.org/states-of-fragility/overview/0/>  
<https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>

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**Our World in Data**

<https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>

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**UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

Population Statistics Reference Database  
Mid-Year Trends, Global Trends reports, response plans' funding snapshots

<http://data.unhcr.org>  
[http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/time\\_series](http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/time_series)  
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/>

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**UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)**

Central Emergency Response Fund  
Financial Tracking Service/FTS  
Country Based Pooled Funds Data Hub

<https://cerf.data.unocha.org/>  
<https://fts.unocha.org>  
<https://cbpf.data.unocha.org/>

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**UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)**

UNRWA in Figures reports

[www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa](http://www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa)

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**UNICEF**

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys

<https://mics.unicef.org/>

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**World Bank**

World Development Indicators  
PovcalNet

<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-development-indicators>  
<http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet>

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# acronyms and abbreviations

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<b>3RP</b>	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for Syria
<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>Cat DDO</b>	Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option
<b>CBPF</b>	Country-based pooled fund
<b>CERC</b>	Contingent Emergency Response Component
<b>CERF</b>	Central Emergency Response Fund
<b>CDP</b>	Centre for Disaster Protection
<b>CRS</b>	Creditor Reporting System [DAC]
<b>CRW</b>	Crisis Response Window
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organisation
<b>CVA</b>	Cash and voucher assistance
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee [OECD]
<b>DI</b>	Development Initiatives
<b>DPR Korea</b>	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>ECHO</b>	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FTS</b>	Financial Tracking Service [UN OCHA]
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GHA</b>	Global Humanitarian Assistance [programme by Development Initiatives]
<b>GHRP</b>	Global Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>GNI</b>	Gross national income
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian response plan
<b>IATI</b>	International Aid Transparency Initiative
<b>IBRD</b>	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

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<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INFORM</b>	Index for Risk Management
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IPC</b>	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>MDB</b>	Multilateral development bank
<b>MSF</b>	Médecins Sans Frontières
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
<b>ODA</b>	Official development assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PEF</b>	Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing power parity
<b>RCRC</b>	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
<b>RRP</b>	Regional response plan
<b>SDR</b>	Special Drawing Rights
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNRWA</b>	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

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# notes

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## foreword

1. Development Initiatives, 2021. Development actors at the nexus: lessons from crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia. Available at: [www.devinit.org/resources/development-actors-nexus-lessons-crises-bangladesh-cameroon-and-somalia/](http://www.devinit.org/resources/development-actors-nexus-lessons-crises-bangladesh-cameroon-and-somalia/)

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## executive summary

1. Development Initiatives defines countries experiencing protracted crisis as countries with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans as of the year of analysis. Protracted crises often involve more than one crisis happening at once (such as conflict, displacement and natural disasters). They combine acute and long-term needs, requiring strategic support to meet immediate needs and to address structural causes and reduce vulnerabilities to new shocks.
2. People living in poverty are defined as living on less than \$3.20 a day (2011 PPP); people living in extreme poverty are defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP). PPPs are constructed by comparing the cost of a common basket of goods in different countries.

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## chapter 1

1. People living in poverty are defined as living on less than \$3.20 a day (2011 PPP); people living in extreme poverty are defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP). PPPs are constructed by comparing the cost of a common basket of goods in different countries.
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4. Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020. Make or break – the implications of Covid-19 for crisis financing. Available at: [www.nrc.no/resources/reports/make-or-break--the-implications-of-covid-19-for-crisis-financing/](http://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/make-or-break--the-implications-of-covid-19-for-crisis-financing/)
5. World Bank, 2020. Food security and Covid-19, World Bank Brief. Available at: [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20is%20estimated%20to,people%20than%20in%20April%202020](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20is%20estimated%20to,people%20than%20in%20April%202020)
6. In response, a Call of Action to Avert Famine in 2021 has been launched; see: FAO, Call of Action to Avert Famine in 2021, [www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/1380962/](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/1380962/) [accessed 24 May 2021]
7. IPC, IPC Overview and Classification System, [www.lpcinfo.Org/lpcinfo-Website/lpc-Overview-And-Classification-System/En/](http://www.lpcinfo.Org/lpcinfo-Website/lpc-Overview-And-Classification-System/En/) [accessed 24 May 2021]
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  26. The number of displaced people in Turkey in 2020 also decreased but by only 2,054, from a total of 5,006,788 displaced people in 2019.

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## chapter 2

1. According to DI's protracted crisis methodology, Pakistan became classified as a country experiencing protracted crisis in 2020 when it entered its fifth year of having a UN appeal. However, Pakistan is not experiencing protracted crisis in the traditional sense as it has been affected by different, regional crises over the years, rather than one sustained crisis.
2. Funding to the DRC RRP as reported on FTS, which may differ from the UNHCR regional plan dashboard.

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  5. This includes countries with country-specific requirements under GHRP as well as those included as country-components of regional refugee response plans, with requirements for the Covid-19 response.
  6. Additional response requirements for the humanitarian response to Covid-19 in Iraq are part of the regional requirements for the Syria Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan..
  7. Research conducted by the CDP on MDB funding flows in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, for instance, finds that this funding was well targeted towards countries with higher risk of impact from the Covid-19 pandemic and with higher economic losses, but insufficiently targeted to countries with greater expected increases in poverty due to the impacts of the pandemic.
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14. We may not have data reported for each organisation in every year. For some NGO alliances, we may have collected data from only one member organisation, therefore treated here as independent.

Development Initiatives (DI) applies the power of data and evidence to build sustainable solutions.

Our mission is to work closely with partners to ensure data-driven evidence and analysis are used effectively in policy and practice to end poverty, reduce inequality and increase resilience.

While data alone cannot bring about a better world, it is a vital part of achieving it. Data has the power to unlock insight, shine a light on progress and empower people to increase accountability.

Our Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) programme analyses resource flows and programming targeting people at risk of and affected by crises, promoting data transparency and access to information through our research and publications – including our annual GHA reports. This content is solely the work of DI and represents our analysis and interpretation of the available data. For further details on the content of this report, and to ask questions or provide comments to its authors, please contact us by email ([gha@devinit.org](mailto:gha@devinit.org)) or visit our website.

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**Canada**



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Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) reports use the latest data to present the most comprehensive assessment of international financing at work in humanitarian situations. The *GHA Report 2021* includes analysis to inform key policy discussions within the humanitarian community, highlighting the impact of Covid-19 on countries experiencing crises and those traditionally providing funding for responses.

Transparent and reliable information, as provided by the *GHA Report 2021*, is essential for all those working to address the causes and consequences of crises. In a complex and changing financing landscape, the report provides clear and independent analysis of how much assistance is given, who it is provided by, where it goes, how it is delivered and how it can more effectively meet people's needs.

With the Covid-19 pandemic applied as a lens throughout, this year's report includes new analysis on the intersection between crisis vulnerability and poverty. It also considers the overlap between poverty and food insecurity, and the impact of the pandemic on displaced populations. The report looks at challenges within the current operating model of international humanitarian response, highlighting persistent and growing underfunding, as well as outlining how the crisis financing landscape is evolving, noting the increasing role played by multilateral development banks and the implications for ensuring coherent and coordinated responses to crises. It also considers efforts to reform current practice, with updated analyses on key Grand Bargain commitments.

To ask questions or provide comments please contact us by email [[gha@devinit.org](mailto:gha@devinit.org)]. We welcome your feedback.



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The executive summary infographic, Figures 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.3, and copy on pages 13, 31–32, 38, 44, 47–51, 65, 67 and 71 were updated on 29 June 2021. The executive summary infographic and Figure 2.1 were clarified on 3 August 2021.

### GLOBAL HUB

**Development Initiatives**  
First Floor Centre, The Quorum  
Bond Street South, Bristol  
BS1 3AE, UK  
+44 (0) 1179 272 505

### EAST AFRICA HUB

**Development Initiatives**  
Shelter Afrique Building  
4th Floor, Mamlaka Road  
Nairobi, Kenya  
PO Box 102802–00101  
+254 (0) 20 272 5346

### AMERICAS HUB

**Development Initiatives**  
1100 13th Street, NW,  
Suite 800, Washington DC  
20005, US