COUNTRY-BASED POOLED FUNDS
2021 IN REVIEW
THE COUNTRY-BASED POOLED FUNDS THANK DONORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT IN 2021

Credits
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Full project details, financial updates, real-time allocation data and indicator achievements against targets are available at the CBPF DataHub.

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Front Cover
A girl at a child-friendly space, where children can access education and a safe space to play.

Credit: ©OCHA/Sayed Habib Bidell

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Foreword

The year 2021 presented a new set of challenges for global humanitarian action. On the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian needs reached another somber record with 235 million people in need of assistance and $37.7 billion required to address them. We saw conflicts ravage the lives of ordinary people, floods and storms sweep away hard-earned harvests and millions of people displaced from their homes.

Amidst the devastation, we also saw hope and people coming together to help those in need. OCHA’s Country-Based-Pooled Funds (CBPFs) were at the forefront, and during the year provided life-saving assistance to 42.9 million people through 20 funds in Africa, Middle East and South America. The funds were an important lifeline for the most vulnerable and thanks to their speed and flexibility responded where and when needed the most.

The funds continued to place partnerships and inclusion at the core of their approach. They brought partners together to agree how to allocate scarce resources based on collective priorities. They systematically included local humanitarian actors in their work, in recognition of their expertise and local knowledge. In addition to allocating over a quarter of all funding directly to 327 local and national NGOs, the funds provided training and mentoring to build their capacity further.

As part of the strategic capacity of the funds to combat exclusion and discrimination, the funds increased support to people with disabilities and reached 22 million women and girls, including 3.4 million people who were supported with GBV prevention and response.

In a world where needs continue to outpace resources, making every dollar count is not only necessary but our solemn responsibility. This means that we can never stop improving, innovating and examining how to do our work better. In 2021, the funds continued to take stock of their work, reflect on their successes, and adapt to the changing world around us. This included updating the guidelines of the funds and setting localization as one of their main goals. We owe this both to our donors and most importantly to those who need our support.

We also continued to ensure that we maximize the use of resources and at every opportunity ensured that the OCHA-managed funding mechanisms – the Central Emergency Response Fund and the CBPFs – complement each other using their comparative advantages. In South Sudan, this meant that when famine was threatening communities, CERF prioritized funding to provide food to help people get through the lean season, while the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund prioritized early recovery to enable farmers to plant the next harvest. Working in sync with each other, the funds maximized their support to people in need and ensured value for money.

I am profoundly grateful for the support of all our donors without whom the work would not be possible. In 2021, the CBPFs received a record $1.13 billion, an amount that represents a high degree of trust and the weighty responsibility that we shoulder. I also want to express my gratitude for Humanitarian Coordinators for their leadership and all CBPF partners who work tirelessly to make sure aid gets where the needs are greatest. Together we will continue to save lives and strengthen the humanitarian system.

Martin Griffiths
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
"The CBPFs always go to great lengths to support inclusive humanitarian action."

MARTIN GRIFFITHS
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR
In 2021, the Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs, the Funds) allocated US$1.01 billion to effective humanitarian action in 20 different crises around the world. This was enabled by the highest ever level of contributions from Member States, international organizations and the private sector. In response to humanitarian crises, the Funds provided resources flexibly and efficiently to partners on the front lines of humanitarian action.

The Funds helped address the needs of an estimated 42.9 million people caught up in crises, with a specific focus on the needs of women, children and persons with disabilities. CBPFs were instrumental in responding to humanitarian needs, most significantly those arising from conflict ($706 million allocated or 70 per cent), from climate-related and natural disasters ($161 million or 16 per cent) and from disease outbreaks ($111 million or 11 per cent).

The Funds responded to 2021’s most challenging humanitarian crises. The Fund in Afghanistan was at the forefront of the response to the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation, providing a total $166 million to assist 9.7 million people –the year’s largest amount of funding. The Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund provided timely support for the response to the escalating conflict in the Tigray region, with $87 million to assist 3.2 million people; and the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund responded to the crisis in the country with $20.7 million to enable life-saving support for 880,000 people.

In 2021, the Regional Fund for West and Central Africa became operational, representing a major innovation in bringing the benefits of pooled funding to new and underserved geographies. Initially focused on Central Sahel, OCHA’s first regional fund supports action on interconnected humanitarian challenges, prioritizing urgent needs while promoting regional coordination and synergies.

During 2021, the Funds were the leading source of support for local and national organizations in the countries where they operate. With their broad partner networks, the Funds enabled front-line NGOs to deliver humanitarian assistance efficiently, capitalizing on their proximity to affected people, and harnessing local knowledge and social networks. Some $731 million (73 per cent of the total allocated) went to NGOs, including $268 million (27 per cent) directly to local and national partners.

In 2021, the Funds championed support for women and girls, strengthening gender considerations in project reviews, allocating funding specifically to address gender-based violence (GBV), and updating guidance based on dialogue with gender experts. To advance women’s empowerment and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, the Funds allocated some $55.5 million to projects dedicated to addressing GBV, assisting 3.4 million affected people. The Funds also provided some $35.8 million to local Women-led/Women’s Rights Organizations (WLO/WRO) and helped build the capacity of 172 WLO/WROs strengthening their participation in the Funds. They also fostered greater consideration of gender in allocation strategies, prioritization processes and funding decisions.

The year saw important progress in ensuring that the Funds remain fit-for-purpose, capitalizing on learning and identifying best practices, in line with developments in the humanitarian sector. In 2021, significant progress was made to revise the CBPFs’ Global Guidelines, which shape the way the Funds work globally. The revision process was highly consultative - with input from CBPFs’ advisory bodies, the Pooled Fund Working Group (PWFG), the CBPF-NGO dialogue, and the individual CBPF Advisory Boards - helping to ensure that the Funds continue to adapt to the evolving needs of partners and operating contexts.
The Regional Fund for West and Central Africa ensuring a place to play for children displaced by fighting

Niger - Hundreds of children fled their villages because of fighting three years ago. Now, they call Tondikwindi displacement site home. Thanks to the Regional Humanitarian Fund, they have a safe place to play, access to psychological support, and other services.

The local NGO, DIKO, has built a safe space for peace and entertainment. Activities include sports and board games like football and Ludo. The space gives children a sense of security and normality in difficult times, helping to build their confidence.
About Country-Based Pooled Funds

The CBPFs are multi-donor funds established by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)/Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG). Their core mandate is to allocate funding based on humanitarian needs and priorities identified at the country level, to save lives, alleviate suffering and to maintain human dignity. The Funds are managed by OCHA at the country level, under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) with the support of Advisory Boards that inform key decisions and help ensure efficient and effective management of resources.

Donors pool their contributions in individual CBPFs as unearmarked funds to support humanitarian responses. This enables humanitarian partners in crisis-affected countries to deliver timely, coordinated, and principled life-saving assistance. The Funds make resources available for NGOs’, UN agencies’ and other partners’ activities identified in the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) or other planning frameworks through Standard Allocations, as well as for unexpected, unforeseen events through Reserve Allocations. Their broad national and local partner networks enable them to support and engage particularly local and national actors in humanitarian responses. Through strategic and prioritized deployment of funding, they support the delivery of agile and coordinated responses, encourage focus on the most vulnerable, including women and girls, and ensure effective and efficient use of available resources in complementarity with other sources of funding, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). They minimize transaction costs and provide transparency and accountability through thorough project monitoring and oversight.

The Funds are critical tools for supporting the delivery of OCHA’s humanitarian coordination mandate, as they promote coordination among humanitarian actors, including international and national/local NGOs, UN agencies and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations. Through their timely, coordinated and principled assistance, the Funds enhance the effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian response, while at the same time promoting innovation and strategic thinking in the wider humanitarian financing architecture, in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.
Sida (Sweden) is proud to be a strong donor to the Country-Based Pooled Funds. The Funds address prioritized humanitarian needs by providing funding to the best placed actors in a timely and coordinated way - this supports a principled humanitarian response.

Jakob Wernerman, Director, Humanitarian Assistance, Sida
Contributions to CBPFs

In 2021, donors contributed a record $1.13 billion to the 20 Funds, a 31 per cent increase from 2020. These contributions included continued support from long-standing donors as well as contributions from new and returning ones. Continued donor confidence enabled the Funds to provide the life-saving support described in this report.

Accounting for 89 per cent of all funding received, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Canada, Sweden, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Ireland and France were the top ten donors in 2021. Twenty-five donors increased their total contributions compared with 2020, and several contributed to more Funds than they had in previous years. Continuing efforts to diversify the donor base brought in four first-time donors – Croatia, Mexico, Morocco and Romania – increasing the number of contributing donors to 40. The year also saw the return of four former donors: the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND), Brunei, Japan and Montenegro.

During the year, donors’ early contributions and multi-year agreements enabled the Funds to support the delivery of coordinated and principled assistance to people in need. Approximately 90 per cent of all contributions were received within a month of pledges, which was critical for planning allocations. With allocation decisions taking place on the ground, close to affected populations, these timely contributions supported an agile response in often fluid and rapidly changing contexts, allowing operational partners to act quickly to adapt and scale activities when needed. In 2021, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom provided $267 million (24 per cent of total contributions) through multi-year agreements, bringing the number of such agreements from five to ten since 2020.

In 2021, OCHA continued to strengthen reporting and communications to further showcase the achievements of the Funds. During the year, OCHA launched two new communication products: The Story Hub, a repository of human-interest stories to highlight the impact of the Funds; and the email newsletter, “CBPFs in Action,” which provides the latest news and funding analysis on the work of the CBPFs. Additionally, the CBPF website continued to serve as the Funds’ digital portal, while the CBPF Data Hub offered real-time information on contributions, allocations and people assisted. In 2021, OCHA also undertook an external review to identify opportunities for improved impact reporting by the CBPFs and CERF, which it is now implementing in consultation with key stakeholders.

Despite donors’ unparalleled support, resources channelled through the Funds still fell short of the goal of 15 per cent of HRP funding. In 2021, this target was only met in Afghanistan, where $270 million, or 46 per cent of the funding secured against the HRP was channelled through the Fund. On average, the Funds accounted for some 9 per cent of total HRP funding in the countries where they are present. While this represents a 3 per cent increase since 2020, there is still some way to go to meet the 15 per cent HRP benchmark. With rising humanitarian needs and an increasing gap between financial requirements and secured funding, investment in the Funds becomes ever more important, particularly given their ability to ensure collective prioritization, strengthen coordination and optimize the use of limited resources. In 2022, OCHA will continue its efforts to diversify and deepen the donor base to make further progress towards the 15 per cent target, as well as increase the number of early and multi-year contributions.

1 This includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

2 It is worth noting that $219 million of total contributions were received after the Taliban takeover in August, more than four times the $51 million that was received from January-July.
Allocations overview

In 2021, the Funds enabled partners to address the humanitarian needs of 42.9 million people affected by conflict, disease outbreaks, natural disasters and the effects of climate change. With generous donor support, the Funds allocated $1.01 billion to enable 7,933 partners in different countries to respond through 1,543 projects.4

Approximately 69 per cent of all CBPF funding was provided to allow partners to address top priority needs identified in HRP. The CBPFs also deployed some 31 per cent of total funding to ensure life-saving responses to sudden and unforeseen emergencies.

Beyond saving the lives of millions of people caught up in humanitarian disasters and emergencies, allocations from the Funds helped to improve how the humanitarian community delivers assistance. Allocation strategies increase attention to protection concerns, and the needs of women and girls and people living with disabilities. The Funds also prioritized localization and contributed to advancing quality programming and improved humanitarian access.

The Funds made use of the comparative advantages of their partners to provide timely humanitarian action. The Funds promote equitable partnerships with diverse actors through their agile, inclusive and transparent grant processes, promoting rapid, collective and context-relevant responses by engaging multiple stakeholders in decision-making. Communication, coordination and information-sharing with partners and other funding mechanisms ensured strong results and complementary use of funding.

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3 For INGOs and UN agencies that work with CBPFs in multiple countries there is duplication.
4 Data as of 28 March 2022, including allocations processed in early 2022 with donor contributions from 2021.
ALLOCATION AT A GLANCE

In 2021, the Funds supported the delivery of timely and effective life-saving assistance for more than 42.9 million people affected by natural disasters and armed conflict.\(^5\)

$1.01B TOTAL ALLOCATIONS

20 FUNDS
19 country humanitarian funds
1 regional fund

19 country humanitarian funds
1 regional fund

**ALLOCATIONS BY WINDOW**

$313.4M Reserve Allocations

$1.01B TOTAL ALLOCATIONS

$695.3M Standard Allocations

**ALLOCATIONS BY EMERGENCY TYPE**

$165.6M Climate/Natural disaster

$114.8M Disease outbreak

$33 Economic disruptions

$750.6M Conflict

\(^5\) Methods to avoid double counting of targeted and reached beneficiaries are applied.
Allocations by type of emergency

Humanitarian needs can be caused by a variety of shocks and their after-effects. The Funds categorize each allocation according to the type of emergency most directly associated with the humanitarian needs to be addressed, providing a useful global perspective on the main drivers of allocations during the year.

CONFLICTS

In 2021, conflict remained the main driver of humanitarian needs, accounting for the largest share of allocations: $706 million or 70 per cent of total funding. This represents a 64 per cent increase from 2020. The escalating conflict in Afghanistan, the growing unrest in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and the ongoing conflict in Yemen together accounted for the majority of funding in response to conflicts, with $271 million (38 per cent of all funding allocated in response to conflicts). In conflict-affected countries with CBPFs, the Funds demonstrated their ability to continue operating and supporting front-line responders in volatile contexts. Their principled needs-based approach allowed them to work across conflict lines, support a wide range of partners and ensure access to vulnerable groups in hard-to-access areas.

NATURAL DISASTERS AND THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural disasters and the effects of climate change were major drivers of humanitarian need in 2021 and accounted for the second-largest portion of funding. In response to, among others, locust infestations in East Africa and severe droughts and floods in West and Central Africa, $161 million (16 per cent of funding) was allocated to natural and climate-induced disasters – up from $92 million in 2020. The Funds continued to make forward-looking allocations for early response to looming natural disasters and climate-related crises based on analyses of risks and forecasts of needs.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund’s response to protracted conflict

In 2021, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) provided critical life-saving assistance for 6 million people. The Fund allocated $109 million during the year, with most funding addressing conflict-related needs. Several allocations from the YHF in 2021 helped to improve access to hard-to-reach and under-served areas with the highest severity of need, demonstrating its capacity as an effective mechanism for delivering a timely and coordinated front-line response.

The Sudan Humanitarian Fund’s response to desert locusts and extreme climate

In 2021, the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF) made a number of allocations to respond to the needs created by natural disasters. In the first quarter of 2021, the SHF provided $115,000 to FAO to support the surveillance and control of desert locusts in Yabus, thereby mitigating the risk and impacts of a locust infestation. Later in the year, the SHF disbursed some $6.5 million in anticipation of – and $3.5 million in the aftermath of – floods and associated disease outbreaks. Subsequently, when below-average rainfall in several regions reduced the availability of groundwater for agriculture and drinking water for people and their livestock, the SHF allocated another $3.9 million for the food security response.
DISEASE OUTBREAKS

The Funds continued to respond to major disease outbreaks, notably dengue, cholera and hepatitis E, as well as the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. The Funds’ speed and agility were particularly important for enabling effective responses – some $111 million (11 per cent of total funding), was allocated for life-saving assistance to people affected by disease outbreaks.6 Among the most significant allocations of this type during 2021 were the Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Fund’s response to COVID-19 outbreaks in refugee camps, and the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund’s efforts to prevent and control dengue, acute diarrhea and COVID-19. Together, they accounted for $44 million (40 per cent of funding) allocated in response to disease.

SEVERE ECONOMIC DISRUPTION

In addition to conflicts, disease outbreaks and natural disasters, the Funds provided $30 million to enable partners to respond to the humanitarian consequences of severe economic disruption, often amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, in already fragile contexts. This included a $23 million allocation from the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund for fuel for generators, to address critical electricity shortages caused by the ongoing economic crisis. The allocation was crucial for keeping health centres and cold storage facilities working, without which critical health care would have been interrupted and food security disrupted.

6 This was a decrease from 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented humanitarian needs, and disease outbreaks accounted for 36 per cent of annual CBPF funding.

The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund limiting the spread of hepatitis E in Bentiu IDP camp

In 2021, the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund channeled some $4 million in response to an upsurge of hepatitis E (HEV) in the Bentiu IDP settlement. The allocation supported an epidemiological survey and enabled health partners to treat cases, helping to prevent and control new infections. As a preventative measure, partners vaccinated vulnerable groups and carried out an environmental assessment to identify the root causes of the outbreak. Based on the assessment, WASH infrastructure was improved, as poor drainage and stagnant water were key factors in the HEV outbreak. As part of a new initiative, the Fund also provided multipurpose cash (MPC) to at-risk households, increasing access to basic services and emergency supplies.

Azerbaijan recognizes and supports the principled role of OCHA, in particular CPBFs, in providing humanitarian assistance to those in need and vulnerable situations, and commends its work as a significant contribution to the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
ALLOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jordan

$2 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 4 donors. Responding to the needs of marginalized Syrian refugees, the JHF assisted 56k people (39.7k women and girls).

Lebanon

$25 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 12 donors. Responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by economic disruption and the fuel crisis, the LHF assisted 260k people (169k women and girls).

Pakistan

$1.5 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 2 donors. Responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the PHPF assisted 362k Afghan refugees and IDPs (179k women and girls).

Venezuela

$11.5 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 8 donors. Responding to a prolonged crisis caused by economic contraction and urban conflict, the VHF assisted 131k people (80k women and girls).

oPt

$27.7 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 11 donors. Responding to the humanitarian needs caused by unrest, insecurity and COVID-19, the oPt HF assisted 2M people (1M women and girls).

Syria

$66 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 18 donors. Responding to the water crisis and protracted conflict, the Syria HF assisted 4M people (2M women and girls).

Ethiopia

$87 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 15 donors. Responding to the Tigray conflict and the high risk of climate-and weather-related disasters, the EHF assisted 3M people (1.4M women and girls).

Afghanistan

$165.6 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 20 donors. Responding to the escalating conflict and drought, the AHF assisted 9.7M people (5M women and girls).

Venezuela

$11.5 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 8 donors. Responding to a prolonged crisis caused by economic contraction and urban conflict, the VHF assisted 131k people (80k women and girls).

Sudan

$55 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 10 donors. Responding to the multifaceted humanitarian situation in Sudan, the Sudan HF assisted 3.9M people (1.9M women and girls).

Democratic Republic of Congo

$66 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 10 donors. Responding to the humanitarian needs resulting from escalating conflict and the volcanic eruption in Goma, the DRC HF assisted 1.7M people (1M women and girls).
Somalia

$46 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 10 donors. Responding to humanitarian needs caused by climate change and natural disasters, the Somalia HF assisted 2M people (1.26M women and girls).

Ukraine

$11 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 12 donors. Responding to humanitarian needs triggered by the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the UHF assisted 169k people (69k women and girls).

Yemen

$109 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 26 donors. Responding to humanitarian needs caused by armed conflict, the YHF assisted 5.8M people (4.5M women and girls).

Central African Republic

$23 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 14 donors. Responding to increased displacement after the intensification of conflict, the CAR HF assisted 1.3M people (673k women and girls).

Iraq

$25.4 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 9 donors. Responding to out-of-camp IDPs and vulnerable returnees in underserved areas, the IHF assisted 642k people (339k women and girls).

Nigeria

$31 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 10 donors. Responding to the humanitarian needs of people in prolonged displacement, the NHF assisted 1.8M IDPs (1M women and girls).

South Sudan

$68.8 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 10 donors. Responding to acute humanitarian needs, caused by floods, conflict, HEV outbreaks, and COVID-19, the SSHF assisted 1.8M people (1M women and girls).

Syria Cross-Border

$151 million allocated thanks to the generous support of 15 donors. Responding to the humanitarian needs of refugees and IDPs in that region, the SCHF assisted 3M people (1.5M women and girls).

West and Central Africa

$12.5 million allocated by the RHFWCA to Niger thanks to the generous support of 8 donors. Responding to transnational humanitarian issues in Niger and neighboring countries, the RhPF assisted 505k people (260k women and girls). The allocations focused on cross-border areas while inducing a positive catalytic effect on the response and the interventions that will be put in place on the other side of the borders, notably in Burkina Faso, Mali or in Cameroon and Chad.
Allocations by sector/cluster

Across the 20 Funds, health, WASH and food security were the top-funded sectors in 2021, accounting for 48.5 per cent of all funding allocated. The WASH sector/cluster received $183 million, making it the highest-funded in 2021. Protracted crises in Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, where emergency water supply, sanitation systems, and construction/rehabilitation of sewage systems for IDPs and refugees were required, were the main drivers of high WASH requirements. The prolonged conflicts in many countries and the many disease outbreaks during the year resulted in significant requirements for emergency healthcare. Accordingly, health was the second-highest funded sector in 2021 with a total allocation of $159 million, followed by food security with $149 million.

CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

In line with the Grand Bargain commitments, the Funds continued to promote the use of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) when feasible. The Funds provided $103 million for CVA during the year, some 10 per cent of all funding allocated – the same share as the previous year. Over half ($54 million) was allocated to international NGOs, a 5 per cent increase from 2020; while national NGOs received $30 million for CVA programming, a 1 per cent increase. The Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund provided the highest level of CVA assistance, with $23 million, followed by Yemen and the Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Funds, each providing some $18 million for CVA programming.

Beyond promoting flexible CVA, the Funds encouraged the use of Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC). The use of MPC offers people affected by crisis the flexibility to decide how to meet their own needs. In 2021, the Funds allocated $23 million for MPC programming, a 3 per cent increase from the previous year.
In 2021, the Funds continued to strengthen the role of national and local actors in humanitarian response through promoting their participation and leadership in the coordination, prioritization and delivery of assistance. During the year, 793 partners received funding, of which 325 (41 per cent) were national or local organizations. The Funds collectively channeled $268 million directly to national and local actors. This corresponds to 27 per cent of the total amount allocated, above the 25 per cent global benchmark set at the World Humanitarian Summit. Seven Funds allocated over a third of all funding to local and national partners. In addition to direct funding, $84 million was made available to national NGOs through sub-grants. This brings the total amount of all funding – direct and indirect – allocated during the year to local and national NGOs to $352 million (35 per cent of total funding).

Approximately $35.8 million was made available specifically to local Women led/ Women Rights organizations, while some $5 million funded to Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

National NGO leadership in the Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Fund
National NGOs were heavily involved in project review and selection committees throughout 2021, playing a critical role in informing funding decisions with evidenced-based insights from the field.

Increased funding to local organizations was accompanied by continued efforts to develop capacities. All Funds conducted training, mentoring and outreach activities to strengthen local and national partners’ capacities for the obtention and accountable use of funding. Training was provided on proposal development, risk management/oversight, and themes such as the centrality of protection, disability inclusion and humanitarian principles. In 2021, the Funds provided training to more than 991 national and local partners, of which 172 were women-led/ women’s rights organizations. In addition, local and national partners received tailored capacity support – for example, through feedback on findings of capacity assessments, monitoring visits, financial spot checks and audits, funding applications, and narrative and financial reporting.

The revision of the Global Guidelines and related consultations officially identified advancing localization as a secondary aim of the Funds. The Guidelines also set out considerations for sub-granting and consortia arrangements. They improve the quality of funding through greater flexibility and a commitment to due recognition of staffing, security and safety costs for project implementation. They allow for projects of longer duration and highlight the requirement for fair sharing of programme support costs within sub-granting arrangements.
People assisted

In 2021, allocations from the 20 CBPFs enabled partners to deliver life-saving assistance to over 42.9 million crisis-affected people – a significant increase from 36 million in 2020. Throughout the year, the number of people in need grew as new conflicts emerged, extreme weather and climate-related events multiplied, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other disease outbreaks continued. By the end of 2021, about 250 million people in 59 countries needed humanitarian assistance.

In 2021, the Funds continued to promote effective programming across all humanitarian interventions to ensure that assistance and services are accessible for the most vulnerable people.

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

In 2021, more than half of all people targeted by the CBPFs were women and girls. Gender norms and pre-existing inequalities often mean that women and girls are disproportionately affected in crises. In line with recent years, 51 per cent of all people receiving life-saving support through the CBPFs were women and girls (about 21.6 million). Across all CBPFs, the Funds enabled life-saving support for about 22 million children under 18.

In 2021, most CBPF-funded projects contributed to gender equality. The CBPF programme cycle recognizes the different needs, challenges and opportunities faced by women, men, girls and boys, and the IASC Gender with Age Marker is mandatory in all funding applications. In 2021, 77 per cent of all CBPFs projects were designed to contribute to gender equality across different age groups (Gender Marker 4), up from 64 per cent in 2020.

Protection and response to GBV remained central to the Funds in 2021. More than $55.3 million, 5 per cent of total CBPF funding, went directly towards the prevention of and response to GBV in 2021.\(^7\) This enabled GBV-related support for some 3.4 million people through the provision of safe channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse, preventive measures, legal aid, psychological support, reproductive health care, and support to other community-led initiatives.

In line with Grand Bargain commitments to advance women’s empowerment in humanitarian action, the Funds also continued efforts to support WLOs and WROs. This included training for WLOs and WROs to improve access to CBPF and other funding. OCHA’s Gender Action Plan sets a minimum target that 10 per cent of national NGOs receiving training on CBPFs are WLO/WROs. This target was exceeded in 2021 (17.4 per cent) with 172 WLO/WRO trained, including, 39 in Myanmar, 37 in South Sudan, and 21 in Nigeria.

\(^7\) Accurately estimating the amount of CBPF funding going to GBV prevention and response is difficult as activities are often mainstreamed within projects that have other primary objectives. The estimate provided here refers only to projects or project components dedicated to GBV prevention and response and is therefore likely to be significantly below the true amount.
In 2021, over four million persons with disabilities, 10 per cent of all people assisted benefited from life-saving support from the CBPFs. This is an increase of 32 per cent compared to the previous year. More than half of people assisted were women and girls. In emergencies, persons with disabilities are often among the most vulnerable because they are frequently less visible during the assessment phase and may struggle to access goods and services offered by relief organizations. By supporting inclusive needs assessments and influencing coordination mechanisms, the CBPFs play a significant role in lowering the barriers to benefiting from humanitarian assistance and protection that persons with disabilities face. During 2021, the CBPFs continued to work with partners to ensure that humanitarian action includes persons with disabilities and secures the protection, safety and dignity of all persons with disabilities.

To illustrate, the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund required partners to use indicators for the number of activities to remove barriers and increase access to humanitarian assistance. 6

During the year, the Funds increased the involvement of specialized organizations supporting persons with disabilities. The CBPFs enabled OPDs to address the needs of persons with disabilities with tailored activities, and increased the involvement of OPDs in CBPF processes, including through training/capacity-development, support for funding applications and participation in project review committees.

The groups provided valuable recommendations on how to ensure adequate representation of WLO/WROs and OPDs in processes relating to CBPF and CERF funding, and opportunities for incorporating strong gender equality and disability inclusion expertise throughout the programming cycle. Recommendations included: sensitizing decision makers on GBV/gender and disability-related issues; ensuring that gender and disability inclusion is taken into account in all CERF and CBPF processes, including guidance and templates; and continuing to pursue mainstreamed and specifically targeted gender, GBV and disability inclusion allocations.

The work of the contact groups was presented and discussed with the CBPF Pooled Fund Working Group and the CBPF-NGO Dialogue Platform. OCHA is tracking progress towards implementation of the recommendations and will meet with members of the Contact Groups in 2022 to take stock and seek further guidance on continued progress.

OCHA continues to enhance the way the CBPFs and CERF address GBV and gender considerations and ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities. As a key part of these efforts, in 2021 OCHA established a Pooled Fund Gender Contact Group and a Pooled Fund Disability Inclusion Contact Group composed of independent experts to advise on ways to improve the impact of OCHA-managed pooled funds in these priority areas. Each Contact Group met 13 times between January and October 2021. Discussions covered gender equality and disability inclusion at the strategic level, including participation and representation in decision-making bodies. The different themes included Accountability to Affected People (AAP), project selection and quality assurance, localization, data and indicators, technical support, and mainstreaming and targeted allocation approaches.
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

In 2021, the Funds assisted almost twice as many forcibly displaced people as in previous years. By the end of 2021, the number of people displaced because of climate disasters, conflicts and violence — within their countries and internationally — reached over 84 million. In response, some 93 per cent (40 million) of all people assisted by the CBPFs in 2021 were affected by displacement — half of whom were children. Of these, over 23 million were people from communities hosting displaced people, 13.5 million were internally displaced, 1.9 million were returnees and 1.5 million refugees.

The Funds play an important role in mitigating new displacement by providing assistance to enable affected people to cope with emergencies and remain in their places of origin, whenever safe and feasible to do so. The Nigeria Humanitarian Fund, for example, allocated $2 million for people affected by the ongoing conflict. The allocation helped to improve access to basic services, promote economic development in the affected areas and restore livelihoods assets, thereby increasing income and self-reliance, and enhancing community resilience. This, in turn, helped to reduce further displacement.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

During 2021, the Funds continued to promote compliance with the IASC AAP commitments. The Funds are committed to promoting AAP by ensuring that partners consider the appropriate operational steps for engaging with affected communities when developing projects and that AAP measures are fully visible throughout the programme cycle. All proposals are required to demonstrate how AAP has been implemented — for example, through integrated feedback mechanisms to allow stakeholders to inform project design, implementation and learning. Fund-level performance indicators track progress and investment regarding AAP. In 2021, 72 per cent of all CBPF-funded projects included accessible and functioning feedback processes or complaint mechanisms for affected people, while another 23 per cent partially included these practices.

IASC AAP COMMITMENTS

- **23% partially**
  - Projects partially include the provision of accessible and functioning feedback and/or complaint mechanisms for beneficiaries

- **73% yes**
  - Projects include the provision of accessible and functioning feedback and/or complaint mechanisms for beneficiaries

- **5% no**
  - Projects do not include the provision of accessible and functioning feedback and/or complaint mechanisms for beneficiaries
CBPFs on the front-line

THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE-SAVING OPERATIONS IN VENEZUELA

In 2021, the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund (VHF) made its first allocations totaling $11.5 million to ensure life-saving assistance for 131,700 people.

In Venezuela, years of economic contraction, hyperinflation and fiscal restrictions have resulted in a dire humanitarian situation. The situation has been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly limited household incomes and the availability of resources for social programmes and public services.

To enable a timely and coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the VHF made its first-ever allocation in January, with $3.5 million to meet the needs of 72,000 people. In line with response priorities, the allocation focused on improving essential services for the most vulnerable, including women and adolescents of reproductive age, elderly people in care facilities, and persons with disabilities. Nine months later, this was followed by a second allocation of $8 million to bolster multisectoral services for remote indigenous communities with a particular focus on ensuring inclusive access and quality learning for children in areas most affected by school dropouts. The allocation also ensured assistance for victims of armed violence in Caracas.

During the year, the Fund made significant investments in supporting GBV response and prevention, with 56 per cent of the allocations dedicated to GBV activities in urban and hard-to-reach areas. This support allowed partners to resume essential services for more than 26,000 people affected by or at risk of GBV. Overall, more than 90 per cent of funding allocated by the VHF supported projects that contributed to gender equality across different age groups (Gender with Age Marker 4).

In line with the CBPFs’ commitment to localization, the VHF prioritized support to local and national civil society organizations: 64 per cent of total funding was allocated to local organizations, with a strong emphasis on capacity-building through incentives for consortia-building and training on topics such as AAP and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The NGO Asociacion Tinta Violeta is a local women-led women’s rights organization that fights against oppression, exclusion, and violence against women. With VHF funding, the organization supported 4,300 people affected by gender-based violence in the parish of La Vega in the capital of Caracas, developing their leadership skills, empowerment, and rehabilitating their community spaces.
The Venezuela Humanitarian Fund provides protection, health and nutrition support to the elderly

Venezuela - “People are worried about money. It’s the first thing they have on their mind,” says Malena Llanes, a volunteer for the ‘AgeHumProject’.

Malena goes door to door asking older people in her neighbourhood what they need and shares information on where they can get help.

CONVITE, a Venezuelan NGO, received funding from the VHF to support vulnerable older people, including those from indigenous communities, with nutrition, eye care, and other basic medical care in Anzoategui, Bolivar, Capital-Miranda, Delta Amacuro and Zulia states.

Outreach volunteers, including Malena, help to make sure people are aware of the services that are available.

People in this part of Venezuela are living through a seventh year of economic contraction, aggravated by the global pandemic, political tensions and increasing violence. Older people are particularly vulnerable as they often have physical disabilities, specific health and nutritional needs, or are isolated from friends and family.

“I like to help people—I see the conditions in which they are living. They learn from me, but I learn more from them. I like to see their smile, and the glint in their eyes when they see us coming,” Malena says.
With $87 million disbursed, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF) provided critical assistance for 3.2 million people affected by conflict in the north of the country, drought in the south and other drivers of needs.

In 2021, the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia deteriorated sharply as a result of conflict, climate shocks and disease outbreaks, as well as the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the north and north-west of the country, conflict and displacement left over 9 million people in need of assistance; in the south, millions more were affected by a devastating drought following a third consecutive failed rainy season. By the end of 2021, close to 30 million people across Ethiopia were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance, of whom nearly 6 million were internally displaced.

Throughout the year, the EHF played a critical role in enabling a prioritized and coordinated response to multiple simultaneous crises. In March, as the conflict in Tigray escalated, the EHF provided $700,000 to expand access to conflict-affected regions through the establishment of humanitarian hubs. One month later, an additional $42 million was allocated to further scale up immediate life-saving activities and ensure access to safe water and health and nutrition services in the hardest-hit areas of Tigray.

In line with the Humanitarian Response Plan, the allocation also included $13 million for humanitarian needs in the north-western and southern parts of the country, as well as $6 million for an NGO consortium to strategically pre-position essential supplies in potential hotspots ahead of the 2021 elections.

In August, as the conflict in Tigray increasingly spilled over into the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara, the EHF allocated another $20 million to expand the response across the north. Given the volatile context and access constraints, the allocation placed particular emphasis on support to national NGOs best placed to reach affected communities.

To ensure that needs in other priority locations were addressed — including in Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia and Somali regions — the Fund allocated another $24.3 million in December to help over 675,000 people affected by drought or conflict.

All allocations from the EHF were made in complementarity with CERF allocations to ensure a coherent and holistic response across activities and locations.
The Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund supports the development of an “accountability culture” among humanitarian responders.

Ethiopia—The Ethiopia Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network is funded by the EHF. The Network is establishing a common approach to strengthen humanitarian workers’ knowledge and ability to prevent and respond to PSEA.

Central to this goal is capacity-building. Service providers need to recognize the consequences of sexual exploitation and abuse on affected communities and understand how to prevent and respond in a survivor-centered way.

“The capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives supported by EHF empower front-line responders,” says Maria Kjersem, the Inter-Agency PSEA Coordinator.

With EHF funding in 2021, the Network trained national and regional focal points in Somali, Oromia, SNNP, Tigray, Afar, Amhara and Gambella regions. EHF funding supported an online and in-person PSEA Network Training Package as well as reference materials.

“The training [was] contextualized to our culture and current situation. This made it easy to understand the concepts and [apply them] to the displacement shelters where I work,” said Dawit Argawi, a social worker with OSSAD, a national NGO.

The Ethiopia PSEA Network is working with IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix team to include PSEA risk assessment and mapping in site and village assessments. The data is being collected through focus groups with affected communities. This will establish baselines for risk and mitigation, further strengthening principled response in Ethiopia.

The Network, says Dr Catherine Sozi, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, is “developing an inter-agency accountability culture from the top-down that protects and supports survivors”.

For more information on the Ethiopia PSEA network, see here.
In 2021, the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) enabled life-saving assistance for almost one million people impacted by the country’s escalating humanitarian crisis.

The past year was characterized by record-breaking levels of human suffering for people in Myanmar. Following the military takeover, humanitarian needs have risen significantly, driven by escalating conflict and related displacement, economic instability and decline, COVID-19, and the further erosion of human rights. At the same time, years of development gains were erased by these same factors. By the end of the year, almost half of the country’s population was living in poverty, with 14.4 million people needing humanitarian assistance, including 776,000 IDPs.

As the situation evolved during the year, the MHF responded with two allocations at a total value of over $20 million. In line with response priorities, the allocations focused on supporting the urgent needs of IDPs and host communities. The allocations targeted the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, and ethnic and sexual minorities. They were instrumental in expanding humanitarian access to remote and non-military-controlled areas – for instance, in Chin and Kayah states, and the Magway and Sagaing regions – where local partners used MHF funding to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable IDPs through a multisector approach.

In total, the MHF ensured that approximately one million of the most vulnerable people impacted by the crisis in Myanmar had access to critical life-saving assistance.

A family has lunch in their home in an informal settlement in Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon. ©Relief International
The Myanmar Humanitarian Fund supports practical help for children with special needs

Myanmar - Two-year-old Su Fai Dar Be Be and her family live in Say Tha Mar Gyi displacement camp in Sittwe township, Rakhine State.

The child has been a regular visitor to the Integrated Nutrition Centre in the camp since she was diagnosed with developmental delays in April 2021. The centre gave her therapy to improve her motor skills and taught her mother how to do daily exercises with her at home.

“Now, she is communicating well with the family; she can move without struggle, comb her hair, eat alone, and play with her brothers and sisters. The exercises they taught me in the centre were very useful as I felt I could help my daughter when she was struggling,” said her mother.

The Integrated Nutrition Centre is run by Humanity & Inclusion and supported by the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund. The project supports children with physical impairments in three Integrated Nutrition Centers that are operated in Sittwe Rakhine State. These centres provide nutrition support to children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and their families across four IDP camps, four Muslim villages and six Rakhine villages. The needs of children with developmental delays are addressed by trained physiotherapists like Thet Nwe Soe, who says early intervention is the key:

“Early identification and subsequent stimulative physical therapy intervention play a central role in ensuring children with developmental delays achieve their potential for physical independence by minimizing the effect of their existing impairments or further development of disabilities. This will improve the quality of their life and their families’ lives in the long run.”

Like most families in the camp, Su Fai Dar Be Be’s parents could not have afforded the specialized health services she received free of charge through the Integrated Nutrition Centre.

Say Tha Mar Gyi IDP camp is home to more than 14,700 Rohingya people, still displaced after the intercommunal violence in 2012. Over 134,400 Rohingya people remain displaced in camps or camp-like settings across Rakhine State.
In June 2021, OCHA established its first-ever Regional Humanitarian Fund to enable a coordinated and coherent humanitarian response to the escalating needs in West and Central Africa.

West and Central Africa currently face some of the world’s most complex crises with millions of people driven to the edge of survival due to a confluence of factors, including conflict and violence, extreme poverty, chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, and the impact of climate change. Currently, over one in ten people in West and Central Africa (over 61 million people) requires humanitarian assistance and protection.

In response to the escalating needs, the Regional Humanitarian Fund for West and Central Africa (RHFWCA) was launched in late June 2021. The initial focus of the first-ever OCHA Pooled Fund is on the Sahel and interconnected cross-border crises, with the aim of strengthening regional coordination, and enabling humanitarian responses to new and underserved locations. In pursuit of these objectives, the Fund aims to support the humanitarian partners best placed to respond, while expanding direct funding to front-line humanitarian partners, including local and national NGOs.

The first allocation from the Regional Fund was made in September, with $12.5 million allocated to NGOs in Niger to ensure life-saving support for displaced people and host communities in the tri-border region (between Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali), as well as the Lake Chad Basin (Niger, Chad and Nigeria) and the Maradi region (Niger and Nigeria). By promoting partnerships with local and national NGOs, the allocation prioritized assistance for more than half a million vulnerable people in the most remote areas.

During the year, the Fund demonstrated its added value in ensuring flexible and efficient resources to address cross-border humanitarian issues and providing resource to local and national NGOs. Going forward, OCHA will build upon lessons learned and best practices to further reinforce coherent approaches to regional emergencies and to promote transnational collaborations and synergies between country-specific responses.
The Niger Humanitarian Fund supports medical care, nutrition and protection assistance for rural women and children

Niger - Laouré is in her fifties and lives in Denbo, a village bordering Nigeria, in the commune of Dan Issa. She is a community mobilizer for a Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) mobile clinic, which is supported by funding from the RHFWCA.

“[The remoteness of our area] has meant we are almost forgotten by everyone. Women only travel to the [regular] clinic in the most serious cases. The mobile clinic offers a better and more accessible option.”

The mobile clinic also offers information and resources on protection, including combatting early marriage. Early marriage was, for many, a financial decision. “Marrying our daughters young was a way to get material support.” The mobile clinic provides awareness sessions on GBV and early marriage and trains mothers like Laouré on how to share information with their community.

Laouré is enthusiastic about the mobile clinic and the services it provides. “The most striking thing is even if you have no naira [Nigerian currency], you are accepted and helped—it is a first in the whole region....”

Access to free health care through the mobile clinics has improved the local vaccination rate for children under five, and the clinic has diagnosed and treated measles and whooping cough in remote areas.
Throughout 2021, the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) played a central role in enabling the humanitarian system’s response to the dire humanitarian situation unfolding in the country. During the year, the Fund allocated a record $165 million to ensure life-saving assistance for 9.7 million people.

As a result of 40 years of war, recurrent disasters, hunger, economic decline, rising poverty and inflation, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has gradually deteriorated, reaching unprecedented levels in 2021 following a year marked by conflict and political upheaval. By the end of 2021, 24.4 million people – more than half of the Afghan population – needed humanitarian assistance, an increase of more than 6 million people since the beginning of the year.

Over the course of the year, the AHF worked alongside humanitarian partners to scale up response efforts and ‘stay and deliver’ despite a challenging operational context.

Early in the year, the AHF provided $3 million for humanitarian air transportation and as food insecurity dramatically worsened, another $19 million was allocated in May to provide cash-based assistance to displaced people and scale up protection activities.

In November, as the situation continued to escalate, the Fund made a record allocation of $112 million to enable a broad multisectoral humanitarian response. The allocation targeted displaced people and host communities affected by the severe winter, with a particular focus on education, food security and shelter. The allocation ensured life-saving assistance for people living in poor urban settings by enabling access to clean water and adequate sanitation, as well as by containing outbreaks of communicable diseases. To increase community support for people in hard-to-reach areas, the allocation included a dedicated focus on supporting the inclusion of local NGOs in the humanitarian response.

The AHF allocations were made in close complementarity with CERF allocations to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive response.

The Fund increased its support to partners in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover and the resulting disruption of health services, including shortages of critical medical supplies. The AHF released $31 million for mobile health programmes, prioritizing support for families at risk of severe hunger and violence or abuse, including GBV.

In November, as the situation continued to escalate, the Fund made a record allocation of $112 million to enable a broad multisectoral humanitarian response. The allocation targeted displaced people and host communities affected by the severe winter, with a particular focus on education, food security and shelter. The allocation ensured life-saving assistance for people living in poor urban settings by enabling access to clean water and adequate sanitation, as well as by containing outbreaks of communicable diseases. To increase community support for people in hard-to-reach areas, the allocation included a dedicated focus on supporting the inclusion of local NGOs in the humanitarian response.
The Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund provides emergency cash to vulnerable families

Afghanistan – Rahima fled her home in Arghandab, Kandahar, in mid-2021. She rented a small space for herself and her children, including her newborn baby. The room lacked a roof and doors, but it was all she could afford. She was anxious for her children’s safety.

“Right after my husband passed away, I had our youngest son. I wasn’t even able to buy him milk powder. I was so afraid I would lose him to hunger. Then my eldest son was involved in an accident. He still cannot walk, and his mental health is suffering. My other children have been walking long distances every day to collect water and carry it back here.”

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), with money from the AHF, gave cash grants to vulnerable women-led households and helped them link up with other services, including protection support.

Rahima used the money to improve her shelter and build a private latrine. She bought a small water tank, which her family now uses to store water to wash their hands. The cistern only needs to be filled once a week, so the children no longer need to walk long distances every day.

She used some of the cash to cover transport costs for her son to travel to a clinic and for medicine expenses. She says there are now slow but steady improvements in his mental health.

While living conditions remain difficult and the future uncertain, the aid provided by DRC has allowed Rahima to prioritize the family’s immediate, life-saving needs. “Compared to before, we feel more comfortable in this place, and I feel safer.”
Complementarity between OCHA-managed Pooled Funds

In addition to the 20 CBPFs, OCHA manages the CERF, which responds to new and underfunded crises globally. Like the CBPFs, CERF fosters a coherent and prompt humanitarian response, builds on existing coordination structures, and reinforces the leadership of HCs. In 2021, the combined allocations by CERF and CBPF were $1.5 billion, with $1.01 billion allocated by CBPFs and $548 by CERF across 39 countries.

For countries with a CBPF, resources available to the Fund are factored into CERF funding analyses. In 2021, $415 million or 75 per cent of CERF funding went to 15 countries with CBPFs. When CBPF and CERF resources are provided to the same context, the HC – with the support of the HCT - ensures that they are used in a complementary and coherent manner and based on the comparative advantage of each. To support HCs and HCTs, OCHA helps translate this vision into coherent allocation strategies that ensure best use of resources to reach people in need.

While each context is unique, one or several of the following principles often underpin joint CBPF-CERF allocation strategies:

- **Temporal sequencing:** CBPF and CERF allocations can support different phases of an emergency response — allowing for continuity in the scaling up of humanitarian services.

- **Complementary Fund recipients:** CBPF and CERF allocations can fund different recipient organizations in a way that best addresses the overall humanitarian situation, with CBPFs providing most of their funding to a wide network of front-line national and international NGO partners, and CERF focusing on fewer, large-scale grants for direct operational requirements of UN agencies.

- **Complementary sectoral focus:** Informed by each Fund’s comparative advantage, CBPF and CERF allocations can address needs in different sectors to achieve the desired programmatic coverage.

- **Complementary geographical targeting:** CBPF and CERF allocations can target different geographical locations to achieve the overall spatial coverage desired to meet the needs of the most severely affected communities.

- **Common promotion of global priorities and cross-cutting issues:** CBPF and CERF allocations can be used together to reinforce consideration of, and attention to, key themes, cross-cutting issues and good practices recognized by the wider humanitarian community as important to the quality of aid.

In 2021, the HCs’ complementary use of the Funds strengthened the humanitarian response in several contexts, including the response to the looming drought in Ethiopia and the crisis in Lebanon.

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Lebanon – Averting the collapse of essential infrastructure

In August 2021, acute fuel and electricity shortages severely hampered the provision of essential services in Lebanon. To initiate a rapid and comprehensive response to the deteriorating situation, the HC employed funding from CERF and the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) utilizing the comparative advantages of each instrument with CERF focusing on supporting UN agencies and the LHF the NGO community.

A $4 million CERF Rapid Response allocation in August enabled WFP to provide fuel to keep water stations operational across the country and maintain the provision of water supplies for over 3 million people. The allocation leveraged the established presence and operational readiness of UN agencies with WFP responsible for developing a fuel supply plan, working closely with UNICEF to ensure timely and effective delivery of fuel to water pumping stations.

The support provided by CERF was complemented by a $5 million allocation from the LHF, targeting 2 million people to provide fuel for life-saving health services through hospitals (public and private), primary health care clinics and dispensaries throughout the country. The LHF capitalized on its partnerships with NGOs in the health sector, their technical expertise and ability to reach affected communities through existing programmes and already established working relations with care clinics and dispensaries. The fuel kept facilities running, without which critical health care – supported by international and national NGOs through other funding streams – would have ceased.

With relatively modest amounts, the joint effort by CERF and the LHF enabled fast delivery of some 8 million litres of diesel to nearly 350 water pumping stations and 240 health facilities across the country between September and December 2021 thus enabling continuity of services without which the wellbeing of two-thirds of the population could have been compromised.

Ethiopia – Ensuring a coherent response to looming drought

In late 2021, in response to a severe drought in Ethiopia’s Somali and Oromia regions, the HC used some $7 million of CERF and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF) resources to enable a strategic and comprehensive response that engaged the humanitarian partners best placed to address different humanitarian needs in all relevant sectors.

Through its Rapid Response window, CERF allocated $5 million to FAO for safeguarding breeding animals and protecting the livelihoods of pastoral communities, and UNICEF for increasing community access to potable water.

In parallel, the EHF provided $2 million for integrated health and nutrition interventions, with a focus on children under five, pregnant and lactating women, people living with disabilities and the elderly. The EHF supported national NGOs able to reach vulnerable groups in locations with limited access.

Under the leadership of the HC, CERF and the EHF’s combined support to UN agencies and NGOs enabled a comprehensive and inclusive response to some 900,000 vulnerable people in hard-to-reach areas.
Fund performance in 2021

Five key principles guide the management of the CBPFs: inclusiveness, timeliness, flexibility, efficiency, and accountability and risk management. These principles are also used to assess the performance of each Fund through a common methodology and indicators. Detailed reporting for each CBPF can be found in their respective annual reports: (http://bit.ly/CBPF2021AR)

In 2021, the Funds promoted inclusiveness and diversity in governance structures, allocation processes, management and administration. A broad range of humanitarian partner organizations – UN agencies, international and national NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations – participate in CBPF processes and receive funding to implement projects that address priority needs. These partners, alongside donors, are included in the governance and decision-making processes of the Funds through participation in Advisory Boards, the Pooled Fund Working Group, the CBPF-NGO Dialogue Platform and project Review Committees. In particular, OCHA strengthened the representation of national NGOs in the Advisory Boards, which, in 2021, increased to 18 per cent across the 20 funds. Three WLOs/WROs and six OPDs were among the 41 national NGOs represented on these boards. In 2022, efforts will continue to further strengthen the representation of WLOs/WROs and OPDs.

In 2021, the Funds’ disbursement speed remained within the 10-day target. The speed of disbursements is a key performance metric, as it is critical in meeting top priority, time-critical needs. The CBPFs aim to disburse funds within ten working days of project approval. In 2021, the average number of working days for disbursement was 9.3 days.

NATIONAL NGO REPRESENTATION IN ADVISORY BOARDS

13% 15% 16% 18%
In 2021, the Funds demonstrated their flexibility, adapting to evolving humanitarian contexts through the strategic use of Standard and Reserve Allocations. When feasible, the Funds also prioritized CVA programming as a flexible and efficient response option. As outlined in chapter four, the Funds made some $103 million available through cash assistance.

The revision of the Global Guidelines also introduced provisions that reinforce the flexibility of the Funds. This includes a new “48-hour response” provision, where funding may be pre-positioned with partners for activation within 48-hours of a sudden-onset emergency. The revised Global Guidelines introduce cost extensions when changing circumstances require supplementary resources to meet agreed objectives. Finally, the Global Guidelines introduce multi-year funding in contexts where a longer implementation period of up to 24 months is deemed appropriate. The revision of the Global Guidelines is described in greater detail in chapter nine.

In 2021, the Funds worked with front-line partners to achieve humanitarian objectives while mitigating and managing risks. The Funds safeguard the limited resources for humanitarian action through robust eligibility requirements, risk-based grant conditionalities, comprehensive oversight of the project portfolio and rolling appraisal of partner performance.

As described in more detail in Chapter 10, throughout 2021, the Funds made continued progress in implementing capacity assessments, programmatic monitoring, financial spot checks, narrative reports, financial reports and project audits. During the year, 95 per cent of projects that were identified for monitoring were examined.

In 2021, the Funds ensured value-for-money by efficiently disbursing funds and minimizing transaction costs.

At $1.13 billion, donor contributions in 2021 were higher than ever before, demonstrating important progress towards the goal of funding 15 per cent of the HRP (9 per cent in 2021). The CBPFs also continued to ensure that fund management was cost-efficient and context appropriate, with an average cost of managing OCHA’s Humanitarian Financing Units equivalent to just 3.3 per cent of the total allocated.
Global governance of CBPFs

Revision of the Global Guidelines

Throughout 2021, the CBPFs made important progress on strengthening the governance of the Funds. The revision of the CBPF Global Guidelines, in particular, was a major milestone for the Funds. The revision, conducted in collaboration with humanitarian partners and other stakeholders, was driven by the need to adapt the Funds to the evolving demands of humanitarian action, to enhance their flexibility and agility, and to ensure their ability to continue addressing humanitarian needs while promoting improvements in the quality of assistance.

The Global Guidelines ensure a harmonized approach to Fund management while recognizing the specific contexts of each Fund. The Guidelines set out the principles, objectives, and governance and management arrangements for the Funds, as well as provide technical guidance, tools and templates for their day-to-day management. They guide OCHA Country Offices and their Humanitarian Financing Units, which support and manage the Funds. Their standards improve Fund practices and support accountability to stakeholders, including UN Member States, donors, humanitarian partners and affected people.

OCHA reviews the Global Guidelines on an ‘as needed’ basis, in line with learning and the continuing evolution of good practices. This revision — the first since 2017 — incorporates recommendations from different studies, including the 2019 global evaluation of CBPFs and the joint study undertaken by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and OCHA on the perspectives of NGOs, as well as lessons learnt from the COVID-19 response. The revision reflects the views and expertise of a broad range of humanitarian partners, including the Pooled Fund Working Group (PFWG), the CBPF-NGO Dialogue Platform, Advisory Boards, operational partners, thematic focal points and OCHA Country Offices. The revised Guidelines incorporate recommendations from the thematic Contact Groups on gender, GBV and disability inclusion, the United Nations Board of Auditors, the UN’s Office of Internal Oversight Services, and the OCHA Pooled Funds impact study.

OCHA will publish the revised Global Guidelines in 2022, and each Fund will update its country-level Operational Manual to reflect their application within the specific context in which they work.

Canada is proud to be a strong supporter of the UN CBPFs in 2021. The CBPFs enable donors to come together to support flexible, needs-based, and timely life-saving assistance, including directly through local and national responders. Over the years, the CBPFs have demonstrated their increasingly critical role in ensuring a more coordinated, effective, and efficient humanitarian response system.

Canada, co-chair of the Pooled Fund Working Group
REVISION OF THE GLOBAL GUIDELINES:

Define localization as a secondary aim for the Funds. While the Funds maintain their primary life-saving goal, the Guidelines also capture their leading role in advancing localization, strengthening the role of local and national actors, including WLO/WROs, in governance and the delivery of aid.

Define ‘Effective Programming’ areas where each Fund adds value, enhances system change and stimulates new ideas and transformation in the Funds and the wider humanitarian system. This aims to reinforce efforts on protection, GBV, gender equality, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, CVA, humanitarian access, anticipatory action, complementarity with CERF and accountability to affected people. In line with the recommendations of OCHA’s thematic Contact Groups, the Guidelines require that gender and disability inclusion experts take part in Advisory Boards and project reviews.

Introduce the HC’s vision for each Fund, setting out the expectations and opportunities and articulating the distinctive added value for localization and areas of effective programming. The vision for each Fund sets out how it will shape the humanitarian response and advance system-wide priorities under the HC’s leadership.

Introduce strategic statements for each allocation, outlining why the allocation is appropriate at a particular time, and the added value that addressing needs through the Fund will bring in terms of system improvements and quality of the wider response.

Introduce ‘Regionally Hosted Pooled Funds’ as a new vehicle for supporting coherent approaches to regional emergencies, cross-border collaborations and synergies between country-specific actions.

Strengthen Fund risk management processes, including effective screening processes to prove partner eligibility and assess performance, improve feedback mechanisms to support partners’ systems and control measures, and implement enhanced procedures for handling incidents related to misconduct, including fraud and SEA.

Enhance financial management procedures, including greater flexibility in project budgets, delegating greater authority for financial clearances to Country Offices, and introducing a risk-based approach to project and partner audits.

Introduce provisions on Fund resource mobilization and communications, including visibility and reporting, to mobilize greater support to the Funds.
The importance of CBPFs as a humanitarian funding mechanism for NGOs cannot be overstated. As the number of people affected by crises grows every year, so does the responsibility of CBPFs to deliver on their humanitarian mandate in a principled and effective manner. In 2021, the CBPF-NGO Dialogue Platform continued to be a key space for NGOs and OCHA to discuss the present and imagine the future of CBPFs in a collaborative way.

Fernando Espada, Head of Humanitarian Affairs, Save the Children, and co-chair of the CBPF-NGO Dialogue Platform
Children try on their newly received winter clothing kits distributed by UNICEF in Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria. ©UNICEF
Risk management

In 2021, OCHA continued to invest in risk management. OCHA has built a strong reputation for risk-based management of CBPFs and is making constant enhancements to strengthen accountability and oversight. With increased donor contributions and a stronger drive for localization, risk management was further strengthened in 2021 at the Fund and partner level.

RISK PREVENTION

As outlined in Chapter 9, the revision of the Global Guidelines for CBPFs included an extensive review of and changes to accountability and risk management systems, tools and procedures, including:

» A strengthened eligibility process, including capacity assessment, to prevent and mitigate the risks of financial and sexual misconduct.

» More weight to partners’ financial and operational capacity when considering eligibility.

» A review of partners’ capacity to engage in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

MANAGEMENT OF MISCONDUCT AND FRAUD

In addition to a stronger focus on risk prevention, in 2021 OCHA enhanced its efforts to respond to misconduct. This involved consolidating the implementation of OCHA’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to respond to incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by Fund partners.

The Funds implemented improved SOP to respond to potential fraud by Fund partners, in close collaboration with the UN Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). OIOS provides dedicated investigative capacity for fraud investigations involving Fund partners. Combined with improved procedures, this has streamlined and shortened investigations.

Monitoring and evaluation mission of the NGO ICAHD International. ICAHD International implements a RHFWCA-funded facilitation project on access to quality education for displaced children and those of host families in the region of Tillaberi. ©ICAHD Niger/Ayorou
STRENGTHENED RISK MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

To better detect and analyse cases of concern, OCHA Country Offices now have dedicated Compliance Officers embedded in their Humanitarian Financing Units. Specific training on fraud and SEA has been developed, and partners are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations. Targeted assurance activities such as monitoring, financial spot-checks and audits, and new features in the Grant Management System that enhance case portfolio oversight, help identify cases of concern.

COUNTRY-LEVEL MONITORING

All projects implemented by CBPF partners (UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement Organizations) are subject to monitoring by each Fund. Monitoring collects and triangulates information about progress made against project outputs and activities and verifies the accuracy of reporting submitted by partners. Monitoring focuses on programmatic and financial indicators. It is a critical component of CBPF’s assurance mechanisms and in 2021 was one of the primary sources of detection of fraud related incidents at the country level.

The frequency and intensity of the monitoring undertaken for each project is determined based on the level of risk associated with the partner. For instance, high risk partners are subject to more frequent monitoring compared with low-risk partners.

COUNTRY-LEVEL RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

At the country level, an annual Fund-level Risk Management Framework is developed. This Framework identifies and mitigates risks that are unique to, or vary across, each specific operating context. Risk factors may include, but are not limited to, the specific country’s funding environment, the nature of the humanitarian needs and response, the profile of partners with which the Fund has the potential to engage, the political situation, the ability of UN personnel to access project locations.

The Fund-level Risk Management Framework is reviewed annually to ensure it stays relevant and up to date. Its formulation and revision are facilitated by the HFU and fall under the accountability of the HC. The Advisory Board of the Fund is closely involved in this process, to ensure risk mitigation and acceptance are agreed by all Fund’s stakeholders as a key measure of risk sharing.

CONTINUED ENHANCEMENTS TO RISK MANAGEMENT

OCHA will continue to enhance risk management in 2022 and beyond through the rollout of the revised Global Guidelines and the introduction of updated tools and procedures developed in 2021.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Through the risk management measures, OCHA has successfully settled and closed numerous cases. Contributing donors and Advisory Boards were informed of the number and status of cases of concern according to the established information-sharing protocols.
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Full reports are available here: http://bit.ly/CBPF2021AR
Member States, observers and other authorities that wish to contribute to CBPFs can contact the OCHA Donor Relations Section at ocha.donor.relations@un.org.

Individuals, corporations and foundations can visit http://bit.ly/GiveToCBPFs to contribute directly to CBPFs.

For general information about CBPFs please visit http://unocha.org/cbpf.

For a collection of impact stories from OCHA’s pooled funds: the global Central Emergency Response Fund and the nineteen Country-Based Pooled Funds. Pooled Fund Impact Story: https://pooledfunds.impact.unocha.org/

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DATA & ANALYSIS

For real-time contribution and allocation data with easy-to-use filters and views please visit the Pooled Fund Data Hub: https://cbpf.data.unocha.org/

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POOLED FUND IMPACT STORIES