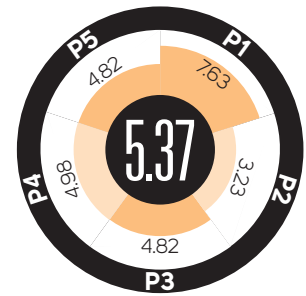


UNITED STATES

HRI 2011
Ranking
17th



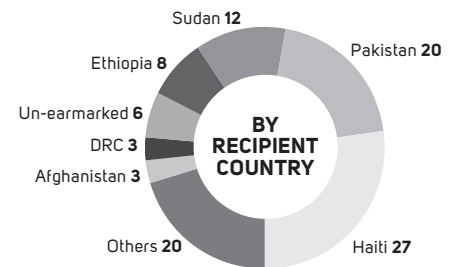
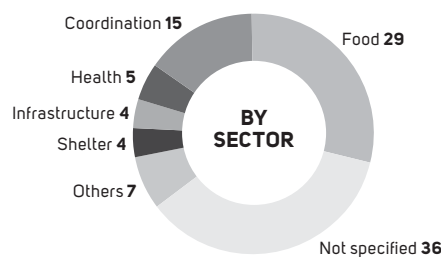
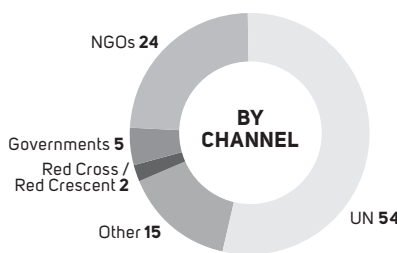
Group **2**
LEARNING LEADERS

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE **0.21%**
of GNI

HUMANITARIAN AID **17.3%**
of ODA

US \$17
Per person

HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION (%)



GENDER RATING

POLICY

FUNDING

FIELD PERCEPTION

STRENGTHS

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% above OECD/DAC average
3	QT	Funding NGOs	7.28	+60.5%
1	QL	Adapting to changing needs	7.48	+19.2%
1	QT	Timely funding to complex emergencies	9.40	+18.8%
4	QL	Advocacy towards local authorities	6.48	+16.4%
4	QL	Facilitating safe access	5.93	+16.3%

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% below OECD/DAC average
3	QT	Un-earmarked funding	0.69	-86.7%
2	QT	Funding reconstruction and prevention	0.96	-78.5%
2	QT	Reducing climate-related vulnerability	0.92	-77.1%
2	QT	Funding international risk mitigation	1.43	-70.0%
4	QT	Human rights law	1.88	-69.6%

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The United States (US) ranked 17th in the HRI 2011, improving two positions from 2010. Based on the pattern of its scores, the US is classified as a Group 2 donor, "Learning Leaders". Donors in this group are characterised by their leading role in support of emergency relief efforts, strong capacity and field presence, and commitment to learning and improvement. They tend to do less well in areas such as prevention, preparedness, and risk reduction efforts. Other Group 2 donors include Canada, the European Commission, France and the United Kingdom.

The US' 2011 global score was below the OECD/DAC and Group 2 averages. The US scored below both averages in all pillars, with the exception of Pillar 1 (Responding to needs), where it scored above both averages.

Overall, the US performed significantly better in the qualitative, survey-based indicators than in the quantitative indicators. Humanitarian organisations in the field generally see the US as an engaged, committed partner, but with some clear areas for improvement. Compared to its OECD/DAC peers, the US did best in indicators on *Funding to NGOs*, *Adapting to changing needs*, *Timely funding to complex emergencies*, *Advocacy towards local authorities* and *Facilitating safe access*. Its scores were relatively the lowest in indicators on *Un-earmarked funding*, *Reducing climate-related vulnerability*, *Funding for reconstruction and prevention*, *Funding international risk mitigation* and *Human rights law*.

AID DISTRIBUTION

Although the US is the largest donor in absolute terms, in 2010 its Official Development Aid (ODA) as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) remained low at 0.21%, well below the UN target of 0.7%. Humanitarian assistance represented 17.3% of its 2010 ODA, or 0.036% of its GNI.

According to data reported to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) (2011), the US channelled 31.6% of its total humanitarian aid to the World Food Programme, representing a large portion of the 53.5% that was allocated to UN agencies in 2010, 24.0% to non-

governmental organisations (NGO), 5.4% bilaterally to affected governments, 2.1% to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and 0.9% to private organisations and foundations. The US provided 0.23% of its humanitarian aid to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The United States' country-specific humanitarian aid supported 73 crises in 2010: 25 in Asia, 23 in Africa, 14 in the Americas, eight in Europe and three in Oceania, with Haiti, Pakistan and Sudan receiving the greatest amounts. Sectorally, the US provided the greatest amount of support to food, seconded by coordination and support services (OCHA FTS 2011).

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Food for Peace Program (FFP) - within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) - and the Department of State's (DoS) Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) collectively manage the United States' humanitarian assistance. According to the 2011 *DAC Peer Review*, a total of 27 government agencies play a role in US foreign assistance, although USAID manages the majority of US humanitarian assistance, followed by the Department of State, and to a lesser degree the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention under the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Agriculture. Additionally, the Commander Emergency Response Program (CERP), which is part of the Department of Defense, was established to provide US military commanders the capability to effectively respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The US is actively involved in the *Good Humanitarian Donorship* (GHD) initiative, though it does not have a comprehensive humanitarian policy. While the Obama Administration issued a new development policy in September 2010, no mention has been made of a humanitarian policy as of yet, despite recommendations from the Organisation of Economic Co-operation's Development Assistance Committee in this regard (OECD/DAC). The Department of State's 2010 *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* announced a change in the organisational set up: the Chief of Missions at the embassy level will be tasked to coordinate the development and humanitarian programmes of the various agencies. USAID/OFDA has strategically located field offices to facilitate humanitarian coordination and ensure rapid access to disaster sites to assess needs and deliver assistance. The US also has stockpiles of relief supplies at regional warehouse hubs in Miami, Florida; Pisa, Italy; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

HOW DOES UNITED STATES' POLICY ADDRESS GHD CONCEPTS?

GENDER

OFDA's *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009* expresses a strong commitment to gender issues in the humanitarian field and PRM emphasises the need to pay special attention to gender-based violence (DoS 2010a). According to USAID, funding for programmes that incorporate gender-sensitive initiatives has increased steadily since 2005 and targets continue to be raised (DoS 2010a). The agency seeks to support efforts to prevent and combat gender-based violence, integrating them into multi-sectoral programmes to maximise effectiveness and increase protection. At the same time, PRM is striving to improve the accuracy of sex and age disaggregated data for multi-sectoral assistance programmes (DoS 2010a).

PILLAR 1

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

The Department of State affirms that its humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of need according to principles of impartiality, and human dignity and providing emergency food aid to the most vulnerable is considered a priority, especially to those in complex emergencies (DoS 2010a). The 2011 *DAC Peer Review* reports that the US has made progress in untying its food aid (OECD/DAC 2011); since 2009, the US has invested significantly in the pilot project, "Local and Regional Procurement Project" as part of its food aid appropriation (USDA 2011). DCHA's Rapid Response Fund allows for a prompt response to unforeseen disasters and conflicts, and OFDA's Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) can be deployed in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset disaster. USAID often consults with other donors and humanitarian organisations in the crisis area to best administer emergency relief according to changing needs (USAID 2009).

PILLAR 2

PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

The US takes a multifaceted approach to conflict prevention, risk reduction and recovery. Disaster readiness is generally funded out of three accounts: International Disaster Assistance, Development Assistance, and the Food for Peace Program (DoS 2010a). To facilitate smooth transitions from emergency relief to medium and longer-term development activities, OFDA works with other offices within USAID's DCHA and USAID's regional bureaus and overseas missions, as well as other partners (USAID 2009). Although short funding cycles have made this difficult, the *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* called for greater emphasis on early recovery and a smooth transition to rehabilitation and development (DoS 2010b). DCHA has recently increased its conflict mitigation budget and continues to encourage beneficiaries to participate in programming (DoS 2010a).

PILLAR 3

WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

OFDA's *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009* stresses the essential role of coordination and information management for the delivery of humanitarian assistance during crisis situations. Most funding in this field is provided through UN and non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners, as well as through local mechanisms. The US supports pooled funding initiatives (OFDA 2009), and USAID intends for its funding to be as flexible as possible (DoS 2010a). The US recently established a Humanitarian Policy Working Group to improve coordination of humanitarian efforts among the agencies. The 2011 *DAC Peer Review* recommended using this group to coordinate funding procedures for partners, as organisations with funding from different agencies "receive a mix of earmarked and unearmarked funding from a number of US humanitarian bodies, with varying conditions, timeframes and reporting requirements." It is worth highlighting, however, that the US is currently reforming its procurement guidelines, so these issues may be addressed (USAID 2011a). The *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* suggested greater investment in the capacity of USAID staff by "retaining expert Locally Employed Staff, tripling midlevel hiring at USAID, seeking expansion of USAID's non-career hiring authorities, expanding interagency rotations, and establishing a technical career path at USAID that leads to promotion into the Senior Foreign Service," (2010b). It remains to be seen if this recommendation will be taken on board given potential budget cuts.

PILLAR 4

PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Department of State (2010) considers all humanitarian assistance to have a protection component. It reports that USAID was able to reach its target goals of protecting affected populations in 2009 and 2010 thanks to enhanced cooperation with international partners and to efforts to encourage government authorities to improve humanitarian access (DoS 2010a). OFDA aims to improve the safety and security of relief workers by meeting personally with NGOs and funding innovative research in security coordination and information-sharing (OFDA 2009). The US also supports initiatives such as the Security Unit at InterAction. The 2011 *DAC Peer Review* commended the US for supporting its humanitarian funding with strong diplomatic and advocacy efforts.

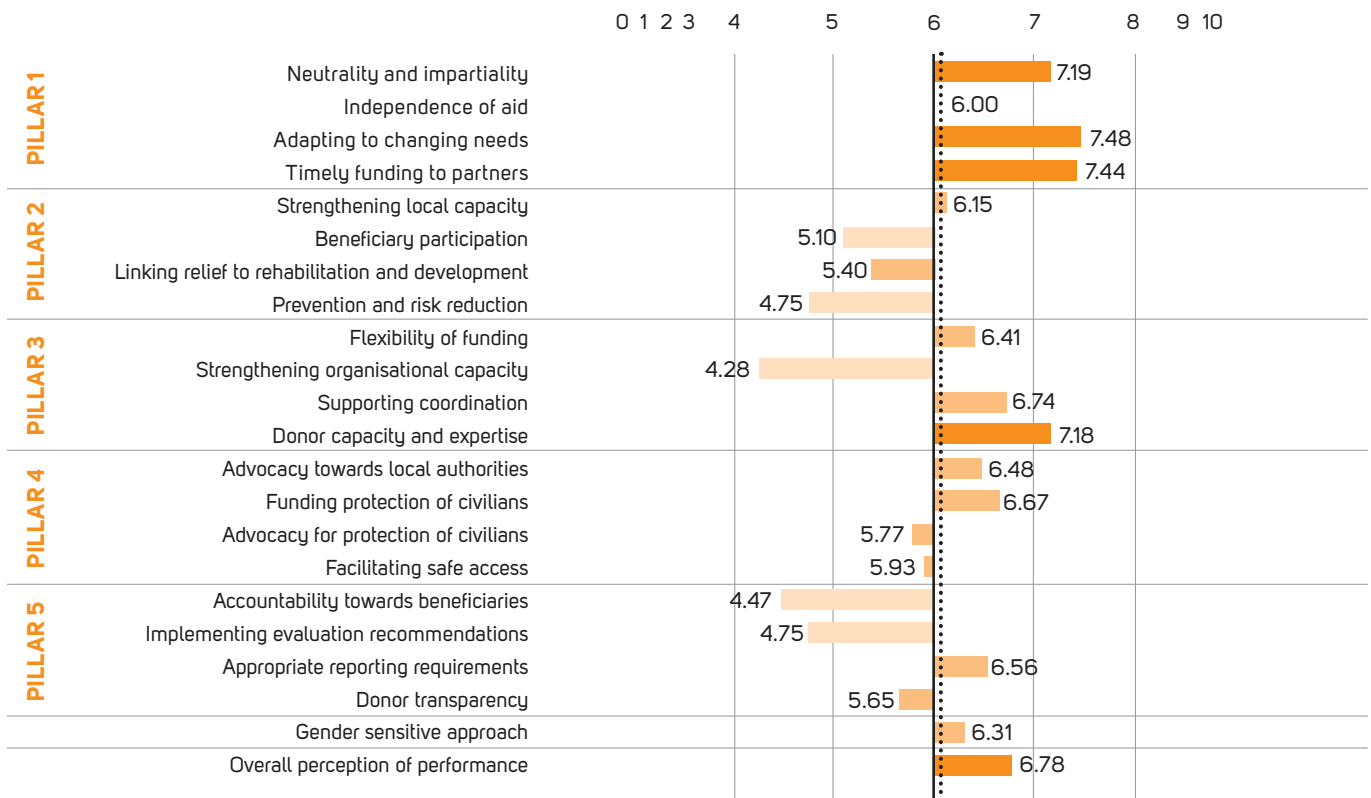
PILLAR 5 LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In 2011, USAID published a new evaluation policy for its development assistance and named a full-time Evaluation and Reporting Coordinator who will participate in the USAID-wide Evaluation Interest Group. Furthermore, learning and accountability activities will increase throughout the agency with the recent establishment of the Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research. OFDA's *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009* states that OFDA staff carefully monitors partners' programmes to ensure that resources are used wisely. At the same time, the Department of State mentions that its development and humanitarian programmes promote transparency and accountability at the local level (2010). USAID also provides funding to the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) (OFDA 2010). In 2010, the US approved a foreign assistance transparency agenda and now publishes data on US foreign aid on the dashboard, foreignassistance.gov.

FIELD PARTNERS' PERCEPTIONS

UNITED STATES' FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES

Collected questionnaires: 142



SOURCE: DARA

United States' average score 6.02 ← → OECD/DAC average score 6.05

Colours represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating:

■ Good
 ■ Mid-range
 ■ Could improve

HOW IS THE UNITED STATES PERCEIVED BY ITS PARTNERS?

GENDER

Organisations in the field reported that the US often ensures the programmes it supports integrate gender-sensitive approaches. “The US wants to integrate women’s empowerment and gender across all programmes,” reported one organisation. Partners report that the US normally requires sex and age disaggregated data, though in Haiti, gender seems to be given less importance: “OFDA generally requires a gender approach, but in this emergency case, they don’t care that much about it.” Some organisations noted that the US could improve by verifying that gender approaches are actually integrated, and indicated that conditions on US aid often affect gender issues. “USAID is very influenced by US policies and therefore cannot distribute the contraceptive pill because the government doesn’t allow it.”

PILLAR 1

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

The United States received one of the lowest scores of the OECD/DAC donors for indicators regarding the neutrality, impartiality and independence of its assistance. Field organisations responded overwhelmingly that US humanitarian agencies are influenced by other interests. One interviewee described the negative effects of this in Somalia: “Extreme politisation of humanitarian aid reinforces negative perceptions of manipulated aid and endangers all operations in Somalia.” “USAID is 100% political,” stated one representative,” and “US assistance in this country is clearly linked to other interests,” stated another. One organisation complained that “the US has an economic interest. You have to use their suppliers.” According to interviewees, US humanitarian assistance often entails conditions that can negatively affect the ability to deliver aid. “With OFDA, we can only purchase drugs from authorised US providers, which is time consuming and directly affects the beneficiaries,” stated one organisation. However, several organisations lauded US field presence and responsiveness to needs. In fact, the US received the second-highest score of the OECD/DAC donors for ensuring the programmes it funds adapt to changing needs. One interviewee praised the US for being the only donor to monitor this for short-term projects. Another interviewee noted that “OFDA is the only donor that came to talk to us and discuss the needs with us.” The timeliness of US funding seems to vary according to the crisis. While in one crisis, organisations complained of six month delays, in others, interviewees reported that it was “exceptionally fast, providing up front funding in every case needed.”

PILLAR 2

PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Partner organisations report that the US is stronger in *Strengthening local capacity* than in the other indicators that comprise Pillar 2. According to one field partner, “Strengthening local capacity is a requirement in all USAID proposals.” However, beneficiary participation seems to be weaker. One interview asserted that “beneficiary involvement is not verified in a systematic manner.” Another reported that “With OFDA, it depends on the kind of project.” Feedback regarding *Linking relief, rehabilitation and development* was more mixed. An organisation receiving funding from OFDA was critical, stating: “OFDA has a strict emergency approach. Their aim is to leave the country in the same situation it was before the crisis, which isn't good. We want to leave it in a better situation than that.” However, organisations receiving funding from both OFDA and USAID seemed to be in a better position: “The US supports the continuum from emergency life saving relief, through OFDA, to reconstruction and development, through USAID.” The US also received low scores for *Prevention and risk reduction*. One interviewee reported that “USAID pulled prevention and risk reduction out of a programme.” Another partner organisation criticised the lack of funding for these activities, stating: “The donor community rewards those who fight because they don't fund until there is a conflict. No one funds prevention. It costs much less to prevent.” One organisation did report however, that “OFDA won't fund any project in this country that doesn't involve disaster risk reduction.”

PILLAR 3

WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Field organisations provided mixed responses in respect to US humanitarian agencies' performance in Pillar 3 categories. Responses showed that US funding is often not flexible and provided under very short timeframes. Though the US received a low score for *Strengthening organisational capacity*, this is also a common weakness for many donors. Several interviewees disagreed, however, reporting that the US was highly supportive of this. “Our organisational capacity is exactly what OFDA funded,” stated one organisation. Another noted that “OFDA supported contingency planning. They look at us as real partners and not just implementers.” Most organisations consider that the US actively promotes coordination in the field, though some complained of the “parallel coordination system” the US created with its partners. The US is one of the OECD/DAC donors considered to have the greatest capacity and expertise.

PILLAR 4

PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Field interviews show that partner organisations see the US as a strong supporter of protection and access. Organisations reported that the US places great importance on advocacy towards governments and local authorities to ensure they fulfill their responsibilities. Similar to most donors, partner organisations consider the US stronger in funding protection rather than advocating for it. Although the US' score fell slightly below its qualitative average, the US outperformed its peers in *Facilitating safe access*. An organisation in Pakistan reported that “the US was extremely concerned by access and human rights violations.” Responses also show that the US funds flights and escorts for humanitarian workers in high-risk situations. One interviewee criticised the lack of a common approach among donors in insecure environments, especially regarding relations with belligerent groups.

PILLAR 5

LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Field organisations provided mixed responses regarding Pillar 5 indicators. Partner organisations held varied opinions regarding the integration of accountability towards affected populations. For example, one interviewee reported that the US “asks you to not promise things you can't do to not create disappointment among the population,” while another felt that the US is more interested in upward accountability: “There are some donors like the US who push for accountability, but it is mostly towards themselves, not to beneficiaries.” Although it is one of the US' lowest qualitative scores, responses also show that the US is among the most proactive donors in working with partners to implement evaluation recommendations. “It has been great to discuss issues with OFDA,” stated one organisation. “USAID is learning about this with us,” reported another. Partner organisations expressed mixed views on reporting requirements. While one organisation stated that the US has a “good” reporting system, another considered it to be “overbearing”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

● FORMALISE COMMITMENT TO HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN A COMPREHENSIVE HUMANITARIAN POLICY

The US should continue efforts to streamline and modernise its humanitarian assistance, crisis prevention, mitigation and response activities through a comprehensive official humanitarian policy describing its commitment to humanitarian principles and uniting the information from various agencies and documents into a common humanitarian policy, in line with the proposed overhaul of the Foreign Assistance Act (Senator Berman's proposed "Global Partnerships Act").

● PROTECT THE NEUTRALITY, IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF HUMANITARIAN AID

The US should engage with its partners to discuss practical measures to ensure the neutrality, impartiality and independence of its humanitarian aid. This is especially important in crises where the US has counter-terrorism operations underway, as partners in Somalia, the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), Pakistan and Colombia reported that politicised aid inhibits their access to populations in need. Many partners also complained of the burden placed on them to comply with the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) regulations. Perceptions of politicised aid led some organisations

to reject US funding due to visibility requirements in sensitive crises as they would put at risk the security of aid workers and further restrict access.

● GET THE RIGHT ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP TO ENSURE INTERNAL COHERENCE AND AVOID GAPS

Some of the US' lower scores in indicators like *Unearmarked funding*, *Linking relief to rehabilitation and development* and *Prevention and reconstruction* seem to be influenced by the agencies involved and their varying mandates. Partners receiving funding from only one agency report difficulty covering issues like risk reduction, prevention and preparedness, while organisations receiving funding from more than one agency seem to be in a better position to respond to the range of humanitarian needs co-existing in crises. However, the complicated aid architecture also influences flexibility, as partners that do access funds from more than one agency must address the different earmarking and funding conditions of each.

● INVEST ADEQUATELY IN PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, RISK REDUCTION

The United States received its lowest scores of the Index (after Un-earmarked funding) in *Reducing climate-related*

vulnerability, *Funding for reconstruction and prevention* and *Funding for risk mitigation*, indicating the need to place greater importance on reducing risk and vulnerability to prevent and prepare for future crises. Given current pressure on the US foreign aid budget, support for these measures also makes sense from a financial stand-point as prevention has been repeatedly shown to cost less than emergency response. In 2010, the US spent only 3.8% of its humanitarian budget on prevention and reconstruction, while the OECD/DAC average is 18.6%.

● FORMALISE COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

Although the US is strong in advocating for local authorities to fulfill their responsibilities in response to humanitarian needs, it is weak in its own commitment to respect international human rights and humanitarian law. The United States is the OECD/DAC country that has signed the least number of international human rights and humanitarian treaties: 18 of 36 human rights treaties and 36 of 50 humanitarian treaties. Furthermore, the United States is one of only four OECD/DAC donors, together with Portugal, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, that has not established a national committee on international humanitarian law, and together with Finland, Italy and Japan, is one of only four OECD/DAC donors that has not established a national committee on human rights law.



Please see www.daraint.org for a complete list of references.