

Statement

Hearing of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid Topic: Report of the Federal Government on German humanitarian assistance abroad from 2018 to 2021

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Overview

Germany's rapidly growing financial commitment and its rise from an insignificant humanitarian financier to the second-largest donor nation in the world has been followed with admiration, astonishment, growing expectations and many question marks.

In recent years, hardly any development of any other actor in international humanitarian aid has been followed with as much excitement as that of the German Federal Government. Germany's rapidly growing financial commitment and its rise from an insignificant humanitarian financier to the second-largest donor nation in the world has been followed with admiration, astonishment, dynamically growing expectations and many question marks by international observers. At the same time, German humanitarian aid and its international role on multiple levels are at a groundbreaking point.

The war in Ukraine has exacerbated the strain on the international humanitarian system, particularly in financial terms. This is exemplified by the record-high global deficit in December 2022, which saw only 50.8% of humanitarian needs being met (OCHA FTS 2022; Figure 1).

Appeal Funding Gap

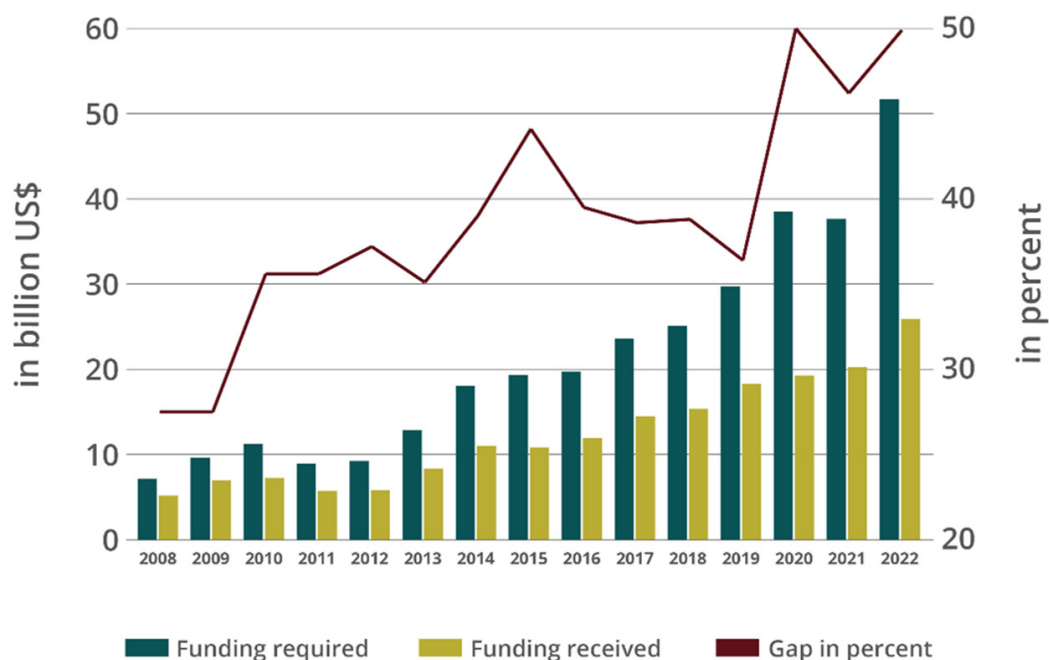


Figure 1: Humanitarian needs and funding gap
Source: OCHA FTS 2022; Presentation CHA

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As a result, the pressure on Germany to not only be a financially supportive donor but also a principle-oriented donor has intensified. The same applies to Germany's role as a driving force to a humanitarian system in need of reform. The disregard for humanitarian spaces and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) during the Ukraine war, but also beyond, has only served to exacerbate these challenges. Moreover, the humanitarian system struggles to establish overdue reforms regarding even more effective and flexible aid, which in turn will fundamentally boost the participation and promotion of local actors.

The growing importance and expectations of Germany are also reflected in relevant topics. For instance, Germany's involvement in the Grand Bargain (GB) reform process, which is widely considered to be the most important and inclusive initiative in humanitarian aid, has increased significantly. At the same time, the Grand Bargain 2.0 seems to be falling short of its objectives (Hövelmann 2022). Furthermore, in terms of migration and refugee policy, Germany's position as the only country in the world that is both a leading donor and host nation for refugees presents a unique opportunity for the country to use its credibility to shape international migration issues, debates and agendas (UNHCR 2022). Additionally, Brexit and the consequential absence of previously very present-to-dominant British humanitarian policy contributions have created a gap in the European Union (EU).

The developments in the European and global context have increased the expectations for Germany not only as a payer but also as a formative player in international humanitarian aid.

These developments in the European and global context have once again increased the expectations for Germany not only as a payer but also as a formative player in international humanitarian aid. The pressure that Germany was under due to that latter challenge was put into words by a European diplomat for a recent CHA study on the subject: "They had to hit the ground running. Germany became almost overnight the biggest European humanitarian donor (...) But if you have money but no policies, you are only a cash machine while if you have policies but no cash, you are only a think tank" (Hövelmann and Südhoff 2022).

Germany is now facing a crucial course setting regarding the Ukrainian war and the "Zeitenwende" (turning point) debate in Germany (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2022; Scholz 2022; Politikum 2022). Although this has raised the question of reorientation within foreign, security, economic and energy policy, the implications of such a reorientation for development cooperation and humanitarian aid as well as the additional direct and indirect humanitarian challenges posed by the war in Ukraine have not yet been addressed or prioritised.

More and more assessments have evaluated that there could be tension not only financially, but also thematically, instead of a reciprocal dynamic between Germany's "Zeitenwende" in defence and foreign policy and its development and humanitarian commitment. "Due to the turning point announced by Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the conditions for the implementation of global goals, such as the foreign policy climate agenda and the Agenda 2030 agreed upon by the United Nations with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are also deteriorating," analyses Professor Brzoska (2022), former Scientific Director of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg.

The medium-term financial planning for the Federal Foreign Office intends to reduce the budget by 28% for 2024 in comparison to 2022. This contradicts dramatic global trends.

During the most recent budget negotiations, there were concerns about the level of funding for humanitarian aid. At the last moment, on the initiative of the German Bundestag, the humanitarian budget for 2023 was increased from € 2 billion to € 2.7 billion, which is in line with the level of expenditure of summer 2022. However, critics argue that this increase does not go far enough, particularly in light of the medium-term financial planning for the Federal Foreign Office, which intends to reduce the budget by 28% for 2024 in comparison to 2022. This plan contradicts dramatic global trends proving that humanitarian needs will continue to grow worldwide, as well as the deficit to cover them financially (Figure 1). Moreover, the crediting of other funds to meet international requirements (ODA-quota) against humanitarian aid and development cooperation, for example, the future crediting of expenses for Ukrainian refugees in Germany, should also be subject to critical scrutiny.

These national and international developments have raised questions about the medium-term strategy, the right priorities and the structure of German aid all the more urgently. The report of the German Federal Government is a very important document in this regard, but it is unfortunately only made available every four years. The very limited reporting measures on German humanitarian aid, which today also accounts for around 40% of the Federal Foreign Office's total budget, is also a central point of criticism in the context of this statement. The lack of transparency in the prioritisation process and design of German humanitarian aid has been subject to criticism in international transparency rankings (see, for example, Aid Transparency Index 2022). Similarly, there are calls for the German Bundestag to address and reflect on this issue (Garavoglia 2015). To be precise, the responsible committee could address this situation, for example by submitting and debating an annual report to the Committee on Humanitarian Aid based on the DG ECHO model or, analogous to the human rights work of the Federal Government, every two years.

This report on German humanitarian aid is nevertheless a document that builds on an apt analysis of international humanitarian challenges and identifies significant trends in German humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the Centre for Humanitarian Action and other actors have conducted research that can shed light on the following issues:

1. Where German humanitarian aid has achieved great success in shaping humanitarian aid, for example in the field of forward-looking anticipatory assistance;
2. Where there is still room for improvement, for example in the inadequate localisation and limited flexibility of German aid, which could, among other things, rely more heavily on flexible, regional programme funding;
3. What challenges and capacities for improvement Germany should tackle internally and externally as part of its role as an active designer and reform engine of humanitarian aid, that in turn urgently needs to be modernised, localised and made more flexible.

Many of the areas for improvement mentioned under number 3 can be reduced to a common denominator: Germany is now a highly respected financial donor of humanitarian aid and the second-largest **payer**, after the USA. However, as a designer and moderniser of an overburdened and outdated international humanitarian system, as a **player** in the essential sense of reform-oriented aid, Germany is an actor whose weight, despite substantial progress, is still far from a role commensurate to its financial commitment and economic and political weight.

All of this amounts to unused potential, for international actors have high hopes for Germany as a humanitarian actor: "There are some expectations to fill. There is since Brexit now more space for Germany and others, and Germany has also a special role due to its limited colonial past and being less economically, politically influenced than, for example, France", a European diplomat said in a CHA Interview (Hövelmann und Südhoff 2022). "Germany is a top 2 donor and a top 5 refugee hosting country – this is a unique mix and moral stance, but it is not yet making much out of it," as interpreted by a UN representative.

The findings of the CHA analysis, which are also discussed in this statement, confirm the previously mentioned concerns regarding the substantial lack of adequate personnel resources and structures in the Federal Foreign Office and propose concrete measures to address this issue. At the outset, it should be emphasised that reforming these structures and processes will not be an instrument to make or justify cuts in the German humanitarian sector, be that in the short- or medium-term, but will require investment in more decentralised and adequate resources.

According to CHA analyses, 0.6% of the staff of the Federal Foreign Office are currently responsible for 40% of its budget. The Federal Government allocates a fraction of that staff to humanitarian programme funding and its design in international bodies and forums, such as the GB, compared to other leading donor nations (see Table 1). The lack of adequate financial resources is a core problem that must be addressed if German humanitarian aid is to be provided more efficiently and effectively to an unprecedented number of people in need.

Answering the Questionnaire:

1. On Germany's Role (Questions IV)

For many years, Germany's rise as a humanitarian actor was primarily financially motivated. Unlike Great Britain and the USA, for example, the German Federal Government does not have a long tradition of humanitarian aid as a policy field. This is also reflected in the fact that reform impulses, for example regarding the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, have mostly been initiated by Anglophone governmental forces. Parallel to that, at the level of civil society, this phenomenon was reflected in a limited and partly internationally isolated policy exchange among German NGOs for many years (Quack 2016). A first CHA analysis in 2019 concluded that the German government still lacked strategic capability and effectiveness in the field of humanitarian policies (Südhoff und Hövelmann 2019). The growing expectations of Germany remained unfulfilled for a long time: "When you came to Berlin five years ago, there was not much to discuss," Jan Egeland, NRC Secretary General and former UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, summed up retrospectively at a CHA event (Centre for Humanitarian Action 2021).

In contrast, the context for Germany's role in the global humanitarian system has undergone significant changes in recent years. Brexit, the devaluation of multilateral institutions during the Trump administration in the USA, and the ever-increasing needs resulting from long-lasting conflict contexts and the Covid-19 pandemic require adapted humanitarian policies. In addition to the provision of financial resources, humanitarian aid in Germany has been upgraded accordingly as part of Germany's "foreign policy using funds" and was taken into account, for example, in the presidencies of the UN Security Council 2019-2020, the EU Council in 2020 and the G7 Presidency in 2021 as an aspect of the respective German thematic priorities.

Against the background of this development, recent CHA analyses confirm that Germany's increasing humanitarian commitment is being recognised in the design of policies and strategies for humanitarian aid. However, these analyses also acknowledge that there is still considerable room for improvement and identify both the strengths and weaknesses in Germany's commitment to humanitarian aid (Hövelmann und Südhoff 2022).

A crucial factor in this context is how Germany, as a value- and principle-oriented nation, allocates its humanitarian aid (for example, oriented to the plight of the people / the principle of humanity and impartiality vs national interests), and what kind of design potential unfolds for Germany from its exemplary leadership role. This issue is particularly relevant in light of an internationally threatened humanitarian space and a declining prioritisation of humanitarian principles and values in some capitals of Western donor nations (Worley 2020). Accordingly, the German Federal Government claims to be a humanitarian actor with a clear orientation towards humanitarian principles and to allocate its funding through the Federal Foreign Office in line with needs (Auswärtiges Amt 2019a). In Germany's humanitarian strategy, there is an emphasis on value orientation and fields of tension are to be resolved into interest orientation (Auswärtiges Amt 2019b).

In this sense, it is consistent and principle-oriented if, for example, the Federal Government refrained from linking its aid for Palestinian refugees with political questions of Israeli reason of state. Instead, the government should provide needs-based services within the framework of its duty of supervision for UN organisations such as UNRWA (Questions IV / 2).

However, it is necessary to analyse the extent to which German support for crisis regions was purely needs-based and independent of security or migration policy interests on a global scale. A preliminary CHA comparison of previously available data up to 2021 reveals a mixed picture:

The tables below compare how high:

- a) On the one hand, the proportionate need for humanitarian assistance in that country was in relation to the total global humanitarian aid needs in 2021, on the basis of the adopted Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) and appeals in the countries mentioned (Table 1; column 1).
- b) The corresponding percentage of German aid in relation to the total humanitarian aid provided by Germany (column 2).

Country	Share of country call of Total Call Global 2021 (OCHA FTS)	Share of DE funding per country in total DE Funding 2021 (according to four-year report)
Zimbabwe	1,99 %	0,20 %
Honduras	0,26 %	0,16 %
Haiti	0,92 %	0,28 %
Chad	2,42 %	0,03 %
Sudan	7,61 %	2,20 %
Mali	2,21 %	3,47 %
Venezuela	2,78 %	2,64 %
Democratic Republic of the Congo	7,79 %	3,94 %
Burundi	0,76 %	0,21 %
Ethiopia	5,84 %	3,35 %
Colombia	0,68 %	0,46 %
Burkina Faso	2,39 %	0,17 %
Niger	2,05 %	0,36 %
El Salvador	0,17 %	0,05 %
Cameroon	1,42 %	0,40 %
Syrian Arab Republic	16,58 %	21,59 %
Yemen	15,12 %	9,72 %
Guatemala	0,22 %	0,08 %
Iraq	2,38 %	4,90 %
Ukraine	0,66 %	1,36 %
Nigeria	3,95 %	3,96 %
South Sudan	6,58 %	4,85 %
Mozambique	1,00 %	0,49 %
Somalia	4,29 %	4,43 %
Libya	0,74 %	0,99 %
Myanmar	1,08 %	0,99 %
Occupied Palestinian Territories	1,64 %	4,33 %
Central African Republic	1,75 %	1,69 %
Pakistan	1,30 %	0,10 %
Afghanistan	3,41 %	22,59 %

Table 1: Comparison of Germany's use of funds for a crisis area with its share of global needs

Source: Report of the Federal Government on German humanitarian aid abroad 2018-2021; OCHA FTS 2022

A purely mathematical consideration of the question would theoretically need to produce very similar proportions if Germany were to provide its aid purely needs-based in accordance with the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs). That being said, it should be noted that other factors and volatilities on site, such as access issues or acute humanitarian changes (e.g. Afghanistan), naturally also play a part in funding decisions.

If one compares the respective shares in 2021, one can see two trends standing out. Firstly, there is only a limited amount of deviation between the proportionate aid needs and Germany's proportionate commitment – with the exception of Afghanistan – which speaks to a far-reaching needs-based orientation of German aid. Secondly, it is noteworthy that the existing upward deviations – or in other words, cases where Germany's involvement is disproportionate – occur with striking frequency in crisis regions that are relevant to migration policy (Mali, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan).

Germany's involvement in various crisis contexts is excessively limited.

Moreover, Germany's involvement in various crisis contexts is excessively limited. At the end of 2021, these areas were significantly underfinanced with aid programmes not even receiving 50% of the required funding (see Financing HRP 2021; Table 2: Burkina Faso, Chad, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia). In these cases, an excessive level of German involvement that prioritises needs would have been necessary. Some of the affected countries are also on the DG ECHO Inform Severity Index (ECHO 2022) of the so-called “forgotten crises,” and are therefore declared a priority to Germany's current humanitarian strategy.

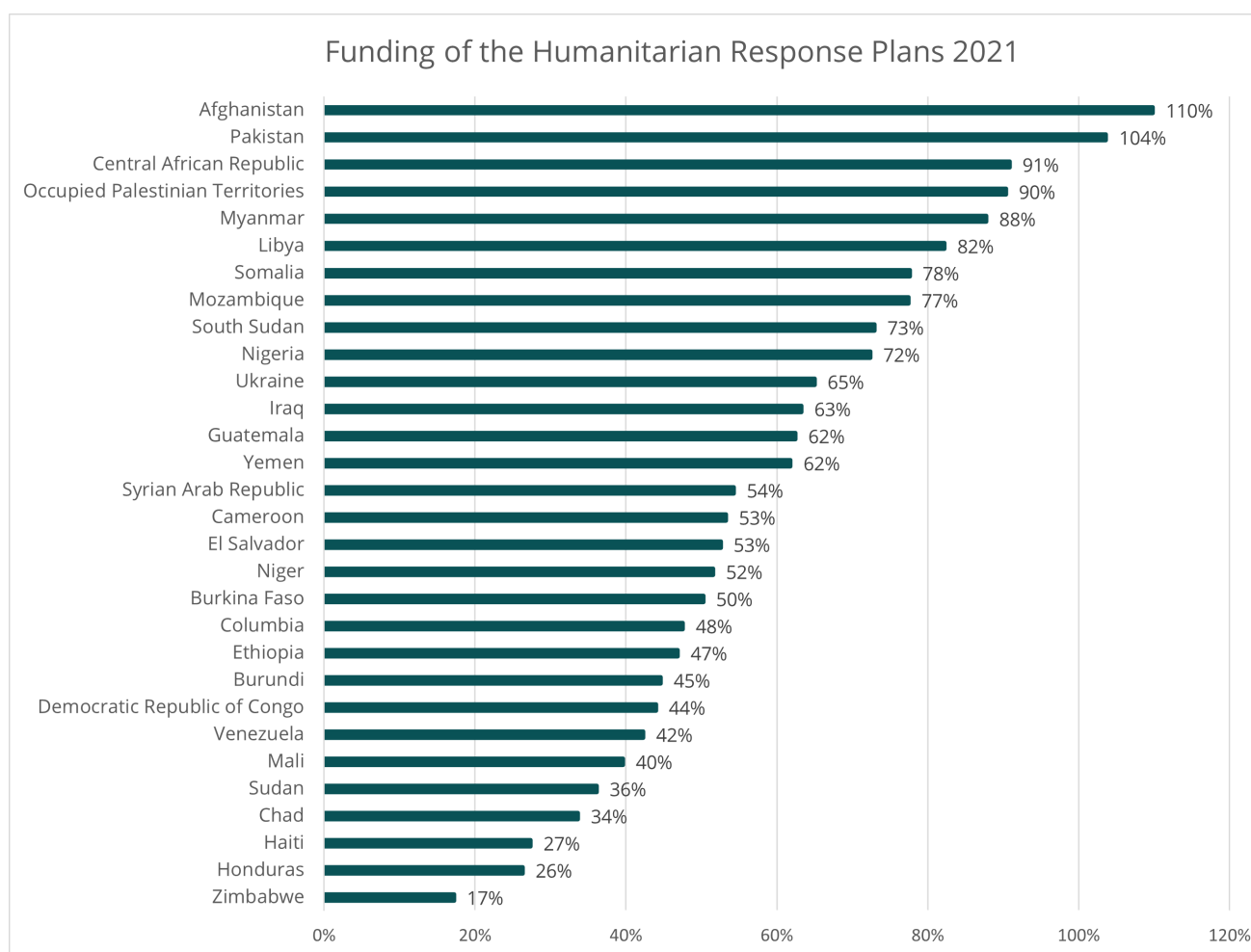


Figure 2: Financing of country-specific Humanitarian Response Plans 2021
 Source: OCHA FTS 2022, Report of the Federal Government on German humanitarian aid abroad 2018-2021

As a CHA survey of more than 200 international stakeholders reveals, a clear majority of the practitioner, experts and government representatives confirm that Germany is an honest broker – meaning a value- and principle-oriented donor – in the field of humanitarian aid (Figure 3).

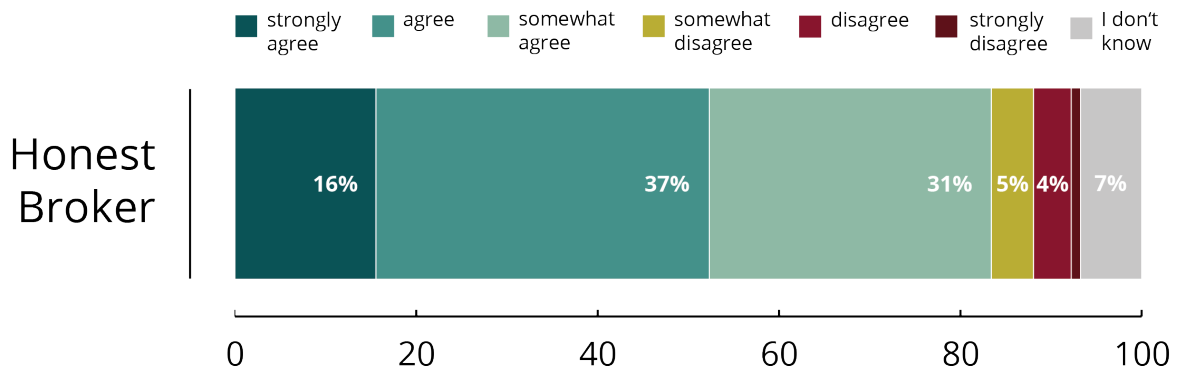


Figure 3: Is Germany an honest broker in humanitarian affairs?
Source: Hövelmann and Südhoff 2022

Interviews conducted as part of the CHA study also suggest that, on this basis, Germany is considered to have great potential to advance humanitarian aid as an honest mediator, moderator and designer on an international stage. Despite this, survey results indicate that only a minority of respondents are under the impression that Germany is making adequate use of this potential:

Only about one in three respondents found that Germany's role as a shaper in the humanitarian system is in line with its role as a top financier (Figure 4). When asked about Germany's relevance compared to other top 10 donors, Berlin now plays in a similar league to Sweden or Norway. Even so, as a player, Berlin is still far behind traditional top players such as the USA, the EU Commission, and Great Britain. Whereas as a payer, it has long overtaken the latter two players (Figure 5).

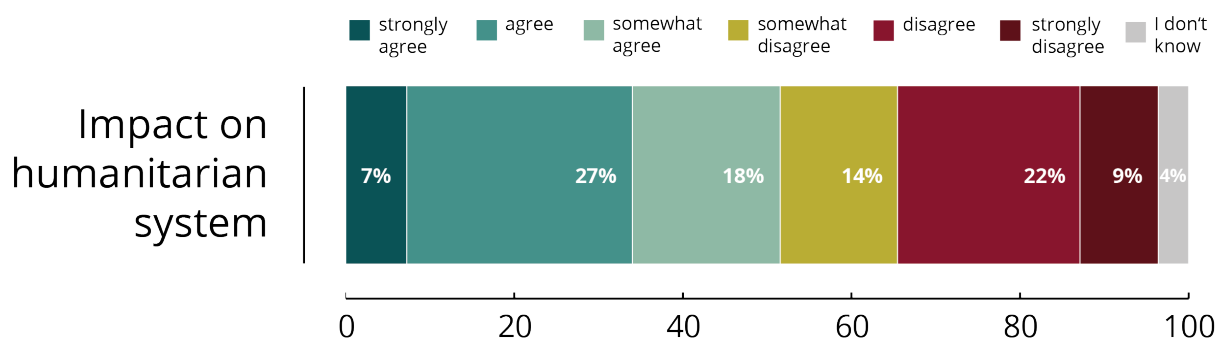


Figure 4: Is Germany's role as the second largest humanitarian donor reflected in its impact on the humanitarian system?
Source: Hövelmann und Südhoff 2022

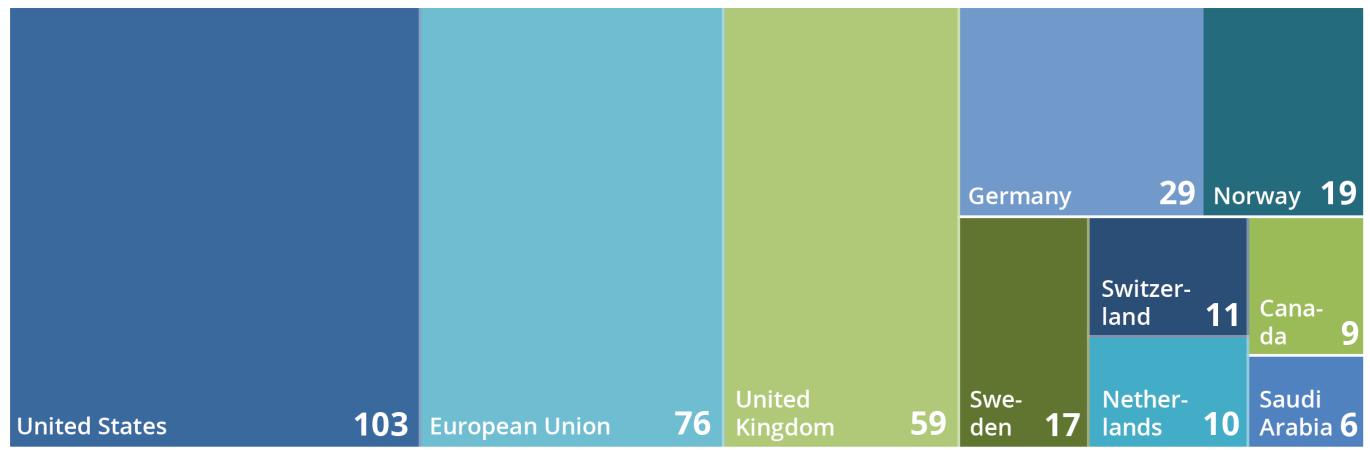


Figure 5: How influential do you perceive the following donors in shaping humanitarian policy? (based on “very influential” answers)
Source: Hövelmann und Südhoff 2022

The CHA study portrays a mixed picture of Germany's role as a shaping force in humanitarian aid and an effective protector of humanitarian space and principles. This perception is also evident in Germany's thematic commitment. A positive example is Germany's commitment to forward-looking, anticipatory aid as an instrument for more efficient, effective, cost-efficient and dignified aid. This priority has been appropriately highlighted in the Federal Government's report, and Germany has defined and implemented clear international financing requirements, making it a good example of how Germany can strategically develop international aid and advance necessary reforms.

Nevertheless, international experts complain that it has thus far been regarded as a singular example and that “Germany lacks a profile”, as one donor representative summarised. From an international perspective, Germany's latest thematic priority on anticipatory assistance came close to a role model of how Germany should play and move issues in the future. It should be noted, however, that no interlocutor was able to name a second topic that had advanced Germany similarly strategically and effectively in recent years.

The survey on the German humanitarian profile conducted in 2022 also confirms the perception (Figure 6): The great diversity of the numerous thematic mentions underlines how diffuse Germany's profile remains in the outlining of aid. A European donor representative summed up this point in the CHA interview as follows: “Germany has not yet either the wideness or the depth. They cannot yet deal with all key topics, and they have not yet the depth to move some topics.”

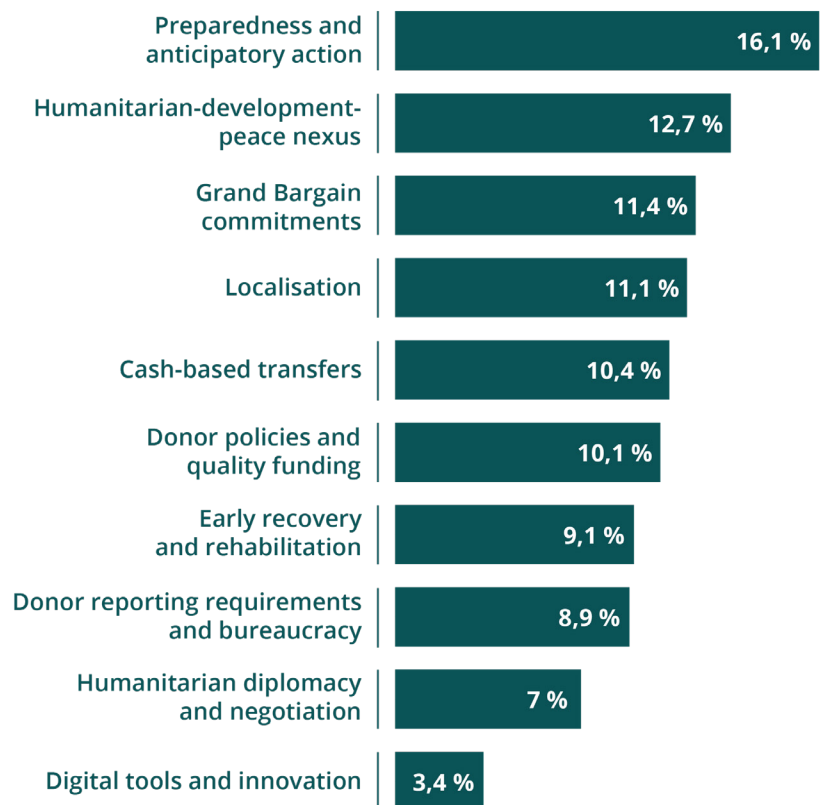


Figure 6: In which policy areas have German public actors been particularly influential?
Source: Hövelmann und Südhoff 2022

Significantly, this perception also applies to the three planned priority topics of the German Humanitarian Strategy 2019-2023, humanitarian access / IHL, innovations and forgotten crises, which barely any interlocutor has perceived as a strategic and priority topic pursued by Germany.

This dilemma is also reflected in the remarks summarised under II. on Germany's role in the Grand Bargain. Within the GB as well as internationally, Germany is perceived as an actor that today is occupied and present in humanitarian processes and forums, unlike in the past. Germany is playing a much more active role than before in moderating and communicating relevant processes. However, which policies and relevant reforms Germany itself would like to promote in these processes often remain unclear. An interviewee who is closely following the GB said: "I'm not sure what policies they are pursuing and where their priorities are."

This problem is linked to resource issues, among other things: "Germany cannot sustain the same level of leadership as the United Kingdom with this little staff," says a donor representative. In 2022, three humanitarian units with a total of 66 posts (including part-time positions) were created at the Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), of which, according to the GFFO, around 5% were vacant in Autumn 2022. In addition, there are nine clerks in the newly created Federal Office for Foreign Affairs (BfAA). The humanitarian units (Unit (S09) and in the Policy field (S07 & S08)) were programmatically responsible for a record budget of €3.2 billion in 2022. A total of 75 posts, i.e. 0.61% of the total staff (12,346 employees), were thus in charge of around 40% of the Federal Foreign Office's total budget (€8.05 billion).

Even prior to the record budget in 2022, Germany's personnel ratio in relation to the subsidies for which they were responsible was only a fraction compared to other donor nations (see Table 2). In 2022, the gap is likely to have expanded drastically, as Germany has implemented a budget of € 3.2 billion with 75 employees, so the personnel/funding ratio in Berlin has deteriorated again from € 27.9 million per employee in 2020 to € 42.7 million in 2022. When compared to the staff of other donors listed in tabular form and assumed to be stable until 2022 for the reference year 2020, this indicates that last year a donor comparable to Sweden invested five times more staff per Euro deployed, the US contributed six times more staff and DG ECHO 14 times more staff in relation to the humanitarian aid it deploys.

Humanitarian Aid	Total funds (rounded) in million Euros 2020	Number of Employees	Funds per employee (rounded) in million
Germany	2.137	76,5	27,9
Sweden	405,9	45	9,0
USA	4.972	750	6,6
Great Britain	1.762	150	11,7
EU Commission	1.823	600	3,0

Table 2: Comparison of funds per employee at the Federal Foreign Office with other humanitarian donor states in 2020
Source: Bundestag 2020

German embassies are relatively small, especially in countries where the biggest humanitarian crises are raging.

Christoph Heusgen

Another problem is the centralisation of all German personnel in Berlin, while DG ECHO alone employs more than 400 humanitarian experts in missions abroad. These experts, like their British and US colleagues, thus acquire the necessary expertise and are represented in the decisive committees, which today often meet in the crisis contexts themselves. But it is precisely there that Germany is very weakly represented, as Christoph Heusgen, former foreign and security policy advisor to Chancellor Merkel, complains: "German embassies are relatively small, especially in countries where the biggest humanitarian crises are raging."

In this context, the rotation principle in the German diplomatic service, which is still common, is also of little help, often leading to a loss of know-how and a lack of continuity in content. This was confirmed to the CHA several times by donor representatives in New York and Brussels. For

example: "How do you ensure a continued process and progress on the topics moved during an EU council presidency, when shortly after no counterpart on the German side is anymore in place?" asked a donor representative from Brussels. Actors in New York saw a limited continuity on the German side since the beginning of its membership in the UN Security Council as a problem: "This work is very personal, if you don't build ties and trust, this won't work here. If you leave after three years, it is not worth posting somebody here". Lack of knowledge management is also a recurring complaint in confidential conversations, also by representatives of German civil society with regard to the Federal Foreign Office.

Limiting staff rotation in the very specific humanitarian sector would be beneficial.

Limiting staff rotation in the very specific humanitarian sector would therefore be beneficial, for example, following the quantitative model of Canada (wherein some core staff of humanitarian personnel do not take part in rotation) or following a rotation model based on the Swiss model (the staff is rotated only between thematically related fields) if the previous model of the British Department for International Development (DfID) of full personnel continuity is not a realistic option.

The questions posed about gender aspects in German humanitarian aid (Questions IV/1) and international sanctions regimes (Questions IV/3) can illustrate Germany's current strengths and weaknesses in the policy area:

A mixed picture emerges for the issue of gender and gender-based violence, as it has not only been named as a priority in the context of a "feminist foreign policy" since 2022, but Germany had already set itself the agenda as a priority for its membership of the UN Security Council 2019-2020. However, the results achieved so far in this area are assessed in a very differentiated way:

At policy level, for example, regarding Germany's initiative on gender-based violence in crisis areas in the UN Security Council, international experts criticise the lack of a strategic approach to the topic: "It then has been an issue, but there was no follow-up," criticises a UN representative. The chapter on humanitarian assistance in the Federal Foreign Office's guidelines for a feminist foreign policy also reads less as a strategic orientation towards ambitious goals in the field of gender and appears more as a series of activities.

In terms of programming, this focus also did not lead to transparent funding. For local women-led organisations, for example, the financing of gender-relevant programmes mainly referred to contributions to international bodies such as the UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), which also support corresponding projects. Whereas only very limited funds reach local civil society women's rights organisations or gender-sensitive national humanitarian NGOs (Latimir und Mollett 2018). Moreover, there is evidence that even the lion's share of the already low funding for combating gender-based violence (GBV) is concentrated in the hands of large, male-led NGOs who rarely work in a gender-sensitive manner (Bennett 2019; GBV AoR 2018). Cultural norms and beliefs hinder efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls (Martin und de la Puente 2019).

In principle, the introduction of the Gender-Age-Disability Marker (GAD) should be noted positively with regard to the Federal Government. The Federal Foreign Office was the first major humanitarian donor to introduce such a marker for measurement and control purposes in order to support its implementing partners with planning and implementation of humanitarian projects that take these criteria into account. On the one hand, the introduced marker stands for the Federal Government's great commitment to inclusive assistance, also with regard to people with disabilities. The German Government became the largest donor for the development and dissemination of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusive Humanitarian Assistance. On the other hand, it would be fundamental to communicate more actively about and sensitise towards the marker, which is still unknown to many actors, and to become even more involved in international committees on the topics of gender, disability and age.

This difference between an achieved output and ensuring that it achieves a corresponding outcome through the use of human and time resources is therefore confirmed in this topic as well as in various other initiatives of German humanitarian aid (Südhoff und Milasiute 2021). Representatives of civil society involved in the development of the humanitarian gender strategy by the Federal Foreign Office criticised it for being relatively vague and lacking transparency in the process.

Sanction regimes play a significant political role, but their impact on humanitarian aid can be problematic.

The question of the role of international sanctions regimes (Questions IV/3) is very relevant in humanitarian crises. While these regimes play a significant political role, their impact on humanitarian aid can be problematic with regards to the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality and can further cause great human suffering. For example, in Afghanistan after the Taliban came to power or the US sanctions in the Syria context. Blanket sanctions, particularly in the financial sector, can make it impossible for humanitarian organisations to finance aid programmes, pay salaries and deliver relief supplies to a crisis region.

The Federal Government is to be commended for having repeatedly tried to remedy this situation by granting exemptions for German aid organisations. However, better coordination between the relevant German institutions would help ensure that export licenses are issued quickly. Additionally, national derogations are not sufficient. For example, despite the humanitarian exceptions in Germany, there is no guarantee that German and international banks will be willing to transfer funds, taking into account US sanctions. Aid organisations also avoid involvement in relevant crisis regions due to fear of prosecution and as part of risk mitigation, even if their activities appear legally feasible and justifiable. Likewise, financial institutions sometimes decline to establish business relationships with sanctioned crisis countries due to a lack of business interest and to minimise risk, despite the legal feasibility.

The introduction of the new UN Security Council Resolution 2664, which provides an overarching humanitarian exemption for all UN sanctions regimes, is therefore very welcome. However, for it to be effective, it must also be incorporated at the European and national levels. This is also an area in which Germany could use its diplomatic influence and allocate personnel to bring about the necessary political adjustments. As an influential player, Germany has the potential to make a significant impact in this regard.

2. Grand Bargain (Questions I)

The first Grand Bargain process until 2021 has sparked important discussions, but rarely changed processes sustainably at the macro level.

The Grand Bargain succeeded in initiating a more inclusive and comprehensive humanitarian reform process than ever before, bringing together four humanitarian actor groups: governments, International Organisations (IOs), NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement (RCRC). The first GB process until 2021 had already sparked important discussions and often initiated pilot projects and programmes at the micro level, thus identifying potentials of great relevance, partly driven or supported by the German Federal Government. Nevertheless, until then, the GB had very rarely changed processes sustainably at the macro level or developed systemic relevance through substantial reforms (Metcalf-Hough et al. 2022; Südhoff und Milasiute 2021).

Accordingly, with regard to many of its initiatives, the first GB process remained predominantly output-oriented and rarely achieved comprehensive outcomes. This also applied to Germany's public engagement in the GB until 2021. The Federal Government's large humanitarian commitment has been accompanied by an increase in multi-year funding, simpler reporting procedures and approaches to "anticipatory aid" with the potential to make the humanitarian system more effective and efficient. Nevertheless, German initiatives only rarely went beyond pilot status.

Subsequently, a refocusing of the reform project on strategic issues, political momentum and a few, measurable reform projects were discussed, which are now being implemented in the GB 2.0. **Germany's role in the GB 2.0 has taken on a new quality**, for it is part of the steering group as a representative of state donors and thus acts in the highest body of the GB since January 2022. Both in interviews and in a recent survey, Germany's commitment to the GB was perceived positively. This applies in particular to Germany's role in the coordination and development of processes in the GB, including hosting a retreat of the steering group in Berlin. Adding to that, Germany is also financing the upcoming progress report. International stakeholders, however, would like to see Germany significantly more engaged in the substance of the previously mentioned topics and political caucuses. The related statement of a participant is as follows: "For the Germans it seems to be all about processes, but which policies shall be moved in these?"

This deficit can be illustrated in the context of the new structure and working methods of the GB 2.0. In essence, four things are to be done differently within the framework of the GB 2.0 from July 2021 on:

- a focus on implementation and integration of the results of the ten GB workstreams
- the definition of only two future “key priorities”: localisation and quality funding
- the establishment of a more strategic, political format on the prioritised topics through thematic political caucuses with clear timeframes and goals
- the formation of National Reference Groups at the local level to enable participatory monitoring of progress.

The first three defined topics of the political caucuses were:

- Cash coordination
- The role of intermediaries in support of locally-led action
- Concrete steps on quality funding

What may seem to be technical questions at first glance are actually highly political and very reform-relevant issues, in which the political interests of donors and the organisational interests of aid organisations play a decisive and usually blocking role (Südhoff 2021).

The clear focus on central political hurdles overall has done well for the GB 2.0. Nevertheless, the actual progress in the political caucus was different (Hövelmann 2022):

Caucus on the role of intermediaries: The aim was to define the role and function of intermediaries (predominantly German and international NGOs and UN organisations) more precisely, and to formulate concrete proposals on how they should make better use of their position to support and empower local aid organisations and push back their own organisational interests.

This more normative approach to the relationship between donors, intermediaries and local organisations in the areas of equity, recognition and transparency contrasted with the tangible or quantifiable objectives of the other two caucuses. Lacking a clear objective, the process was slow and the voluntary commitments formulated in the outcome document were similarly perceived as “not very productive,” according to statements by those involved.

The proportion of funds transferred to local actors via one intermediary decreased in 2021. Direct support for local actors equaled only 0.02%.

The goal formulated in the 1.0 process of giving 25% of global aid funds ‘as directly as possible’ to local actors also faded into the background due to the focus on intermediaries. An analysis shows that in 2021, signatories cut their contribution to directly funded local and national actors in half, from 4% in the previous year to 2% (Metcalf-Hough et al., 2022b). In Germany, too, the proportion of funds transferred to local actors via a maximum of one intermediary decreased in 2021 (2019: 26% / 2021: 22.5%) (Bundestag 2020; Auswärtiges Amt 2022). Direct support for local actors equaled only 0.02% (Bundestag 2020), whereby Germany primarily supports the already established structures of the humanitarian system.

Relating to more locally-led aid, Germany could instead advertise for certain approaches and, as a donor, implement them itself, such as:

- a) the provision of project-independent funds for the network development of local organisations, consortia or locally managed pool funds
- b) the financing of coordinating positions within the National Reference Groups of the GB 2.0

c) the promotion of participation of local actors in coordinating meetings and conferences to enable more equal access.

d) As the second-largest donor, Germany also has the power to initiate a considerable leveraging effect in scenarios where, for example, along the implementation chain funding agreements require the transfer of administrative costs or quality funding (see chapter Localisation).

Caucus on Quality Funding: The aim was to significantly increase the share of flexible, predictable and multiannual financing for humanitarian aid, as it has been proven to be much more effective and efficient.

Under the leadership of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the DG ECHO, agreements have been developed for quality funding. According to analyses, the volume of long-term, earmarked and flexible funding has increased, but large aid organisations benefit especially from this. In addition to that, the extent to which international NGOs and UN organisations pass on their flexibly received funds just as flexibly to local partner organisations remains mostly non-transparent.

In its final document, the caucus was primarily able to reach agreements to increase multiannual funding, which can substantially increase the predictability of aid. About a dozen of the largest humanitarian donors have pledged to make substantial progress by the end of 2023.

Overall, progress has been limited in terms of flexible resources (GB target: 30%). This was partially linked to a lack of commitment on the donor side. Even though the caucus was already well-staffed by USAID and the DG ECHO, Germany's participation would have been desirable. The German Government has recently significantly increased its long-term humanitarian funding (2021:78%) and is thus playing a pioneering role internationally. However, the Federal Foreign Office could have further supported the international process by sharing its experience

The German Government has recently significantly increased its long-term humanitarian funding and is thus playing a pioneering role internationally.

Outcomes of caucuses at halftime

Caucus on cash coordination

1

A basic model laying out principles and functions of cash coordination was developed and adopted. This formalises that...

- ➔ at country level, a cross-sectoral and cross-cluster coordination group is responsible for overall cash coordination in collaboration with the global Cash Working Group;
- ➔ depending on the context, OCHA or UNHCR (for refugee contexts) as chairs play a central role in coordination;
- ➔ on country-level a setup of co-chairs, with one seat preferably be taken by a local actor is envisioned.

Caucus on quality funding

2

It was agreed that multi-year funding...

- ➔ is the preferred funding modality, especially in protracted crises;
- ➔ should include at least some flexible arrangements to enable recipient organisations to respond efficiently and effectively;
- ➔ be channelled as close to direct delivery as possible, and that intermediaries such as UN agencies play a central role in this process.

Caucus on the role of intermediaries

3

Outcomes and commitments for different groups of actors have been formulated to enable equitable partnerships.

Intermediary organisations commit vis-à-vis national and local stakeholders to...

- ➔ implementation in partnership with local/national actors as the preferred mode of delivery;
- ➔ increased quality and quantity of funding to local & national partners;
- ➔ transparency of funding and budgets

National and local actors commit to

- ➔ proactively propose themselves as partners for in-country coordination leadership roles

Donors commit to

- ➔ stipulate equitable partnerships in their selection processes and contractual provisions;
- ➔ increase the share and flexibility of funding as directly as possible to national and local actors.

Figure 7: Results of caucuses at mid-term 2021

Source: Hövelmann 2022

with more flexible programme-based regional funding approaches, which are more effective than small-scale project funding. Additionally, the Office could have significantly expanded its own commitment in this area of its funding practice.

Caucus on Cash Coordination: The GB 2.0 has made very precise progress in addressing the longstanding debate about improved coordination around cash assistance, which has hindered numerous aid operations and accounts for around one-fifth of global humanitarian aid. However, this progress also challenges the traditional divisions and mandates of organisations, particularly among large aid organisations such as UNHCR, WFP, RCRC and INGOs. In February 2022, the directors of the workstream unanimously agreed on a future coordination process for cash assistance. The new model aims to make this process more reliable by either UN OCHA or UNHCR co-chairing the local coordination group on cash assistance in new crises, preferably along with a local organisation where possible.

While it remains to be seen, what conclusions the latest political **caucus on the localisation of humanitarian aid** will come to, it is essential to agree on clear targets for its conclusion. In addition, transparent and binding monitoring processes for the results achieved by all caucuses of the GB 2.0 must be agreed on and tracked, which the Federal Government should ensure.

The question of a more relevant role for Germany in the GB 2.0 is also linked to human resources. The anchoring of the GB in the coalition agreement of the German government could be an important instrument and argument that **the support of international humanitarian policy processes in the Federal Foreign Office must be staffed accordingly** (see 1. On Germany's Role (Questions IV)).

Germany has positioned itself in favour of a 3.0 process.

With only a few months on the clock, the focus is now on potential research of the GB process. Germany has positioned itself in favour of a 3.0 process. This is particularly noteworthy, as it has the political weight to continue the process of cooperation with others. In order to achieve that successfully on the German side, however, concrete changes are needed at various levels of actors:

Recommendations for a Grand Bargain 3.0

Bundestag

In the coalition agreement, the Federal Government not only committed itself to the objectives of the GB, but also to disbursing one-third of the funds as flexible funding and to further expanding the localisation of its aid. In order to meet this goal, the Bundestag should:

- Ensure the predictability of a stable budget of at least € 3.2 billion compared to 2022 and reduce the practice of “over-budgeted funds” promised late in the year for predictable, ongoing major crises.
- Make sufficient funds available for multiannual periods through commitment appropriations and advocate flexible resources and an extension of flexible programme funding.
- Equip Division S in the Federal Foreign Office with more human resources for strategic work so that Germany can have a leading role in the reform project and help shape a more efficient and effective humanitarian system.

Foreign Office

The Foreign Office has become an important supporter of the GB. For further and future processes, the Federal Foreign Office should:

- Clarify substantive priorities and engage in the two main topics of the GB 2.0 and beyond as a driver of reform.

- As a key actor, ensure that the GB's obligations, e.g. to promote local partners through international aid organisations and to divert administrative costs are a requirement for financing processes in order to maximise the impact of these efforts.
- Aim to streamline bureaucratic processes of project management in order not to hinder efficiency gains and to facilitate budgetary access for smaller and local aid organisations. The international dissemination of the leaner 8+3 reporting format would also be central to this.
- Ensure better predictability of its funds, increase the share of uncommitted funds and ensure that all financing partners benefit equally from flexible financing (see chapter Localisation).
- Adapt human resources planning to the prioritised position of other top humanitarian donors, who invest far more of their existing staff in humanitarian units to ensure the quality of their programmes and policy contributions.

NGOs

With regard to German civil society engagement, the question arises around how initiated processes, such as the dialogue on the role of intermediaries, can be continued and influence international debates in a more targeted manner. Moreover, NGOs should:

- Proactively engage in the further course of the debate and work towards a GB 3.0 process, including clear objectives and fewer priorities.
- Implement the agreed targets of the GB and report transparently, for example, to meet the target of passing on 25% of their funds directly to local actors, including high-quality financing and administrative costs, which is often missed by NGOs.
- Critically evaluate their organisational bureaucracy requirements and risk appetite. Specifically, it is important to question the delegation of operational and programmatic risks to local partners and make risk management processes more transparent for local partners and donors.

3. International Organisations and Local Actors (Questions II)

International aid organisations are now scrutinised more systematically if they plan to implement their aid programmes without local involvement.

The transformation of humanitarian aid and the humanitarian system into locally anchored, responsible and participatory aid has been recognised as a top priority in the international debate for many years. On the one hand, this has led to a cultural change in the conception of humanitarian aid: International aid organisations are now scrutinised more systematically if they plan to implement their aid programmes without local involvement – not only by institutional donors but also by local emergency services, those affected by crises, and their own community (see Pledge for Change 2022). Local and national organisations, particularly in the Pacific and Asian regions, as well as in Latin America and the Americas, are already emerging stronger from this process.

Then again, the change in culture and conception has so far had a limited impact on:

- a) the real access of local actors to financial support of aid and donor institutions
- b) the partnership approach between international aid organisations and local organisations, which often continues to be characterised by a service relationship
- c) the distribution of risks and their management in humanitarian operations and their institutional support, which are predominantly delegated by donor institutions and international aid organisations to national organisations, especially in complex crises and conflicts.

Another challenge in this context is the cooperation of the international humanitarian system with local forces in conflict areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Syria and Ukraine. In these areas, there is a tension between claims to neutrality and local roots, which must be addressed even more strongly in the coming debates (Anderson et al. 2022; Barter und Sumlut 2022; Slim 2022).

The GB and its resumption, the GB 2.0, continue to be criticised by local humanitarian actors and their networks for their poor performance in the practical implementation of agreed objectives regarding localisation. In financial terms, for example, only 1.2% of institutional funds worldwide were allocated directly to national and local actors in 2021, compared to at least 3% in 2020 (Urquhart 2022, p.18).

Currently, this disparity is also evident in Ukraine. Although Ukrainian actors account for about two-thirds of all humanitarian forces listed by UN OCHA (UN OCHA 2022b) and implement about half of all missions operationally, they recently received just under one-fifth of the humanitarian funds directly from the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UN OCHA 2022b). With USD 13.7 billion in 2021, more than half (53%) of global institutional funds went to UN organisations, and international NGOs received almost a fifth (19%) (Urquhart 2022, p.17).

The funds allocated by Germany to local actors directly most recently stood at 0.02%. Germany also missed the GB's goal of allocating at least 25% of humanitarian aid to local actors via a maximum of one intermediate organisation (an "intermediary") in 2021 with 22.5% and should urgently examine the relevant causes, for the share has also been declining for two years instead of rising continuously as hoped.

International organisations and NGOs differ in their approach to passing on at least 25% of their funds directly to local actors, and often fall short of meeting this goal. Administrative lump sums received by international aid organisations from donors are shared with local partners only to a very limited extent, and investments in local capacities remain limited or non-transparent. Due to the lack of direct access to institutional resources, local forces are still dependent on cooperation, especially with UN organisations, but also with international NGOs. Contrary to the GB 2.0 objectives, this cooperation continues to be characterised by major bureaucratic hurdles, which international actors use for traceability and transparency reasons in order to reduce their risk of complaints about the projects by their institutional donors as much as possible (Localisation Panel CHA Annual Conference 2022).

Despite far-reaching discussions about more efficient and more equitable risk-sharing within the framework of the GB and GB 2.0, have so far had little effect in practice. The existing risk aversion, among institutional donors, international organisations and NGOs, as well as a lack of trust between the parties involved, continue to hinder the partnership-based, equal cooperation with local forces according to the Principles of Partnership (Global Humanitarian Platform 2007). Local leadership is still rare, partly due to the aforementioned lack of initial allocation of humanitarian funds to local actors.

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There are, however, isolated pilot projects that break up this humanitarian practice and place projects into local hands. These also include greater involvement of those affected by the crisis. In German practice, the piloted implementation of smaller amounts of funding via missions abroad offers an interesting approach that could also promote the decentralisation of German humanitarian aid.

Nonetheless, the integration of the typically restrained and risk-averse, yet well-organised and transparent international humanitarian system with ad hoc generated civil society initiatives that function according to their own mechanisms remains a challenge (National Network of Local Philanthropy Development in Ukraine 2022; Stoddard et al. 2022).

Pooled funds are also an opportunity to promote local actors, also supported by the GB. However, this requires constant monitoring and further reforms of these funds. The UN-led, country-based pooled funds (CBPFs), some of which already distribute considerable amounts to local actors, should prioritise local and national actors – as far as possible in terms of a needs-oriented

direction – in order to reduce sub-contracting of local and national organisations by international actors. For selected CBPFs, concrete percentages for local and national actors could be specified on a pilot basis. Following a public evaluation, this model should be adapted and extended. The participation of local actors in the CBPF processes should also be expanded in terms of personnel and structure as well as the promotion of funds managed by NGOs if they substantially support local actors. In particular, and where available, mechanisms initiated and managed by national and local actors should be supported.

In addition to pooled funds and pilot projects, individual UN organisations and international NGOs are also currently developing robust “localisation and partnership strategies” whose implementation they want to track using key performance indicators (KPIs). According to local actors, these should at least include (Trócaire 2022):

- Equal sharing of indirect costs
- Capacity strengthening as a budget line in the partner budget
- Joint negotiations of local and international actors with institutional donors and improved visibility of local partners
- Involvement of local partners and stakeholders in all aspects of project planning

To implement these recommendations, organisations can rely on comprehensive measurement tools, for example from NEAR 2020, as well as on the recommendations for action of the GB “intermediary caucus.” It is essential that organisations and donors, such as the German government, increase their efforts to put these principles into practice. Additionally, there needs to be a significant improvement in monitoring results. Many national and local NGO networks would like to see an incentive system for humanitarian donors to implement the impact targets of the GB 2.0 by their international partner organisations. This could include conditioning/privileging aid programmes according to the criterion of whether local partnerships have been adequately taken into account, as well as the mandatory transfer of flexible funds (quality funding) and administrative lump sums to local partners based on robust reporting by international partners on the objectives of the GB (Charta for Change 2022).

Many national and local NGO networks would like to see an incentive system for humanitarian donors to implement the impact targets of the GB 2.0 by their international partner organisations.

With regard to evaluating its own performance, the German government can also draw inspiration from the localisation strategies of other countries and donors. There have been and continue to be positive developments in recent years, especially in the USA (USAID 2022), Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the EU. The Federal Government should also continue to work on the measures mentioned in the GB 2.0. In addition, the paper of the Global Mentoring Initiative (2021), provides detailed information and recommendations on donor measures. It also and above all includes its own direct cooperation with local actors, for example through networks such as the GB National Reference Groups, NGO Fora and C4C.

In order to create transparency concerning the flow of funds, the Federal Foreign Office should also publish annual data showing the amount that was transferred directly and indirectly to local and national actors and via which intermediaries (NGO, RK/RH, UN, CBPFs and other pooled funds). Additionally, the following steps with regard to improving the localisation practice of German humanitarian actors should be examined:

- Further development, explicit phrasing, and implementation of the “Proposals for the Implementation of the Localisation Agenda by the Federal Foreign Office and Intermediaries,” which the Federal Foreign Office has drawn up cooperating with civil society.
- Simplification of formal processes also for local actors through further international dissemination of the 8+3 reporting format developed under German leadership, which has brought clear advantages in the simplified reporting of NGOs, but whose dissemination among other donors is still faltering.

- Further development of the UN Partnership Portals, where local organisations can submit project ideas rather informally.
- Examination of an international certification for local civil society organisations to reduce the administrative burden on both the organisational and donor side.
- Examination of a “localisation marker” in project proposals and an exchange and reporting format with the aim of gradually implementing joint responsibility on the part of donors and intermediaries in a goal-oriented manner.
- Further development of local partnerships of German humanitarian organisations into consortium partnerships in the sense of an equal project partnership vs a service relationship as well as for better bundling of local capacities.

4. Growing Food Insecurity (Questions III)

The war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as the subsequent blockade of Ukrainian grain exports and the price surges on international agricultural markets, have brought attention to the world food crisis, but have also diverted attention from its structural causes. The events at the end of 2022 serve as an illustration of this problem.

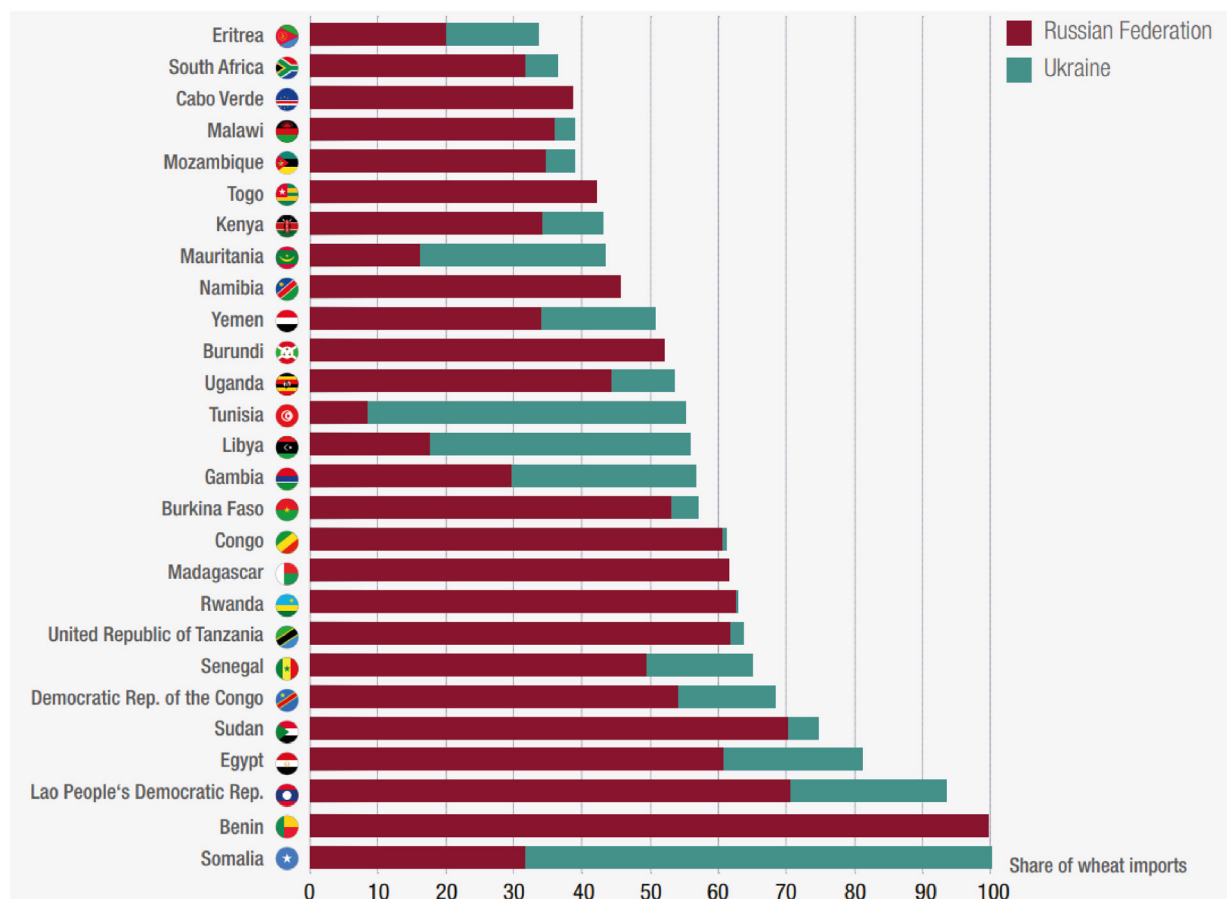


Figure 8: Wheat Dependence in African and Least Developed Countries
Source: UNCTAD 2022b

Rapid price increases since the beginning of the war in Ukraine have pushed the FAO's global food index to almost 160 points (see Figure 9); In particular, many of the poorest developing countries (Least Developed Countries) were affected by the absence of cereal exports from Ukraine and

FAO food price index

Year	Month	Food Price Index	Meat	Dairy	Cereals	Vegetables Oils	Sugar
2005		67.4	71.8	77.2	60.8	64.4	61.2
2006		72.6	70.5	73.1	71.2	70.5	91.4
2007		94.3	76.9	122.4	100.9	107.3	62.4
2008		117.5	90.2	132.3	137.6	141.1	79.2
2009		91.7	81.2	91.4	97.2	94.4	112.2
2010		106.7	91.0	111.9	107.5	122.0	131.7
2011		131.9	105.3	129.9	142.2	156.5	160.9
2012		122.8	105.0	111.7	137.4	138.3	133.3
2013		120.1	106.2	140.9	129.1	119.5	109.5
2014		115.0	112.2	130.2	115.8	110.6	105.2
2015		93.0	96.7	87.1	95.9	89.9	83.2
2016		91.9	91.0	82.6	88.3	99.4	111.6
2017		98.0	97.7	108.0	91.0	101.9	99.1
2018		95.9	94.9	107.3	100.8	87.8	77.4
2019		95.1	100.0	102.8	96.6	83.2	78.6
2020		98.1	95.5	101.8	103.1	99.4	79.5
2021		125.7	107.7	119.1	131.2	164.9	109.3
2022		143.7	118.9	142.5	154.7	187.8	114.5
2021	December	133.7	111.0	129.0	140.5	178.5	116.4
2022	January	135.6	112.1	132.6	140.6	185.9	112.7
	February	141.2	113.9	141.5	145.3	201.7	110.5
	March	159.7	119.3	145.8	170.1	251.8	117.9
	April	158.4	121.9	146.7	169.7	237.5	121.5
	May	158.1	122.9	144.2	173.5	229.2	120.4
	June	154.7	125.9	150.2	166.3	211.8	117.3
	July	140.6	124.1	146.5	147.3	168.8	112.8
	August	137.6	121.1	143.4	145.6	163.3	110.5
	September	136.0	120.3	142.7	147.9	152.6	109.7
	October	135.4	116.8	139.3	152.3	151.3	108.6
	November	135.0	115.2	137.6	150.1	154.7	114.4
	December	132.4	113.8	139.1	147.3	144.4	117.2

Figure 9: Food and Agriculture Organization, Food Price Index
Source: FAO 2022

The Global Humanitarian Overview 2023 predicts the biggest food crisis of modern times for 2023.

partly Russia, as well as the surges in the price of food and energy in the basic needs of their populations. The situation is particularly concerning for the 47 Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) and 38 energy net importer countries. As a result, the Global Humanitarian Overview 2023 (UN OCHA 2022) predicts the biggest food crisis of modern times for 2023. Forecasts are substantial, despite a drastic decline in world market prices in the second half of 2022, pointing to the underlying causes of the global food crisis.

In December 2022, world market prices for agricultural products had fallen significantly again, partially due to the resumption of Ukrainian grain exports, and were even below the pre-war level with an index of around 132 points. On the one hand, the focus on price surges in the wake of the Ukraine war neglects the already sharp rise in food prices, which are still around 40% higher than in 2020. On the other hand, numerous countries of the Global South continue to suffer massively from real price increases:

For example, Egypt continued to pay almost twice as much for wheat imports in autumn 2022 compared to 2020, while Ethiopia almost tripled the figure with 20.4 million people currently in need of food aid (WFP 2022). The reason for the persistently very high import prices is a strong appreciation of the US dollar against the respective currencies of up to 176%, according to UNCTAD (2022a).

These recent developments in the world food crisis highlight the fundamental structural challenge of high dependence on imports and fragility in the food supply of developing countries. External

and extraneous factors such as exchange rate fluctuations, conflict- or climate-related defaults by large agricultural exporters, and food speculation can thus exacerbate or even trigger hunger crises in regions that once enjoyed a significant degree of food sovereignty due to substantial domestic agricultural production. This fragility, combined with the already drastic consequences of climate change – as is currently clearly visible in the Horn of Africa or in Pakistan – emphasises the need for greater **efforts and investments by developing countries** in this sector (as has been promised internationally for many years). At the same time, industrialised countries must prioritise food security issues in development and trade matters through coherent policy.

The **Federal Government's** latest initiatives in the context of global food insecurity, both domestically and as part of its commitment to the G7 Presidency, such as the 'Uniting for Global Food Security' Initiative and the Alliance for Global Food Security, are welcome. However, there is room for improvement in terms of coordination between the ministries to ensure more sustainable effects in cross-departmental coherence. The significant financial commitment, including the approval of the "Food Billion" in November 2022, is also very welcome from a financial perspective. However, the timing of the approval a few weeks before the end of the financial year is not conducive to the strategic use of the funds due to the "discharge pressure" that very few international organisations are able to meet through conducting internal transfers. It is important to conduct a well-founded analysis to identify the most effective partners for aid delivery in different crisis contexts with the available resources. Unfortunately, such an analysis cannot be provided with the approved "over-budgeted funds" at the end of the year and with the lack of personnel resources at the Federal Foreign Office. This promotes a questionable practice in which individual organisations were allocated up to one-third of German humanitarian aid in 2022, mainly due to the above-mentioned constraints.

It is important to conduct a well-founded analysis to identify the most effective partners for aid delivery in different crisis contexts with the available resources.

The world food crisis highlights the need for the Federal Government and Bundestag to uphold their promise in the coalition agreement and work towards a humanitarian budget that can be planned at an early stage, responsive to growing humanitarian needs and supported by personnel in the Federal Foreign Office. This would enable Germany to take a prominent role as a humanitarian payer and player in the future.

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