

# chapter 5

# methodology

# and definitions

## What is humanitarian assistance?

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

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

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

The FTS is open to all humanitarian donors and implementing agencies to voluntarily report contributions of internationally provided humanitarian assistance, according to an agreed set of criteria for inclusion.<sup>2</sup>

The analysis in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance [GHA] Report 2019* draws on data reported to the OECD DAC and the FTS. Between these sources there is variation in the criteria for what can be included as humanitarian assistance, as well as volumes reported, so we aim to consistently explain and source the data that we use. Since the 2018 report, we have included humanitarian funding reported to FTS that has been provided by OECD DAC members as assistance to non-ODA eligible countries. We also use other sources to calculate international humanitarian assistance including reports from UN agencies and NGOs on private humanitarian funding and data from the Central Emergency Response Fund [CERF] on contributions from public donors; data sources and methodologies for these are also clearly marked and explained.

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## Cash

Our global estimate of humanitarian assistance provided in the form of cash and vouchers in 2017 and 2018 is based on data collected from 28 organisations through collaboration with the Cash Learning Partnership [CaLP]. The data was gathered in support of the 'Tracking cash and vouchers' sub-workstream under the Grand Bargain workstream on cash and vouchers and will be analysed in greater detail in a forthcoming publication.<sup>3</sup> The methodology used for these estimates builds on one developed by Development Initiatives [DI] for research in 2016, while taking into account new data sources such as the CashHub by the RCRC.<sup>4</sup> For more information on that methodology and research, see *Counting cash: Tracking humanitarian expenditure on cash-based programming*.<sup>5</sup>

## Channels of delivery

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

## Constant prices

Our trends analyses on financial flows are in US\$ constant prices (base year 2017) unless otherwise stated. We use data from the OECD DAC, the International Monetary Fund [IMF]'s World Economic Outlook (October 2018 release) and the World Bank's World Development Indicators to convert financial data from current to constant prices using deflators. Consistent with our annual methodology, data in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018* was shown in constant 2016 prices, so totals may vary between reports.

## Country and region naming conventions

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

## Crisis categories

For our analysis of crises by category, we applied thresholds to several indicators and cross-checked with other data sources. We used information from the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research's Conflict Barometer 2018 and data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] to identify countries affected by conflict. For countries affected by disasters associated with natural hazards, we used indicators in the INFORM Index for Risk Management and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters [CRED] Emergency Events Database [EM-DAT] data. And to identify displacement crises, we used data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], the IDMC and the UN Relief and Works Agency Palestine Refugees in the Near East [UNRWA].

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## Earmarked funding

'Earmarked' funding comprises all non-core ('other') funding directed to multilateral organisations. Unearmarked funding may include softly earmarked contributions, for instance by region, to better reflect progress against the Grand Bargain commitment<sup>6</sup> of providing more unearmarked and softly earmarked funding.

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

## Exchange rates

We use exchange rates from the OECD DAC for DAC members and data from the IMF World Economic Outlook (October 2018 release) for other government providers. UN operational exchange rates are used by UN OCHA FTS.

## Funding for local and national responders

Our analysis of direct funding to local and national responders in Figure 4.2 uses data from FTS that we then 'code' according to a set of organisational categories. We use the following categories of local and national non-state actors and national and subnational state actors, as defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Task Team in its *Localisation Marker Working Group Definitions Paper* (January 2018):<sup>7</sup>

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

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

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

For our calculation of indirect funding (i.e. delivered through one intermediary) given to local and national responders, as agreed in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's definitions paper,<sup>8</sup> we analyse data reported to FTS that is marked up as 'new money' or provided through an intermediary. To prevent double counting, we compare levels of funding to first-level recipients (receiving 'new money' as reported on FTS) with the volumes these same organisations then pass on down the transaction chain (and are therefore recorded as 'donors' of funds that do not constitute 'new money'). The amount of funding provided as intermediary donors is subtracted from the amount of funding received as first-level recipients.

## International humanitarian assistance

Our estimate of total international humanitarian assistance is the sum of that from private donors (see this chapter's section on *Private funding*) and from government donors and EU institutions. Our calculation of international humanitarian assistance from government donors is the sum of:

- 'official' humanitarian assistance (OECD DAC donors)
- international humanitarian assistance from OECD DAC donors to non-ODA eligible countries from the FTS
- international humanitarian assistance from donors outside the OECD DAC using data from the FTS.

Our 'official' humanitarian assistance calculation comprises:

- the bilateral humanitarian expenditure of OECD DAC members, as reported to the OECD DAC database under Table 1
- the multilateral humanitarian assistance of OECD DAC members. This comprises:
  - The unearmarked ODA contributions of DAC members to nine key multilateral agencies engaged in humanitarian response: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UN OCHA, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP and WHO, as reported to the OECD DAC under Table 2a and the CRS. We do not include all ODA to FAO, IOM, UNICEF and WFP but apply a percentage to take into account that these agencies also have a 'development' mandate. These shares are calculated using data

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on humanitarian expenditure as a proportion of the total received directly from each multilateral agency.

- The ODA contributions of DAC members to some other multilateral organisations (beyond those already listed) that, although not primarily humanitarian oriented, do report a level of humanitarian aid to OECD DAC Table 2a. We do not include all reported ODA to these multilateral organisations but just the humanitarian share of this.
- Contributions to the UN CERF that are not reported under DAC members' bilateral humanitarian assistance. We take this data directly from the UN CERF website.

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

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

Turkey is captured and shaded differently in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 because the humanitarian assistance that it voluntarily reports to the DAC largely comprises expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey. We do not include Turkey's spending on Syrian refugees in Turkey in our total international humanitarian assistance and response calculations elsewhere in the report as these only include amounts directed internationally by donors.

## Multi-year funding

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 are based on data collected from 11 institutional donors that are Grand Bargain signatories. Data for ten of these was collected through a bilateral survey and data for one donor was collected from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Multi-year funding in this analysis comprises funding that the reporting donors consider humanitarian or humanitarian related. Data on multi-year funding is categorised according to the respective donors' definitions of timeframes of the funding and therefore includes funding agreements ranging between 12 and 24 months when defined as multi-year by the donor. More methodological detail will be included in DI's forthcoming global multi-year funding study.

## Poverty

We refer to two poverty lines in this report: the international extreme poverty line of \$1.90 a day and a higher poverty line of \$3.20 a day. Both of these poverty lines are expressed in 2011 purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars and use data from the World Bank's PovcalNet. We use the international poverty lines with estimates for 2013 in this year's report to provide the most comparable up-to-date analysis possible.

In this GHA report we also include DI's own estimates on poverty in five countries without data on PovcalNet: Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya and Somalia. These estimates are based on data from proxy surveys carried out in those countries among other sources. For more detail on the methodology behind these estimates please refer to DI's corresponding discussion paper.<sup>9</sup>

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## Private funding

We directly request financial information from humanitarian delivery agencies (including NGOs, multilateral agencies and the RCRC) on their income and expenditure to create a standardised dataset. Where direct data collection is not possible, we use publicly available annual reports and audited accounts. For the most recent year, our dataset includes:<sup>10</sup>

- over 200 NGOs that form part of representative NGO alliances and umbrella organisations such as Oxfam International, and several large international NGOs operating independently
- private contributions to IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN OCHA, UNRWA, WFP and WHO
- the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

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

Data is collected annually, and new data for previous years may be added retrospectively. Due to limited data availability, detailed analysis covers the period 2013 to 2017.

Our 2018 private funding calculation is an estimate based on data provided by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), pending data from our full dataset. We calculate the average share that MSF's contribution represents in our private funding figure for the five previous years (2013–2017) and use this to scale up the private funding figure provided by MSF to arrive at an estimated total for 2018. The rationale for this methodology is that the share of MSF's private funding remains relatively consistent year on year (ranging between 25% and 29% of the total amount over the last five years).

## Rounding

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

## UN-coordinated appeals

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

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# data sources

ACAPS	<a href="http://www.acaps.org/countries">www.acaps.org/countries</a>
The Cash Learning Partnership	<a href="http://www.cashlearning.org">www.cashlearning.org</a>
Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters	<a href="http://www.emdat.be/database">www.emdat.be/database</a>
EM-DAT: International Disaster Database Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium	
Country-based pooled funds Grant Management System	<a href="https://gms.unocha.org/content/cbpf-allocations">https://gms.unocha.org/content/cbpf-allocations</a>
CBPF allocations, CBPF Grant Management System, UN OCHA	
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN	<a href="http://www.fao.org/home/en">www.fao.org/home/en</a>
Food Security Information Network <i>Global Report on Food Crises 2018</i>	<a href="http://www.fsincop.net/fileadmin/user_upload/fsin/docs/global_report/2018/GRFC_2018_Full_report_EN_Low_resolution.pdf">www.fsincop.net/fileadmin/user_upload/fsin/docs/global_report/2018/GRFC_2018_Full_report_EN_Low_resolution.pdf</a>
International Aid Transparency Initiative	<a href="http://www.aidtransparency.net">www.aidtransparency.net</a>  <a href="http://iatistandard.org">http://iatistandard.org</a>
INFORM	<a href="http://www.inform-index.org">www.inform-index.org</a>
Index for Risk Management	
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	<a href="http://internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data">http://internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data</a>
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	<a href="http://www.ifrc.org">www.ifrc.org</a>
IFRC's appeal reports, IFRC, Geneva	
International Monetary Fund	<a href="http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2017/01/weodata/index.aspx">www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2017/01/weodata/index.aspx</a>
World Economic Outlook Database	<a href="http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/02/weodata/index.aspx">www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/02/weodata/index.aspx</a>
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	<a href="http://stats.oecd.org">http://stats.oecd.org</a>
OECD.StatExtracts, OECD, Paris	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/">www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/</a>
Development finance data, OECD, Paris	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2016-9789264267213-en.htm">www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2016-9789264267213-en.htm</a>
<i>States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence</i> , OECD, Paris	
OECD Creditor Reporting System	
UN Conference on Trade and Development	<a href="http://unctadstat.unctad.org">http://unctadstat.unctad.org</a>
UNCTADstat, UNCTAD, Geneva	

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UN High Commissioner for Refugees	<a href="http://data.unhcr.org">http://data.unhcr.org</a>
Population Statistics Reference Database, UNHCR	<a href="http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/time_series">http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/time_series</a>
Mid-Year Trends (historical), UNHCR Global Trends reports, response plans' funding snapshots	<a href="http://reporting.unhcr.org">http://reporting.unhcr.org</a>
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	<a href="http://www.unocha.org">www.unocha.org</a>
Central Emergency Response Fund/CERF, UN OCHA, New York	<a href="http://www.unocha.org/cerf">www.unocha.org/cerf</a> <a href="https://fts.unocha.org">https://fts.unocha.org</a>
Financial Tracking Service/FTS, UN OCHA, Geneva	
UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	<a href="http://www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa">www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa</a>
<i>UNRWA in Figures</i> reports	
World Bank	<a href="http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators">http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators</a>
World Development Indicators, World Bank, Washington DC	<a href="http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet">http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet</a>
PovcalNet, World Bank	<a href="http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/international-debt-statistics">http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/international-debt-statistics</a>
World Bank International Debt Statistics	
Global Concessional Financing Facility, Financial Reports	<a href="http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data">www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data</a> <a href="https://globalcff.org/documents">https://globalcff.org/documents</a>
The World Factbook CIA	<a href="http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook">www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook</a>

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# acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
CBPF	Country-based pooled fund
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CRS	Creditor Reporting System [DAC]
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee [OECD]
DFID	Department for International Development [UK]
DI	Development Initiatives
DPR Korea	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FTS	Financial Tracking Service [UN OCHA]
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHA	Global Humanitarian Assistance (project by Development Initiatives)
GNI	Gross national income
HRP	Humanitarian response plan
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LIC	Low income country
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN]
ODA	Official development assistance

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OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCRC	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
RRP	Regional response plan
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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# notes

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## chapter 5

1. OECD DAC definitions and reporting guidelines can be found at: [www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards)
2. See criteria for inclusion at: [https://fts.unocha.org/sites/default/files/criteria\\_for\\_inclusion\\_2017.pdf](https://fts.unocha.org/sites/default/files/criteria_for_inclusion_2017.pdf)
3. Development Initiatives (Rieger, N), forthcoming. *Counting cash and vouchers*.
4. Data can be accessed via the Cash Maps, available at: <https://cash-hub.org/resources/cash-maps>
5. Development Initiatives and Overseas Development Institute (Spencer, A, Parrish, C, Lattimer, C), 2016. *Counting cash: Tracking humanitarian expenditure on cash-based programming*. Available at: [www.odi.org/publications/10716-counting-cash-tracking-humanitarian-expenditure-cash-based-programming](http://www.odi.org/publications/10716-counting-cash-tracking-humanitarian-expenditure-cash-based-programming)
6. The Grand Bargain document is available at: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand\\_Bargain\\_final\\_22\\_May\\_FINAL-2.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf)
7. Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Task Team, 2018. *Localisation Marker Working Group Definitions Paper*. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/humanitarian-financing-task-team/documents-public/hfft-localisation-marker-definitions-paper-24>
8. See note 7.
9. Development Initiatives (Walton, D), 2018. *Filling the gaps in current global poverty data estimates*. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Filling-the-gaps-in-current-global-poverty-data-estimates.pdf>
10. Please note we may not have data reported for each organisation in every year. For some NGO alliances, we may have only collected data from one member organisation, therefore they are treated as independent here.