

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HRI THE 2011 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX

ADDRESSING THE GENDER CHALLENGE



ABOUT DARA

Founded in 2003, DARA is an independent organisation committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of aid for vulnerable populations suffering from conflict, disasters and climate change. DARA has recognised expertise in providing support in the field of humanitarian aid as well as climate change and disaster risk reduction management. We have conducted evaluations of humanitarian operations in over 40 countries across five continents for a variety of government, United Nations and European Union agencies, as well as other major international humanitarian organisations, such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. DARA is registered as an independent, non-profit organisation in Spain, has 501 (c)(3) status in the United States and is recognised as an international organisation in Geneva, Switzerland.

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COVER

Relief camp in Pakistan. UNHCR/S. Phelps

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The complete HRI 2011 report is available at www.daraint.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTENTS

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	1
DONOR CLASSIFICATION	3
CONCLUSIONS	5
THE FUTURE OF DONOR PRACTICES: THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE HRI	6
WHAT THE HRI MEASURES	6
HRI 2011 RESEARCH PROCESS	7

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) 2011 research covers 23 of the world's main donor governments and nine major crises. This gives the Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) a broad perspective of the trends and challenges facing the humanitarian sector. Unfortunately, our findings for the 2011 report confirm that the issues raised in previous years largely persist. The ability of the humanitarian sector to deliver assistance has improved over time, but progress in consolidating good donor practices and reforming the sector has been limited. Based on the experience and findings of five years of HRI research, our conclusion is that most donors have not significantly altered their approaches in order to apply good practices, and the pace of reform efforts is too slow for the humanitarian sector to be able to adequately meet current needs, much less prepare for, anticipate, mitigate and respond to a trend of increasingly complex crises in the coming decade. The main gaps and challenges found through the HRI 2011 research are highlighted below.

23 DONORS

AUSTRALIA
AUSTRIA
BELGIUM
CANADA
DENMARK
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
FINLAND
FRANCE
GERMANY
GREECE
IRELAND
ITALY
JAPAN
LUXEMBOURG
THE NETHERLANDS
NEW ZEALAND
NORWAY
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
THE UNITED KINGDOM
THE UNITED STATES

9 CRISES

CHAD
COLOMBIA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
HAITI
KENYA
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES
PAKISTAN
SOMALIA
SUDAN



GENDER A LOW PRIORITY FOR MANY DONORS AND ACTORS, LEAVING GAPS IN RESPONSES

The HRI research shows that gender is far from being mainstreamed into humanitarian action. Many actors do not take the time to understand the different needs of women, girls, men and boys in a crisis, and ensure programming meets these needs equitably. This can result in aid that is unsuitable, such as culturally inappropriate feminine hygiene kits in Pakistan, or worse, putting women and girls in danger, such as inadequate lighting and security in camp latrines in Haiti. While the majority of donors include gender in their policies, their funding is not always allocated towards projects that incorporate adequate gender analysis, and few donors actually monitor and follow up on how gender is addressed in programmes they support. Donors have enormous potential to influence the sector by requiring their partner organisations to prioritise gender in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, ensuring that aid is not discriminatory and meets the different needs of women, men, girls and boys equally.

PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY DISREGARDED IN AID EFFORTS

The response to crises like the Haiti earthquake, Pakistan floods or drought and famine in the Horn of Africa show the human consequences of a lack of sustained commitment by donor governments to prevention, preparedness, risk reduction and long-term recovery efforts. Too often, these activities are not prioritised by governments in their development or humanitarian assistance, resulting in missed opportunities to strengthen local capacity and resilience, and undermining the ability of the humanitarian sector to anticipate, prepare for and respond effectively to future crises. Given that humanitarian needs will continue to grow exponentially in coming years, reducing the human and economic impacts of humanitarian crises is a critical pending task for all donor governments.

THE CURRENT AID REFORM AGENDA IS INSUFFICIENT TO TACKLE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

The HRI 2011 research suggests that efforts to reform the humanitarian system, including the *Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)* initiative, are generating slow but uneven progress in improving the planning, coordination and delivery of assistance. Nevertheless, after five years of HRI research, it is more than evident that the gaps are essentially the same as when the reform process began, and the pace of reforms may not be quick enough to match increasing needs and a rapidly changing aid context, much less respond adequately to future challenges. Donors must continue to support current reform efforts, but they also need to actively work towards an ambitious programme to strengthen the capacity of the sector to anticipate and adapt to future needs and challenges.

DONOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IS WEAK

Donor governments are not as transparent and accountable as they should be, especially towards the crisis-affected populations. As the HRI research in Colombia, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan shows, decisions around aid allocations are not sufficiently transparent, nor guided by humanitarian objectives, and donor governments in general are still reporting their assistance inconsistently. Accountability is still largely conceived as an exercise on fiscal management and control of the partners they fund, rather than on meeting the needs, priorities and aspirations of affected populations as the primary stakeholder in any aid efforts. By making aid transparency and accountability towards affected populations the cornerstone of their assistance, donors would have greater assurance that their aid contributions and the work of all actors are effective in meeting needs.

POLITICISATION CONTINUES TO DENY MILLIONS ACCESS TO AID

The HRI 2011 research shows that many governments' political, economic and security agendas continue to undermine the ability of humanitarian organisations to access vulnerable populations and provide aid without discrimination. Anti-terrorism legislation of some governments has led to legal and procedural barriers to access populations in need in crises such as Somalia or the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), and this is having negative spin-off effects on other donors and in other crises. At the same time, the political interests and actions of other parties, such as national authorities or armed groups, have impeded access to and protection of civilians in need. The only effective way to ensure donors' contributions have maximum benefits and impact in relieving human suffering is by keeping humanitarian assistance focused exclusively on meeting needs, independent of other objectives. Donors also need to step up their support for concrete measures to ensure all actors comply with their responsibilities to protect, including supporting prevention strategies and supporting appropriate legal actions to address abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law.

BREAKDOWN OF DONOR PERFORMANCE ON GENDER

		POLICY	FUNDING	FIELD PERCEPTION	HRI 2011 GENDER INDICATOR SCORE
Group 1 PRINCIPLED PARTNERS	DENMARK	↑	↓ 5.74	↑ 5.90	→ 6.65
	FINLAND	↑	→ 6.68	→ 5.62	→ 6.92
	NETHERLANDS	↑	↓ 2.90	→ 5.40	↓ 5.32
	NORWAY	↑	→ 8.12	↑ 5.85	↑ 7.59
	SWEDEN	↑	↑ 8.30	↑ 5.76	↑ 7.63
	SWITZERLAND	↑	↑ 8.27	↓ 4.31	→ 7.03
Group 2 LEARNING LEADERS	CANADA	↑	↑ 8.54	↑ 5.99	↑ 7.82
	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	↑	→ 7.99	↑ 6.06	↑ 7.62
	FRANCE	→	↑ 8.29	→ 5.64	→ 6.57
	UNITED KINGDOM	↑	→ 7.52	→ 5.03	→ 7.02
	UNITED STATES	↑	→ 8.04	→ 5.71	↑ 7.50
Group 3 ASPIRING ACTORS	AUSTRALIA	↑	↑ 8.54	↓ 4.00	→ 7.02
	BELGIUM	↑	↓ 5.72	↓ 4.51	→ 6.09
	GERMANY	→	↑ 9.09	→ 4.70	→ 6.52
	IRELAND	↑	→ 6.34	↑ 5.85	→ 6.88
	ITALY	→	→ 6.74	→ 4.89	↓ 5.65
	JAPAN	→	→ 6.89	↓ 4.20	↓ 5.44
	LUXEMBOURG	↑	↓ 3.82	↓ 3.59	↓ 4.96
	SPAIN	↑	→ 6.95	→ 5.06	→ 6.80

All scores are on a scale of 0 to 10. Colours represent performance compared to OECD/DAC donors' average performance rating: ↑ Good → Mid-range ↓ Could improve

DONOR CLASSIFICATION

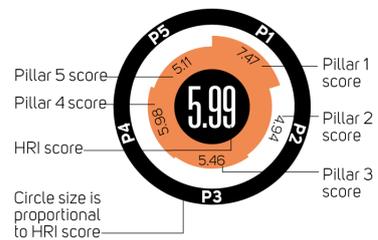
The HRI donor classification is based on an analysis of donor performance against 35 quantitative and qualitative indicators of donor practices, aligned to core concepts contained in the *Declaration of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)*. This statistical classification looks for relationships and patterns among donors based on their scores against the HRI's 35 indicators. The 23 OECD/DAC donors are classified into three categories based on their performance in the five HRI pillars:

- Group 1: Principled Partners
- Group 2: Learning Leaders
- Group 3: Aspiring Actors

Similar to the findings from previous HRI reports, in general, all donors scored well for the indicators in Pillar 1 (Responding to needs), though the concern about politicisation of aid featured prominently in many of the crises studied. Collectively, donors scored lower in Pillar 2 (Prevention, risk reduction and recovery) and Pillar 5 (Learning and accountability). Both pillars include indicators around greater participation and ownership of affected populations in the design and management of programmes, and longer-term approaches to build capacity and resilience.

THE GROUPING IS NOT HIERARCHICAL: EACH GROUP OF DONORS HAS ITS OWN SET OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, BUT ALL HAVE MADE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO OVERALL HUMANITARIAN AID EFFORTS

AVERAGE DONOR PERFORMANCE

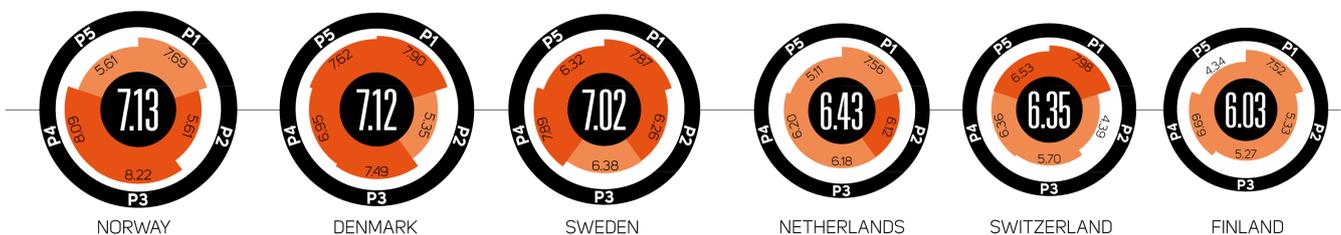


GUIDE TO THE CLASSIFICATION

- PILLAR 1** Responding to needs
- PILLAR 2** Prevention, risk reduction and recovery
- PILLAR 3** Working with humanitarian partners
- PILLAR 4** Protection and international law
- PILLAR 5** Learning and accountability

All scores are on a scale of 0 to 10. Colors represent performance compared to OECD/DAC donors' average performance rating:
■ Good ■ Mid-range ■ Could improve

GROUP 1: PRINCIPLED PARTNERS

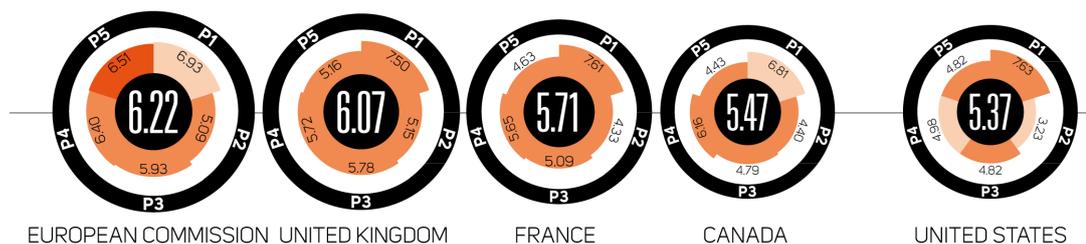


The "Principled Partners" group includes Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. This group is characterised by their generosity, as measured by the ratio of humanitarian assistance compared to Gross National Income (GNI), a strong commitment to humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, and by flexible funding arrangements with partners.

At the individual donor level, compared to 2010, Norway shows substantial improvements in its scores in Pillar 3 (Working with

humanitarian partners) and Pillar 4 (Protection and international law). The Netherlands also demonstrates improvement compared to 2010, especially for its scores for timely funding to complex emergencies, un-earmarked funding, and funding towards prevention and accountability initiatives. However, it could improve in aligning funding to gender criteria and follow up at the field level on gender issues. Finland, Sweden and Switzerland also show small improvements, while Denmark drops slightly in comparison to 2010.

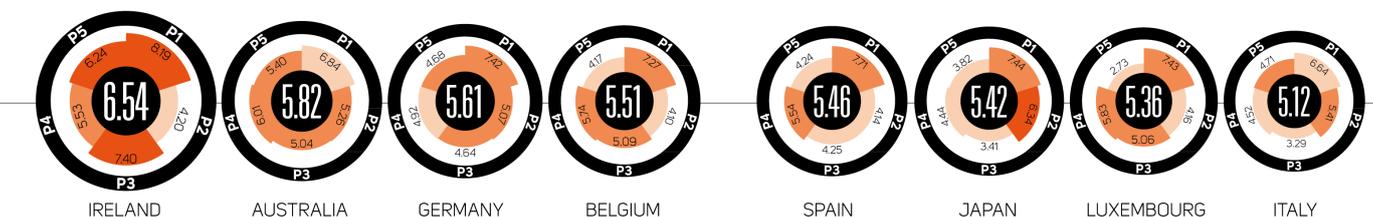
GROUP 2: LEARNING LEADERS



Canada, the European Commission (specifically the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, ECHO), France, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) make up the group of “Learning Leaders.” This group of donors is characterised by their leading role and influence in the humanitarian sector in terms of their capacity to respond, field presence and commitment to learning and improving performance in the sector. They tend to do poorer in areas such as prevention, preparedness and risk reduction efforts, and in perceptions around the neutrality, impartiality and independence of their aid (ECHO is a notable exception, as it scores well above most donors in this regard).

At the individual donor level, compared to 2010, France has improved in terms of the perceptions of its partners in the field. The US has also made progress in the perceptions of its field partners, partially explaining the improvement in its overall scores. This may be a sign that USAID reform efforts are beginning to show positive results at the field level. In contrast, the UK received poorer scores in field, survey-based indicators, perhaps explained by the uncertainties caused by a major review process of the UK’s humanitarian aid programme, which was underway at the time of the HRI field research. ECHO’s scores remain largely unchanged, while Canada slipped somewhat in some scores, perhaps reflecting changing political priorities for its aid programmes.

GROUP 3: ASPIRING ACTORS



Australia, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg and Spain make up the group of “Aspiring Actors.” This group is diverse in terms of their size and capacities, but is characterised by their focus on building strengths in specific “niche” areas, such as geographic regions, or thematic areas like preparedness and prevention, and their aspirations to take on a greater role in the sector. As a group, they tend to have more limited capacity to engage with the humanitarian system at the field level and score below the OECD/DAC average in the majority of the HRI pillars and indicators.

At the individual donor level, Belgium deserves mention for its concerted efforts to address some of the deficiencies identified in previous HRI assessments. Compared to 2010, Belgium’s scores improved significantly in quantitative indicators for the timeliness of funding, un-earmarked funding, funding to NGOs,

and for evaluations and support for accountability initiatives. This demonstrates that it is possible to make positive changes to donor practices in a very short period of time if there is sufficient political will and commitment. Australia, Germany and Spain have also improved, while Japan remains largely unchanged compared to 2010. Ireland dropped slightly in indicators based on the perceptions of its field partners and quantitative indicators, indicating that the deep cutbacks in its humanitarian assistance are beginning to have negative effects. Luxembourg saw a significant decrease in its overall scores compared to 2010 due mainly to the poor perceptions from its partners in the field. The country is one of the world’s most generous donors on a per capita basis, but one with little capacity to monitor and engage with its partners at the field level. The poor field-based survey indicator scores suggest a need for further dialogue with partners to understand and address these perceptions.

PARTIALLY-ASSESSED DONORS

This year, four donors were not included in the full HRI assessment due to insufficient data from the field: Austria, Greece, New Zealand and Portugal. In the case of Greece and Portugal, the volume of their humanitarian assistance has been minimal compared to other donors (including new and emerging donors) for several years. Additional aid cuts brought on by the

severe financial crisis have further limited their engagement with the sector. Austria and New Zealand, on the other hand, have made concerted efforts to review and improve their aid policies, but the limited number of partners at the field level made it impossible to assess them against the qualitative components of the HRI.

CONCLUSIONS

The Humanitarian Response Inex 2011 findings reinforce many of the same conclusions reached in previous editions of the HRI, and indeed, many other evaluations in the sector. After five years of the HRI, some initial conclusions and lessons are clear:

1

FOCUS ON NEEDS, NOT POLITICS

Despite commitments to ensure their aid is needs-based and guided by humanitarian principles, donor governments have shown repeatedly that there are other factors that often determine decisions on aid allocations. Increasing politicisation of aid is one of those factors, and it is having serious consequences in determining whether humanitarian actors can access crisis-affected populations and provide assistance and assure protection. Understanding these factors from the perspective of donors' humanitarian agencies is critical to determine how to best preserve and protect the neutrality, independence and impartiality of aid efforts in an increasingly complex environment.

2

TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS GENDER GAPS

As the HRI findings on gender and beneficiary participation in programming confirm, the humanitarian sector is still far from working in ways that ensure aid is equitable, contributes to empowering vulnerable communities, and is focused on meeting the needs, priorities and aspirations of people affected by crisis. If humanitarian actors do not invest the time and effort to understand the dynamics of a crisis from the perspective of the people affected, aid efforts can never claim to be effective or have lasting impact. Donors have a clear role in insisting that their partners take the time to do so, and for ensuring that their own support is respectful and aligned to meeting those needs.

3

PRIORITISE PREVENTION AND RESILIENCE

The generalised disregard by donors for tackling prevention, risk reduction and recovery in ways that build capacity and resilience is inexcusable. Time and time again, the humanitarian sector announces that it will not repeat the mistakes of the past, and will invest in prevention and risk reduction as the most efficient and effective way to address vulnerabilities and reduce the impact of crises. Yet, as the sluggish response to famine in the Horn of Africa and the fractured efforts to rebuild Haiti demonstrate, the humanitarian sector has not systematically applied lessons from the past. Donors have much of the responsibility for creating this situation, and could be part of the solution by re-shaping their humanitarian and development assistance policies, procedures and practices in ways that foster better integration of prevention, capacity building and resilience into all the programmes they support.

4

PREPARE FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

The current aid reform agenda is unlikely to address existing gaps and challenges facing the sector, such as politicisation or prevention and risk reduction, much less help the sector prepare for and anticipate the challenges on the horizon. These include increasing pressures and needs due to climate change, changing demographics, and the likelihood of a long-term global economic downturn. What is needed is a dramatic shift in direction for the sector, focused on building the necessary capacities and competencies to anticipate, prepare for and adapt to changing contexts. Part of the shift will require traditional donors and humanitarian actors to reach out to other players, ranging from local actors, new and non-traditional donors, or the private sector. It will also require better understanding of the barriers that have so far impeded efforts to adopt good practices, as well as carefully considering the implications of new developments, such as the outcomes of the Arab Spring for humanitarian actions.

5

IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Improved transparency and accountability of all actors, starting with donor governments, is essential to ensuring aid efforts are principled, and have the maximum impact for affected populations. By putting the focus back where it belongs – on meeting the needs and respecting the capacities and priorities of affected populations – humanitarian actors can ensure that their policies, procedures and practices are aimed at achieving this end.

THE FUTURE OF DONOR PRACTICES: NEXT STEPS FOR THE HRI

The issues raised in the HRI have been part of an unresolved agenda for the humanitarian sector for too long now. Rather than continuing to expound on the problems, it is time to look more closely at the reasons why this is such a challenge for the humanitarian sector, and in particular, look for practical solutions that will allow donors to maximise the value and impact of their contribution to aid efforts.

As we look forward to the next phase of the HRI, DARA intends to investigate these issues in greater detail as part of a renewed approach and orientation to the HRI, focused on understanding the “why?” behind these issues and developing practical guidance on

what is needed to ensure all donors can maximise the benefits, results and impact of their support for humanitarian action. We see this as an opportunity to reflect on the lessons and experiences gained over the past five years, and reshape the initiative to go beyond an exercise focused on OECD/DAC donors to include other donors and funders. It will allow the sector to review and redefine good donor practices in line with today’s context, and identify the capacities needed for donors to better anticipate and respond more effectively to future challenges. We look forward to engaging with all stakeholders in this process, and hope that this makes a lasting contribution to improving the quality, effectiveness, accountability and impact of aid efforts.

WHAT THE HRI MEASURES

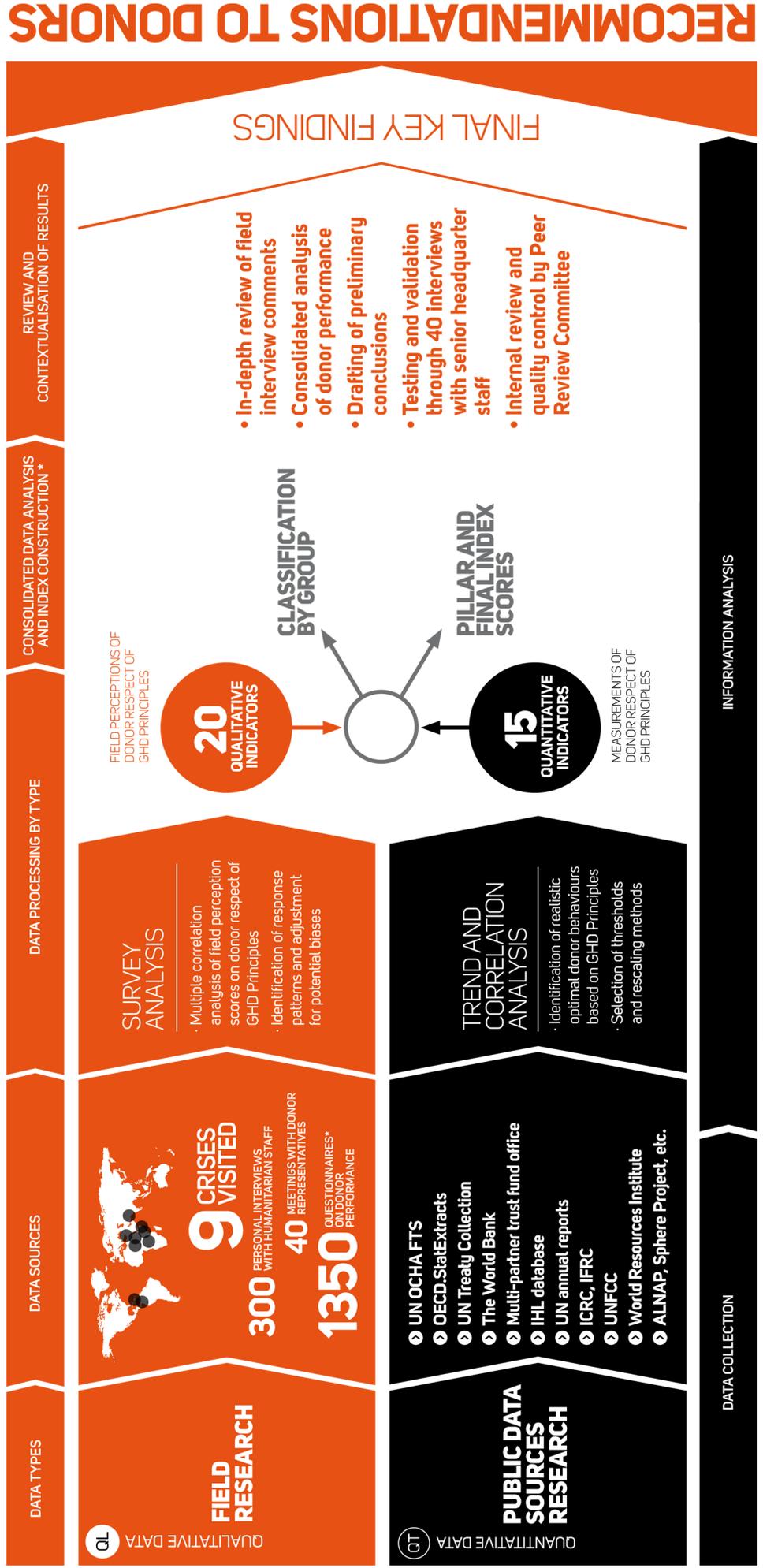
As the principal funders of humanitarian actions, the world’s main donor governments have a special role and responsibility to ensure that aid money is used efficiently, effectively and for the greatest impact for the millions of people affected by crisis each year. Donors recognised this when they jointly drafted in 2003 the declaration of *Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)*. The GHD set forth principles and good practices intended to make donors’ humanitarian aid more principled, predictable and reliable.

Since 2007, DARA’s Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) has monitored donor governments’ application of the *GHD Principles* with the aim of contributing to efforts to improve the quality, effectiveness, accountability and impact of humanitarian aid. The HRI combines analysis of quantitative data on donor funding and policies with field research in different humanitarian crises to assess the quality of 23 Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) donor governments’ humanitarian assistance in five pillars of practice:

PILLARS OF DONOR PRACTICE

1	2	3	4	5
RESPONDING TO NEEDS	PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY	WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS	PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW	LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Are donors’ responses based on needs of the affected populations and not subordinated to political, strategic or other interests?	Do donors support strengthening local capacity, prevention of future crises and long-term recovery?	Do donors’ policies and practices effectively support the work of humanitarian organisations?	Do donors respect and promote international humanitarian law, and actively promote humanitarian access and protection of civilians?	Do donors contribute to transparency, accountability and learning in humanitarian action?

HRI THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX 2011 RESEARCH PROCESS



*Visit www.darainf.org for further information on the HRI methodology

SUPPORT FOR THE HRI

At UN Women we are delighted that the HRI is calling on humanitarian actors and donors to ensure humanitarian actions are adapted to address the specific and different needs of women, girls, men and boys.

MICHELLE BACHELET

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN



I encourage donors to place gender concerns at the heart of humanitarian action. The findings and recommendations from the Humanitarian Response Index report deserve thoughtful consideration.

VALERIE AMOS

UN EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR



What the HRI allows, and what makes it unique, is to give across the board an analysis around similar indicators of where donors stand in their practices. It changes the quality of the dialogue by giving us the information in a very systematic manner, allowing for comparability. This is why I believe the HRI is a great tool.

HANSJOERG STROHMEYER

CHIEF OF THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND STUDIES BRANCH, OCHA



The Humanitarian Response Index serves as a crucial tool to help ensure that no disaster is ignored, and that every dollar spent helps those most in need.

KOFI ANNAN

FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS



The lofty ideals contained in political declarations are not enough - concerted actions must follow - and these efforts must be monitored vigilantly. This is why the Humanitarian Response Index is so important.

NOBEL LAUREATE ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

CHAIR OF THE ELDERS



HRI

2011

THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX

Donor governments mobilised more than US\$16 billion to respond to humanitarian crises in 2010, including “mega-responses” in Pakistan and Haiti. Challenges to effective humanitarian response continue to grow. Yet far too often, the pressure to respond to vast emergency needs overshadows the different repercussions of natural disasters and conflict on women, men, boys and girls. The Humanitarian Response Index 2011 focuses on the crucial role donor governments have in ensuring that gender receives the attention it deserves in emergency response.

Now in its fifth year, the Humanitarian Response Index is the world’s foremost independent instrument for measuring individual performance of donor governments against Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. The Humanitarian Response Index provides in-depth assessments of the 23 most important donor governments to help ensure their humanitarian funding has the greatest possible impact for people in critical need of aid.