

A study of humanitarian financing for older people



HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

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Introduction

Older people form a significant proportion of those affected by crises and disasters. Approximately 11 per cent of the world's population comprises people over 60 years.¹ By 2050, this figure is expected to rise to 22 per cent.² The proportion of older people in the population varies from one area to another. In some areas, the population may be very young - in Burkina Faso, for example, those under 14 account for 46.4 per cent of the population. In other areas, high HIV prevalence, low birth rate, conflict or economic migration means there is a higher proportion of older people. In Georgia, for example, older people account for 19 per cent of the population. In IDP and refugee camps, the number of older people can be very high. For example, in Gulu District of Northern Uganda, 65 per cent of those remaining in camps in 2009 were over 60 years of age.

The fundamental principle of impartiality - that humanitarian assistance is provided according to need - requires humanitarian actors to ensure that they undertake an analysis of the needs of all vulnerable groups within an affected population and that levels of assistance provided to older people is commensurate with this analysis.

General aid provision to a population or to families does not exclude older people and assistance provided to women may also support older women's needs. Thus general aid provision meets some of the needs of older people. However, older people have particular needs related to their age that are not met by general aid provisions. Yet following the Asian tsunami disaster, research conducted by HelpAge International found that less than 1 per cent of funds provided by three major donors in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia had been explicitly directed at older people.³ In 2007, an inter-agency review of the inclusion of older people in humanitarian action conducted by HelpAge international on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group found continuing neglect of this vulnerable group.⁴

This study quantifies the humanitarian aid explicitly directed at older people through the UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and Flash Appeals in 12 humanitarian crises (see table on page 5) since 2007, covering a total of 1,912 projects.⁵

Key findings: levels of humanitarian aid delivered to older people

The study found a significant disparity between the needs of older people as a vulnerable group and the humanitarian assistance funded to meet that need. There remains minimal reference to older people within proposals compared with reference to other vulnerable groups.

- In five of the crises studied (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, OPT 2007 and 2008 and Honduras), not one project in any sector explicitly referred to or provided targeted assistance to older people.
- Only 93 (4.9 per cent) of the 1,912 projects analysed made any explicit reference to older people as a vulnerable group (compared with 619 or 32.0 per cent for women and children).

1. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2008, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

2. United Nations, 2008

3. Wells J, *Protecting and assisting older people in emergencies*, London, ODI Network Paper 53, 2005

4. As a result, a guidance document was produced by WHO and HelpAge *Humanitarian Action and Older Persons: An essential brief for humanitarian actors* endorsed by the IASC to support field actors. In November 2010, HelpAge will report back to the IASC Working Group on progress on the recommendations.

5. Flash Appeals are launched five to seven days after a disaster and identify needs, coordinate strategic response, and includes a list of relief and early recovery projects; they are revised four weeks after a crisis. The CAP is used for countries with protracted crises and identifies the priorities as assessed by the Humanitarian Coordinator.

- Of the 93 projects that mention older people, only 18 projects of the total of 1,912 (0.94 per cent) included activities that targeted older people.
- Just five of the projects (0.2 per cent) that included activities targeting older people were funded.
- In Afghanistan, general distribution projects aimed at supporting the whole population received 24.9 per cent of the total funding. Projects that specifically targeted women and children received an additional 70.6 per cent of the total funding.
- In the Philippines, general project funding accounted for 14.4 per cent of all funding. A further 62.7 per cent of funding was given to projects focusing on women and children. Funding for complementary services for older people accounted for just 1.5 per cent of total funding.
- In financial terms, the CAP and Flash appeals raised a total of US\$4.2 billion in the 12 crises. Of this, US\$8.2 million (0.2 per cent) was allocated to projects that included an activity that specifically targeted older people.

Sector specific findings

These findings are shown in Annex 1 on page 8.

- Some clusters did not highlight older people as a vulnerable group in need of support to access services in any project (camp coordination and camp management and agriculture), while others did not include any activities to address the specific vulnerabilities of older people (agriculture, camp coordination and camp management, food security and nutrition, and water and sanitation).
- Seven projects in the health sector targeted activities to older people.
- Five projects in the protection sector targeted older people. These were in Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and OPT. No reference to older people was made by the protection sector in the other nine crises.
- More consistent identification of older people appeared to correlate to contexts where HelpAge had some involvement, such as a humanitarian response programme, secondment of someone to the protection cluster or long-term work with an international partner organisation, or where a multi-sector assessment had specifically highlighted the needs of older people (as in the Haiti earthquake response).

Research methodology

The research examined projects within the United Nations Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), Flash Appeals, and Humanitarian Appeals for 12 major humanitarian crises since 2007⁶ to assess the degree to which older people's needs were highlighted and funded. The research analysed 1,912 projects – the total number submitted to these appeals.

The countries analysed and the rationale for their selection is outlined in the table below.

6. Analysis of humanitarian funding data for OPT is from CAPS 2007, while analysis for the other contexts is taken from 2008 and 2009.

Table 1: Humanitarian crises covered by the study

Country	CAP	Flash Appeals	Humanitarian Appeal
Afghanistan: * Case study 1 Conflict (2009)	✓		
Burkina Faso: Case study 2 Floods (2009)		✓	
El Salvador : Case study 3 Hurricane Ida (2009)		✓	
Georgia: Case study 4 Conflict (2008)		✓	
Haiti: Case study 5 Earthquake (2010)		✓	
Honduras: Case study 6 Floods/Landslides (2008)		✓	
Kenya: Case study 7 Conflict (2008, 2009)			✓
Kyrgyzstan: Case study 8 Conflict (2010)		✓	
Myanmar: Case study 9 Cyclone Nargis (2008)		✓	
oPt: Case study 10 Conflict (2007, 2008, 2009)	✓		
Pakistan: Case study 11 Floods (2010)			✓
Philippines: Case study 12 Tropical Storm Ketsana (2009)		✓	

The countries examined reflect a balance of rapid-onset natural disasters, complex political emergencies and geographic spread. While CAP, Flash, and Humanitarian Appeals⁷ represent only a part of donor funding in a crisis, they provide a good proxy indicator of the level of official funding. The appeal documents are approved by the Resident or Humanitarian Coordinator and additionally serve as the basis for funding applications to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and other donors. As such they are used as planning tools for donor support.⁸

Two publicly available databases track financial spending in the humanitarian sector: the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS). The primary data source used in this study was the FTS which tracks the amount of funding allocated to each emergency. CRS data was not included in the study because it provides information only until 2008 and it records funding to a whole country rather than a specific emergency. Additionally, reporting to the FTS is voluntary, however extensive cross-checking and data reconciliation is carried out before the figures are published.

To complement the financial data, the research also analysed the assessment data, and OCHA Situational Reports available for each of the crises in order to determine whether assessments referred to older people as a vulnerable group in need of specific assistance.⁹

7. A Humanitarian Appeal is similar to a CAP or Flash Appeal in that it outlines the emergency, provides financial requirements for assistance, and gives project descriptions for the disaster. There are, however, a number of reasons why the term "Humanitarian Appeal" is used instead of CAP or Flash, including but not limited to the following. Firstly, the Flash Appeal must be launched within the first week of a disaster while the CAP Appeal is an annual process. Therefore, appeals falling outside these parameters have different names. Secondly, the appeal document may require a separate narrative to emphasise a new disaster in a region. Thirdly, the host government may request for the appeal to be called by another name.

8. *Guidelines for Flash Appeals*, IASC CAP Sub-working group, October 2006
ochaonline.un.org/OchaLinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docid=25530 (viewed 8th August 2010)

9. Assessment data refers to OCHA situation reports and where available needs analysis conducted by cluster groups.

Commentary

Mainstreaming age and targeting assistance

This study shows that a disproportionately low amount of humanitarian assistance (five funded projects out of 1,912) is dedicated to ensuring that the needs of a particular vulnerable group in disaster-affected populations – older people – are met. Underlying this situation is a widespread assumption that older people's needs are addressed by general assistance programmes. Yet we know that targeted assistance for older people is required in key areas such as:

- appropriate healthcare (e.g. treatment for age-related chronic diseases, mental health conditions, visual impairment)
- nutritional support that takes into account specific age-related needs (e.g. for protein and micro-nutrients)
- appropriate livelihood support for people with reduced strength and mobility
- protection requirements (e.g. tracing and family reunification for older people separated by displacement; skipped-generation families).

HelpAge's experience shows that ageing issues need to be explicitly articulated to ensure that older people are able to access general services. For example, interviews with key humanitarian stakeholders in Haiti three months after the earthquake revealed that while general assistance programmes purported to assist older people, few felt that older people were in fact accessing their services.¹⁰ Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, the Rapid Protection Assessment highlighted that older people had difficulties in accessing food.¹¹

This study also shows that the considerable contribution that older people make to their families and communities in many emergencies – as carers of grandchildren and orphans, for example – is largely unrecognised in assessments and project design.

As an overall picture of humanitarian response, the research demonstrates that sectoral or cluster response that builds on the capacities of older people, as well as supporting their needs, remains inconsistent, unpredictable and far from proportionate to the scale of need.

The provision of targeted assistance to complement general programmes is already well established for children and women. There is substantial learning in the sector that can be used to design and inform complementary and/or tailored programming for older people. This research indicates that this learning has yet to be mainstreamed by the international humanitarian sector.

Needs assessments and vulnerable groups

Key complementary or tailored provision is knowledge of the location and needs of vulnerable groups and those who support them or are supported by them. Central to this is the gathering of sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) during needs assessments. This enables an analysis of the differing impact of crises and disasters on older men and women compared with other age groups, as well as a differentiation between the "old" (60 years plus) and the "oldest old" (80 years plus).

According to the IASC Phase II Cluster Evaluation, "hardly any documents at country level including needs assessment contain age and sex disaggregated data."¹² Furthermore, "cross

10. HelpAge International, *Humanitarian response for older people in Haiti: three months on* 2010, <http://www.helpage.org/publications/?ssearch=&adv=1&topic=0®ion=0&language=0&type=3/> (30 August 2010)

11. Kyrgyzstan protection cluster, *Kyrgyzstan protection cluster – rapid protection assessment, Osh and Jalalabat Oblasts 30, June – 3 July 2010*, [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2010.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/NROI-87D9C9-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2010.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/NROI-87D9C9-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf) (30 August 2010)

12. IASC, 2010, *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2, Synthesis Report*. pp.56

cutting issues (one of which is age) are rarely included appropriately at the needs assessment and diagnosis stage making it difficult for subsequent steps of the response to react to them adequately.¹³ HelpAge's experience supports the view of the Cluster Evaluation. In 2007, specific recommendations were made regarding the collection and use of age and disaggregated data in needs assessments and morbidity and mortality surveillance.¹⁴

The positive impact of recognising the needs of older people in needs assessments is seen in the Haiti earthquake response. The Rapid Initial Needs Assessment for Haiti (RINAH) carried out by the IASC and OCHA identified older people as one of the two most vulnerable groups affected by the earthquake. Analysis of the projects submitted as part of the Flash appeals for Haiti shows that over 5 per cent of funded projects referred to older people – while still very low, this is much higher than the other countries included in the study.

The way forward – recommendations

In view of the responsibility to ensure that principled and effective humanitarian assistance is based on a proper assessment of priority needs and that it supports all vulnerable and marginalised groups in accordance with their needs:

To the international humanitarian community:

- Ensure that needs assessment covers all vulnerable groups through the collection of sex and age disaggregated data in assessments and programme monitoring.
- Design and implement humanitarian response programmes that are appropriate to all sections of the population and put in place mechanisms to ensure that all people, young or old, can access relief and recovery assistance.
- Ensure heads of clusters are accountable to the humanitarian coordinator for ensuring that cross-cutting issues, including age, are included in all phases and aspects of a response.

To humanitarian donors:

Uphold the principles outlined in the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative by:

- Ensuring that project proposals have a contextual analysis that include an analysis of demographics and data broken down by sex and age, including men and women over 60 years.
- Supporting the humanitarian cluster system to improve its performance on cross-cutting issues, in particular the issue of age.
- Funding interventions to improve the global and field-level capacity to assist older people in humanitarian crises.
- Requiring proposals to include a question on categories of vulnerable groups, with explicit reference to older people and to the links between different ages and groups.
- To uphold GHD principle 16, which states that signatories must “promote the use of Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and principles on humanitarian activities”.¹⁵ These include *Humanitarian Action and Older Persons: an essential brief for humanitarian actors*.

13. IASC, 2010, *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2, Synthesis Report*, pp.57

14. IASC, 2008, *Humanitarian Action and Older Persons: an essential brief for humanitarian actors*
http://www.who.int/hac/network/interagency/iasc_advocacy_paper_older_people_en.pdf (30 August 2010)

15. Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2004, *Principles and Good Practice for Humanitarian Donorship*,
<http://www.reliefweb.int/ghd/a%2023%20Principles%20EN-GHD19.10.04%20RED.doc> (8 September 2010)

Annex 1: Sector-specific findings

Sectors in countries that made no reference to older people in any CAP or Flash Appeal document

Projects that mention older people that were fully, over funded, or part funded

Projects that mention older people that were not funded

NF - Not funded PF - Partially funded OF - Over funded	Afghanistan	Burkina Faso	El Salvador	Georgia	Haiti	Honduras	Kenya 2008	Kenya 2009	Kyrgyzstan	Myanmar	oPt 2007	oPt 2008	oPt 2009	Pakistan	Philippines	Total sum of number of projects	
Sector	Number of projects and their funding status																
Agriculture																0	
Camp coordination/camp management & NFIs																0	
Coordination & support services																0	
Early recovery/livelihoods								2 NF								2	
Economic recovery and infrastructure							2 NF			1 NF						3	
Education																0	
Emergency telecommunications																0	
Food security and nutrition																0	
Health				1NF	2 NF								1 PF	1 FF	1 OF	1 NF	7
Logistics																0	
Multi-sector																0	
Protection								1 NF	1PF	1 NF			2 NF			5	
Sector not yet specified																0	
Shelter									1 PF							1	
Water sanitation and hygiene																0	
Grand total	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	5	1	0	0	3	1	2	18	
Total number of projects in CAPs and Flash Appeals	146	14	47	112	265	27	135	153	78	111	128	157	368	86	85	1912	
Percentage of projects targeting older people	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.89%	0.75%	0.00%	1.48%	0.65%	6.41%	0.90%	0.00%	0.00%	0.82%	1.16%	2.35%	0.94%	
Percentage of projects mentioning older people funded or part funded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.53%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.27%	1.16%	1.18%	0.80%	