

global humanitarian assistance report 2019

foreword

Welcome to the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (GHA) 2019*.

Many people across the world are leading healthier, safer and more prosperous lives, yet despite this progress there remains significant demand for humanitarian assistance. In 2018, 206.4 million people were estimated to be in need. Ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to cause untold suffering and contributed to the record numbers of people who were forced from their homes. In Afghanistan and Sudan, drought and floods devastated the lives of people whose resilience had already been weakened by conflict. The now-established pattern of recurrent, protracted and complex crises disproportionately affects the poorest people and further entrenches poverty, particularly in politically and environmentally fragile contexts.

New and ongoing initiatives in 2018 sought to bring about change. Global compacts for refugees¹ and safe, orderly and regular migration² were agreed. Efforts were also made to reinvigorate the Grand Bargain process, to make sure it achieves its goal of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. The UN, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and others likewise continued work to deliver collective humanitarian, development and peacebuilding outcomes. These processes show a continued commitment to change and adapt but much remains to be done.

This year's *GHA Report*, like those published every year since 2000, aims to reflect, respond to and inform efforts to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance. And every year we provide an update on what the new data tells us by linking it to changes in the crisis financing landscape. We also get user feedback to define the thematic focus of forthcoming reports. This year, we have focused on recurrent and protracted crises in our analyses, to better understand how assistance is provided over the multiple years of a crisis. In the context of ever-more-complex and enduring crises and the increasing demand on limited resources, there is a pressing need to address the underlying causes of crises. The *GHA Report* therefore looks beyond humanitarian financing to examine other resource flows to countries in crisis, including developmental official development assistance (ODA less humanitarian assistance) and foreign direct investment, and the role they can and should play alongside humanitarian assistance to address crisis.

We highlight where there are significant gaps in the data available that impede our understanding of progress against commitments, as well as the context in which assistance is delivered. We have sought to fill some of these knowledge gaps through our own, independent data collection and analysis. This year's report therefore contains new analysis on multi-year and unearmarked funding, cash programming and contributions from private donors. We hope this analysis provides an interesting insight for decision-makers setting policy in these areas. However, this should not distract from the collective responsibility of all donors and agencies to improve open reporting of usable and useful data, and to invest in and support data platforms, such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Financial Tracking Service, and data standards, such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

Development Initiatives is committed to providing decision-makers and practitioners with data-led evidence in an accessible and easily digestible form. The *GHA Report* therefore presents a timely analysis of emerging trends in humanitarian financing, as part of our larger programme of humanitarian analysis. We hope that the report provides you with the information and analysis you need. As ever, we welcome your feedback so our research and analysis can better support your work.

Thank you for your interest.

Harpinder Collacott

Executive Director

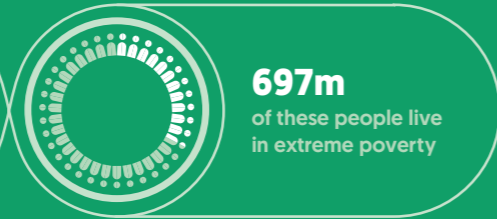
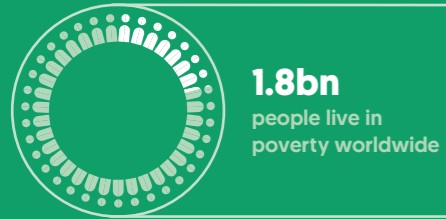
executive summary

humanitarian assistance in numbers

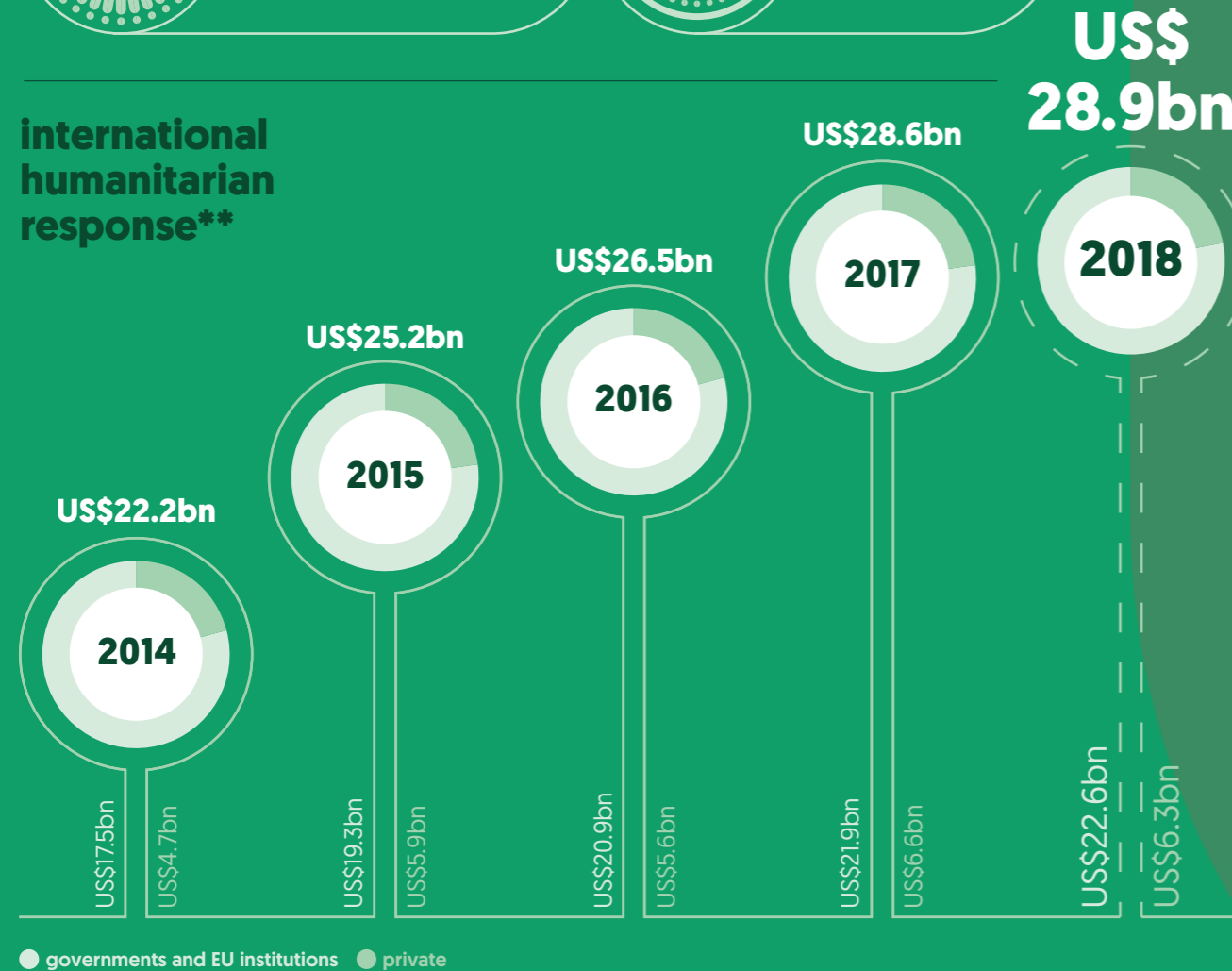
poverty and crisis*

21% of people living in poverty also live in countries with recurrent humanitarian appeals

33% of people living in extreme poverty also live in countries with recurrent humanitarian appeals



international humanitarian response**



Notes: *People living in poverty are defined as living on less than \$3.20 a day; people living in extreme poverty are defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day. **Data consists only of humanitarian assistance directed internationally by donors. Data for 2018 is preliminary. ***Contributions of EU member states include an imputed amount of the EU institutions' expenditure. EU institutions are also included separately for comparison and are shaded differently to distinguish from government donors. Turkey is shaded differently because the humanitarian assistance it voluntarily reports to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is largely made up of spending on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey. Therefore, it is not strictly comparable with the international humanitarian assistance totals from other donors in this figure. Data for 2018 is preliminary.

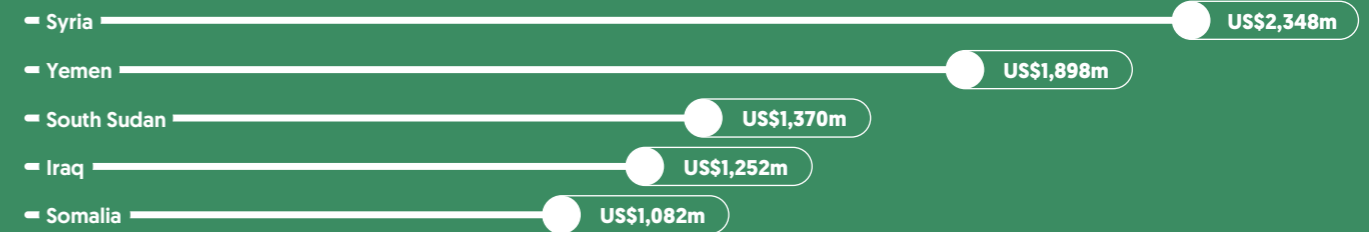
where does this come from?

donors, 2018 (largest by volume)***



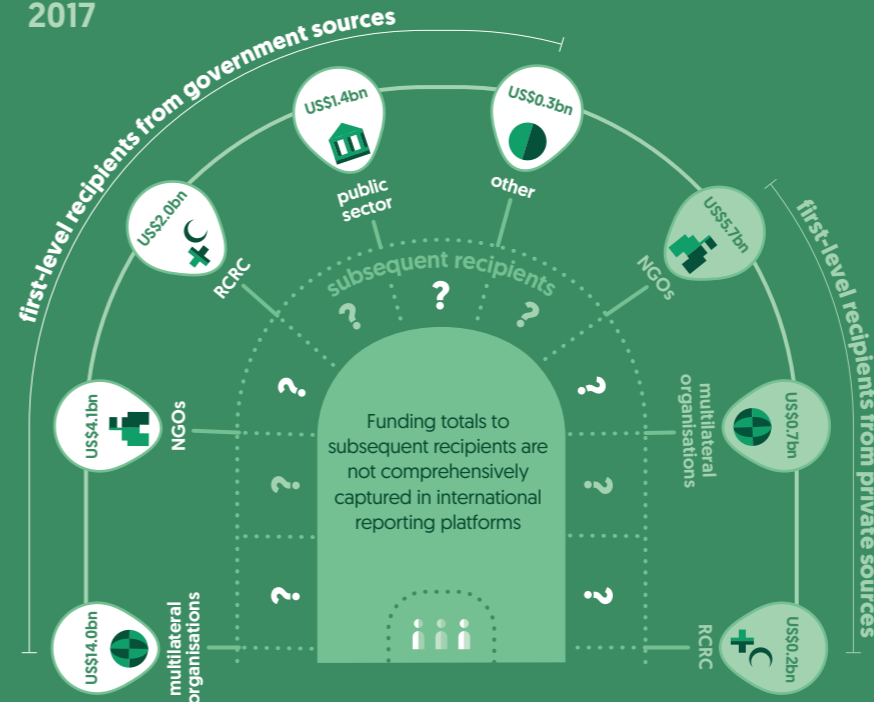
where is it going?

recipient countries, 2017 (largest by volume)

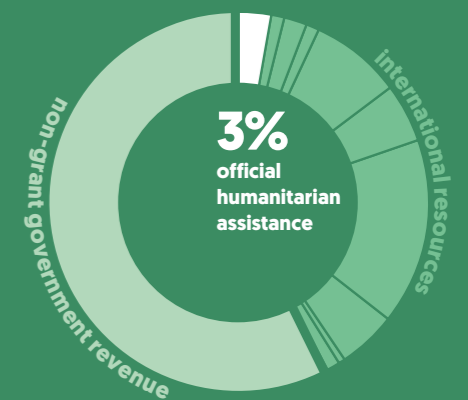


how does it get there?

2017



resource mix in countries with recurrent humanitarian appeals, 2017



For sources and full notes see Figures 1.1, 1.6, 2.1, 2.4, 3.1 and 4.1.

executive summary

In 2018, an estimated 206.4 million people living in 81 countries were deemed in need of humanitarian assistance. A large portion of these people continued to be concentrated in a small number of countries: six countries accounted for 80.6 million people in need. The well-established trend of a small number of crises receiving a large proportion of all humanitarian assistance continued. Ten countries received 63% (or US\$11.8 billion) of all country-allocable humanitarian assistance in 2017.

Crises are frequently protracted. Between 2000 and 2017, 27 countries had more than 5 consecutive years of UN-coordinated appeals. Of these countries, 16 still had appeals in 2018. Recurrent crisis disproportionately impacts people in poverty. A third of the global population living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.90 per day) are in countries with UN-coordinated appeals in 2018 and consecutively for at least one preceding year. Crises are also often complex. Nine of the ten countries with the largest populations in need faced conflict and forced displacement in 2018. Globally the numbers of forcibly displaced people grew for the seventh consecutive year, to 70.8 million in 2018 (a 3% rise from 2017).

International humanitarian assistance from governments and private donors continued to increase in 2018, reaching US\$28.9 billion. This represents growth of almost a third since 2014. Yet the pace of growth has slowed, rising by just 1% from 2017 to 2018. Contributions from public donors drove the overall increase in 2018, as preliminary estimates of private contributions indicated a slight decrease.

In 2018, the amount requested through UN-coordinated appeals rose for the third consecutive year, reaching a new high of US\$28.1 billion. While a record volume of funding was committed towards these appeals (US\$17.0 billion), there was still a funding shortfall of US\$11.1 billion, with only 61% of requirements met.

The well-established trend of a relatively small group of governments and EU institutions providing the majority of international humanitarian assistance remains unchanged. The three largest donors continue to be the US, Germany and the UK. These countries accounted for 52% of all government contributions, although contributions from all three decreased in 2018. Among other donors, substantial increases were made by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, providing an additional US\$1.7 billion (567% rise) and US\$806 million (173% rise) in 2018, respectively.

Given the protracted and complex nature of many crises and the strain on available resources, directing a wide range of domestic and international resources to complement humanitarian assistance is important if both immediate and long-term needs are to be met. However, in countries with UN-coordinated appeals in 2017 and consecutively for at least one preceding year, domestic resources are significantly lower than in other developing countries (US\$272 per person, compared with almost US\$1,000), while international flows per person are over 40% lower.

Developmental official development assistance (ODA less humanitarian assistance) and humanitarian assistance are progressively being channelled to the same protracted crisis contexts. A greater proportion of developmental ODA is being delivered in the form of loans. Protracted crisis response countries (see Chapter 1, Box 1.1) are receiving significantly more lending of all kinds. ODA loans to these countries have grown and at a much faster rate (by 394%) than loans to other developing countries (by 40%) between 2012 and 2017. However, in 2017, 75% of ODA loans went to just 7 of 34 protracted crisis response countries, with many others in this group of 34 receiving little or no lending of this kind.

Protracted crises can have a significant impact on international and domestic private flows, but there is also potential for the private sector to complement humanitarian assistance and improve the management of crises more broadly. Assessment of 27 countries with 5 or more consecutive years of UN-coordinated appeals shows that foreign direct investment can be volatile, and inflows can fall rapidly in the face of a crisis, decreasing on average by 47% in the first year of a crisis. The size of the domestic private sector as a proportion of GDP is also substantially lower for countries with recurrent appeals. Blended finance is growing but remains small, with only a fraction going to protracted crisis and fragile contexts. However, there is also potential for the private sector to assist in managing crises, such as through risk finance mechanisms that contribute to a layered financing strategy that brings together different sources of finance.

The targeting, channels and modalities of humanitarian assistance delivery impact the effectiveness and efficiency with which funding reaches people in need. In 2017, almost two thirds of direct government funding (64%, US\$14.0 billion) went to multilateral organisations. Meanwhile, most funding (85%, US\$5.7 billion) from private donors was channelled to NGOs. Funding to UN pooled funds doubled between 2013 and 2018 (from US\$717 million to US\$1,439 million). These funds received 6.4% of all international humanitarian assistance from public donors in 2018.

Unearmarked and multi-year funding allow for resources to be delivered predictably and flexibly. Between 2014 and 2018, unearmarked funding to nine UN agencies increased in volume but decreased incrementally as a proportion of all funding received, from 20% in 2015 to 17% in 2018. In 2018, data collected directly from donors showed that multi-year funding accounted for 37% of their total humanitarian-related contributions, increasing from 33% in 2017. However, improved reporting of volumes and the impact of unearmarked and multi-year funding is still needed.

Cash-transfer programming can enable recipients of humanitarian assistance to choose how best to meet their needs and offer potential gains in dignity. Volumes of humanitarian cash and voucher assistance continued to rise to a record US\$4.7 billion in 2018. An increasing proportion of this assistance has been transferred to beneficiaries in the form of cash rather than vouchers since 2015, rising from 55% to 78% in 2018.

Development Initiatives is an independent international development organisation that focuses on the role of data in driving poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Our vision is a world without poverty that invests in human security and where everyone shares the benefits of opportunity and growth.

Our mission is to ensure that decisions about the allocation of finance and resources result in an end to poverty, increase the resilience of the world's most vulnerable people, and ensure no one is left behind. We work to make sure these decisions are underpinned by good quality, transparent data and evidence on poverty and resources, and lead to increased accountability and sustainable long-term outcomes.

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

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Canada



Global Humanitarian Assistance [GHA] reports use the latest data to present the most comprehensive assessment of international financing at work in humanitarian situations. The *GHA Report 2019* explores the links between poverty, risk and crisis, and examines the resources directed to people experiencing crises.

In a complex and changing financing landscape, GHA reports provide clear and independent analysis of how much is given, who it is provided by, where it goes, how it is delivered and how it can more effectively meet people's needs. This year's report contains new and detailed analysis of financing to protracted crisis situations.

Transparent and reliable information, as provided by the *GHA Report 2019*, is essential for all those working to address the causes and consequences of crises. Please visit our website to download and share this report and other relevant analysis. To ask questions or provide comments please contact us by email (gha@devinit.org). We welcome your feedback.



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The Executive summary was updated and Chapter 1 was clarified in April 2020.

UK

Development Initiatives

North Quay House
Quay Side, Temple Back
Bristol, BS1 6FL, UK

+44 (0) 1179 272 505

KENYA

Development Initiatives

Shelter Afrique Building
4th Floor, Mamlaka Road
Nairobi, Kenya
PO Box 102802-00101

+254 (0) 20 272 5346

US

Development Initiatives

1110 Vermont Ave NW,
Suite 500, Washington DC
20005, US