

# British Red Cross Submission: IDC Effectiveness of Aid inquiry

May 2020

## i. Executive summary

This submission is focussed on areas where British Red Cross has specific insights based on programmatic partnerships and experience.<sup>1</sup> Although we highlight areas of particular relevance to the work of British Red Cross, this submission is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the effectiveness of UK Aid. Through this submission, British Red Cross aims to achieve three things:

Firstly, to emphasise and evidence the **importance of UK Aid internationally**, to the countries we support bilaterally but also the overall effectiveness of the humanitarian system.

Secondly, to outline where **DFID display good practice and provide global leadership**. These are the areas we would like to see maintained throughout the new parliament. Through our work, we see the reputation that DFID has developed around the world as a global leader, projecting the British value of reducing global poverty, and contributing to setting high standards in ensuring that humanitarian action is effective, delivers value for money, and that importantly - is guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The changing global dynamics offer DFID and their partners the opportunity to provide and project global leadership to transform the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and to utilise the knowledge and expertise of DFID with global impact.

Thirdly, we aim to outline the areas where **improvements could be made**. Both British Red Cross and DFID are dedicated to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, both in our own work as well as in the wider multilateral system. Therefore, throughout this submission we explore how DFID, British Red Cross and the humanitarian sector can work in partnership to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system.

Key themes covered include:

- DFID remains an effective and accountable department at implementing Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- ODA should be spent as effectively and transparently as possible and DFID is among the most scrutinised Government Departments by the UK Parliament and other institutions.
- To improve the humanitarian system and the effectiveness of aid, areas of focus should include: advancing the use of cash and voucher assistance; strengthening local humanitarian action; improving community engagement and accountability; investing in disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action; and reducing environmental impact.
- British Red Cross believe that targeting should remain related and driven by the provision of principled humanitarian action and achieving the SDGs on the basis of need, complementing the work of other donors. We champion principled humanitarian action that is underpinned by: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and help people in crisis based on need and informed by rights.

## ii. Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> Our Movement partners ICRC have also made a submission and our differences of focus reflect our unique but complimentary mandates.

1. The British Red Cross is part of the world's largest independent humanitarian network, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement), which comprises more than 12 million active volunteers across 192 countries. The Movement consists of three components: Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, of which the British Red Cross is one; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
2. As a National Society, British Red Cross is an auxiliary to the UK Government in the humanitarian field, and as such, is a key partner of the UK Government in the delivery of Official Development Assistance (ODA).
3. The British Red Cross acts as the 'Global Relationship Manager' between DFID / UK ODA and the Movement partners (IFRC and all 192 National Societies). We provide oversight of the strategic partnership, helping to ensure effective coordination and coherence of relationships and programmes supported by DFID, and assist Movement partners to meet the requirements of DFID funding.
4. DFID funding is the largest single source of international income for British Red Cross (21% in 2018 and 25% in 2017). It is also the largest country donor to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the second largest donor to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).<sup>2</sup> In 2019, British Red Cross income from DFID totalled £33.5m and in 2018 £16.7m<sup>3</sup>.
5. BRC believe together with the UK Government, we have the potential to renew collective approaches, improve the humanitarian system and address some of the most pressing global challenges of our time.

### iii. The definition and administration of UK aid – who should be responsible, and accountable, for targeting and spending aid?

6. It is relevant to note that in recent years there has been an increase in spend of ODA funding by other government departments and the proportion of ODA spent by departments other than DFID could increase to 30% by the end of the current spending review period (2020).<sup>4</sup>
7. This submission offers an opportunity to reaffirm the need for clarity in defining and allocating ODA and to highlight the importance that all ODA remains focussed on poverty alleviation and providing principled humanitarian assistance to people in crisis on the basis of need.
8. DFID remains an effective and accountable department at implementing ODA. Working closely with teams across DFID, British Red Cross has experienced high quality management and value for money of UK ODA when the UK Government utilises the expertise of DFID's specialist staff and technical advisers.

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<sup>2</sup> DFID contributed CHF 19.2m (5% of income) to IFRC in 2017 (through BRC) and CHF 205.6m (13% of income) to ICRC in 2018 directly

<sup>3</sup> DFID income in 2018 includes the following: £9.0m (2017: £9.0m) core funding to IFRC, £4.9m (2017: £8.7m) to support emergency response programmes, £1.0m (2017: £2.9m) core funding to BRC, £1.0m (2017: £1.0m) UK Aid Match and £0.8m (2017: £0.8m) to support long-term programmes in countries including Nepal, Kenya and Uganda.

<sup>4</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/2048/2048.pdf>

#### iv. How **effective and transparent** is the UK aid spent by the Department for International Development (DFID) compared to aid allocated to other Government departments and to the cross-Government funds?

##### **Transparency of UK aid**

9. ODA should be spent as effectively and transparently as possible. DFID is among the most scrutinised Government Departments by the UK Parliament and other institutions: the International Development Committee (focus on policy and practice), the Public Account Committee (focus on efficiency and effectiveness), the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (focus on efficiency of UK aid spending), and the National Audit Office (focus on value for money).<sup>5</sup>
10. Similarly, DFID is consistently ranked highly in external reviews of transparency, of particular note is [2018 Aid Transparency index](#) which ranked DFID at 'Very good'. DFID is a strong supporter of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and applies transparency requirements on implementing partners.<sup>6</sup>

##### **Impact of UK Aid**

11. The UK government has long been a world leader in helping people in crisis, from tackling Ebola, to responding to devastating floods in Mozambique or the food crisis in East Africa. Support received by British Red Cross from DFID stays within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and goes towards helping some of the most vulnerable people in the world. All National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are guided by our Fundamental Principles including humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. The Fundamental Principles also guide the British Red Cross in the way we accept funding. Our transparent monitoring system shows how these funds are spent to ensure they are delivering outcomes and impact ensuring efficient and effective use of funds to help those who need it most. **An evaluation of our DFID funded programmes can therefore provide evidence of the impact of UK Aid and the positive role DFID is playing.**<sup>7</sup>
12. Examples of the positive impact of DFID ODA funding include:
  - (a) DFID funding helped British Red Cross to **build safe toilets and provide clean water** supplies to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. In Bomet County in Kenya, we took on a programme to build toilet buildings for the local school and provide it with a clean water supply, something they had never had. Now, 55,000 people across Bomet County alone, including ten schools, are benefitting from the work started with DFID funding.
  - (b) The DFID **What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Programme**<sup>8</sup> is perceived by many across the humanitarian and development sector as an example of good practice which should be replicated. It is accountable, transparent, effective, and builds strong partnerships. The programme has successfully developed, adapted and implemented evidence-based VAWG

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<sup>5</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn03714/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-iati-guidelines>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/research-publications#International%20evaluations>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.whatworks.co.za/>

prevention interventions alongside rigorous practice-based research to substantially advance the evidence on what drives violence, what works to prevent violence, what makes interventions successful and how they can be replicated, adapted and scaled up. It is led through women's organisations and academics, partnered with civil society, focussed on finding and investing in solutions. The programme has provided evidence that we can act together to prevent violence. In 2016 this programme received a Green score from ICAI and it continues to go from strength to strength.

- (c) **The Movement response to COVID 19** – DFID's support to the Movement's COVID-19 Appeal of £55m (£36m to IFRC, £17m to ICRC appeals and £2m to British Red Cross). DFID's proactive and flexible approach to understand and support the Movement's appeal in an adaptive manner adds value as does its support to the Grand Bargain commitment on localisation and the value it places on the role of local and national humanitarian actors, in this case the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies. The Movement, with its network of local branches and volunteers and widely respected neutrality, can negotiate access to some of the hardest to reach populations and can provide support where many other aid workers simply cannot.

### **Effectiveness of humanitarian aid: implementing best practice approaches**

- 13. The British Red Cross and DFID have a common goal to improve the humanitarian system and the **effectiveness of aid** and have a shared ambition to deliver on the **commitments of the Grand Bargain**. The following section provides recommendations on areas of engagement and approaches where there is more work needed to improve the effectiveness of the international humanitarian system. This includes a focus on:
  - (a) advancing the use of cash and voucher assistance
  - (b) strengthening local humanitarian action
  - (c) improving community engagement and accountability
  - (d) investing in disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and reducing environmental impact

### **Scaling up Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)**

- 14. At the British Red Cross, we believe that CVA has the potential to transform the way aid is delivered. Providing cash has proven to be an effective and efficient tool in humanitarian response. It makes aid more efficient by reducing the needs for the major humanitarian logistics machine but it also allows local markets to recover more quickly after a crisis and plays a vital role in preserving the dignity of affected people. It can help restore the economic resilience and livelihoods of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities; facilitate ongoing and early access to key basic services, including healthcare, water and education; reduce the use of damaging and irreversible coping mechanisms; and kick-start markets' functionality.
- 15. In recent years, the use of cash and voucher assistance in humanitarian action has increased dramatically, however we know **that we should be more ambitious with a higher percentage of humanitarian assistance delivered through CVA rather than through in-kind support**. High-quality evidence demonstrates the effectiveness and efficiency of CVA and supports the ambition to scale-up the use of humanitarian cash assistance. A large body of

literature illustrates what more could be achieved if support was shifted towards greater investment in cash-based responses, both in improving the quality and quantity of humanitarian support. Numerous studies have found that CVA can be much cheaper to deliver than in-kind aid, provided local markets are functioning properly. The lower cost is mainly due to avoiding the logistical costs associated with storing and distributing material goods. As CVA is usually more cost-efficient to deliver, more people can be reached for each dollar spent. A four-country study calculated that an additional 18% of people (more than 40,000 in total) could have been helped if they'd been given money instead of food.<sup>9</sup> A survey for the American Economic Review found that 84% of economists agreed with the statement that “cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value.”<sup>10</sup> A World Bank analysis of 30 studies of cash transfer programmes found very little evidence of families spending financial aid on so-called temptation goods such as cigarettes and alcohol. In fact, the opposite was often the case, with families reducing their consumption of these goods. The estimated multipliers of financial aid are typically in the range of 1.5 to 2.5, meaning that an injection of \$1 million of cash generates an additional income of \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million for the local economy.

16. The UK Government plays an important role as co-chair of the Grand Bargain Working Group on Cash, influencing joint donor commitment to the scale up in the use of humanitarian cash assistance. As such an influential donor with a long-term strategic commitment to the reform agenda on cash, and benefitting from the UK humanitarian sector skills and experience in cash programming, including British Red Cross, it is recommended that **DFID continues to play a lead role in this key area of aid delivery.**

#### **Localisation and strengthening local humanitarian action**

17. The British Red Cross endorses the Grand Bargain commitment on localisation and promotes humanitarian assistance that is as local as possible and as international as necessary. Humanitarian responses should identify and build on the comparative advantages of local, national and international actors, all of which have important roles and strengths to offer during an emergency response. It is through the innovative alignment of these **comparative advantages** that we achieve a truly appropriate, efficient, and principled humanitarian response. The Movement, comprised of 192 National Societies with their local knowledge and ability to mobilise large networks of volunteers, supported by the IFRC and ICRC, provides a model for such complementarity.<sup>11</sup>
18. Local actors are the first to respond when a disaster strikes and are often the last to leave. They frequently have **unrivalled access to communities, community trust, and an understanding of local needs, perceptions and capacities.** The COVID-19 pandemic is currently shining a light on the centrality, as well as the challenges faced by local humanitarian actors. Enabling local actors to adapt and respond is crucial.
19. By supporting national humanitarian institutions to develop, donors enable more independent, national responses to disasters, **thereby reducing dependency on aid.** This provides donors such as DFID with partners of choices to ease the management of responses. This is especially true when those organisations are included into national, disaster laws, as British Red Cross is aiming to ensure for National Societies. Through the support DFID provide to IFRC core funding, they are leading the way in institutional

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<sup>9</sup> [https://apolitical.co/en/solution\\_article/four-reasons-refugees-need-cash-not-aid](https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/four-reasons-refugees-need-cash-not-aid)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.power-of-financial-aid.org/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/about-us/international/the-case-for-complementarity.pdf>

development. However, unless this approach is complemented by country level funding, and unless other government donors support this ambition, there is unlikely to be fast progress in this area. Institutions are not resilient if they depend on aid and efforts must be made to **diversify funding bases from national sources**. Currently, it is a struggle to divert short term humanitarian financing to the long-term challenge of institution building for national humanitarian organisations. As such, we believe it is important to create space and investment models to build the resilience of national humanitarian actors.

20. Despite global commitments, **much more needs to be done to address global power imbalances in funding, resourcing, decision making and the burden of risk which undermines local response**. This requires funding to local actors for core costs, institutional strengthening and organisational development. UN country-based pooled funds, increasingly seen as effective mechanisms for funding local actors, are not yet a reliable tool for localisation and require clearer global commitments. Long-term flexible funding to local actors requires increased support from development funding mechanisms and a recognition that stronger local capacity could reduce humanitarian impacts, increase the speed of recovery and protect development gains. Above all, local actors need to have a seat at the table and their voices need to be heard.
21. An example that shows the need for local actors to be placed at the centre of decision-making on funding is the **Ebola outbreak**. During this time the local organisations did receive funding from the UK government, though primarily for “curative activities” such as building hospitals. Learning from this response shows that small, community-led organisations and community volunteers must be placed at the centre of decision making on funding and receive flexible long-term funding to respond to the needs identified by them, and ensure effective prevention and behavioural change.<sup>12</sup> This also includes support to supply chains and funding for core costs, as well as support to keep local staff and volunteers safe.

#### **Community engagement and accountability**

22. To ensure a truly local response, affected populations need to be at the centre of the response, contributing to decisions, activities and monitoring effectiveness. Community engagement and accountability (CEA) leads to more effective responses and to enable this approach there needs to be increased funding available for CEA. Supporting CEA commits donors and the sector to provide timely, relevant, and actionable life-saving and life-enhancing information to communities. By using the most appropriate communication approaches to listen to communities’ needs, feedback and complaints, we can ensure they can actively participate and guide services.
23. CEA also enables people in crisis to become more skilled and empowered to lead and shape positive, sustainable change in their own lives, to influence decisions that affect them, and to hold all relevant stakeholders to account. Local and national actors, including frontline workers and volunteers, should be supported to develop, grow, and build their capacity including their understanding and capacity for CEA. Similarly, more needs to be done to recognise and learn from local expertise, for example in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, local organisations have been dealing with the consequences of weather-related disaster for decades and have a huge amount of experience and existing expertise.
24. British Red Cross and DFID share ambitions for the role of CEA. DFID have invested strongly in British Red Cross capacity in this area and are active participants across a number of the

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.devex.com/news/dfid-has-learned-a-lot-in-ebola-response-85427#.Xo3ownajN\\_Y.email](https://www.devex.com/news/dfid-has-learned-a-lot-in-ebola-response-85427#.Xo3ownajN_Y.email)

Grand Bargain workstreams, most notably the ‘participation revolution’ and IASC results group 2. With DFID funding, British Red Cross are partnering with Ground Truth Solutions, the Lebanese Red Cross and the Zimbabwe Red Cross Societies to support their Risk Communication and Community Engagement ambitions within their Covid-19 response plans. This entails setting up mechanisms to collect community-level data on perceptions of Covid-19 (for instance perceptions of how it is spread, which groups are more/less vulnerable, how to mitigate the spread/protect yourself, perceptions of the humanitarian or government response, perceptions of the longer-term impacts of these responses and how lockdown will impact livelihoods) and using this community-level data to inform and adapt programmes and information sharing. If our messages are aligned with community perceptions, then we are more likely to be considered a trusted and reliable source of information within these communities and people are more likely to heed our advice and recommendations.

### **Investing in resilience and disaster risk reduction**

25. Investing in resilience strengthening activities such as disaster risk reduction and preparedness is an effective form of support. For instance, communities who are affected by the **impacts of climate change** and extreme weather face increasing risks such as drought and flooding, but investing in community resilience can reduce the impact and be more cost-effective and ethical than supporting disaster response.<sup>13</sup>
26. An example of where these interventions have shown to be effective has been supporting communities in Bangladesh to tackle the impacts of seasonal cyclone floods. The financial support provided to people led to improved resilience of their village. Among others, the project offered the poorest and most vulnerable people paid work on projects that would help everyone in their villages by building raised roads, repairing ponds used for drinking water and making flood embankments stronger. When Cyclone Roanu hit in 2016, people were able to reach evacuation centres thanks to raised roads built by the project and timely warning by the trained community volunteers. Many employees were women, and with their new wages and grants to establish alternative income sources they could contribute to build up their families’ safety nets allowing them to cope better with disasters and not fall into debt. Overall, for every \$1 invested the project provided \$1.5 to \$2.8 in benefits with additional non-monetary benefits suggesting even higher returns.<sup>14</sup>
27. IFRC estimates that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of storms, droughts and floods could climb beyond 200 million annually by 2050 compared to an estimated 108 million today, with a huge financial price tag of US\$ 20 billion per year for humanitarian response by 2030 in the most pessimistic scenario. However, by taking determined and ambitious action now to invest in disaster risk reduction and climate-smart development, the number of people in **need of international humanitarian assistance annually could fall** to as low as 68 million by 2030, and even drop further to 10 million by 2050 – a decrease of 90 per cent compared to today.<sup>15</sup>
28. Investing in local disaster risk reduction and preparedness pays off. Be it investments in climate smart agriculture for vulnerable farmers in drought prone Zimbabwe,<sup>16</sup> epidemic

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<sup>13</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ab0debce5274a5e20ffe268/274\\_DRR\\_CAA\\_cost\\_effectiveness.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ab0debce5274a5e20ffe268/274_DRR_CAA_cost_effectiveness.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://blogs.redcross.org.uk/resilience/2016/10/grants-ducks-cyclones-seven-lessons-bangladesh/>

<sup>15</sup> IFRC 2019. The Cost of Doing Nothing <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/the-cost-of-doing-nothing/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://blogs.redcross.org.uk/international/2019/02/from-kent-to-zimbabwe-jb-gill-on-helping-farmers-deal-with-climate-change/>

community surveillance and preparedness in Sierra Leone, or community preparedness for earthquakes and floods in Nepal, savings from DRR investments may take the form of saved lives, livelihoods, property or money and it can certainly save more money than response could. The greatest value of community-based DRR continues to be in supporting and empowering local communities who are always the first to respond to disasters.<sup>17</sup>

29. The COVID 19 pandemic highlights the need to invest into epidemic preparedness, community-based surveillance and the importance of resilient local health systems – including both ‘formal’ health services and community health programmes-actors. There are lessons from the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, on how stronger, more resilient health systems would have been better prepared to cope with the 2014 – 16 Ebola outbreak, well summarised by WHO.<sup>18</sup> Anecdotal evidence from the Sierra Leone Red Cross’ Community-Based Health Programme (CBHP, 2013 - 2015 Endline Evaluation), supported by British Red Cross until mid-2019, seem to suggest that villages/ communities where the programme was consistently implemented coped better with the outbreak, and saw lower confirmed cases/ mortality.<sup>19</sup>

### **Increasing investment to enable anticipatory action**

30. It is now known when and where the majority of weather-related emergencies are likely to strike, due to much better access to weather forecasts and risk analysis data that allows us to predict the impact of weather events with a good degree of accuracy. Resources should be allocated in advance to make sure the most vulnerable are protected and actors on the ground have better **capacity to act early** and respond effectively. Despite this, the vast majority of relief is reactive and provided after the emergency / disaster has taken place and very small amounts are put towards preparedness. Actors need to preposition, act and invest in advance. In Mongolia for example, **forecast based financing (Fbf)** for their Early Action Protocol allowed the Mongolia Red Cross Society to support vulnerable herder families to protect their livestock from the risk of an impending extreme (dzud) winter.<sup>20</sup> By providing animal care kits and cash assistance for fodder and other households needs weeks ahead of the peak of the disaster, the supported herders were able to reduce the mortality of horses, their most valuable animals, by approximately 50 per cent compared to households who did not receive the FbF intervention and increase the survival rate of their goat and sheep offspring, thereby helping herders to secure the future of their livelihoods.<sup>21</sup>
31. British Red Cross and DFID need to continue to work together to achieve the ambitious targets outlined in the newly adopted Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (**REAP**). Increased focus and investment to **enable anticipatory action** would also increase the effectiveness of UK Aid as it is more cost effective and saves lives. Great strides have been made in recent years, but more needs to be done to invest in risk-informed early warning systems and early action capabilities linked to crisis finance instruments.<sup>22</sup> This is especially the case given the increased humanitarian cost of climate change and extreme weather.

### **Supporting humanitarian actors to reduce their environmental impact**

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<sup>17</sup> [https://www.preparecenter.org/wp-content/sites/default/files/cba\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.preparecenter.org/wp-content/sites/default/files/cba_guidance.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/92/12/14-149278/en/>

<sup>19</sup> This is based on anecdotal evidence and it would be difficult to establish direct causality

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.forecast-based-financing.org/2020/01/14/forecast-based-early-action-triggered-in-mongolia/>

<sup>21</sup> [https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/06/CaseStudy16\\_Mongolia-FbF-Final.pdf](https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/06/CaseStudy16_Mongolia-FbF-Final.pdf);

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.disasterprotection.org/crisisfinance>

32. To be effective, aid also needs to ensure it does not do harm by undermining the longer-term environmental sustainability of local ecosystems and the global climate. Whilst life-saving interventions must always remain the priority aim of any emergency response operation, humanitarian and development aid investments must promote actions that minimise the adverse impacts on the surrounding environment and eco-systems. This ranges from a **greener response**<sup>23</sup> that takes into account environmental considerations in the selection of relief goods and delivery mechanisms - for example procuring solar lanterns or handwashing units locally - to promoting climate-smart solutions and the protection and restoration of environmental assets in resilient programmes - for example through the promotion of agroforestry and diversity of indigenous drought-tolerant crops that better preserve soil moisture and the local ecosystem.

### **DFID partnerships and processes and their impact on aid effectiveness**

33. In recent years, there has been a transition to **payment by results, increased compliance and risk transfer**. This move to a more contractual basis which treats recipients as formal suppliers has resulted in a large increase in the amount of work needed to be conducted throughout the process, disadvantaging smaller NGOs and local actors.
34. The trend towards **risk transfer** threatens the ability for DFID partners to operate in the contexts where they are needed most. Humanitarian and development needs are most prevalent in conflict or unstable contexts. These pose significant operational challenges that are increasingly being met with a risk-averse donor approach, rather than a risk reduction/mitigation and management mind-set which would enable and empower actors to respond responsibly to needs. British Red Cross believes that the emphasis should be on risk sharing, rather than handing this off to a downstream partner.
35. There is also concern that inappropriate use of **payment by results** affects the capacity and effectiveness of smaller providers and local humanitarian actors. New **compliance rules, procurement and contractual arrangements** are increasingly time consuming to make contextually appropriate, involving legal negotiation (and costs) which takes time away from accountability through dialogue and context specific action. Given the introduction of new frameworks (IMDP) to the DFID Supply Partner Code of Conduct, there is hope there will be evidence and learning on the impact/efficacy and outcomes on UK Aid at the frontline.
36. **Increased levels of predictable and flexible** funding for humanitarian crises saves lives and money. Predictable, year on year funding is important to allow for future planning and to retain staff and expertise. The core funding British Red Cross receives from DFID is highly valued and DFID's work cooperation in emergencies tends to support IFRC appeals as opposed to specific sectors or geographic areas which add great value to adaptive response. The recent COVID-19 response shows the need to be able to swiftly adapt programmes enabled through unearmarked funding to the IFRC and ICRC appeals.

### **DFID ways of working and their impact on aid effectiveness; DFID engagement with other government departments; HMG engagement with bilateral and multilateral processes**

37. An area that could improve effectiveness of the humanitarian system is ensuring **policy is translated into action and impact**. At present, it can be unclear how much the policy side of

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<sup>23</sup> <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/green-response/>

DFID (CHASE) and procurement and commercial department of DFID work together to achieve outcomes. For instance, there was support for localisation in principle and programme management rules i.e. the SMART Rules, were intended to introduce leaner documentation and processes that encourage a proportionate approach, but new requirements now introduced by PCD across all organisations, including NGOs (e.g. DFID Supply Partner Code of Conduct) makes achieving this even more difficult.

38. The challenges the world is facing are more interrelated than ever and so interventions should be focussed on the holistic needs of a community, rather than the objectives of separate thematic programmes. As such efforts should be made to **prevent a siloed approach to programming within DFID**. An example of where programming could be greater aligned is climate change adaptation that should be mainstreamed into all policy and programming. Climate change adaptation should be integrated throughout programme design, to prevent a siloed approach across various areas including humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and conflict. This will also help mitigate the risk that efforts become too bureaucratic with different funding mechanisms available for different sectors and enable maximum impact.
39. Whilst we recognise the expertise of DFID in delivering effective UK Aid, there are many areas where increased and improved **cross government departmental approaches** would further improve effectiveness. For instance, there should be a whole of Government approach to climate mitigation and adaptation. To complement DFID programming as well as diplomatic efforts on the international stage in the run up to COP 26, a cross departmental approach is needed to integrate these climate ambitions in other areas, for instance where the UK invest and how the UK trades, for the approach to be as efficient and effective as possible.
40. There are also actions the UK could take to ensure **global policy commitments** are implemented within UK programmes and funding decisions, as well as internationally. Tools such as developing road-maps for UK and global engagement on specific commitments would help the process of implementation. An example of where these processes would achieve improved effectiveness would be the FCO-led tri-departmental Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative which received an Amber-Red score in a recent ICAI report as a result of weak strategic direction, a lack of investment and high-level leadership.<sup>24</sup> The National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, another tri-departmental initiative, is another global policy area which lacks a clear action plan and success indicators and would benefit from more effective cross-government coordination. In the coming years, the UK can also play an important role to ensure momentum is maintained by the multilateral system ensure that global commitments are met. An example of strong leadership from the UK Government is the work on the Call to Action to End GBV in Emergencies.<sup>25</sup> This can provide an example of what effective leadership looks like, and could support for the 2017 Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.<sup>26</sup>
41. Effectiveness of the humanitarian system and the UK role within it can be increased through **global solidarity** and by working multilaterally with partners on global issues. An example of this is the UK role in the development and implementation of both the Global Compact for

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<sup>24</sup> <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/html-report/psvi/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-call-to-action-to-end-forced-labour-modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking>

Refugees and for Migration, to address large movements of refugees and migrants, with the aim of bringing the international community together behind a more humane and coordinated approach. To ensure these Compacts make a difference to the lives of people on the move, the UK has an important role to play in ensuring they are implemented both within the UK and internationally.

42. Crucial to the effectiveness of the humanitarian system in times of conflict is adherence to **International Humanitarian Law**, including the obligation to allow and facilitate access of humanitarian relief. The UK plays an important global leadership role in promoting the rule of law and the international rules-based system, which the Movement appreciates.

#### v. How should the national interest be defined, and what weight should it be given, in relation to **targeting** UK aid?

43. The UK Government is recognised globally as a world leader in delivering humanitarian and development funding and as a source of expertise. British Red Cross believes we must continue to promote this shared **value of humanity** and that targeting should remain related and driven by the provision of principled humanitarian action and achieving the SDGs on the basis of need, complementing the work of other donors. British Red Cross champion principled humanitarian action that is underpinned by: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and help people in crisis based on need and informed by rights.
44. Only about 10% of 0.7% of GNI is spent on humanitarian aid (£1,407m out of 13,933m of ODA in 2017), this allocation would need to be protected in order for humanitarian assistance to be delivered on the basis of need alone, distinct from other political, military, stabilisation and trade objectives and guided by the Humanitarian Principles.
45. Crucially, we believe that targeting should ensure **that no one should be left behind** and that countries and communities hardest to reach and most in need must be prioritised for inclusive investment and programming. This includes affected populations in some of the most challenging environments globally **where humanitarian crises such as conflict and the impact of climate change intersect**.
46. Many of the global challenges we face have an impact worldwide but as shown by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, even if they impact every country, the most vulnerable will be hit hardest. Specific population groups are disproportionately affected by crisis as a result of pre-existing and intersecting vulnerabilities.<sup>27</sup> These groups often include:
  47. **Women and girls** who face issues such as gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, non-partner violence and sexual violence as a tactic of warfare, gender inequality, the burden of unpaid or low-paid care work and restricted freedoms linked to pre-existing gender norms. Female headed families, single women and teenage girls face specific challenges. Pregnant, lactating and menstruating women often have specific sexual and reproductive health care, sanitation and nutrition needs which often go unaddressed.
  48. **Children, including unaccompanied and separated children** may not have access to information, education or services. They may experience increased levels of neglect and

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<sup>27</sup> <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/10/B-WDR-2018-EN-LR.pdf>

violence (including sexual violence) in the home, institutions or in camps. Impoverished, displaced or separated children could also face increased risk of other forms of abuse such as child recruitment, child labour, early marriage and trafficking.

49. **People with disabilities**, both physical and/or intellectual, may have specific needs that will go unmet, be at higher risk because of pre-existing conditions, and could lose access to their regular support mechanisms and mobility devices. People with disabilities are also disproportionately exposed to violence, neglect, discrimination and lack of access to education, health care and other essential services. They are also often hidden from view and/or may have specific communication needs - as a result their voices frequently remain unheard.
50. **Older people** -the vulnerabilities and specific needs many people have in older age can become a serious challenge to survival and wellbeing in a humanitarian crisis, this includes being separated from their family, physical disabilities, cut off from services, specific health and nutritional needs, risk of violence, abuse and neglect.<sup>28</sup>
51. **LGBTQI** who already experience difficulties and barriers to accessing health care and other services due to stigmatisation and cultural barriers may experience an exacerbation of these challenges during crisis. Sexual and gender minorities are also disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence and trafficking.
52. **Minority groups (religious, racial, ethnic, national or political)** - The most socially or economically disadvantaged groups in the community will experience increased protection risks in an emergency, including marginalisation, exclusion from assistance and services, stigmatisation, neglect, violence and exploitation including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) or trafficking.
53. **Men and boys** – The specific protection needs of men and boys are often overlooked, but they may face increased levels of violence including sexual violence, they are often disproportionately affected by forced recruitment into armed groups or gangs and detention. They also experience specific mental health concerns.
54. **Migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees** – restricted access to basic services including health care, lack of accurate or accessible information, language barriers, prejudice, trauma or existing health conditions. Inadequate housing and disruptions to their livelihoods and loss of assets, as well as separation from family and existing social support networks expose them to violence, exploitation and abuse.
55. **Principles underpinning targeting include:**
  - (a) Targeting should allow for **flexibility**, an example of which can be seen through the Action for Migrants: Route Based Assistance programme, which although focussed on targeting migrant communities for assistance, encourages flexibility of support people with unmet needs in host communities.
  - (b) Targeting of aid should be based on **local priorities** and insights
  - (c) Targeting of interventions should use **risk informed data**, informed by partners such as World Meteorological Organization.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/older-people-in-emergencies/>

## vi. How is official development assistance defined, administered and targeted elsewhere in the world?

56. As part of the world's largest humanitarian Movement, British Red Cross appreciate the benefits of sharing learning and good practice internationally. We also see first-hand that DFID is reputed for its thought leadership and investment in multiple issues and contexts, which improves the effectiveness of ODA but also mobilises other governments to contribute.
57. Most ODA follows the official OECD definition and that is considered as good practice; British Red Cross continue to encourage **alignment with this global standard**.
58. The British Red Cross and the UK Government are part of the IFRC's Donor Advisory Group (DAG) which allows for coordination, sharing of good practice and collaboration.<sup>29</sup> Fora such as this should be encouraged as an **opportunity to learn from others** on how to best administer and target ODA. As co-chair of the IFRC's DAG, DFID's convening power brought senior engagement from nine other governments, creating more investment potential mobilising support for national, humanitarian action.
59. There are a couple of thematic areas where we may be able to reflect on lessons from international partners, for instance a number of donors who offer greater **flexibility in their funding in complex environments**. Funding with Payment by Results conditions should be used with care and only where the benefits outweigh the significant increase in administration and management costs. The use of contracts as opposed to grants creates significant and onerous compliance challenges on local in-country organisations which many would be unable to meet, and so threatening the Grand Bargain localisation commitments.
60. There is a recent submission from the Lowy Institute/papers re DFAT which continues to offer learning for others regarding mergers/alignment/decision making and accountability of Aid.<sup>30</sup>

## vii. Recommendations

61. The UK should retain its **commitment to global leadership in international humanitarian assistance**, leading by example with the transparent allocation and accountable management of assistance provided based upon needs.
62. Humanitarian funding should be protected and remain driven by humanitarian principles, based on need and targeting the most vulnerable and those hardest to reach.
63. Continue to improve effectiveness through best practice in terms of cash and voucher assistance; empowering local actors through investment in capacity building; investing in community engagement and accountability; increasing anticipatory action and making humanitarian responses greener to minimise any negative impact on the environment.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/09/Donor-Advisory-Group.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/submission-department-foreign-affairs-and-trade-review-australia-s-development-program>

64. Siloed approaches to programming should be avoided, working instead from the bottom up from the needs of a community; granulate the approach to programme design and delivery as there is no one size fits all approach, every context is different and it is important we support local-level approaches.
  
65. Targeting should ensure that no one should be left **behind** and that countries and communities hardest to reach and most in need must be prioritised for inclusive investment and programming.