Lives in Crises

WHAT DO PEOPLE TELL US ABOUT THE HUMANITARIAN AID THEY RECEIVE?

OECD

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OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

The World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 represented a turning point for the humanitarian business model. The summit gave the impetus to reflect seriously on how to operate in crisis environments where people's needs can no longer be met by existing tools and operations. The humanitarian community took stock of the changing nature of crises in the world, and the growing inadequacy of the current humanitarian and development business models to operate in these contexts.

The summit was to be the starting point of a transformation to the existing model. Initiatives such as the Grand Bargain, an agreement between donors and operating agencies to improve the quality of the overall aid package, offer tangible ways to improve the effectiveness of the response in crisis contexts.

One way to measure the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance is to survey aid beneficiaries on what they think about the aid they get, and also to ask humanitarian providers in the field about their perception of the aid they provide. To achieve this, in 2016 the OECD partnered with Ground Truth Solutions, an organisation that specialises in getting feedback from affected populations in crisis contexts.

Six contexts were selected, presenting different types of crises. Haiti was recovering from Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Lebanon is a middle-income country that for more than seven years has been hosting the world's biggest refugee population per capita. Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan are all experiencing protracted crises of different kinds, but have both emergency and recovery needs for their displaced and resident populations. Uganda is a low-income country with its own development needs, and is hosting a large refugee population.

A first round of surveys was conducted in 2016 in these six countries. The survey used a questionnaire designed in consultation with the Grand Bargain facilitation group and developed to broadly follow the Grand Bargain structure. Two years after the World Humanitarian Summit, the OECD and Ground Truth Solutions conducted another round of surveys in the same countries, as well as in Bangladesh – a lower middle-income country that has been hosting a refugee population since 2017, and where the international humanitarian response still in the initial phase.

This three-year project, generously supported by Germany and the United Kingdom, creates a direct link between the most vulnerable people in the most fragile countries and Development Assistance Committee members, who represent the main source of funding for humanitarian responses. These surveys offer a unique source of knowledge and an opportunity to increase effectiveness so that donors' investments bring better results for those who need most help in these complex situations. While the surveys show some positive trends and satisfaction rates, they also raise challenges. Based on the surveys' findings and additional research, the project is a call to speed up efforts to change the way the international community responds to crises.

The OECD will continue to support better policies and better finance for people living in fragile and crisis contexts. This will include work to support changes to the current humanitarian business model.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
ATM	Automated teller machine
CBPF	Country-based pooled funds
CGD	Centre for Global Development
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EC	European Commission
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
FEG	Food Economy Group
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
GTS	Ground Truth Solutions
HEA	Household economy analysis
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally displaced person
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
LCC	Lebanon Cash Consortium
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RACE 2	Reaching All Children with Education II
RDPP	Regional Development and Protection Programme
RSC	Refugee Studies Centre
SIM	Subscriber identity module

STEP	Subsidised Temporary Employment Programme
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

In 2016, the "One humanity, shared responsibility" report of the United Nations Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit called for a new paradigm for conceiving, programming and delivering humanitarian assistance. The scale, complexity and longevity of many crises are proving challenging to the international community in designing and funding interventions fit for such complex situations.

Three years after the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the OECD project, "Lives in crises", demonstrates the need to continue on the reform path set out at the summit. The project has seen two rounds of surveys conducted in seven crisis countries since 2016, asking more than 12 000 affected people and humanitarian workers about their perceptions of aid. The surveys' findings and additional research reinforce the call to pursue reforms in how donors support people and countries in crisis contexts:

- **Humanitarian assistance improves conditions but does not cover all basic needs.** The surveys clearly illustrate that humanitarian assistance represents only a part of what people require to meet their most important needs. The extent to which humanitarian assistance meets people's needs depends on the context, but affected people generally need to find other sources of income. The project shows that the *quality* of the response and local authorities' *management* of the crisis are critical elements in recipient satisfaction, implying that meeting the most important needs does not depend exclusively on donors' humanitarian budgets. In crisis contexts, meeting these needs requires a thorough vulnerability analysis to understand household economies so that humanitarian assistance can be combined with actions or programmes that enhance income generation and preserve assets.
- **Humanitarian assistance leaves some of the most vulnerable behind.** Surveys indicate that assistance is not always perceived as going to those who need it most, and reveal a stark contrast between affected people's and humanitarian workers' perceptions of fairness. Across the surveys, those who are ill or with chronic diseases, the elderly, people without social/political connection, the undocumented and remote were perceived to be left behind by people receiving aid. Yet, humanitarian staff surveyed are confident that aid is going to those who need it most. This suggests that the system targets those most in need as long as they fall within agencies or NGOs' mandates and programme objectives. The current fragmented and supply-driven humanitarian business model risks overlooking people – notably amongst the host populations, who fall into the cracks between traditional humanitarian sectors. A vulnerability analysis is key to ensuring that the humanitarian response leaves no one behind.
- **Supporting self-reliance requires a blended set of aid instruments.** If humanitarian assistance is not sufficient to meet people's most important needs, it is even less effective in achieving economic self-sufficiency. People surveyed consistently mention the lack of economic and livelihood opportunities as a primary grievance. In the protracted crises that make up most humanitarian contexts, affected people want autonomy, not prolonged assistance. Because humanitarian assistance is not designed to put an end to need, and because it is unpredictable in nature, other aid instruments needs to be mobilised to help create an enabling environment in which livelihood opportunities are available for both affected people and host communities.

- **Some limited progress is being made on the Grand Bargain commitments.** The surveys do reveal some improvements in the way aid is delivered. Support to education in crises is increasing, showing that humanitarian-development silos can be overcome by donors. Some of the Grand Bargain commitments, such as multiyear frameworks and joint needs assessments, are starting to deliver positive initiatives that now need to be systematised. The cash agenda is becoming more widespread, though it remains sector based. Some serious challenges remain however. The localisation agenda is moving too slowly, mainly because donors' architecture does not encourage it. The way people's views are taken into account remains limited and people have limited clarity over why they do or do not qualify for aid, what they receive, and for how long. The humanitarian system is still supply driven, based on international organisations' mandates and programmes, rather than on the affected people at the centre of the response.

From people to policy: a call for new approaches

The paradigm shift called for at the World Humanitarian Summit is yet to occur. Some changes are yielding positive outcomes, but these mostly reflect improvements to the current humanitarian system begun before the summit, rather than systemic change in the way crises are understood and addressed. Continuing on the reform path implies the following actions:

- **Look beyond the humanitarian response**. What we learn from affected people is that not all their needs in a crisis are humanitarian in nature, and a humanitarian response is not by default the best instrument to meet people's needs. Meeting people's needs requires a fresh look at what crises are. Both political crises and natural disasters create humanitarian needs, and they should be designated as such, rather than as "humanitarian crises", so that DAC members willing to respond can mobilise a range of instruments that include, but are not limited to, humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance plays a role, but as seen in the surveys, in protracted crises other instruments – including political dialogue, peace instruments and development co-operation funds – should also be mobilised.
- **Implement the humanitarian-development-peace nexus**. Determining which instrument and which channel is best suited to meet people's needs requires collaboration, coherence and complementarity among assistance instruments, in line with the DAC Recommendation on the humanitarian, development peace nexus. Undertaking a joint analysis will help understand the context for people's urgent and long-term needs, and how responding to these needs can also strengthen local capacities and economies.
- **Fill gaps and build opportunities.** The current humanitarian system is built on organisations' specific mandates, each designed to fill sectoral gaps. This system is poorly equipped to build on existing political and economic opportunities in order to create long-term livelihoods for people and countries affected by crises. Because humanitarian assistance is not designed to end need, and does not allow for self-sufficiency, it must be complemented with other instruments that can create sustainable livelihoods, taking into account people's aspiration and building on their potential for rebuilding their lives, or preparing to return, relocate or successfully integrate.
- **Shift from a supply- to a customer-driven approach to meeting needs.** In the protracted situations that now represent the majority of humanitarian responses, a customer approach to assistance would represent a genuine participation revolution when based on household economy and vulnerability analyses. Because it cuts across all sectors, multipurpose cash transfer, combined with the use of data and information technology in both humanitarian assistance and development co-operation, can help deliver the participation revolution by individualising humanitarian assistance delivery.
- **Change paradigms to protect humanitarian assistance.** Humanitarian assistance was deemed very relevant and was widely perceived positively by survey respondents. The most difficult

contexts offer little alternative to humanitarian assistance. Yet mobilising huge amounts of humanitarian assistance over years or decades in contexts showing little prospect of political resolution is unsustainable, and can discourage the mobilisation of other political, peace or assistance instruments. Changing paradigms, starting by operationalising the DAC Recommendation on the humanitarian–development-peace nexus and looking at how each instrument can best help design a coherent response to a given crisis, will allow humanitarian response to fulfil its original mandate of protection and assistance where other instruments cannot be mobilised.

Box 1. Methodology and demographics

Over the two rounds of surveys, 8 666 people affected by crises were interviewed in seven countries facing different type of crises. Respondents were selected randomly through local partners and the humanitarian country team in each countries. Respondents were the beneficiaries of aid programmes from a wide variety of aid agencies, and were approached face-to-face, except for Somalia where interviews were conducted via phone for security reasons. During the most recent round of surveys, 53% of respondents were male and 47% female. 57% of respondent were refugees, 13% were internally displaced, 10% were returnees; and 20% were local resident with humanitarian needs. 48% of respondent were in the 18-25 age group, 35% in the 36-50 age group and 16% were over 50 years old.

3 471 humanitarian workers were also interviewed, 51% of them working for international NGOs, 46% in UN humanitarian agencies and 3% in local NGOs. 71% of the humanitarian staff interviewed was based in field location whereas 29% was based in their capital city offices.

Résumé

En 2016, le rapport du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour le Sommet humanitaire mondial intitulé "Une seule humanité, une responsabilité partagée" appelait à un nouveau paradigme pour concevoir, programmer et fournir l'aide humanitaire. L'ampleur, la complexité et la durée de nombreuses crises posent des difficultés à la communauté internationale pour élaborer et financer des interventions adaptées à des situations aussi complexes.

Trois ans après le Sommet humanitaire mondial de 2016, le projet commun de l'OCDE et de Ground Truth Solutions, " Que nous apprennent les personnes touchées par les crises ?", démontre la nécessité de poursuivre sur la voie des réformes définies lors du Sommet. Depuis 2016, le projet a donné lieu à deux séries d'enquêtes menées dans sept pays en crise, interrogeant plus de 12 000 personnes touchées et travailleurs humanitaires sur leur perception de l'aide. Les résultats de l'enquête renforcent l'appel à poursuivre les réformes sur la manière dont les donateurs soutiennent les populations et les pays en situation de crise :

- **L'aide humanitaire améliore les conditions de vie mais ne couvre pas tous les besoins essentiels**. Les enquêtes montrent clairement que l'aide humanitaire ne représente qu'une partie de ce dont les gens ont besoin pour répondre à leurs besoins les plus importants. La mesure dans laquelle l'aide humanitaire répond aux besoins des populations dépend du contexte, mais les personnes touchées doivent généralement trouver d'autres sources de revenus. L'enquête montre que la qualité de la réponse et la gestion de la crise par les autorités locales sont des éléments critiques pour la satisfaction des bénéficiaires de l'aide. Cela implique que la satisfaction de ces besoins ne dépend pas exclusivement des budgets humanitaires des donateurs. Dans les contextes de crise, une analyse approfondie de la vulnérabilité est nécessaire pour comprendre l'économie des ménages afin que l'aide humanitaire puisse être combinée avec des actions ou programmes qui améliorent la génération de revenus et préservent les actifs.
- **L'aide humanitaire laisse derrière elle certains des plus vulnérables**. Les enquêtes indiquent que l'aide n'est pas toujours perçue comme allant à ceux qui en ont le plus besoin et révèlent un contraste frappant entre la perception d'équité des personnes touchées et celle des travailleurs humanitaires. Dans l'ensemble des enquêtes, les personnes malades ou atteintes de maladies chroniques, les personnes âgées, les personnes sans lien social ou politique, les sans-papiers et les personnes éloignées ont le plus fort sentiment d'avoir été abandonnées. Dans le même temps, le personnel humanitaire interrogé est convaincu que l'aide va à ceux qui en ont le plus besoin. Cela donne à penser que le système cible les personnes qui en ont le plus besoin tant qu'elles entrent dans le cadre du mandat et des objectifs de programme des agences ou des ONG. Le modèle humanitaire actuel, fragmenté et axé sur l'offre d'aide, risque de négliger certaines personnes qui ne rentrent pas dans des secteurs humanitaires traditionnels, notamment parmi les populations d'accueil. Une analyse de vulnérabilité est essentielle pour s'assurer que la réponse humanitaire ne laisse personne derrière elle.
- **Soutenir l'autosuffisance nécessite un ensemble d'instruments d'aide**. Si l'aide humanitaire ne suffit pas à répondre aux besoins les plus importants des populations touchées, elle est encore

moins efficace pour atteindre l'autosuffisance économique. De manière persistante, les personnes interrogées mentionnent le manque d'opportunités économiques et de moyens de subsistance comme l'un de leurs principaux griefs. Dans les crises prolongées qui constituent la majeure partie des contextes humanitaires, les personnes affectées veulent être autonome et non des récipiendaires durables d'aide humanitaire. Parce que l'aide humanitaire n'est pas conçue pour mettre fin aux besoins et parce qu'elle est imprévisible par nature, d'autres instruments doivent être mobilisés pour aider à créer un environnement favorable dans lequel les personnes touchées et les communautés d'accueil peuvent trouver des moyens de subsistance.

- **Des progrès limités ont été réalisés en ce qui concerne les engagements du 'Grand Bargain'**. Les enquêtes révèlent de réelles améliorations dans la manière dont l'aide est fournie. L'appui à l'éducation dans les situations de crise s'accroît, ce qui montre que les donateurs peuvent surmonter les cloisonnements entre l'aide humanitaire et le développement. Certains des engagements pris dans le cadre du 'Grand Bargain', tels que les cadres pluriannuels de financement et les évaluations conjointes des besoins, commencent à initier des développements positifs qui doivent désormais être systématisés. Les transferts monétaires se généralisent, bien qu'ils restent sectoriels. De sérieux défis demeurent, néanmoins. La localisation de l'aide avance trop lentement, principalement parce que l'architecture administrative des donateurs ne l'encourage pas. La façon dont l'opinion des personnes affectées est prise en compte reste limitée et les gens ne savent pas très bien pourquoi ils sont admissibles ou non à l'aide, ce qu'ils reçoivent et pour combien de temps. Le système humanitaire reste construit sur l'offre d'aide, sur la base des mandats et des programmes des organisations internationales, plutôt que sur les personnes touchées au centre de la réponse humanitaire.

Traduire les enquêtes : un appel pour de nouvelles approches

Le changement de paradigme demandé lors du Sommet humanitaire mondial n'a pas encore eu lieu. Certains changements donnent des résultats positifs, mais ils reflètent surtout des améliorations entamées avant le sommet apportées au système humanitaire actuel, plutôt qu'un changement systémique dans la façon dont les crises sont comprises et traitées. Poursuivre sur la voie des réformes implique les actions suivantes :

- **Aller au-delà de l'intervention humanitaire**. Nous apprenons des personnes touchées que tous leurs besoins en temps de crise ne sont pas de nature humanitaire et qu'une intervention humanitaire n'est pas par défaut le meilleur instrument pour répondre aux besoins des personnes. Répondre à ces besoins exige un regard neuf sur ce que sont les crises. Ce sont des crises politiques et des catastrophes qui créent des besoins humanitaires et qui devraient donc être désignées comme telles et non comme des " crises humanitaires " afin que les membres du CAD désireux d'intervenir puissent mobiliser toute une gamme d'instruments - notamment, mais pas exclusivement - l'aide humanitaire. L'aide humanitaire joue un rôle, mais dans les crises prolongées, comme le montrent les enquêtes, d'autres instruments - notamment le dialogue politique, les instruments de paix et les fonds de coopération au développement - devraient également être mobilisés.
- **Mettre en œuvre le lien entre l'humanitaire, le développement et la paix**. Déterminer l'instrument et le canal qui conviennent le mieux pour répondre aux besoins des populations exige collaboration, cohérence et complémentarité entre les instruments d'assistance, conformément à la Recommandation du CAD sur le lien entre l'aide humanitaire, le développement et la paix. Entreprendre une analyse conjointe aidera à comprendre le contexte dans lequel des besoins urgents et à long terme des populations se font jour, et comment répondre à ces besoins peut également renforcer les capacités et les économies locales.

- **Combler les lacunes et créer des possibilités**. Le système humanitaire actuel repose sur les mandats spécifiques des organisations, chacune étant conçue pour combler des lacunes sectorielles. Ce système est mal équipé pour tirer parti des possibilités politiques et économiques existantes afin de créer des moyens de subsistance à long terme pour les populations et les pays touchés par les crises. Comme l'aide humanitaire n'est pas conçue pour mettre fin aux besoins et ne permet pas l'autosuffisance, elle doit être complétée par d'autres instruments susceptibles de créer des moyens de subsistance durables, en tenant compte des aspirations des populations et en mettant à profit leur potentiel pour reconstruire leur vie ou se préparer au retour, au transfert ou à une intégration réussie.
- **Passer d'une approche basée sur l'offre à une approche axée sur le client pour répondre aux besoins**. Dans les situations prolongées qui représentent aujourd'hui la majorité des interventions humanitaires, une approche de l'aide axée sur le client représenterait une véritable révolution de la participation, lorsqu'elle serait fondée sur l'économie des ménages et les analyses de vulnérabilité. Parce qu'ils touchent tous les secteurs, les transferts monétaires polyvalents, combinés à l'utilisation des données et des technologies de l'information dans l'aide humanitaire et la coopération au développement, peuvent contribuer à la révolution de la participation en individualisant l'aide humanitaire.
- **Changer les paradigmes pour protéger l'aide humanitaire**. L'aide humanitaire a été jugée pertinente et a été largement perçue positivement par les personnes interrogées. Les contextes les plus difficiles n'offrent guère d'alternative à l'aide humanitaire. Pourtant, mobiliser d'énormes quantités d'aide humanitaire pendant des années ou des décennies dans des contextes offrant peu de perspectives de résolution politique est insoutenable et peut décourager la mobilisation d'autres instruments politiques, de paix ou d'assistance. L'évolution des paradigmes, en commençant par la mise en œuvre de la recommandation du CAD sur le lien entre l'aide humanitaire, le développement et la paix, et en examinant comment chaque instrument peut aider au mieux à concevoir une réponse cohérente à une crise donnée, permettra à l'instrument humanitaire de remplir son mandat initial de protection et d'assistance lorsque les autres instruments ne peuvent être mobilisés.

Encadré 2. Méthodologie et démographie

Au cours des deux séries d'enquêtes, 8 666 personnes touchées par des crises ont été interrogées dans sept pays confrontés à différents types de crises. Les personnes interrogées ont été sélectionnées au hasard par l'intermédiaire des partenaires locaux et de l'équipe humanitaire de chaque pays. Les personnes interrogées ont bénéficié des programmes d'aide d'un large éventail d'organismes d'aide et ont été contactées en face à face, sauf en Somalie où les entretiens ont été menés par téléphone pour des raisons de sécurité. Au cours de la plus récente série de sondages, 53 % des répondants étaient des hommes et 47 % des femmes. 57 % des répondants étaient des réfugiés, 13 % étaient des déplacés internes, 10 % étaient des rapatriés et 20 % étaient des résidents locaux ayant des besoins humanitaires. 48 % des répondants appartenaient au groupe des 18-25 ans, 35 % à celui des 36-50 ans et 16 % avaient plus de 50 ans.

3 471 travailleurs humanitaires ont également été interviewés, dont 51% travaillent pour des ONG internationales, 46% pour des agences humanitaires des Nations Unies et 3% pour des ONG locales. 71% du personnel humanitaire interrogé était basé sur le terrain, tandis que 29% étaient basés dans leurs bureaux de la capitale.

1 Humanitarian assistance improves conditions but does not cover all basic needs

Most people surveyed say that humanitarian assistance does not meet their most important needs. For households affected by crises, humanitarian assistance is an important, but generally fluctuating, element of their income. Even the most vulnerable need to complement it with other sources, including taking on more debt. The success of humanitarian assistance does not depend exclusively on volumes of funding. The survey suggests that the *quality* of the response and local authorities' *management* of the crisis are critical elements in recipient satisfaction. Meeting people's most important needs in a crisis therefore requires a thorough vulnerability analysis to understand household economies and the constraints they face, in order to combine humanitarian assistance with actions or programmes that enhance income generation and preserve assets.

Key messages

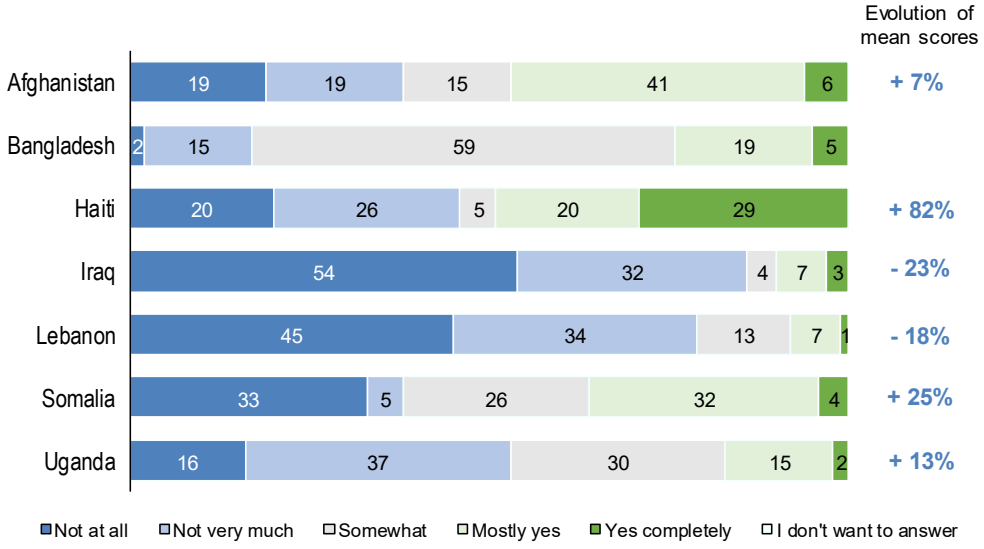
- For people affected by crises, humanitarian aid helps to cover a portion of their needs – but people need to complement it with other sources of income.
- Meting people's needs does not only depend on donors' investments. Other factors are critical, such as the quality of local authorities' management of the crisis and the quality of the humanitarian response.

Humanitarian response helps mitigate some of the problems faced by people affected by crises, notably by distributing items such as food or shelter or delivering services such as health or education. In many places, humanitarian assistance improves food availability and the quality of medical treatment beyond what was previously available (Wake and Bryant, 2018[1]). Yet, most people affected by crises cannot live on humanitarian assistance alone. Where they have been conducted, household economy analyses or global vulnerability assessments demonstrate that while humanitarian assistance is an important, and often the primary, source of household income, it is rarely the only source (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, 2018[2]). For people affected by crises, humanitarian assistance is only one part of what they need to sustain their families (Barbelet, 2017[3]).

For example, the surveys that form the basis of this report (see Annex A)[1] show that on average only 26% of people report that humanitarian assistance mostly or completely meets their needs, while 51% of respondents, on average, state that humanitarian assistance does not, or does "not very much", meet their needs (Figure 1.1). Throughout the two rounds of surveys and across countries, cash, food and health were mentioned as the main unmet needs. The distribution of those needs depends on the context.

In Lebanon, for example, the main cash assistance programme provides up to USD 175 per month for a family of five, whereas the survival minimum expenditure basket was estimated at USD 435 when the programme was designed in 2014 (LCC, 2017[4]). In Bangladesh and Haiti, the distribution of in-kind food and non-food items alone is never sufficient to meet what a family needs. The same scope of unmet needs is also apparent in other refugee contexts, such as Turkey (CaLP, 2017[5]).

Figure 1.1. Does the assistance you receive cover your most important needs?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[6]), Humanitarian perception surveys, Round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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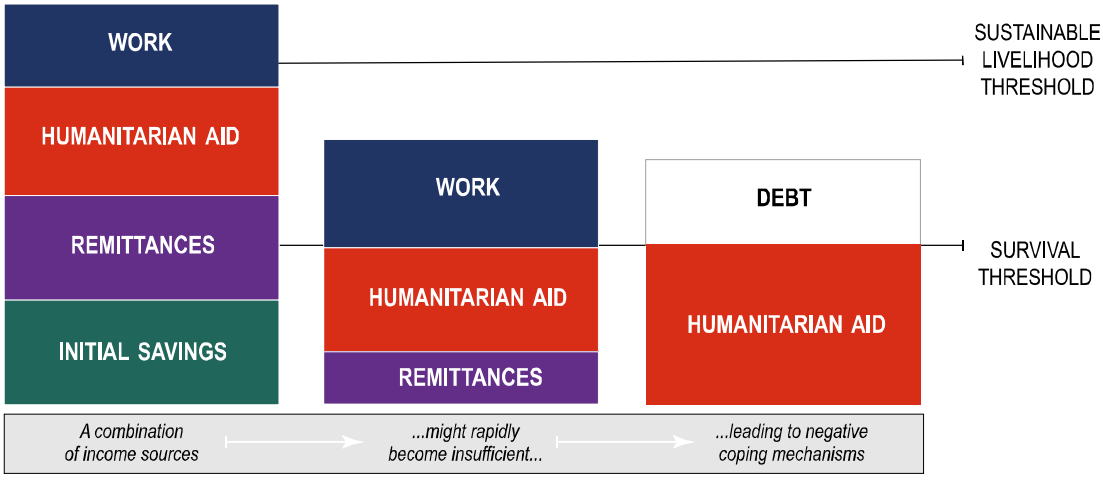
That most affected households cannot live on humanitarian assistance alone is important to take into consideration when analysing overall vulnerabilities and programming response to a crisis. People affected by crisis, including refugees, will have to find additional income to cover their financial needs. These other sources of income are mainly initial savings, remittances and gainful employment (Figure 1.2). Those whose initial savings are exhausted, who do not have other sources of income and cannot match income with expenses will resort to debt and to traditional negative coping mechanisms, such as de-schooling, early marriage or child labour, pushing households deeper into poverty and affecting food security and nutritional status (De Vriese, 2006[7]). In Lebanon, for example, 88% of Syrian refugee households are indebted and 51% live below the survival minimum expenditure basket of USD 2.90 per day (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, 2018[2]).

Figure 1.2 Households can quickly become indebted in crises

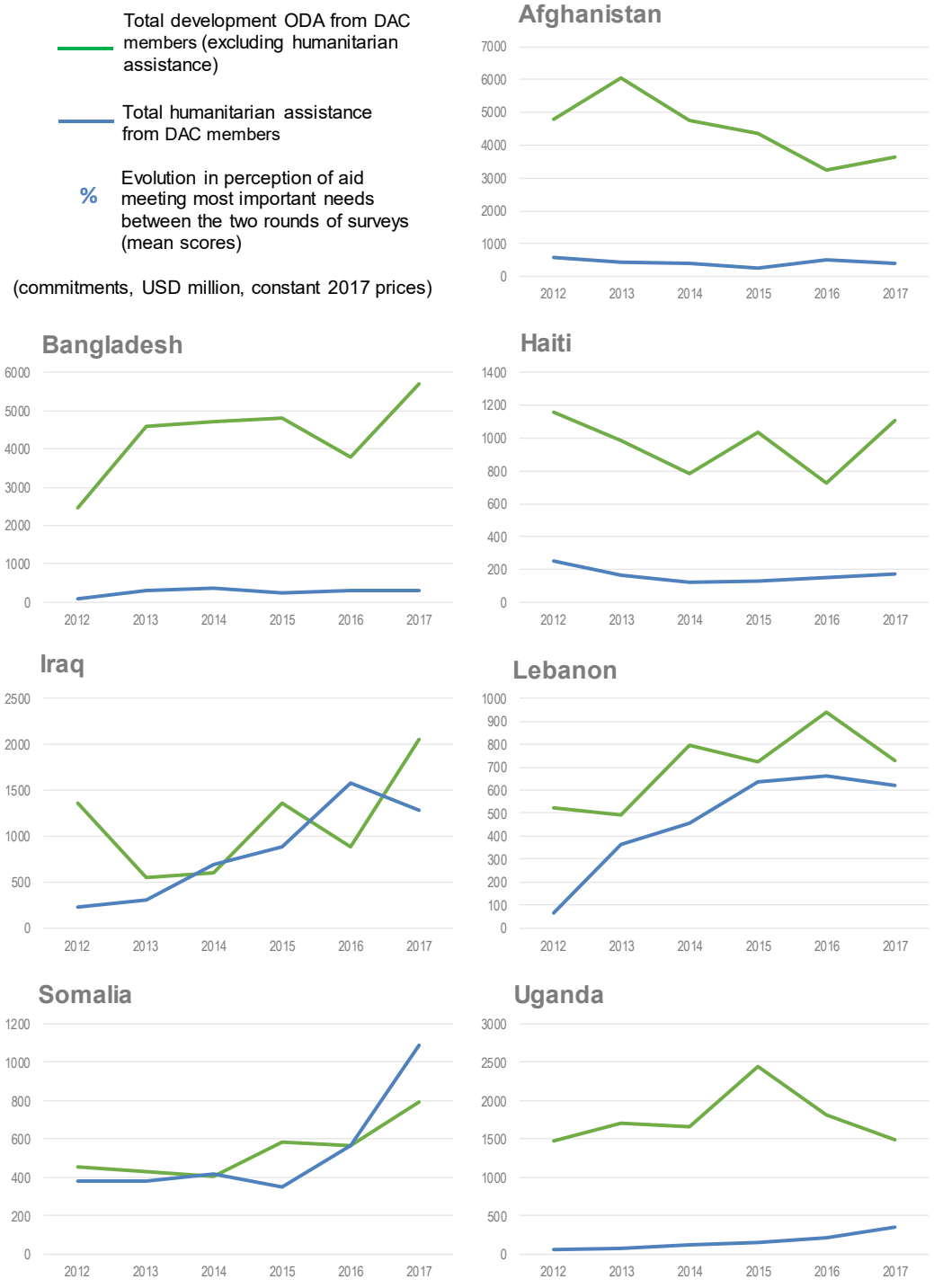


Source: OECD, adapted from *The Household Economy Approach: A guide for programme planners and policy-makers*, (Holzmann et al., 2008[8])

Meeting needs does not only depend on donor investment

Donor funding is a critical part of the humanitarian response, and the volume of assistance has a direct impact on humanitarian actors' ability to meet people's needs. However, there is not an automatic correlation between the level of aid to a specific crisis and recipient perceptions that their most important needs are being met (Figure 1.3). The context and the modalities of assistance delivery play an important role. For example, the surveys show a sharp satisfaction increase in Haiti between the two rounds of surveys, from 11% to 55%, despite a decrease in humanitarian funding. This underlines the importance of other aid features, such as co-ordination. After Hurricane Matthew in 2016, co-ordination of the humanitarian sector was slow to get started, explaining partly, in the complex Haitian context, the initial piecemeal humanitarian response (Grünewald and Schnenkenberg, 2016[9]). When the cluster system was put in place and humanitarian co-ordination started to have a positive impact on assistance delivery, including on shelter provision, people were significantly more positive. Countries' policies and the way local authorities deal with a crisis also make a difference: in Lebanon, overall perception about assistance and living condition decreased drastically between the two rounds of surveys, from 59% to 79% of respondents saying that humanitarian assistance does not cover their most important needs at all or not very much. This was despite the fact that although humanitarian funding started to decrease, large-scale cash assistance programmes were maturing. Perceptions of assistance also reflect the rising tensions between Syrians and host communities, driven by the reluctance of the Lebanese authorities to allow for a durable solution or the economic integration of refugees (Nassar and Stel, 2019[10]).

Figure 1.3 Levels of aid do not always correlate with recipient satisfaction



Note: Bangladesh was only surveyed only in round 2. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5

Source: (OECD, n.d.[11]) Creditor Reporting System, (https://stats.oecd.org/) and (OECD, 2019[6]), Humanitarian perception surveys, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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To conclude, humanitarian assistance provides lifesaving assistance and protection, improving the living conditions of people affected by crisis. However, these people see humanitarian assistance as a varying part of their livelihood. This perception is not only linked to finance, and more humanitarian money will not automatically increase aid effectiveness if other obstacles remain. The way the humanitarian sector organises itself for a coherent response also matters, and efforts to improve the sector's effectiveness, in the framework of the Grand Bargain (Agenda for Humanity, 2016[12]) and other commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, should continue. Importantly, the local political, security and legal context will determine people's ability to access a variety of income sources, including humanitarian assistance. Contextual analysis that puts people's economic situation at the core should be conducted regularly in order to combine humanitarian assistance with actions or programmes that make income generation accessible and that preserve people's assets.

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Notes

[1] OECD – Ground Truth Solutions surveys are available at http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/humanitarian-financing/humanitarian-surveys.htm

2 Humanitarian assistance leaves some of the most vulnerable behind

The question of whether assistance is going to those who need it most is central to humanitarian action. The surveys suggest many recipients feel that the humanitarian system only targets those people who fall within agencies or NGOs' mandates and programme objectives – many feel overlooked. On the other hand, humanitarian staff are confident that aid is going to those who need it most. This misalignment reflects how the segmentation of the affected population by a fragmented humanitarian sector can lead to people falling between sectors, most notably amongst the affected host population.

Key messages

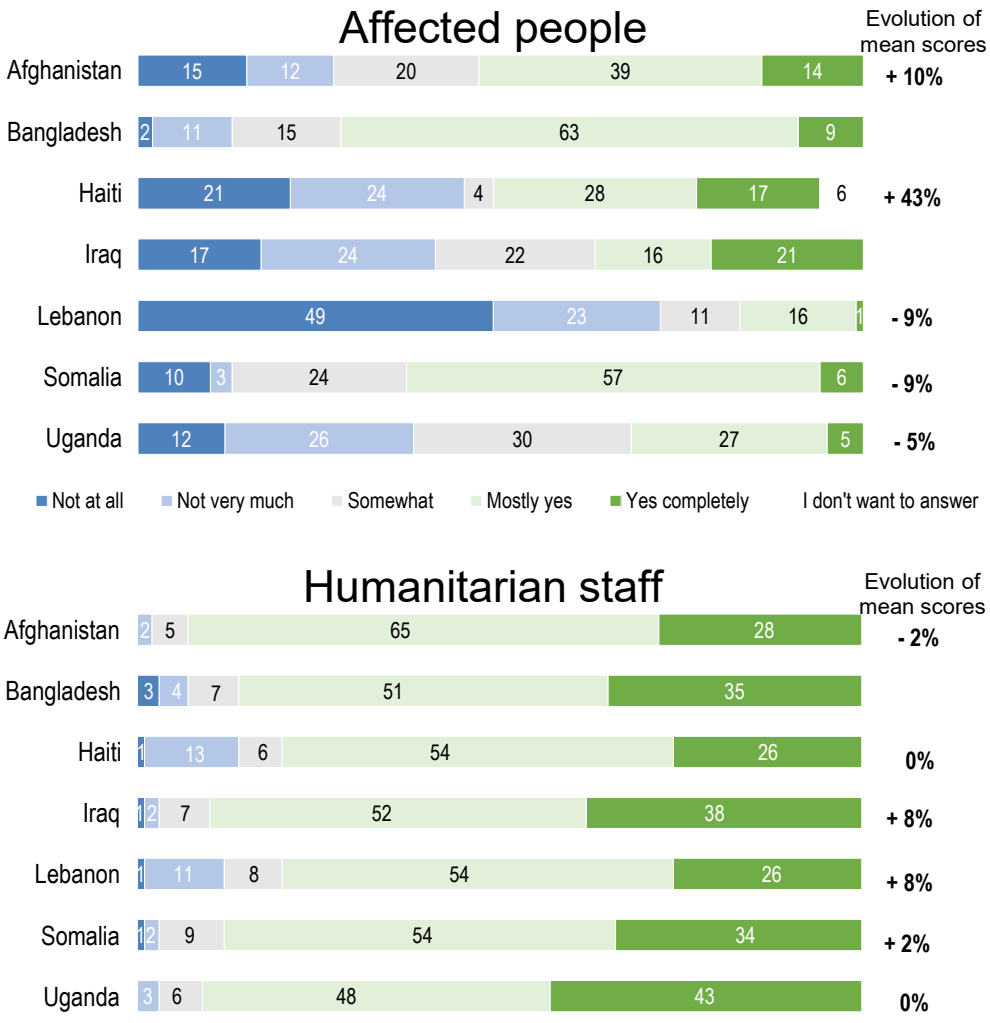
- A fragmented humanitarian system can leave people behind when their vulnerability is not aligned with the traditional humanitarian sectors.
- Especially in protracted crises, joint and impartial vulnerability assessments must look beyond humanitarian sectors in order to take into account both humanitarian and long-term needs.

When asked whether aid is going to those who need it most, people affected by crises have mixed responses, with the perception of fairness ranging from 72% in Bangladesh down to 17% in Lebanon (Figure 2.1). In contrast, between 80% and 92% of the humanitarian staff interviewed believe aid is going to these who need it most.

Across the surveys, those who are ill or with chronic diseases, the elderly, people without social/political connections and those who are undocumented are perceived to be left behind by surveys' respondents (OECD, 2019[1]). Survey's respondents also feel that people in remote areas or living outside camps often have more difficulty accessing aid, such as in Haiti after Hurricane Matthew, in the most remote provinces of Afghanistan or the distant rural areas of Somalia.

Those who believe aid is not fairly distributed also indicate that people are left out because of poor information and targeting (21% in Uganda, 24% in Afghanistan, 13% in Somalia). Perceptions of biased practice, including corruption, are widespread. In Somalia, up to 85% of those believing aid is not fairly distributed blamed corruption or other biases.

Figure 2.1. Does assistance go to these who need it most?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[1]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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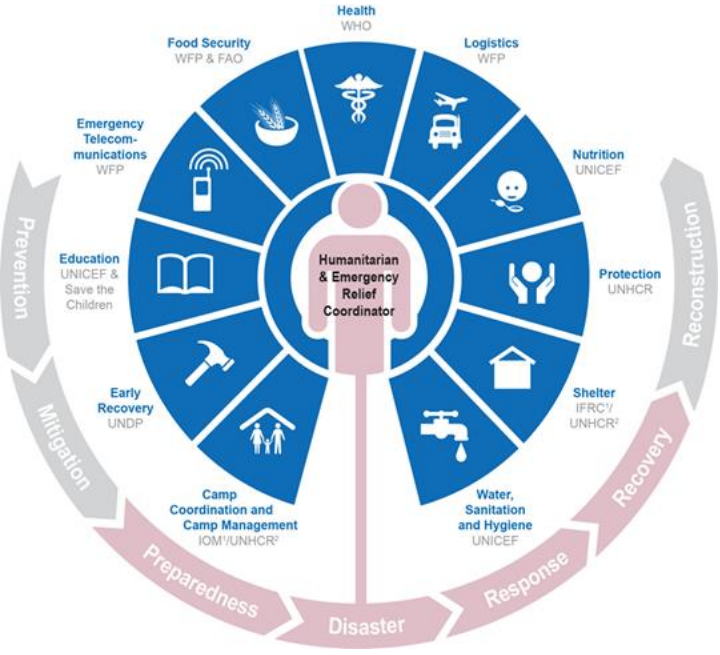
The current humanitarian model is fragmented and sector-based

While it is not surprising that humanitarian workers are more positive about the assistance they provide than beneficiaries, this misalignment does reflect how the humanitarian system functions. Humanitarian agencies assess needs and programme their operations according to their mandates and their ability to enrol their beneficiaries. This ability can be constrained by the context: insecurity can prevent humanitarian teams from accessing some areas, and it can also prevent people in need from reaching humanitarian aid distribution points, as expressed by survey respondents in Afghanistan and Somalia. Local authorities can also restrict humanitarian work through administrative red tape. Obstacles to humanitarian access is widespread and increasing, as is disregard for humanitarian assistance principles and respect for

assistance workers by belligerents (ALNAP, 2018[2]). Such constraints exclude the weakest, who might remain out of reach of humanitarian agencies.

However, the humanitarian system itself can leave some of the weakest unreached. Organisations' mandates and programme objectives can restrict the scope of the needs assessment when these needs are primarily determined by people's status or categories. Since the 2005 humanitarian reform the humanitarian sector has been compartmentalised into 11 clusters (Figure 2.2) (IASC, 2006[3]). The cluster approach clarified the division of labour among organisations and defined their roles and responsibilities within these 11 sectors. Its aim was to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies. However, the cluster approach is still used in protracted crises, such as in Somalia and Afghanistan (OCHA, 2018[4]).

Figure 2.2 The cluster sector distribution



Source: (Humanitarian Response, n.d.[5]), What is the Cluster Approach?, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach (accessed on 5 April 2019).

Even when the clusters are not activated, such as in Lebanon, the response still follows this sectoral approach (Government of Lebanon and UNHCR, 2019[6]). While organising a humanitarian response by sectors clarifies responsibilities, the sector approach to humanitarian action has also segmented the humanitarian response. Humanitarian workers select their beneficiaries within the scope of their mandate and sectors. Conversely, the general population, including people affected by crises, tend to see vulnerability more holistically and irrespective of humanitarian status. This is reflected in all the surveys: those perceived to be left behind, such as the elderly or the undocumented, do not fall into the traditional humanitarian sectors. This difference partly explains the sharp perception gap between people affected by crisis and assistance workers depicted in Figure 2.1. Humanitarian workers do provide assistance to the people most in need, but they do so in line with their programmes and projects, which do not cover those off the sector-based humanitarian radar screen, notably vulnerable groups within the host population, as opposed to the refugee population.

Vulnerability needs to be identified and addressed differently in protracted crises

The survey results point to a need for reviewing of how vulnerability is measured and aid beneficiaries selected, especially in protracted crises where people directly affected by a crisis intertwine with a vulnerable host population. Designing a response based on a holistic vulnerability analysis rather than exclusively on pre-set sectors would notably increase coherence between humanitarian assistance and the social sector. Humanitarian assistance is not designed to address poverty, and better links between humanitarian assistance and social safety nets, where they exist, are necessary. In protracted displacement crises in particular, a joint and impartial vulnerability assessment that looks at both humanitarian and long-term perspectives would spare some humanitarian funding and resources for its core humanitarian and protection mandate. In Lebanon, for example, the 2018 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees put a particular emphasis on food consumption, economic vulnerability, livelihoods and income, household assets and coping strategies in addition to some of the traditional humanitarian sectors (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, 2018[7]). Looking at a whole range of vulnerabilities beyond humanitarian aid sectors represents a good step towards the joint and impartial needs assessment that is called for in the Grand Bargain.

The way humanitarian assistance is delivered also plays an important role in reaching the weakest. This is most striking in places where in-kind global distribution is organised, as reflected in the Haiti survey. Here the most vulnerable do not always have the strength, wealth or social networks to be registered on distribution lists, or do not feel secure enough to bring home a monthly distribution pack of food and other items (GTS, 2019[8]).

Digital cash delivery mechanisms, such as mobile payment, but also e-vouchers and ATM debit cards, are a convenient alternative to cash or in-kind distribution, and brings many benefits to beneficiaries as well as to the cost-efficiency of humanitarian delivery. However, the most vulnerable are often in hard-to-reach areas and such technology, even mobile payment is not necessarily available to them (World Bank, 2019[9]). The humanitarian community should also be careful that the use of technology does not exclude those are not technologically literate from receiving assistance. Humanitarian assistance should always be about serving the most vulnerable, which often requires a human network, including local networks, to assess vulnerability correctly. Furthering the localisation agenda, relying on local responders that have this granular understanding of vulnerabilities at local level (see Chapter 4) can help in reaching out to and targeting the most vulnerable.

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3 Supporting self-reliance requires a blended set of aid instruments

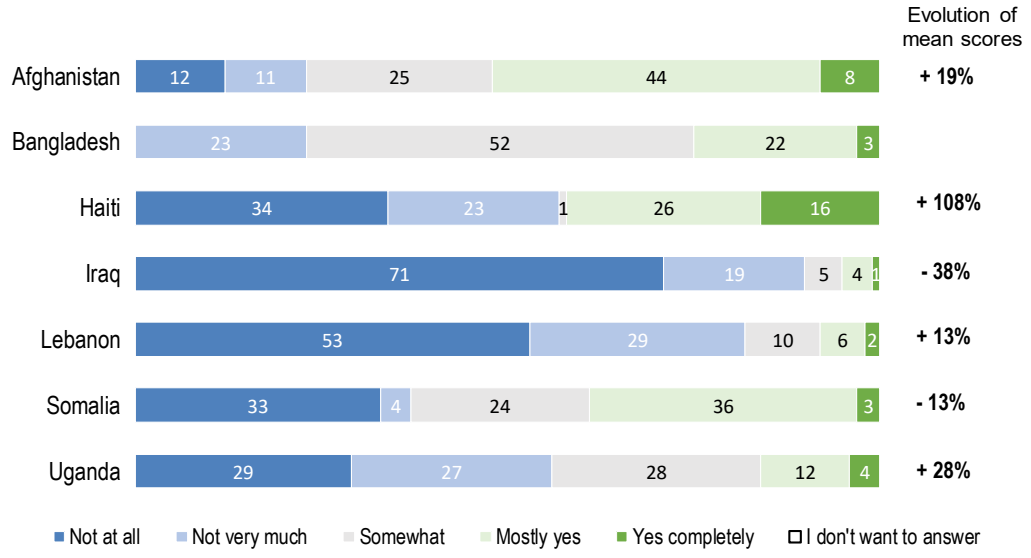
If humanitarian assistance is not sufficient to meet people's most important needs, it is even less effective in achieving economic self-sufficiency, for which the lack of economic and livelihood opportunities is the primary grievance for the vast majority of survey respondents. In protracted situations, people want economic autonomy, not prolonged assistance. Because it is not designed to end need, and because it is unpredictable in nature, humanitarian assistance is not the right tool to build sustainable economic opportunities, especially in refugee contexts where strict restrictions can be in place to prevent refugees from participating in the economic life of their host countries. Creating an enabling environment for livelihood opportunities for people affected by crisis should rapidly become a priority for DAC members in their political dialogue with partner countries.

Key messages

- Humanitarian assistance is not the right tool to support self-sufficiency. Livelihood opportunities are amongst the most commonly unmet need according to people who are affected by crises and who are striving for financial autonomy, not for prolonged assistance.
- Helping create the right conditions for affected people to access livelihoods beyond aid should be a priority for donors engaged in crises contexts.

The surveys asked people if the humanitarian aid they get will help them become self-reliant in the future. In this context, self-reliance is the ability to live independently from humanitarian assistance (Easton-Calabria et al., 2017[1]). Not surprisingly, as humanitarian assistance is not sufficient to meet people's most important needs, as suggested in the previous chapters, it is even less effective in helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency. The vast majority of respondents do not feel that humanitarian assistance is helping them to live without aid in the future (Figure 3.1). Across countries, a minimum of 48% and up to 94% respondents are negative or neutral about the role of humanitarian assistance in helping them to become self-reliant.

Figure 3.1 Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[2]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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In refugee contexts, recent policy instruments such as the New York Declaration (UNGA, 2016[3]) and its corollaries the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (UNHCR, 2018[4]) and the Global Compact for Refugees (UNGA, 2018[5]), as well as the Grand Bargain (Agenda for Humanity, 2016[6]), all call for seeking durable solutions for refugees and more broadly for people affected by crises. Because it is limited in scope and unpredictable in time, humanitarian assistance is not the best instrument to achieve this objective. Humanitarian actors are increasingly engaging in building resilience, addressing underlying causes of vulnerability (ALNAP, 2018[7]), but the humanitarian model is based on short-term programming

and funding that cannot deal with long-term issues whose resolution goes beyond humanitarian programming cycles. Even when replicated over decades, the humanitarian response instrument does not have the predictability necessary to bring the systemic changes required for people affected by crises to reach self-sustainability.

Furthermore, the unpredictability of such assistance can also exacerbate uncertainties for people receiving it in relation to return, eviction, labour law, access to jobs, etc. For example, some people receiving humanitarian assistance are cautious about taking up short-term employment opportunities as they fear this would exclude them from receiving the support they need as part of their overall household income strategy (RDPP et al., 2017[8]).

Humanitarian assistance is delivered in a socio-economic context that needs to be understood, and the risks of increasing vulnerabilities at the country level should also be analysed. In Lebanon for example, employers use humanitarian assistance as an excuse to pay Syrian refugees below the minimum wage – a monthly average of USD 277 a month compared to the USD 448 Lebanon minimum wage (ILO, 2014[9]). This in turn brings down the informal minimum wage for the Lebanese, as the availability of Syrian refugees does not encourage salary upgrades.

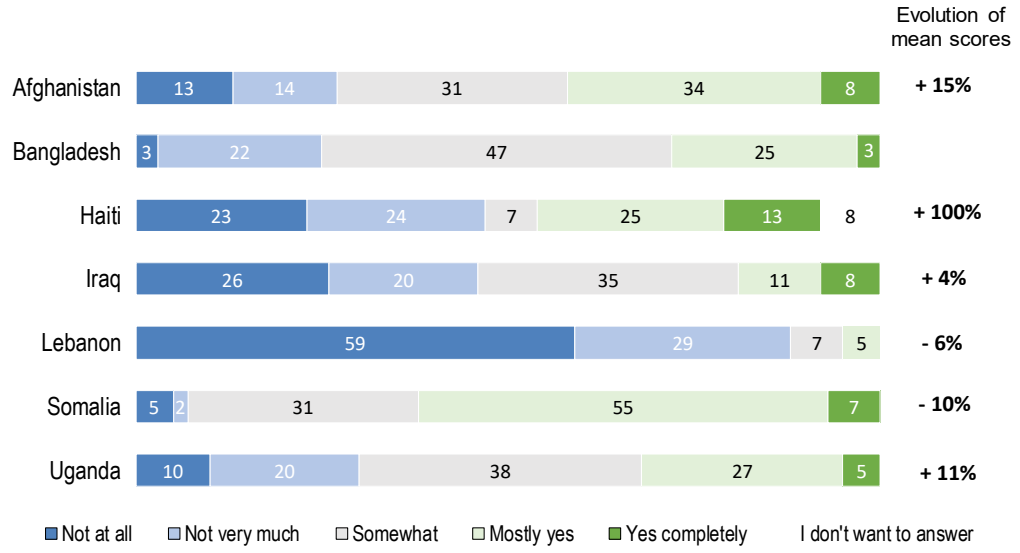
People affected by crisis want autonomy, not prolonged assistance

Findings from across the surveys, and confirmed by much research in crisis areas, show that people affected by crises and receiving assistance are primarily looking to regain financial autonomy and sustainable livelihoods and to become less dependent on assistance. Particularly in long-term crises, refugees have a sense of protracted temporariness when they are stranded in reluctant host countries like Bangladesh or Lebanon. The inability to achieve self-reliance is one of the main factors driving secondary migration (Van Hear, 2011[10]).

When asking people receiving humanitarian assistance whether their life has improved, responses differ from one context to another, depending on the situation in their countries of origin and the quality of the humanitarian response (Figure 3.2). However, respondents who replied negatively put employment or income opportunities as one of their top concerns for achieving self-reliance (OECD, 2019[2]).

In countries where governments impose strict control on what the humanitarian sector can deliver even as a basic service, the issue of economic sustainability for people affected by crises requires the mobilisation of other instruments in order to help create an environment that is more conducive to self-sustainability. Especially for refugees, self-sustainability touches upon a country's political and economic choices. For donors, helping create a conducive environment for affected people to reach self-sustainability requires a political dialogue that humanitarian actors can feed into but not initiate, in order to protect the humanitarian principles driving their action.

Figure 3.2 Overall, is your life improving?



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Source: (OECD, 2019[2]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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Some programmes lie at the juncture between humanitarian assistance and social development and represent interesting opportunities to support long-term self-reliance for refugees while reassuring host governments that supporting refugees does not contradict their own policies. In Lebanon, for example, the Subsidised Temporary Employment Programme (STEP) includes a pillar for providing eligible refugees with savings accounts that are only accessible when they leave Lebanon (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. The DFID-supported Subsidised Temporary Employment Programme in Lebanon

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) funds humanitarian and development assistance in Lebanon, aiming to help highly vulnerable refugee and host community families to meet their basic survival needs and maintain dignity. Given the specific Lebanese context, this assistance focuses on education, jobs and services, and is based on the logic that humanitarian assistance is required only until development assistance begins to offer a meaningful alternative. Through the Subsidised Temporary Employment Programme (STEP), DFID also provides financial and employment incentives that will encourage small and medium-sized businesses to expand production and create new permanent jobs for Lebanese workers, as well as temporary jobs for Syrians. One aspect of this programme is to create savings accounts that are only accessible to refugees on leaving Lebanon. The accounts – or wallets – are managed by an NGO and the Banque Libano-française, a private Lebanese bank that also manages the cash transfer within the Lebanon Multi-purpose cash transfer in partnership with the World Food Programme and MasterCard.

Source: (DFID, 2018[11]), *DevTracker Project GB-GOV-1-300060*, https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300060 (accessed on 16 April 2019).

Restrictions on the right to work increase the burden for hosting countries

Wage earning and self-employment provisions in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR, 1951[12]) are seldom fully implemented (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016[13]). In refugee contexts, some of the main obstacles mentioned by survey respondents include a problematic legal status that results in the lack of rights and opportunities. Fearing permanent settlement of refugees, some hosting governments put stringent restrictions on many aspects of refugees' lives, most notably on movement and access to work. Restrictions on the right to work also prevent their access to other rights, such as social security benefits and general labour rights protection. In many host countries, limitations also apply to opening a business; and owning property, land or capital – undermining refugees' access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Where access to jobs is restricted, and as humanitarian assistance is not enough to sustain affected people's livelihoods, refugees are often confined to seeking work in the informal sector, or in low-wage jobs such as in agriculture, construction or services (these are the three sectors in which refugees are allowed to work in Lebanon, for example). Working informally often means greater vulnerability to exploitation, poor working conditions and harassment. When affected people are forced to live on the margin of societies, it not only exacerbates existing social problems, but also deprives the host country government of some domestic revenues (RDPP et al., 2017[8]). As refugees are not included in the formal economy, the cost of accommodating them in terms of basic services provision, water, electricity, garbage collection, etc. falls onto the host country without any financial contributions, other than humanitarian assistance, to relieve some of the financial burden.

Additionally, confining refugees to some low-wage sectors increases competition with the local unskilled workforce, notably when refugees take asylum in areas that are already suffering from a lack of investment from the central government, as is the case in all surveyed countries. This also fuels negative perceptions of refugees and exhausts countries' capacities to host, for example in Lebanon where 56% of respondents feel unwelcomed.

As most people are looking for economic opportunities to complement humanitarian assistance and meet their livelihood needs, their access to economic opportunities is therefore a critical connecting point between humanitarian assistance and development co-operation. There are increasing examples of non-humanitarian programmes that benefit both refugees and the host country. The Jordan Compact (EC, 2017[14]), for example, seeks to provide Syrian refugees with access to the formal labour market in exchange for improved access for Jordan to European markets and support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. The European Union's Jordan Compact

Signed in February 2016, the Jordan Compact aims to improve access to education and the formal labour market for Syrian refugees in a protracted displacement situation. Instead of requiring refugees to pay high prices for a work permit, the Jordanian Government has waived these fees, reduced bureaucratic barriers, and issued 200 000 work permits in specified sectors in Special Economic Zones. Furthermore, Jordan has committed to improve the business environment, provide school places for all Syrian children, as well as support refugees with training opportunities. In return for employment quota in existing Special Economic Zones, the EU has loosened trade regulations and offered tariff-free access to European markets. The donor community has also agreed to better support the Jordan Response Plan, which was only 30%-funded by 2016 (Grawert, 2019[15]). By integrating Syrian refugees into the existing Special Economic Zones strategies, Jordan has attracted additional financial support from international donors. Three years on, the Jordan Compact has led to improvements in education and employment for Syrian refugees, and has also notably improved its manufacturing sector, showing that a conducive policy environment can also open up the potential to benefit both the host community and refugees.

Source: (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Ille, 2018[16]), *The Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts*, https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/61932 (accessed on 16 April 2019).

Because meeting people's needs requires the mobilisation of many actors who are all seeking funds, people affected by crises are perceived as a cost for assistance agencies and donors, as well as a financial burden for host countries. Humanitarian planning and programming are based on the assessment of the gaps that need to be filled and their costs. However, in protracted crises, there are also opportunities which can be capitalised on to complement needs and gap assessments. Allowing refugees to improve their livelihoods by starting to invest in, produce, and contribute to the host economy can yield development benefits.

For donors, supporting the creation of conducive environments for developing economic opportunities and a legal environment in which refugees are protected from exploitation and discrimination is an important way to enable partner countries to align their development, humanitarian and diplomatic instruments with development objectives.

Aspirations and dignity are elements of building self-reliance

Prospects for economic autonomy mean that people affected by crisis do not only seek work to complement humanitarian assistance, but also, and sometimes above all, to live in dignity. Economic autonomy is one of the main elements in dignity. The ability to live from one's work has a dramatic effect on people's sense of dignity. Many refugees describe dignity in terms of being able to provide for one's family and having financial stability. As seen in Bangladesh, the economic aspect of dignity is also important to women, particularly those women who are heads of household and would rather work than receive assistance (Holloway and Fan, 2018[17]). Inability to work also directly links refugee status with dependence on society; the related negative social impact also acts as a strong push factor for secondary migration (Kvittingen et al., 2019[18]).

People affected by crises are often seen as vulnerable victims who depend on assistance, a stereotype sometimes conveyed by assistance agencies' fundraising campaigns focusing on their lifesaving role in humanitarian contexts. While this role is indeed vital in acute emergency phases, the stereotype is often misleading (Horst, 2006[19]). People affected by crisis quickly turn their attention to finding livelihood

opportunities, either because their initial savings are exhausted rapidly, or because the humanitarian assistance they receive is too little or not targeted enough to rely on exclusively, as seen above.

The lack of economic opportunities is also mentioned in the surveys as an obstacle outside refugee contexts. The position of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is particularly problematic as they do not benefit from the same level of international protection or have a specific institution designed to support them. Instead, they largely depend on their government for protection and assistance, such as social safety net mechanisms. In Iraq for example, while people see an overall improvement because of the end of the conflict (Figure 3.2), perceptions of empowerment are lower in areas in which refugees and IDPs now find themselves in a state of protracted displacement. People who returned to their place of origin are more positive, especially where government policies encourage return and the assistance response has shifted focus from supporting IDPs to supporting returnees.

A cash-based response is often presented as a more dignified way to deliver humanitarian assistance and an easier way to link it with a broader social safety net programme, such as the Emergency Social Safety Net in Turkey. This is true, and most people receiving assistance in the form of cash see it as a valuable aid. However, cash assistance remains humanitarian assistance. It is insufficient to meet all needs, is not more predictable than in-kind aid and qualifying criteria are poorly communicated to its beneficiaries (Chapter 4).

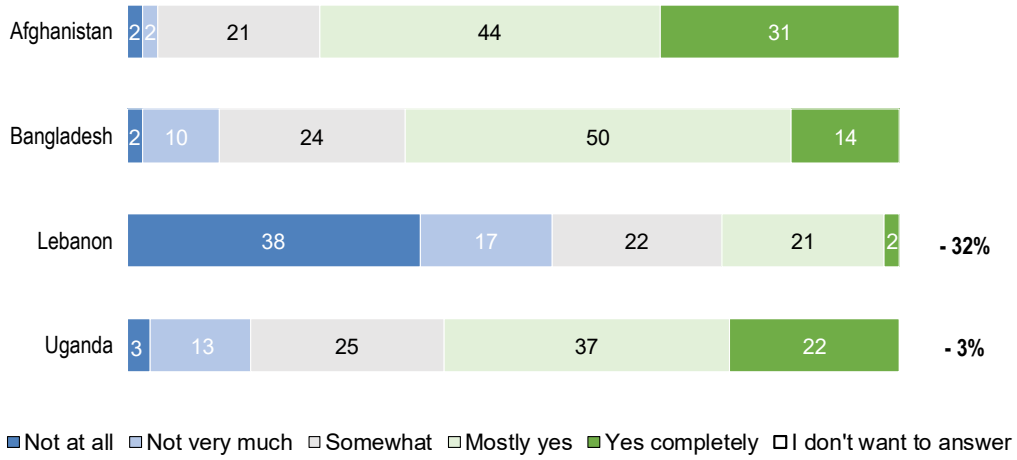
The way people affected by crises access economic opportunities is one of the main elements allowing refugees to make a dignified contribution to the country's development, rather than being a social and economic burden on the host country requiring intervention by the international community through humanitarian assistance. Access to work and livelihoods for all people affected by crisis should therefore become a priority issue for Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members in their political dialogue with partner countries and development co-operation actors.

Host communities are also directly affected by crises

An influx of people fleeing a crisis from another area of a country or across a border is an understandable demographic shock for any population, especially at the local level. The arrival of a new population affects public service delivery, land use, housing availability, food availability and prices. When humanitarian actors employ local staff and use local services such as housing, this favours the most educated and the most socially connected within the host communities, which can exacerbate the social impact of the crisis, (Grunewald, 2014[20]). The crisis can also negatively affect infrastructure, road traffic and market prices, as noted by the host community in Bangladesh (GTS, 2019[21]).

Because of possible competition between refugees and the local population over jobs, social services or resources, refugees' perceptions of feeling welcomed by the host community are decreasing in some countries (Figure 3.1). The initial support and hospitality can rapidly wane as local social tolerance becomes tested, especially when the exogenous population is from a neighbouring country with a different culture, language or religion. Many factors play a role in these perceptions, which do not only seem correlated with the length of the crisis, but also with government policy towards refugees.

Figure 3.3 Do you feel welcome in your host community?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Bangladesh was only surveyed during round 2. Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[2]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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National and local authorities retain the main responsibility for engineering the relationships between the population and affected people through their own policies and practices. When popular support starts to wane and when affected population are perceived to represent a risk to host communities, the government may start to implement restrictive policies, as was the case in Lebanon after 2013. Decisions over whether or not to grant the right to work, provide access to education and public services, and registration policy are all examples of critical issues which a host government has to navigate carefully when displacement is set to become long term. For example, in Bangladesh, most of the Rohingyas who notice tensions with the host community attribute them to restrictions on their right to work in the local economy and their resultant high rate of informal work. The main reasons given by locals for these same tensions are cultural differences and the Rohingya working unofficially in the area (GTS, 2019[22]).

International engagement can help create opportunities

The way humanitarian assistance is planned and delivered within political contexts and administrative constraints can also make a stark difference. Besides protection and assistance, delivering assistance only to the people affected by crisis based on their refugee or IDP status can rapidly create dissention between hosting communities and the people affected. These negative perceptions can be reduced by enabling refugees or IDPs to participate in projects that serve the entire community (Horst, 2006[19]). While the legal and security constraints imposed by the national authorities can be strict, humanitarian assistance should be programmed in a way that alleviates the burden on the local services and population as much as possible. This is especially the case for employment and wages for young and informal workers in middle-income countries, who are most at risk of competition with affected people (Verme and Schuettler, 2019[23]).

When the regions or neighbourhoods receiving refugees are underdeveloped, such as in Lebanon, Uganda or Bangladesh, the protracted increase in population and economic exchanges can justify development investment and be turned into social and economic opportunities. This is the rationale of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), in which crisis response finance can also create opportunities for the host country to enhance development. It requires building a narrative explaining that refugees, or people affected by crises more broadly, can make positive contributions to the local economy (Verme et al., 2016[24]). Programmes that create awareness of the potential embodied in forced migrants can help to tackle negative views.

In Uganda, where perceptions of being welcome are high amongst refugees (Figure 3.3), the government policy to implement the CRRF provides more livelihood opportunities, notably in the agricultural sector, even for refugees who were not allocated land. While the Ugandan model of refugee management is not immune from controversy (Hovil, 2018[25]), it has opened up opportunities for development in a particularly underserved region of the country (Box 3.3).

Box 3.3. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Northern Uganda

Uganda adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in 2017. One of Uganda's key components under the CRRF mechanism is the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment project (Government of Uganda and World Bank, 2017[26]), a government-led multi-year strategy for self-reliance and resilience that seeks opportunities for both refugees and the host communities. Its trademark "30-70 Principle" ensures that 30% of the assistance targets the host community. The initiative has increased investment from international actors. Despite its generally underfunded situation, Uganda's engagement in the CRRF attracts financial support from international actors (Coggio, 2018[27]). Since 2017, the World Bank has provided a USD 50 million loan for the government to implement the CRRF and mobilised the IDA18 refugee sub-window to support refugees and host communities: through this window, Uganda received a USD 29 million grant for a water management project and a USD 335 million grant for municipal infrastructure. The CRRF has improved health and education development indicators in Northern Uganda, because of an integrated response that has increased the accessibility of health and education services. Infrastructure projects have also provided market access and livelihood opportunities (IRC, 2018[28]).

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4 We are seeing limited improvements to the system

The project reveals improvements in the way aid is delivered. Some of the Grand Bargain commitments, such as multiyear frameworks and joint needs assessments, are starting to deliver positive initiatives that now need to be systematised. Building on years of practice, the cash agenda is becoming more widespread. Support to education in crises has also become a key issue for donors, showing that humanitarian-development silos can be overcome, resulting in positive outcomes and better responses. Some serious challenges remain however. The localisation agenda is progressing too slowly, mainly because donors' architecture is designed to favour direct contracts to trusted partners rather than to a dense network of local civil society organisations active in the field. The participation revolution has not happened either. The humanitarian system is still driven by international organisations' mandates and programmes, rather than by the affected people at the centre of the response.

Key messages

- Some key improvements are starting to deliver better support for people affected by crises, such as education and cash transfers.
- Critical challenges remain, and shifting from a supply- to a customer-driven approach to aid delivery is necessary to genuinely put affected people at the centre of the response.
- The international humanitarian architecture is not designed to encourage the localisation of aid. Striking a balance between international capacity and local ability requires a granular understanding of each particular situation.

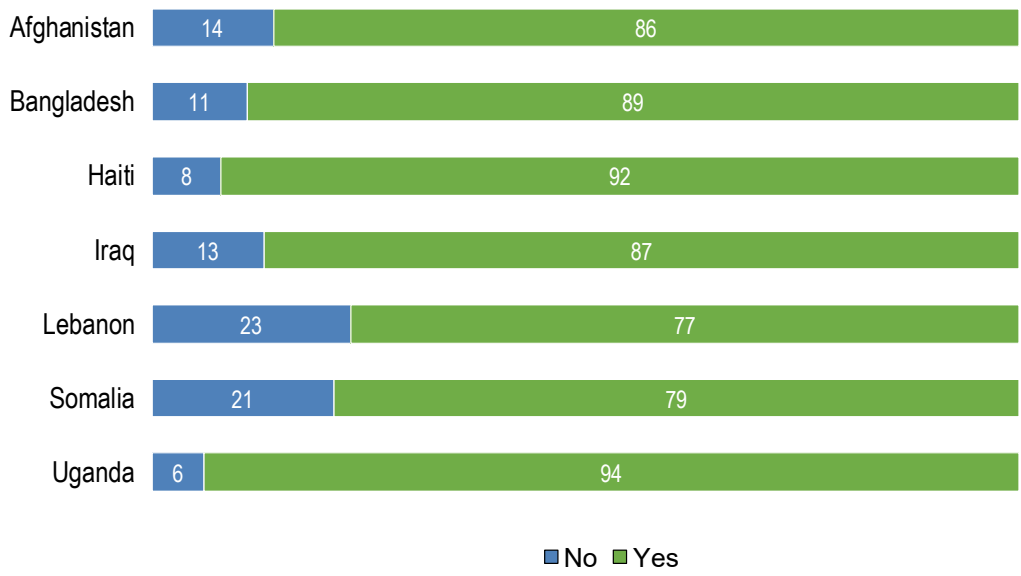
Supporting education in crises is showing results

Sending children to school and ensuring a better future for them is a priority for people affected by crisis, including refugees. Some respondents explained that a better education for their children would make them feel more optimistic about the future. While many adults accept low wages and informal occupations for themselves to feed their family, they do want more for their children. Many believe however that a better future will be hard to achieve given the limited educational opportunities existing in some host countries (Barbelet and Wake, 2017[1]).

Integrating education into the crisis response system is having clear results: most survey respondents send their children to some kind of education, even in emergency situations or protracted crises (Figure 4.1). This is encouraging, given that crises all over the world are disrupting the education of 75 million children between the ages of 3 and 18. Prioritising education also has a gender and a protection impact: while 25% of world's out-of-school children live in crisis-affected countries, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys (UNICEF, 2017[2]).

Those who are not sending their children to any sort of education blamed their inability to pay school fees and other associated costs (school equipment, transport, etc.). Other concerns vary according to the context, but are linked to poor quality teaching, overcrowded classes, school access difficulties or denial of education. Undocumented people also have less capacity to send their children to school, as seen in the survey in Afghanistan (OECD, 2019[3]).

Figure 4.1 Do you send your children to any education classes?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018).
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 2 (2017-2018).

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Education in crisis situations has long been a neglected priority. It was seen as too long-term for humanitarian funding, but too crisis-oriented for development funding. This gap has left generations of displaced people and refugees without access to proper education over the years. Recently, aside from the emergence of many individual initiatives and projects, key donors – such as the European Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) – have started to prioritise education in crisis, increasing the share of its humanitarian funding dedicated to education from 1 to 10% between 2015 and 2019 (European Commission, 2019[4]). This relatively fresh look at education in crises culminated with the creation of the Education Cannot Wait fund at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, which has already attracted USD 172 million from donors, almost exclusively Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members (ECW Secretariat, 2018[5]).

Despite increased funds available for education in emergencies, detailed survey analysis per country calls for donors to continue their push for universal enrolment in crises contexts. In many countries, access to school is also curtailed by child labour, or by enrolment requirements, language difficulties, or transportation issues. Children with disabilities and those of secondary school age are at particular risk. In Lebanon, only half of school-age refugee children are enrolled in spite of the RACE 2 programme, which aims at universal enrolment (Human Rights Watch, 2018[6]). In Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees cannot enrol in the formal education system, and children can only attend informal learning centres in the camps, with their level of education varying greatly according to the organisation running them (UNICEF, 2018[7]).

The perception of instability from being displaced abroad or in a different region can also make it difficult to engage in the education system, even where it is accessible. Moreover, most humanitarian efforts in education focus on primary education, leaving higher education less accessible. Higher education can also be regarded as less important by refugees, especially when the prospects for employment in the host country are extremely limited. The combination of the lack of access to higher education and to a decent

job for people stranded in a migration situation is a powerful push factor for secondary migration (Kvittingen et al., 2019[8]).

Globally, positive surveys results about education in crises show that humanitarian and development silos can be overcome, resulting in positive outcomes for people affected by crises. Supporting education in fragile or crisis settings, notably through development funds, is a good way to operationalise the nexus between humanitarian assistance, development co-operation and peace. In Lebanon, for example, international support to the public education system for Syrian refugees strengthened a weak public education sector, including increasing wages for the Lebanese teachers mobilised on the afternoon shift for refugees. This also has a stabilising effect given that over half of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are school-aged children (McCarter et al., 2018[9]).

While the right blend of emergency and long-term funding is required in crisis contexts, not all problems can be solved by finance. A political dialogue with partner countries and long-term support to the education sector is also necessary to help remove obstacles to enrolment and view education for refugees as both necessity and opportunity.

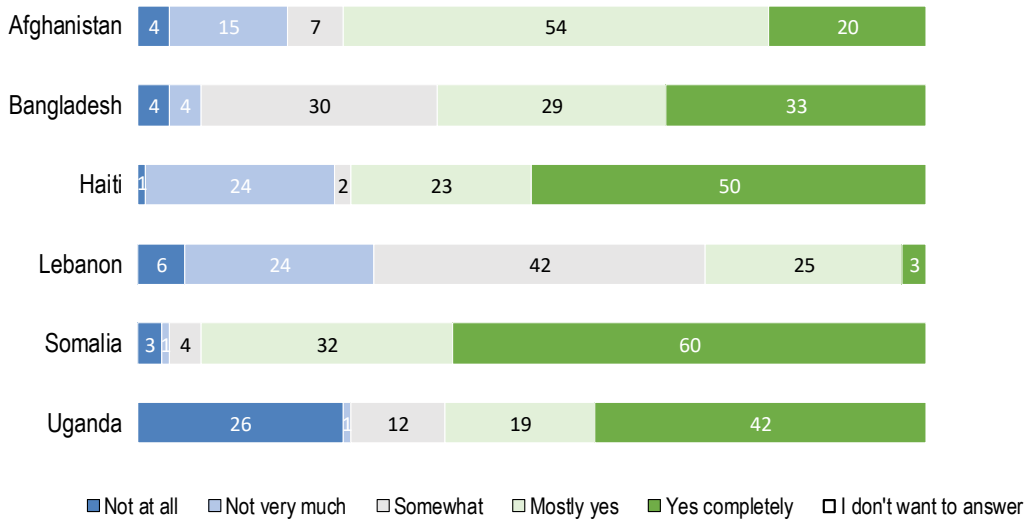
The Grand Bargain is delivering in some sectors

Three years after its launch, the Grand Bargain policy initiative is maintaining good momentum for action, notably because of its reporting mechanism. As it links donors and humanitarian operators, the Grand Bargain has become a key reference in DAC members' humanitarian and development policies, and 22 out of 24 donors that are Grand Bargain signatories are DAC members (IASC, 2018[10]). Several provisions of the Grand Bargain have started to bear fruit, though some serious challenges remain in some sectors. Some of the Grand Bargain provisions are discussed in turn below.

Cash-based responses are growing

Providing cash as a complement to or in place of in-kind assistance is an increasingly regular practice, building on years of research, pilots and experience (ODI, 2015[11]). The cash agenda was already well advanced before the Grand Bargain, but the Grand Bargain gave additional policy support to this fundamental move. Crises in the Middle East provided one of the first opportunities to implement a cash response at a very large scale, notably in Turkey and Lebanon (Bailey and Harvey, 2017[12]). Across countries, the surveys indicate that beneficiaries are mostly satisfied with the cash assistance they receive (Figure 4.2). In Bangladesh, where the government is imposing restrictions on cash distribution and the delivery of SIM cards that would allow mobile transfer, the survey shows that 44% of refugees sell some of the in-kind assistance they receive to get cash to allow them to purchase urgent needs, notably food and energy.

Figure 4.2 Are you satisfied with the cash support you receive?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 2 (2017-2018).

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While cash transfer programmes are becoming standard components of humanitarian responses, the vulnerability analysis that underpins cash transfer programming should also take into account the risks associated with cash delivery.

Providing cash to affected people instead of in-kind assistance of the same value can be perceived badly by host populations and authorities. It can be seen as promoting dependency and inequality, especially when selection criteria are more inclusive than the social safety net for the most vulnerable amongst the host community (Ulrichs, Hagen-Zanker and Holmes, 2017[13]). Humanitarian actors often assess the impact of cash transfer on the local economy, and this assessment should be extended to cash transfers' social impact. There is a role for donors to help align selection criteria with existing safety nets while strengthening national safety nets, so as to enhance perceptions of fairness. Doing so can also reduce competition amongst humanitarian providers over an activity for which their comparative advantage is not clear in all contexts in relation to non-humanitarian actors such as national governments or banks.

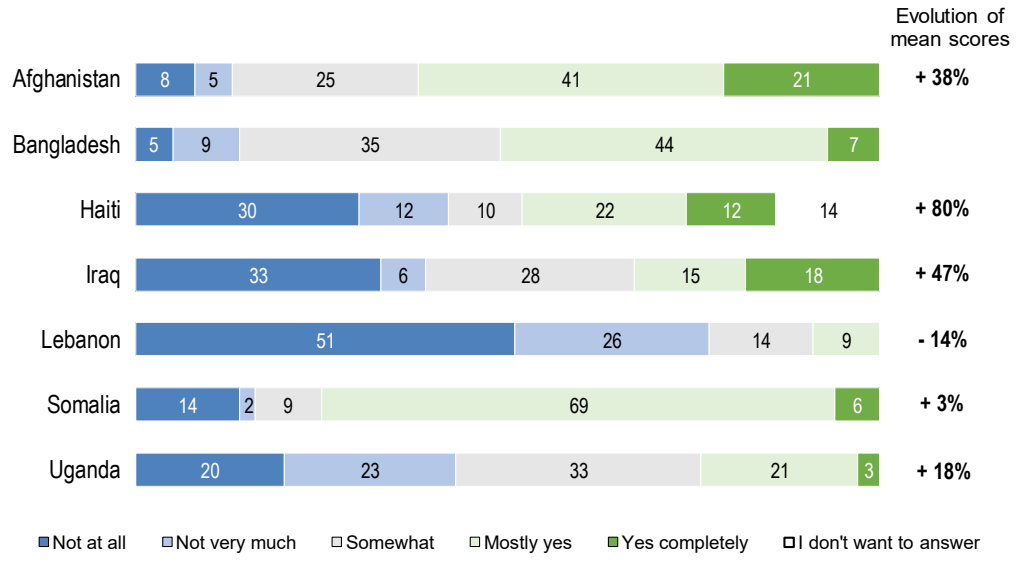
In addition, the surveys show that people in Lebanon – where large-scale cash transfers are in place – are the least satisfied with the cash support they receive (Figure 4.2). Yet 74% of participants also responded they would prefer a cash-only type of assistance. This apparent contradiction suggests that, because humanitarian aid assistance is insufficient to cover some the most important needs, including food, cash assistance is used mainly to help repay debts, gradually diminishing beneficiaries' capacity to purchase food in shops, and increasing level of indebtedness over the month (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, 2018[14]).

The most vulnerable people often have needs that cannot always be met by cash transfers. Humanitarian actors have a role in linking complementary and tailored interventions to avoid people resorting to negative coping mechanisms, ensuring they continue to access food and send their children to school, for example. Interventions should be designed with the recipient's long-term situation in mind, even when this means donors accepting higher transfer costs, for example, when electronic cash provision is not the optimal response.

The participation revolution is shifting from a supply- to a customer-driven approach to aid delivery

The participation revolution, i.e. including people receiving aid in making the decisions that affect their lives, is one of the commitments under the Grand Bargain. The surveys reflect a positive evolution in people's perceptions about the degree to which their opinions are taken into account, except in Lebanon, where the overall sense of the humanitarian response is negative (Figure 4.3). This evolution reflects an effort to take people's views into consideration. However, much remains to be done in this area – because it was designed to respond to emergencies and meet survival needs, the humanitarian sector is still very much supply driven.

Figure 4.3. Do you feel assistance providers take your opinion into account when providing assistance?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018) http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/humanitarian-financing/.

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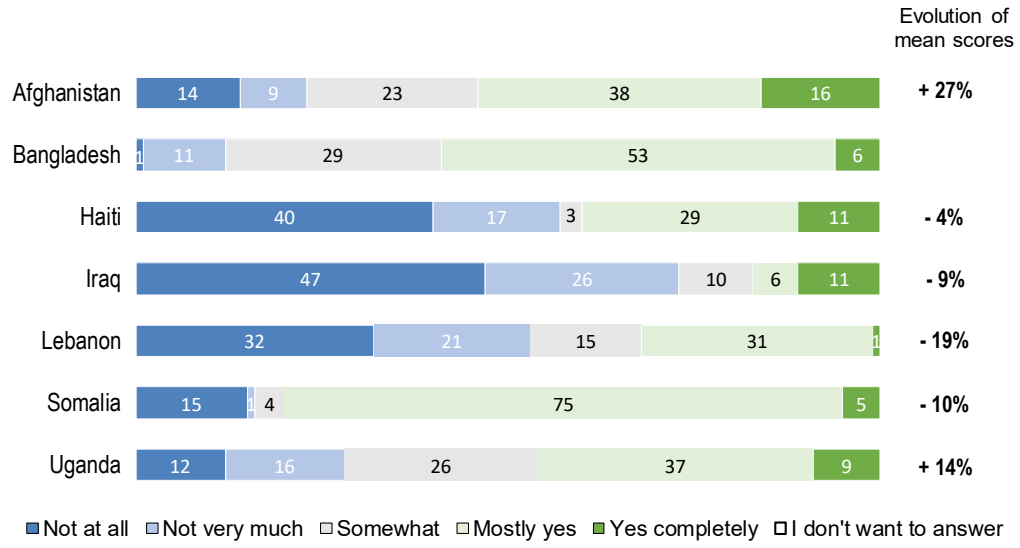
Although people's opinions are often taken into account while implementing programme, this does not always result in better assistance (Konyndyk, 2018[15]). Not only are people badly informed about the assistance that is available to them, especially outside camps (Figure 4.4), they also do not fully understand the selection criteria. Multiple assistance streams and assistance actors make it complex for people affected by crises to fully grasp what assistance is coming and where from. In a survey in Iraq and Kenya, around two-thirds of respondents did not know how long they would continue to receive cash transfers (Sagmeister et al., 2018[16]). In Iraq, up to 94% of respondents did not know how assistance agencies decide who receives cash assistance and who does not. On top of creating anxiety about the future, such uncertainty also prevents beneficiaries from factoring assistance into the household economy, limiting its potential for building livelihoods and resilience.

Figure 4.4. Are you aware of the assistance available to you?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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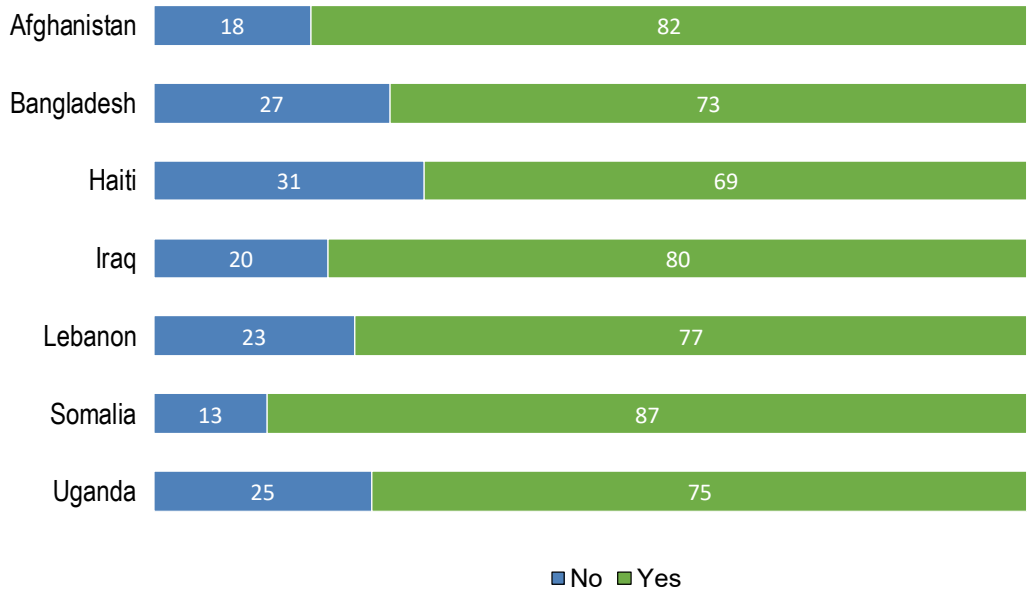
The next step in the participation revolution would be to take people's opinions on board in designing a tailored response for them. Considering that the majority of crises are protracted, an individual and customer approach should prevail and become the norm in protracted crises, given that each household is a particular case, with different types of vulnerability and sources of livelihood (Sagmeister, Folke and Aziz, 2018[17]). Multi-purpose cash-based responses using electronic and mobile technology can help customise assistance delivery to the point where beneficiaries could receive assistance from a single operator, not necessarily a humanitarian actor. By creating a more systemic link between aid provider and aid receiver, such a customer-oriented approach could provide more clarity over assistance timings and any potential disruption.

Multi-year planning and funding are becoming common features

While complex to measure, multiyear funding frameworks are an increasing feature of donors' humanitarian assistance architecture. DAC peer reviews show that many DAC members are now able to provide either multiyear funding or, more often, can set multi-annual funding frameworks with annual disbursements (OECD, 2019[18]). Field staff surveys reflect a high number of organisations receiving multi-annual funds (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5. Does your organisation obtain multi-year funding?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018).
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 2 (2017-2018).

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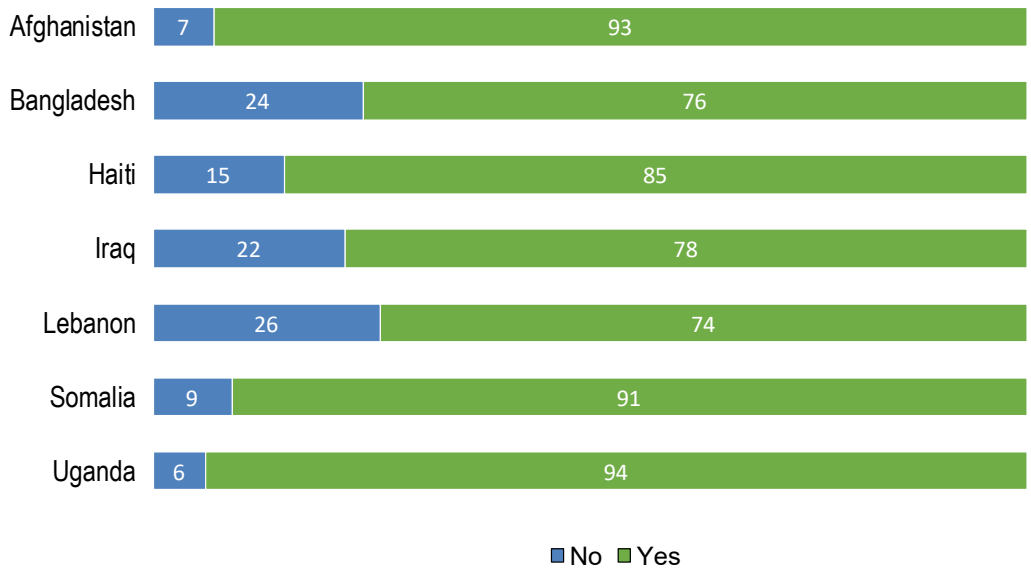
Multiyear funding can decrease costs, for instance through reduced procurement and transport costs, savings on proposal writing, and reduced currency risk. It aids an early response when it is combined with greater flexibility – agencies can react more appropriately, resulting in reduced caseloads, levels of need, and loss of life. When multiyear funding is provided directly or indirectly to local partners, they can invest in staff, training and equipment, building local capacity. It also allows them to be better prepared to respond efficiently and at scale when a crisis hits. For example, a local emergency response agency working under a multiyear partnership is likely to have been able to prepare and train its staff, which would significantly improve the quality and swiftness of its crisis response (Fabre and Cabot Venton, 2017[19]).

It should be noted, however, that while humanitarian multiyear planning and funding have advantages, a regular assessment should be made of whether the supported activities remain under the humanitarian remit and mandate, or if longer-term financial tools would be more appropriate to support the activity and achieve better development outcomes.

There are more joint needs assessments

Joint needs assessment involving donors and operational actors is a good way to implement the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, which aims to promote more coherent action among the world's leading donors of humanitarian, development and peace programmes in fragile and conflict contexts (OECD, 2019[20]). As it helps create a consensus around the different dimensions of a crisis, it also favours efficient labour division and coherence amongst actors. Many aid organisations have reported conducting joint needs assessments (Figure 4.6). For example the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is referred to as a positive annual multi-agency collaboration to share understanding, expectations and commitment and help decision making (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, 2018[21]).

Figure 4.6. Does your organisation regularly conduct joint need assessments with other organisations?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018).
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 2 (2017-2018).

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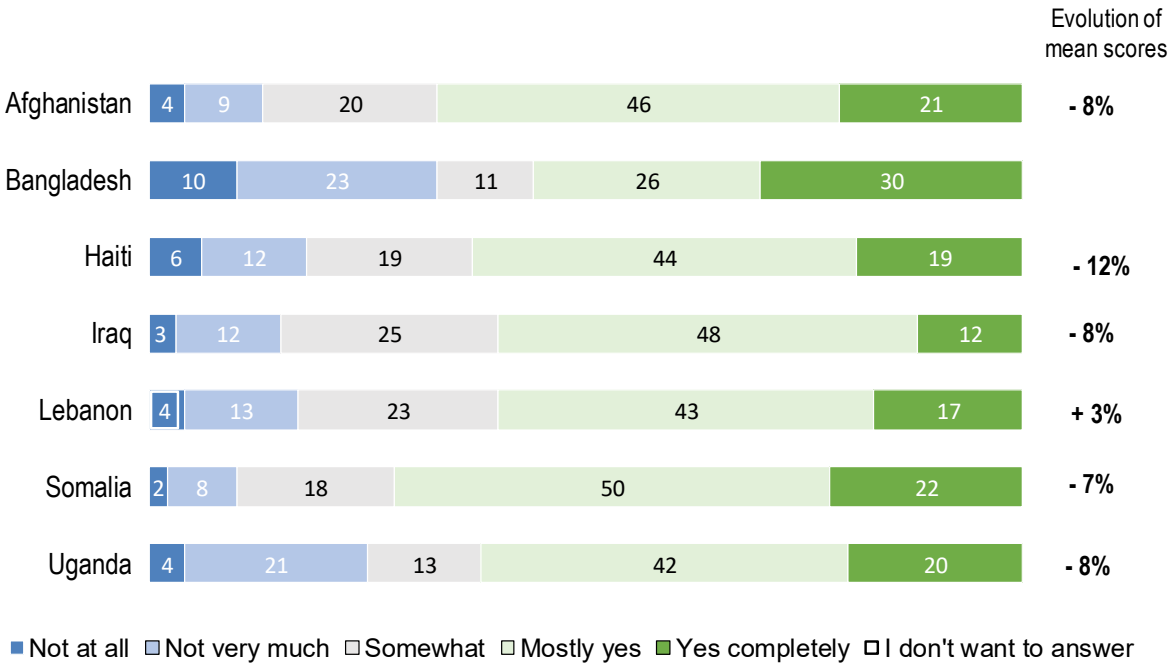
Reporting requirements are appropriate, but harmonisation can still improve

Since the surveys started in 2016, humanitarian workers in the field are globally positive about the time they spend on reporting across countries (Figure 4.7). The longer the crisis the more positive the respondents are, suggesting that humanitarian partners are building reporting capacity over time, whereas staff in more recent crises are less accustomed to specific reporting requirements. The relatively positive answers show that although reporting requirements remain high, they are not detrimental to operations.

Figure 4.7. Do you feel the amount of time you spend on reporting is appropriate?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 1 (2016-2017) and round 2 (2017-2018).

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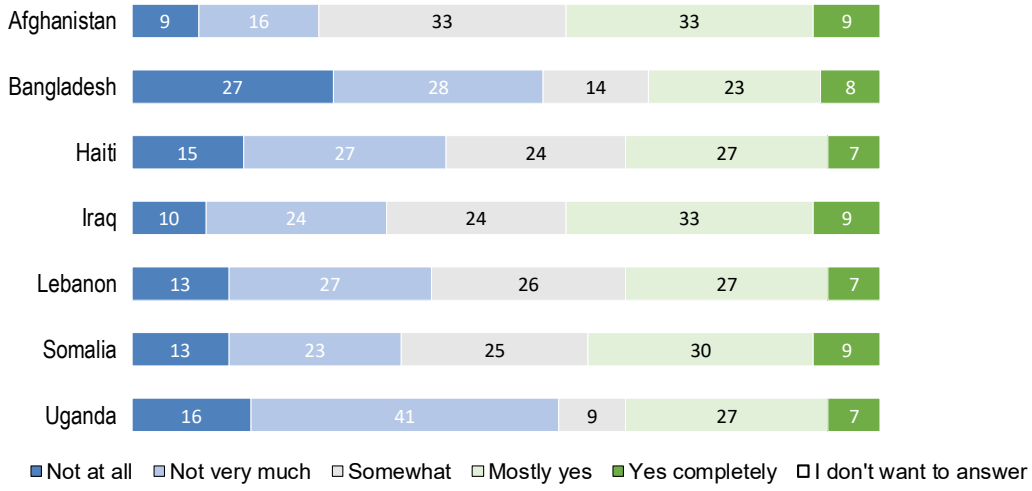
While the reporting time is not questioned too much by operational humanitarian staff, harmonisation remains a concern (Figure 4.8). Overlaps in reporting format and timelines for different donors remain problematic. As one respondent put it, "donors ask us to co-ordinate, but they don't seem to co-ordinate themselves".

Figure 4.8. Do you feel the reporting requirements from different donors are sufficiently harmonised?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 2 (2017-2018).

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Most notably, the link between heavier reporting requirements and improvement in response effectiveness is unclear to humanitarian workers. There is no real clarity for humanitarian staff as to how the significant amount of resources devoted to reporting is used, given that reporting management costs are not accounted for. Heavy reporting also diverts time and resources away from monitoring. Moreover, some secondary donors, such as UN agencies, impose stricter reporting requirements than those imposed by their own donors, which in certain cases or during emergencies risks leading to inaccurate reporting data.

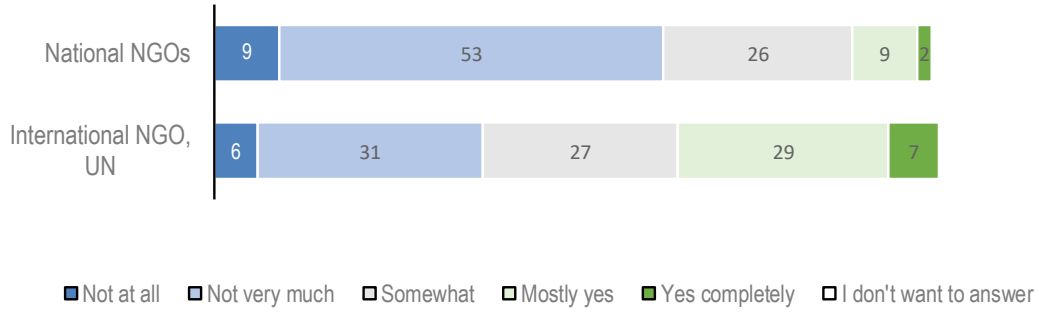
Humanitarian staff concerns about reporting mainly revolve around the need for a joint reporting framework or unified regulations for reporting. In that respect, co-funding operations in particular represent a challenge for humanitarian staff in charge of reporting. Respondents suggested using harmonised indicators as a basis to write reports, as well as creating an online database that collates and cumulates reports.

The Harmonizing Reporting Pilot is testing a standardised template in three pilot countries, including Myanmar, Iraq and Somalia. While the initial results seem encouraging (Gaus, 2018[22]) the surveys do not yet show a clear difference between perceptions on reporting in these pilot countries and others.

The localisation promise is not happening

One of the most complex commitments in the Grand Bargain is the localisation of aid, i.e. supporting local humanitarian responders as directly as possible. Humanitarian staff perceptions about whether local organisations are sufficiently supported vary according to the context (Figure 4.9), but also mask some disparities between local and international responders.

Figure 4.9. Are local organisations sufficiently supported?



Note: Figures reflect respondents' perceptions in survey round 2 (2017-2018). The bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. The mean scores are calculated based on reported responses using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 .The evolution of mean scores reflects a negative or positive evolution since round 1 (2016-2017). Some numbers cannot be added up to exactly 100%, as graphs show rounded percentages without decimals, therefore distorting the relative frequencies between answer options.
Source: (OECD, 2019[3]), Ground Truth Solutions, humanitarian perception survey, round 2 (2017-2018).

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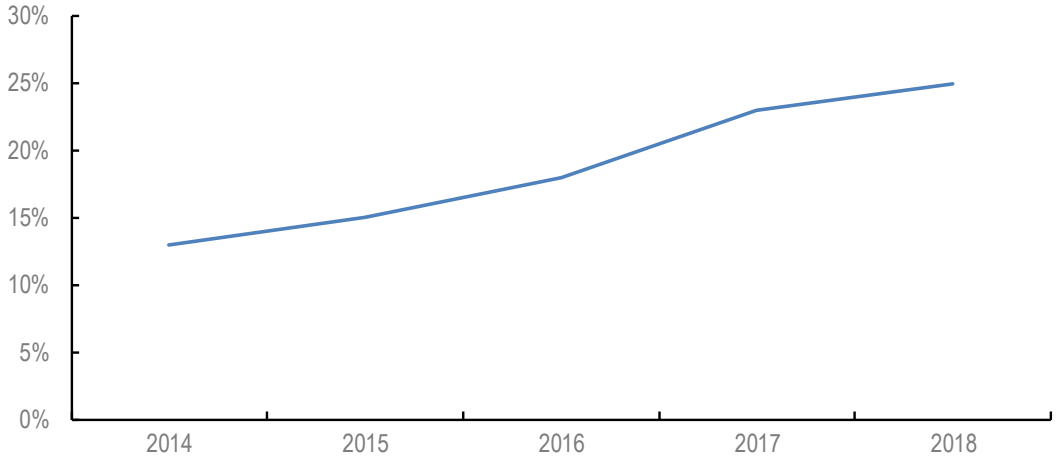
Localisation in the sense of more direct support from donors to local actors is not happening because the international humanitarian architecture is not designed to encourage it. Humanitarian funding and decision-making is highly centralised, managed by ministries or development agencies who have seen their humanitarian budget increasing over the last decade,[1] while global pressure for decreasing public expenditures does not allow for the human resources required to manage a great number of small NGO projects. In addition, strict legislation to prevent terrorism financing makes direct financing to the most complex areas, where financial tracking is complex, virtually impossible.

Donors cannot keep up with the proliferation of civil society initiatives in countries of intervention. As a result, their administrations are designed to favour large projects and trusted partners, and most of the humanitarian funding is channelled through the UN agencies or a few big international NGOs, making the humanitarian sector highly concentrated (Konyndyk, 2018[23]). The share of direct funding in total humanitarian funding rose only from 2.3% in 2015 to 3.6% in 2017 (as reported to the UN Financial Tracking Service) (ALNAP, 2018[24]).

When asked from whom they would prefer to receive assistance, respondents across the surveys did not express a marked preference for local actors over international actors. Instead they preferred a combination of the two. This suggests that localisation should be thought through carefully. International actors provide assistance following quality standards built over decades, and their logistical means make them indispensable providers, notably in emergencies. When assistance requires a more contextual approach, only local actors can bring the cultural knowledge that is required, however. Also, because local humanitarian responders are often primarily development actors, they can be an important resource when assessing vulnerabilities across affected populations, including host communities, during a crisis. Some long-term funding and partnerships in development sectors such as in food security could easily encompass some emergency capacity building. Crisis modifiers in contracts could be interesting ways to allow local responders to take operational responsibilities during crisis contexts.

Striking the balance between international capacity and local ability requires a granular understanding of each particular situation – something that is out of reach of most humanitarian donors. In such cases, the UN Country-Based Pooled Funds (UN CBPF) have shown their ability to give local NGOs access to humanitarian funding and represent a good alternative when direct funding is not an option (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10. The growth in UN Country-Based Pooled Fund allocations to local organisations



Source: (OCHA, 2019[25]) *Country Based Pooled Funds*, database, https://gms.unocha.org/content/cbpf-allocations (accessed on 30 April 2019).

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For donors, localising humanitarian assistance should be about more than just allocating more money to local humanitarian responders. Instead, supporting local humanitarian responders should lead to changes in how crises are managed, optimising existing partnerships and strengthening the voice of affected populations (Fabre, 2016[26]). National government disaster management agencies and other relevant ministries, local humanitarian responders, NGOs, and Red Cross or Red Crescent societies should be seen as key pillars in an overall humanitarian response. Support to these local humanitarian responders, when possible and relevant, should therefore be seen as a natural evolution of humanitarian assistance, as reflected in the High Level Panel report to the Secretary General: *Too Important to Fail - Addressing the Humanitarian Financing Gap* (High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, 2016[27]).

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Notes

[1] DAC members' humanitarian funding rose from USD 11 billion in 2009 to USD 28 billion in 2017, representing a 155% increase during the period.

5 From people to policy: A call for new approaches

The surveys' results are a clear call to combine humanitarian aid with longer-term solution in crises contexts. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus calls for greater coherence when engaging in crisis contexts. This requires a common analysis that helps frame the context, risks and opportunities for donors engaging in crises using a set of instruments that includes, but is not restricted to, humanitarian assistance. Emerging good practice – on education for example – shows that global analysis and coherent programming can help international responses alleviate the impact of crises by supporting both affected people and local economies and infrastructure. Continuing on the reform path will mean turning aid programming into a genuinely people-centred approach, implying a significant shift from the current supply-driven humanitarian system to a customer approach.

Key messages

- Humanitarian assistance must be complemented wherever possible and as soon as possible with other instruments, including development co-operation, political dialogue and peacebuilding measures, as relevant, to create development opportunities for affected people, including host populations.
- Because it allows different instruments to address the underlying causes of crises, operationalising the DAC Recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus will help protect the unique role of humanitarian assistance and its guiding principles.

In 2016, the report "One Humanity, Shared Responsibility" called for a new paradigm in the way humanitarian assistance was conceived, programmed and delivered (UNGA, 2016[1]). The scale and complexity of many crises highlight the challenge for the international community in designing and funding interventions that are fit for such mixed situations. Yet surveys in all countries point at the need to better articulate the response to people's short-term and long-term needs in crises contexts. It reveals a clear call to speed up reforms in the way donors support people and countries in crisis contexts. In line with the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (OECD, 2019[2]), these reforms primarily require from donors a new approach to crises and a fresh look at programming and partnership in these contexts.

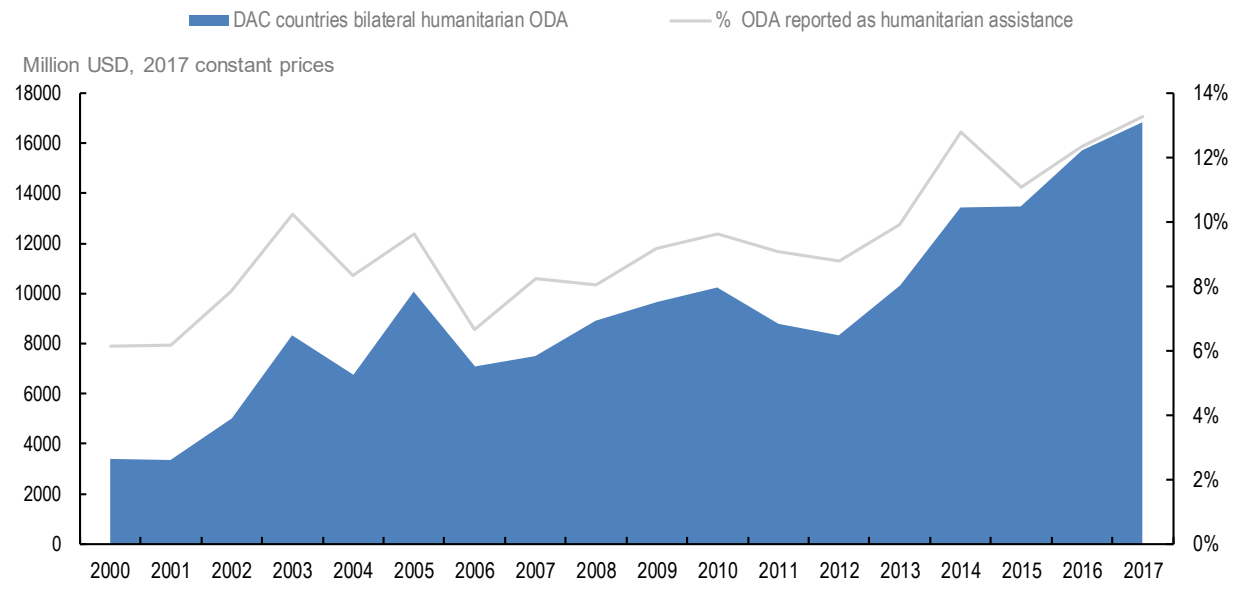
Look beyond the humanitarian response

Most actors in the political, international development and humanitarian sphere – but also the media and general public – refer to "humanitarian crises". However, labelling a crisis "humanitarian" calls for a humanitarian response, and implies that humanitarian assistance is the right tool to address that crisis. Clearly, humanitarian assistance is designed to meet humanitarian needs and not to address the underlying cause of these needs (ICRC, 2016[3]). The crises creating humanitarian needs are either political crisis or natural disasters, and they should be referred as such to help DAC members in mobilising an array of instruments that include humanitarian assistance, but not exclusively.

Humanitarian needs originate from a complex interaction of social, economic, environmental and political and security crisis drivers that are far beyond humanitarian programmatic cycles, as the surveys have shown, and that the humanitarian sector is not equipped to prevent or address. Humanitarian assistance can have a positive or negative impact on crisis dynamics (The Peace Promise, 2016[4]), but as seen in the surveys, other instruments – including political dialogue, peace instruments and development co-operation funds – should also be mobilised by default to support the affected population and affected countries in crises that will become protracted.

The biggest humanitarian appeals relate to protracted crises for which there are no short-term solutions. Yet, in such contexts, DAC members mainly mobilise short-term humanitarian budgets that have increased by 76% in the last decade, from USD 8.7 billion in 2008 to USD 15.3 billion in 2018 (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. The growth in DAC members' bilateral humanitarian assistance



Note: Commitments, USD, 2017 constant prices.
Source: (OECD, 2018[5]), Creditor Reporting System, https://stats.oecd.org/ (accessed on 25 April 2019).

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Because people have been caught in a crisis or been forced to cross a border does not mean that all their needs are humanitarian. Understanding the different dimensions of a crisis and monitoring how it develops will allow DAC members to select the best set of instruments to address the crisis drivers while meeting people's needs.

Implement the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

The surveys have shown that humanitarian aid does not help people affected by crises to reach self-sufficiency (Chapter 3). Because not every problem in a humanitarian context calls for a humanitarian response, pursuing coherence among humanitarian assistance, development co-operation and peace is all the more important to build on the comparative advantage of each instrument. In some contexts, only humanitarian actors have the expertise to reach people in need, provide assistance and protect the most vulnerable. In other crises, the actual delivery of services is not a humanitarian endeavour. It is for example debatable whether the fragmented humanitarian sector is better-placed to manage the process of delivering debit card and cash transfers to refugees than a single private bank with the network and expertise – as in the example of Lebanon. Determining which instrument and which channel are best suited to meet people's needs requires collaboration, coherence and complementarity among assistance instruments, in line with the DAC Recommendation on the humanitarian, development peace nexus (OECD, 2019[2]). Undertaking a joint analysis will help understand the context in which people affected by crises have urgent and long-term needs, and how responding to these needs can also strengthen local capacities and economies, when relevant.

Fill gaps and build opportunities

Emerging good practices in supporting livelihoods, or in basic services provision in crisis contexts, such as education (Chapter 4), show that a joined-up analysis and coherent programming can help the international response alleviate the impact of crises in supporting both local economies and infrastructure. In Iraq, for example, most survey respondents called for an improvement in public services across the country, especially in areas of return. They demanded better access to potable water and the provision of electricity and healthcare in the former conflict-affected areas. Employment was considered just as important.

When a large-scale crisis hits, including from a natural event, the whole population, economy and development are affected, including in neighbouring countries. Needs rapidly expand beyond the humanitarian remit. Affected people – displaced and host population alike – want to recover and they aspire to be autonomous in meeting their needs beyond survival. Because humanitarian assistance is not designed to end need, and does not allow for self-sufficiency, it must be complemented wherever possible and as soon as possible with other instruments, including political dialogue and peacebuilding measures, when relevant. This combination can create development opportunities that promote sustainable livelihoods for affected people in rebuilding their lives, or preparing to return, relocate or successfully integrate.

Shift from a supply- to a customer-driven approach to meeting needs

The use of data and information technology in both humanitarian assistance and development co-operation can help advance the "participation revolution" by individualising humanitarian assistance, notably through cash transfer (UNHCR, 2017[6]). To date, humanitarian response is based on a collation of mandate-based agencies needs assessments. A genuine participation revolution would require individual assistance to be based on a household economy analysis and individualised vulnerability assessment, in a customer approach to assistance, where relevant and possible. Joint delivery mechanisms supported by both development and humanitarian funds could help beneficiaries to better understand the type of assistance they can expect in order to factor this assistance into their livelihood plans. The surveys and additional research show that people affected by crises appreciate receiving aid in cash (Chapter 4). However, turning cash delivery into a people-centred approach requires a significant shift from the current supply-driven system – often involving different cash delivery mechanisms or different ATM cards for each organisation – to a client relationship in which programming starts with a client preference analysis (UNHCR and WFP, 2015[7]). The analysis of big data generated by such transfers can help improve customise service (Flaemig et al., 2017[8]). Such an approach would be valid for protracted crises where longer-term programming cycles are available and where assistance provision can have a transformational effect on a country's social services, justifying the mobilisation of development funds.

Change paradigms to protect the unique role of humanitarian assistance

There is no doubt that humanitarian assistance remains relevant in the most complex crises. Because affected countries' capacities are scarce, or because host countries' political contexts and legal frameworks prevent affected people from building sustainable and decent livelihoods, they need humanitarian assistance to support them through their most difficult periods. Humanitarian assistance is filling some of the gap to help people live a more decent life. The most difficult contexts, such as in Yemen, offer little alternative to humanitarian assistance.

Yet, when 90% of UN-coordinated humanitarian appeals continue for three years at least, and many ongoing crises show little prospect of political resolution, mobilising huge amounts of humanitarian

assistance over years or decades is unsustainable and can discourage the mobilisation of other political, peace or assistance instruments. Across countries, the surveys reported on here have helped to reveal that some progress has been made, notably on some of the Grand Bargain commitments. However, improvement to the current humanitarian system alone is unlikely to help meet both emergency and long-term needs for people affected by crises.

Changing paradigms, starting by looking at how each instrument can best help design a coherent response to a given crisis, will help to build opportunities to make people affected by crises to be actors in their own lives and in their economy wherever possible, allowing humanitarian response to fulfil its original mandate of protection and assistance in the places where other instruments can't be mobilised.

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Annex A. Methodology

In 2016 the OECD partnered with Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), an organisation that specialises in getting feedback from affected populations in crisis contexts.

Six contexts were selected, presenting different types of crises. Haiti was recovering from Hurricane Matthew in 2013. Lebanon is a middle-income country that for more than seven years has been hosting the world's biggest refugee population per capita. Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan are all experiencing protracted crises of different kinds, but have both emergency and recovery needs for their displaced and resident populations. Uganda is a low-income country with its own development needs, and is hosting a large refugee population.

A first round of surveys was conducted in 2016 with affected people in these six countries. The survey used a questionnaire designed in consultation with the Grand Bargain facilitation group and developed to broadly follow the Grand Bargain structure. Two years after the World Humanitarian Summit, the OECD and Ground Truth Solutions conducted another round of surveys in the same countries, as well as in Bangladesh – a lower middle-income country that has been hosting a refugee population since 2017, and where the international humanitarian response still in the initial phase. In total over the two rounds of surveys, 12.137 affected by crises and humanitarian workers were interviewed in the seven countries.

The surveys were conducted by GTS, which was responsible for overseeing data collection and ensuring that ethical and methodological standards are met. The design of the questionnaire in the second round of the survey was adapted after analysis of results from round 1, and to better reflect realities on the ground, in light of significant changes in the locations of affected people in the different countries.

Sampling methodology

The surveys look at the perspectives of 8,666 affected people and 3,471 humanitarian field staff. These two types of surveys were designed and conducted separately. The sampling strategies for the affected people survey were designed using the most recent figures on refugees, returnees, IDPs and residents affected by crises, that were retrieved from the websites or provided directly from the departments of UN agencies (UNHCR, OCHA and IOM). A balanced gender split amongst respondents was sought across all regions in each country.

The risk of oversampled affected groups skewing the results was evaluated by calculating weighted means based on the proportion of each region in the target population. These weighted means did not differ from the raw means by more than one decimal point, suggesting that any bias introduced by the oversampling was negligible across all questions in all seven countries (with the exception of two questions in Iraq, mentioned in the country report). As such, this methodology allowed for maximum reliability of between-group comparisons, region-specific means, as well as among the affected population at large. Due to the lack of reliable, up-to-date population demographics for Pakistani refugees in Afghanistan, we did not mean weight the results for Pakistani refugees.

When designing the sampling strategies for the humanitarian field staff survey, the selected organisations were approached and asked to participate in the surveys. The surveys are distributed by the participating organisations online among a sample of their staff.

Question formulation

Questions were formulated using the Grand Bargain commitments as a framework. The focus is on the extent to which humanitarian aid is becoming more responsive to the people it sets out to serve. People's views were probed on whether they see progress beyond meeting their basic needs, towards creating self-reliance and opportunity.

Data disaggregation

In the affected people survey, the data were disaggregated by geographical region, type of accommodation, gender, age, status of person interviewed, gender of head of household, household size, number of dependents under the age of 18 years and disability. In specific contexts, country of origin, date of arrival and year of registration were taken into account. To identify groups of people with disabilities within the sample, a staff member of the NGO Handicap International was consulted and participants were asked a series of questions.

In the humanitarian field staff survey, the data were disaggregated by type of organisation, gender, age, time working in the local context and target beneficiary type. Nevertheless, the survey in Bangladesh did not include the data by type of organisation, role of staff or time working in Bangladesh as the sample size was too small to draw conclusions.

The analysis includes any major difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories.

Language of the survey

Across seven countries, the surveys were conducted in local language(s) for affected people and in local language(s) and English for humanitarian field staff. In Bangladesh, the enumerators received Rohingya language training from the NGO Translator without Borders.

Data collection

GTS staff, independent data collection companies, consultants and UN partners of GTS conducted the affected people surveys. Respondents were the beneficiaries of aid programmes from a wide variety of aid agencies, and were approached face-to-face, except for Somalia where interviews were conducted via phone. They were selected for the interview based on two sampling filters: the respondent had to be willing to participate in the survey in addition to having received aid in the past eighteen months.

Responses from humanitarian field staff were collected in 2018 from humanitarian staff members working for UN agencies, international NGOs and local organisations. The surveys were distributed online by each participating organisation.

Challenges and limitations

Affected people survey

Expectations of respondents

While enumerators were briefed and trained on managing expectations and clearly communicating the aims of the research, they reported instances of affected people expecting humanitarian assistance or mistaking them for representatives of aid agencies or the government.

Perceptual data

The perceptual data alone might be insufficient to evaluate the state of the humanitarian system and should therefore not be seen in isolation, but as complementary to other research, monitoring and data evaluation approaches.

Humanitarian field staff survey

Low response rate

In some countries, responses from participants were initially low. Feedback from international organisations suggests that staff members are experiencing survey fatigue as the result of the increasing number of surveys they are required to complete.

Self-selection bias

Self-section bias is applicable to any kind of social science research where participation is voluntary. Hence, the realised sample for this project is limited to humanitarian staff working in these seven countries who received the survey link and who consented to partake in the surveys.

Scoring in 2018 compared to 2017

Scores in 2018 are higher for participation and feedback than in 2017. This could be due in part to the fact that some of the questions were formulated differently this year.

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Lives in Crises

WHAT DO PEOPLE TELL US ABOUT THE HUMANITARIAN AID THEY RECEIVE?

In May 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit represented a turning point for humanitarian policies. The Summit gave the impetus to seriously reflect on how to operate in environments where people's needs don't coincide anymore with existing mandates and sectors. The OECD believes that an effective humanitarian response is the one that addresses affected people's needs in a timely and efficient manner. One way to measure effectiveness is to ask aid beneficiaries what they think about the aid they get. With this is mind, the OECD initiated a first round of surveys during the cycle 2016-2017 in six countries affected by different type of crisis : Lebanon, Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Somalia and Uganda. Two years after the World humanitarian Summit, the OECD and Ground Truth Solutions took another round of surveys in the same countries, plus Bangladesh. The purpose of this second round of surveys is to assess whether the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, including the Grand Bargain, are having a tangible impact on people's lives in the most difficult contexts in the world. This paper provides some answers to this question.

Consult this publication on line at ***https://doi.org/10.1787/9d39623d-en***.

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