

Spotlight

1st edition of 2023



South Sudan (Jeffrey Akobo)

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Working together to provide principled and effective humanitarian responses

Greetings and a warm welcome to our first Spotlight of 2023!

As we edge towards the third month of the year, Brussels is abuzz with activities. In 2022, the network achieved success in various areas of work. Hence, we look forward to a productive year where our shared values of relationship, servanthood and compassion are at the core of every engagement.

This year, we have two primary flagship projects — the Impact of the Climate crisis, which is already a cross-cutting issue in our strategy. We will commence this work by preparing a study of how members respond to climate crisis impacts as it impacts relief and development programmes and the communities where you work. The second is Supporting the In-Country forums,

which will require providing support to country coordinators and capacity building in respect of Funding and Partnership activities.

As a network, we recognise that multiple global compounding crises impact the people we serve, and we wanted to spotlight some of the members' efforts. Hence, this Spotlight is dedicated to Humanitarian action. We showcase the fantastic work our members are engaged in for the ultimate goal of saving and securing lives. This goal epitomises the words of Abot Naskar "Do not sit around waiting for a saviour to come, be the Saviour for the people in despair".

Warm regards,
Tabeth Masengu

Upcoming Humanitarian Events



(European Union)

European Humanitarian Forum

The second edition of the European Humanitarian Forum (EHF) will be held in Brussels from **Monday, 20 to Tuesday, March 21 2023**. The event will gather policymakers, humanitarian actors and other relevant stakeholders to encourage constructive dialogue on humanitarian policy and strategy. In addition, the Forum will represent an opportunity to enhance cooperation and partnership among countries affected by crises, donors, international stakeholders, the EU, and its Member States.

The 2023 edition will provide innovative, sustainable, and efficient approaches to address existing challenges through high-level discussions, political debates, and brainstorming sessions. The Forum will be organised in the EGG Conference Centre in a hybrid format to enable remote participation and engagement. People willing to participate can join the web-streamed sessions on the Forum's [official webpage](#).

UN Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Humanitarian Affairs Segment

ECOSOC's Humanitarian Affairs Segment is a unique platform that brings together UN Member States, UN organisations, humanitarian and development partners, the private sector and affected communities. In **June**, the segment discusses and agrees on tackling the most recent and pressing humanitarian concerns. Interactive panel discussions and side events will also share the latest information on current opportunities and challenges.



(United Nations)

Tearfund: The Jakomkris network for disaster management in Indonesia



In 2006, Tearfund Netherlands initiated the founding of the Jakomkris network in Indonesia.

The Jakomkris network is a Christian community network for disaster management, building resilient communities through church and community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Jakomkris also advocates for the involvement of local churches and faith-based organisations in DRR and disaster management. Since its formation, the Jakomkris network has provided disaster preparedness training to churches. In addition, it educates local churches on the need to engage in disaster relief, equipping and enabling them to provide a timely response. For example, in November 2022, an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 struck West Java, Indonesia. A total of 321 people died, and 73,874 were displaced; the Jakomkris network established a coordination post and communication hub providing information and updates to partner agencies to ensure that

aid was distributed where it was most needed.

Through its advocacy, the Jakomkris network has successfully highlighted churches' role in disaster management. As a result, the Government quickly recognised the network, and it is currently the official Christian Representation of the Indonesian Department of Disaster Preparation and Response.

Jakomkris connects Churches and Christian non-governmental groups across the country and works to improve communication and relationships between local churches and Christian NGOs working in disaster management. Since 2018 the network has extended its role to disaster coordination. During the responses to the Lombok earthquake and subsequent tsunami in Sulawesi in 2018,

Jakomkris took on a training and coordinating role. In other minor disasters, the network has coordinated funding from local churches and individuals with its member's disaster response, meeting the needs with local and national resources.

From the outset, the members of Jakomkris were encouraged to take ownership of the network. As a network, Jakomkris reflects the strength of local organisations working with national actors such as NGOs, government departments and denominations. Its strength lies in local knowledge, community members assessing the risks and being able to react where possible with local resources, linking with local and regional government resources. Jakomkris illustrates the value of investing in capacity strengthening, local networks and the potential role they can play in DRR and building resilient communities.

Eriks: Working to give children the world they dream of in Ukraine



In February 2022, ERIKS Development Partner launched a humanitarian operation in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

The operation is implemented through different components, focusing on sustainable assistance over a more extended period.

ERIKS efforts in and around Ukraine strongly focus on the rights and protection of children and their families and the specific protection needs that arise during the war. For example, when families are split, children are separated from their guardians, or children living in institutions are evacuated. In addition, ERIKS' partners in the country conduct direct, life-saving interventions. These include support with cash transfers/vouchers, food parcels, clothing, diapers and hygiene items — to several thousand families with children around Ukraine. These children have

had their homes destroyed or live internally displaced in the country. ERIKS also has a psychosocial support line — over the phone and online — where many who seek contact are children.

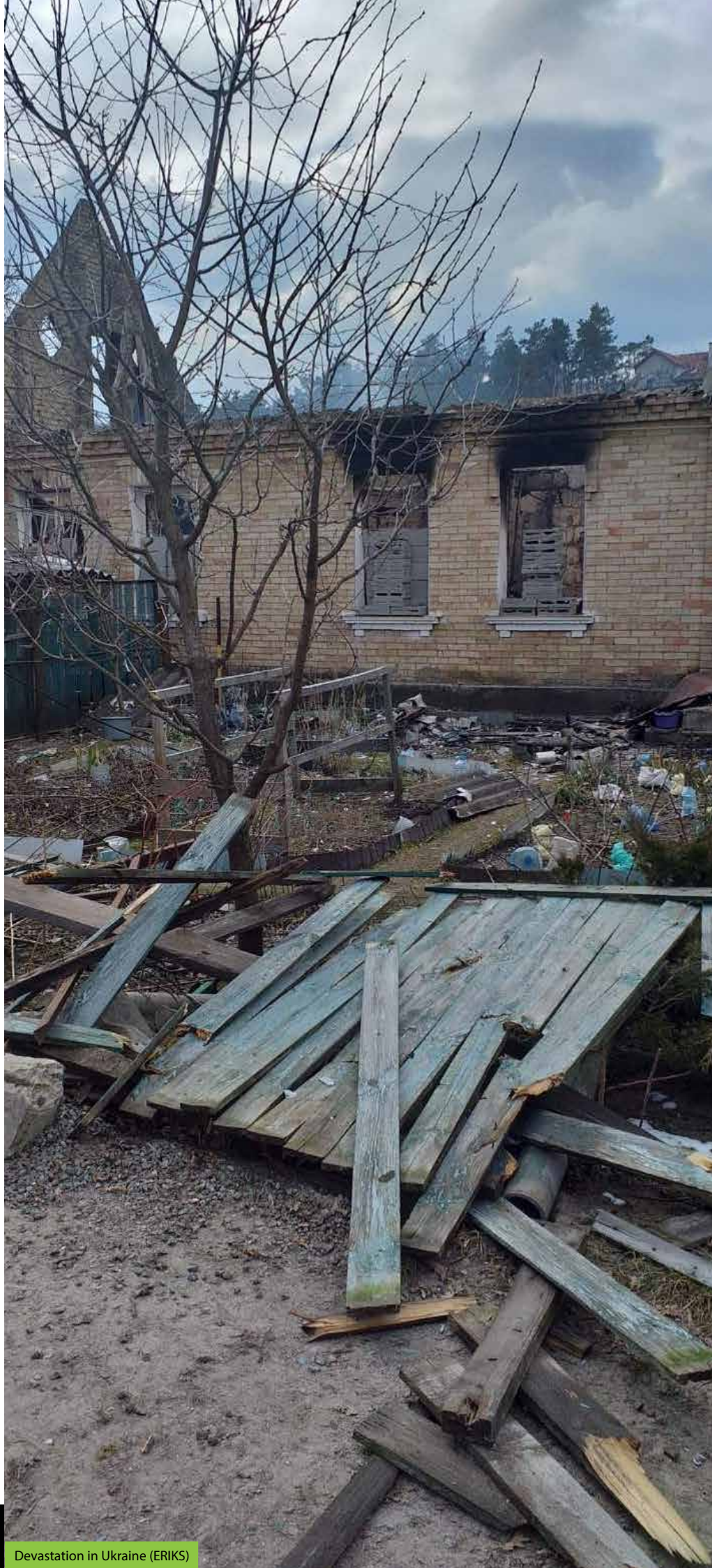
ERIKS, through partners, also provides long-term support — such as housing, social support, integration, the right to health care, schooling, employment and psychosocial support — to people inside Ukraine and in the surrounding countries. In July, ERIKS and its partner started the project “Relief, reclaim, rebuild for the children. And the Ukraine they dream of”. The project aims to give refugees and war-affected children and women in Kyiv, Sumy, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya and the capital, Kyiv, access to

immediate assistance to regain their lives and participate in the reconstruction of their communities. The initiatives include providing essential goods such as food, water, and hygiene items, and offering cash transfers and psychosocial support to families and individuals in urgent need. The project will also allow women and children to gradually process and overcome war-caused trauma through initiatives where they can develop and interact with each other in a safe place in regional family hubs. The project will also support families through new income-generating activities.

Another of ERIKS' partners works at the border crossings between Ukraine and Romania. In cooperation with the

emergency services in Romania, the organisation coordinates the border reception activities with the first information the refugees receive when they cross the border. With its translators and teams of professional social workers and psychologists, ERIKS' partner organisation can refer the refugees further in different ways. The support includes a safe place to rest, information on registration in the EU, legal assistance, information on the prevention of trafficking, and referral to various types of support provided by NGOs or public institutions, such as housing, food and transport. Emergency medical care is sometimes needed, and ERIKS' partner cooperates with emergency aid organisations at the border. If necessary, volunteers accompany the refugees to various instances, such as migration offices, health facilities, stations, and airports and all transport is done through the local emergency services.

ERIKS has, through coordination and networking, in several ways been able to bring together partners and mediate contact between organisations inside Ukraine and organisations and authorities in neighbouring countries and Sweden. Furthermore, ERIKS' regional office in Romania has been an essential player in compiling standards for the safe reception of children without guardians. The aim is to ensure that the standards are enforceable in all host countries and have children's rights, including the right to protection, as their primary purpose.



ZOA: Working with local churches and governments in Ukraine to provide humanitarian aid

ZOA staff (ZOA)



The escalation of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in a large-scale displacement of people moving towards West Ukraine and abroad.

To cover a variety of basic needs for this moving population in the quickest, most efficient, and most effective way possible, ZOA provided digital cash assistance. ZOA also provided cash for shelter repairs in Chernihiv, north of Kyiv, close to the Belarus border. Local churches and governments are key partners for successful implementation.

Multipurpose cash assistance

MPCA transfers are provided to Ukrainians on the move and to the most vulnerable people who stayed in different locations in Transcarpathia in West Ukraine. Every month

2,220 UAH (per household) is distributed to the households needing it most for three months. Depending on need and vulnerability, this could be extended and/or targeted for additional recovery assistance. Cash is used for various expenditures, including food, shelter, winterisation items/bills, healthcare, education, transport, and communication. As one recipient noted:

I use my cash to buy food items, pay part of my rent, and buy warm clothes for my children. Also, I support my mother, who is still living in an area occupied by Russia. I send part of the cash digitally, to make sure they are able to get food and water.'

Cash for shelter

In March 2022, the Russian army invaded the north of Ukraine through Chernihiv oblast. This attack was unsuccessful but left behind huge damage to houses and infrastructure in the region. With the cold winter coming in quickly, ZOA repaired damaged houses by providing cash for shelter assistance. By providing cash assistance, the beneficiaries could employ local handymen and constructors who could apply their skills to support their communities. This allowed for the quickest assistance possible while also supporting the local market. Selected households were

extremely satisfied with this flexible approach.

Collaboration with local churches and governments

ZOA and local church networks work together to reach those who fall through the cracks of the humanitarian system. The well-established church networks are an efficient and effective entry point to finding the neediest households.

Registrations are done in churches (or remotely if physical registration is not possible), using the safe environment of the local church to register and support people who are often traumatised by the conflict. Besides working with local

churches, ZOA collaborates with local governments ('oblasts') to find households needing shelter or multipurpose cash assistance. First, they provide lists of damaged houses or lists of households most in need of cash support; then, staff verify the houses and/or households. Once approved for assistance, cash is provided to ensure timely assistance to repair their house or cover their basic needs.

Flexible aid delivery

All cash payments are made through our digital cash management platform, contextualised explicitly for Ukraine. In addition, red Rose integrated the Money Gram solution in Ukraine, allowing

ZOA to set up and use a digital CVA management platform for large-scale cash transfers. The platform allows for timely and secure cash distributions: people can collect their cash at any time, either online or at their preferred Money Gram location spread throughout Ukraine and neighbouring countries (including banks and Ukrposhta services). Moreover, digital and physical cash collection is possible, making it possible to offer a variety of options to targeted households. This reduces protection-related risks and costs for people in need, allowing them to – truly use the delivery mechanism they want and cover their needs.



A woman in her destroyed house (ZOA)

LM International: Life-saving action in diverse humanitarian settings

To contribute to the saving of lives affected by humanitarian crises, LM International has actively worked with partners and self-implementing offices in a cross-section of countries. Our humanitarian response has been in complex, protracted settings and rapid emergency response.

Emergency response

The humanitarian situations related to the war in Ukraine and the conflict-induced displacement in DR Congo are critical to the rapid emergency responses. Our response to the Ukraine crisis has been both within the country and across

the border. For example, in the city of Lviv, through our local partner, we have provided a safe (transit) shelter for internally displaced persons (IDPs), including a safe place for children affected by the war. In addition, a winterisation response allowed us to provide

essential equipment, such as generators, winter clothing, and related supplies, to address the challenge caused by attacks on energy infrastructure. Across the border, our local partner in Romania has provided safe shelter for (transiting) refugees since the war started while providing basic food, NFIs and relevant psychosocial and legal support.



Ukrainian refugee transit centre in Romania (LM International)

In the Eastern DR Congo, as the fighting with the M23 rebels intensified, the situation worsened for children who lost their parents and managed to escape to Goma. In response, our local partner extended an existing home to receive and support more of these children. We have supported this work to save the lives of the children and preserve their dignity.



Humanitarian response in protracted crises

Humanitarian response in some protracted crises, such as Sudan and Niger, has continued. With a focus on WASH programming, our work aims to provide sustainable potable water, sanitation, and hygiene solutions. In addition, WASH humanitarian response has become even more critical in these recent times as the world continues to face the continuously mutating virus that causes COVID-19.

In Niger, our WASH activities have focused on the regions of Diffa and Tillabéry. Targeting refugees, IDPs and host communities, our interventions not only respond to the immediate humanitarian needs but also seek to engage the affected communities in setting up sustainable

approaches and infrastructure. Nexus thinking is vital in our humanitarian programming, and collaborations with cross-sector actors and creative and integrated programming ensure this. While recognised as a key WASH actor in the country, we actively involve local actors to ensure their strengthened capacity as first responders. For example, the piloting of the regional humanitarian financing model by OCHA in 2022 enabled our teams to provide life-saving WASH services to approximately 15 000 women, men, girls, and boys in Diffa in 2022.

The states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur in Sudan continue to face conflict-induced humanitarian challenges. Having been in South Kordofan and Darfur for many years, our teams have built on the developed capacity to provide sustainable

WASH solutions to displaced communities. In doing so, these WASH activities have enabled the provision of other critical services like education and health in the areas of engagement. Our recent engagement in the Blue Nile has also provided critical life-saving WASH services to affected communities there. With funding from the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF), we continue to respond in some of the hardest-to-reach areas in Sudan and contribute to saving precious lives.

Our humanitarian engagement is diverse in the type of action and geographical spread. However, in all this, our goal remains to serve lives. We are delighted to have dedicated partners and teams that serve selflessly at the frontlines in these complex humanitarian settings.

Help A Child: Reaching extremely vulnerable children in DRC and South Sudan

DRC

Help a Child has been operating in the regions of North and South Kivu Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the past ten years. Programs are oriented towards high-fragility areas where children are vulnerable, primarily in rural and peri-urban areas, with a fragile security situation and difficult geographical accessibility. We are present in the regions of North and South Kivu. The country has a history

of violence and civil war, and especially the eastern part of the DRC remains unstable. Various armed groups fight for possession of resources and land. Incidences of child soldiers, rape and kidnapping are not uncommon. After a controversial election result in 2020, an emergency has arisen that continues to this day. Combined with a recent volcanic eruption and crop failures due to climate change, more than five million people

are currently displaced. The crisis in the DRC is one of the most forgotten crises in the world.

What is needed here is providing food, protection, trauma care and education in an environment with multiple needs. In short, we are providing stability in an unstable and unsafe environment. The places where we work have become safe havens for children, their families and friends. Vulnerable populations are identified by placing the child at the centre within their school context. Activities to strengthen the nutritional status of children, coupled with educational, protection and hygiene promotion activities in schools and the community, as well as food security and economic empowerment activities, have improved the quality of life of the beneficiary populations.



(Seerah Galos / Help a Child)



The areas in which Help a Child is active in the DRC are:

- Protection, child protection, and SGBV prevention
- Emergency education
- Food security and livelihoods
- Water sanitation and hygiene

South Sudan

More than a decade after independence, South Sudan remains impacted by fragility, economic stagnation, the impact of climate change, and instability. Poverty is ubiquitous and is exacerbated by conflict, displacement, climate change, and external shocks. In addition, South Sudan remains in a

severe humanitarian crisis, with some two-thirds of its total population of 11.4 million (2021) estimated to require humanitarian assistance in 2022 and 2023. Women and children continue to be the most affected by all these crises. Help a Child remains committed to providing protection, food security, and livelihoods. Our interventions in South Sudan are sponsored mainly by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Dutch Relief Alliance. Help a Child designs all its responses in South Sudan based on needs-based programming guided by protection vulnerability analyses. These analyses target the most vulnerable populations while ensuring

the specific needs of women, children, and traditionally underserved groups, especially people with disability, are addressed in the locations we have chosen and prioritised.

The areas in which Help a Child is active in South Sudan are:

- Child protection and empowerment
- Emergency education
- Food security and livelihoods
- Community engagement through sports activities
- Water sanitation and hygiene
- Mental health and psychosocial support for children

Medair: Helping lives on many levels in Jordan



While the world focuses on Ukraine, other countries affected by crises seem to fall out of the public eye. Targeted financial support remains one of the most efficient emergency relief services in Jordan, which is currently host to 762,858 registered Syrian, Yemini, Iraqi and other refugees (UNHCR, 2022) since the Syrian crisis began in 2011. Returning to their home country is not an option for many of them, and this number has remained almost constant for years. Although Jordan shows solidarity with Syrian refugees, resources are running out, and the Government is challenged to maintain the same quality of services for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians impacted by the Syrian crisis.

Together with the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO),

the German Federal Foreign Office, the Evangelical Church of Württemberg and the Deichmann Foundation, the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM), Medair is providing life-saving humanitarian assistance for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in Jordan through community health, Cash for Health, protection and psychosocial support. Medair has been present in the Middle East in response to the Syria crisis since 2012, with ongoing operations in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. From an initial health emergency response, Medair Jordan's programme has consolidated into a series of stable needs-based responses focused on access to healthcare and social protection, with cash used as the primary programming modality.

The status quo of the refugees has not changed much to this day. Since their arrival, many have been living in precarious circumstances outside the refugee camps, mostly in urban settings. The cost of living is very high, and many refugees residing in Jordan live in poor conditions, struggling to meet their basic needs. Many lack the money for rent and food; only a few can pay for education and medical care. Some Syrians with work permits may be able to sustain themselves through income-generating activities. However, the most vulnerable – including Syrian refugees and other refugees who cannot access work permits – will continue to rely on humanitarian aid for quite some time.

Medair's intervention targets the most vulnerable through Cash for Health programming to facilitate access to life-saving

healthcare services and fill gaps in service provision. Medair's approach complements existing health structures by supporting vulnerable refugees to access existing health facilities, ultimately empowering them with choice and control to immediately access the urgent medical care required. In 2022, over 1,800 pregnant women benefited from access to medically attended deliveries, and refugees also benefitted from cash support to access emergency health needs and surgeries. Cash for Health remains critical and the most effective modality to address the financial barriers for refugees to access life-saving health care and prevent disability and premature death if not treated. This is confirmed by a study commissioned by the European Union Humanitarian Funding.

Ameera Amin, Health Project Manager Jordan, says:

“Cash for Health provides life-saving assistance for refugees here in Jordan, especially as most of them can't afford the cost of treatment. I am proud of Medair's continued and adaptive approach that is resting on regular research and analysis as well as internal review of service delivery.”

Medair-trained Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) provide a link to these vulnerable communities. Around 90 volunteers are active in four governorates to assess and identify vulnerable households

eligible for support. CHVs deliver key health messaging on a house-to-house basis, focusing on improving maternal and child health and assessing risk factors for Non-Communicable Diseases. They also refer women, girls, boys and men for other health, protection, and primary health needs-related services. Through Medair's project funded by EU Humanitarian Aid, 51,400 individuals have received targeted messages on crucial health practices.

High levels of psychosocial stress continue to burden refugees, and Medair also works with refugees and vulnerable Jordanians to improve psychosocial well-being through community-based, adult peer support groups. These groups provide a safe environment for individuals to work through traumatic experiences, invest in positive

coping skills and address stigmatisation surrounding mental health care. “It's also about finding like-minded people, building a new network, strengthening and helping each other together,” explains Sari-Luisa Jung, International Program Coordinator at MEDAIR Germany, who visited the project in November 2022.

Medair also cares for people with permanent and temporary disabilities in Jordan. In addition to providing mobility aids like a wheelchair or a cane, courses in sign language have recently been offered to improve communication between children and their caregivers. “It became clear that there is a huge need for such courses,” says Jung. Medair remains committed to serving the most vulnerable in Jordan.



Dorcas calls for a strong, diverse, localised humanitarian response that needs multi-annual flexible funding

In June 2022, Dorcas published its report *Falling through the cracks: older people in conflict situations*.

The report claims that humanitarian crises have become more complex and protracted. Moreover, humanitarian crises are increasingly connected to war and conflict. This unfortunate trend is not expected to stop anytime soon. In this context, internationally supported local humanitarian response is of utmost importance but also increasingly complicated and challenging.

Dorcas' experience in Yemen

In 2021 Dorcas opened a Country Office in Aden. Before 2021, Dorcas supported the work of a Yemeni partner providing emergency food assistance to families affected by the civil war. Together with Yemeni partners and in cooperation with the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA), Dorcas continues to support the people of Yemen. The Yemen

Joint Response project provides a humanitarian response to the protracted crisis in Yemen through the DRA, which is funded through a block grant by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A positive development in this joint response is that funding can be used for two years.

Why is this important?

Humanitarian organisations can't just start responding in Yemen or any other country without valid approval of those in power. This approval process takes time. In addition, access to areas and communities needs to be coordinated and negotiated with local power holders. This also takes time. Finally, organisations like Dorcas need to invest in understanding a local context. And potential local partner organisations and affected communities need time to trust

and understand organisations like Dorcas.

The Government of South Yemen pushes for cooperation between organisations like Dorcas and local Yemeni NGOs. However, in Yemen, official approval is complex due to the civil war-related context. Dorcas' experience is that at least two to three months are needed before government approval is obtained in the South. You would have already lost three in a 'usual' humanitarian response of six months. Planned operations would need to be implemented in the remaining months.

Why is this a problem?

Though emergency response can be initiated in a matter of hours, substantially alleviating human suffering, and saving human lives, paradoxically need more time. When this time can't be taken, harm



(Dorcas)

could be done to the affected population. This causes humanitarian organisations to be hesitant to commit to a humanitarian response in complex, protracted conflict settings. They do not want to harm affected populations and set themselves up for failure in the process.

Dorcas made a choice to invest in local Yemeni presence and relationships before embarking on a humanitarian response on a larger scale. Dorcas' local presence assisted in obtaining formal government approval and establishing necessary local cooperation. This enabled Dorcas to open a Dorcas Yemen office and join DRA Joint Response. In Yemen, Dorcas is sharing Internal Cost Recovery

with Yemeni partners. This includes substantial coverage for overhead expenditures. In addition, Dorcas invests in the capacity strengthening of local partners and makes the budget available for this intentionally.

What could be the solution?

Dorcas calls for multi-annual funding of internationally supported localised humanitarian responses in the context of protracted complex crisis situations. Funding should be at least for one year and – depending on the context – longer, up to two years or more. When funding is shorter, localisation cannot materialise, and harm may be done as the

response is incomplete and unsustainable. Multi-annual funding enables a stronger, more diverse localised response, as many smaller organisations can also be considered potential partners in longer-term investment. In addition, Dorcas calls for flexible funding that allows for greater adaptability in programming. This means using a certain percentage of funding can be decided on and accounted for during a project. The reality of humanitarian response learns that appropriate actions are hard to determine in detail beforehand. Flexibility in funding enabled Dorcas in Yemen to appropriately respond to inflation and sudden drastic changes in the exchange rate.

Mission Aviation Fellowship: Flying planes and saving lives



Nepau during treatment
(Mission Aviation Fellowship / Diana Zwijnenburg)

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) is the world's largest humanitarian airline, flying to over 1400 remote destinations.

Every 6 minutes, a MAF aircraft takes off or lands somewhere in the world, delivering aid, medicine and evacuations, transporting personnel and responding to natural disasters in areas widely inaccessible by road. MAF believes every community, however remote, should have the essentials for life. So it ministers to people backed by a vision 'To see isolated people changed by the love of Christ'.

One incident where MAF's life-saving action exhibited the power of God happened in August 2022 to a citizen of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Nepao, a married father of two in his late forties, was cutting wood underneath his house

in the remote PNG village of Pyarulama when it suddenly collapsed on top of him. Large fireplace stones from the floor above fell onto his chest, and a wooden beam crushed his leg. Screaming in pain, neighbours pulled him from the debris while Mathew Panglas, the local health worker, gave him some morphine and called for a MAF med evacuation. Evacuated from Pyarulama to Kompiam Hospital by pilot Mathias Glass, this twelve-minute flight saved Nepao's friends from carrying him in a makeshift stretcher over rugged terrain for two days.

Upon admission, the attending

doctor from the Netherlands, noted:

"He's badly injured and not very responsive. Although barely conscious, he's breathing ok. I'm concerned about a possible skull fracture because there's blood coming from his ear. His right upper leg is broken, and his chest has a nasty graze and bruising."

Due to the absence of an X-ray machine, an ultrasound was conducted, which determined that there were no collapsed lungs or blood in Nepao's abdomen or pelvis. However, under a lot of local anaesthetics, Dr Zwijnenburg inserted a traction pin into his lower leg.

The remoteness of Kompiam Hospital meant that resources were limited and when bruises on Nepao's lungs started to cause breathing problems, Nepao needed a ventilator to survive. He also needed to be intubated (when a breathing tube is inserted into the airway) until his lungs had healed enough to breathe again. This was a rare sight in the remote area as staff have never seen, let alone looked after, an intubated patient. Dr Zwijnenberg and her team prayed for a miracle; though Nepao stabilised, he needed 24-hour care. In addition, the medical team was running out of supplies, and when they eventually did come, the team's constant fatigue from

having to watch Nepao was also a significant obstacle.

Fear gripped Nepao's family, and a local pastor was asked to pray for and encourage them. Finally, on day five, it appeared that Nepao might be able to breathe without a ventilator but weaning him off the ventilator was not without its challenges. Eventually, the doctors removed his breathing tube, and he was given double oxygen and made to sit up as much as possible. Finally, Nepao could open his eyes, sit up and drink!

On October 25, two months after initial admission, Nepao was discharged from Kompiam Hospital and flown back to Pyarulama

by MAF. He recounts the emotional experience:

"I cried a lot – I should have died. People shook my hand and cried with me. After sleeping, I killed a pig and gave it to the white people (doctors). I invited them to my house and gave them food. They cared for me and looked after me in hospital. It was a gesture of appreciation. They were there. The plane was there."

Without the MAF plane, Nepao knows he wouldn't have survived.

Nepau after treatment
(Mission Aviation Fellowship / Diana Zwijnenburg)



Afghans are rebuilding their lives with a helping hand from Mission East

Peter Drummond Smith, Operations Director of Mission East, reflects on his visit to Afghanistan in September 2022.

A month in north-eastern Afghanistan makes a lasting impression. The beautiful landscape and the friendly people capture your heart. But, on the other hand, devastated fields and homes in ruins chisel their way into your consciousness.

Here we see the effects of climate change from the front row. First, two years of drought desiccated fields and left families in deep poverty. Then, heavy rains caused the ground to slump over houses and gardens — the worst part was seeing people lose everything because they had to flee their homes.

It couldn't get more hopeless.

Losing everything and starting again

I was talking to Abdulrahim and his brother when a landslide occurred and crushed their house. They rushed out and were rescued but had lost all their belongings. Now they

had only the clothes they wore and had to build their lives from scratch.

I met Safia, a widow with nine children whose house collapsed in a torrential downpour. She had painstakingly built the house but was missing both windows and doors, and now she could forget about plastering the facade.

On my journey in the mountains, I met the Reza family of nine children who had lived in a shelter with the husband's brother's family. They are now building a new house but still need door frames and window frames, doors and windows. In the meantime, a torrential downpour had razed half of their shelter.

Contrasts!

The stories I heard were similar and bore witness to poverty in the wake of climate-induced natural disasters. Drought causes food prices to skyrocket, and sudden rainstorms shake

the dry soil and send mud down on villages. As a result, people are scrambling to build new houses with available materials. What a pity in a country so beautiful with a population so precious.

And what contrasts to witness: admiring the extraordinary beauty of the valleys, mountains and rivers and then talking to villagers who don't know how they will be able to feed their families until the next harvest. I remember the kindness and hospitality of the people I met and their gratitude for the efforts of our 100+ staff in a country still ravaged by violence, conflict and instability. Although the Taliban controls the country, there are almost daily bombings in Kabul and sporadic fighting in districts not far from where we work.

Aiding survival

Mission East remained in the country when the Taliban took power last August, and our

talented staff are working hard to give the most vulnerable communities a chance to survive. We distribute cash, establish water supplies and create a livelihood for those who have lost everything.

Abdulrahim, whom I mentioned earlier, is building a new house, but it's a long way to the nearest water point. So, Mission East is laying a pipeline to the new settlement, where another 45 families will be resettled after the landslide destroyed their houses. Safia, the widow, has received money from Mission East, which she will use to buy doors and windows so that she and her nine children can live safely. The Reza family has decided to do the same. Safety above all.

However, cash is only enough for three months, then what? Hence Mission East is also distributing goats to the families so that

they can have milk and, in time, kids, which they can either keep or sell and thus survive in the long term.

Winter and new challenges

I encountered gratitude everywhere I went — money for food materials, goats and, most importantly, water systems from Mission East make a world of difference. I drank from a water post-Mission East set up in a village four years ago. Now the winter cold threatens. The people we have helped so far will be fine. They have shelter, water and money for food. But what about everyone else? Mission East can only help as many as we have the resources to help.

I can only recommend that you contribute to helping the precious people of that beautiful country, Afghanistan.

As we mark one year since the invasion of Ukraine, may we join hands to pray for peace and reconciliation to prevail. More than weapons, we need a cessation of hostilities and aggression.

Please also remember the Horn of Africa in prayer as it grapples with a debilitating famine.

Finally, pray for the protracted global crises that do not make news headlines.

EU-CORD is a network comprised of 24 NGOs that work in relief and development alongside their national civil society counterparts in 87 countries. We are a not-for-profit organisation registered under Belgian law and in the EU Transparency Register.

For more information on our organisation, see www.eu-cord.org or contact Tabeth Masengu, Advocacy Coordinator, at tabeth.masengu@eu-cord.org.

This Spotlight was edited by Dr Tabeth Masengu and Ms Arianna Antionioni.

