

# DUTCH RELIEF ALLIANCE

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**Working together to respond more effectively to humanitarian crises**



In partnership with



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

*“Civil society organisations in the Netherlands have shown so well that they can successfully work together. I sincerely hope that we can continue with the Dutch Relief Alliance because its results are good for everyone. Humanitarian aid is [now] much more effective.”*

*“The Dutch Relief Alliance and Dutch Relief Fund both continue to work very well... [and their results are more effective] than the organisations involved all working loose and without agreements. It is as simple as that.”*

**Lilianne Ploumen,  
Netherlands  
Minister for  
Foreign Trade  
and Development  
Cooperation  
2014-2017**



Ethiopia Joint Response

## DUTCH RELIEF ALLIANCE: MISSION AND ORGANISATION



Afghanistan Joint Response

**The Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) is an Alliance of Dutch humanitarian NGOs funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The structure of the DRA allows for the rapid delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance.**

The DRA was established in 2015 to meet the challenge of the increase in the number of humanitarian crises and the number of people affected by crises around the world. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked to bring together leading Dutch NGOs to improve the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the national humanitarian effort. The DRA model requires members to collaborate to deliver Joint Response programmes - delivering greater impact than independent interventions.

The DRA designs and launches Joint Response programmes to address sudden onset emergencies within 72 hours following the decision to respond. Short communication lines and agile programme management allows for rapid decision making and flexibility to respond to changes in the humanitarian context.

Cooperation and coordination between DRA members enables them to better respond to major humanitarian crises in an efficient and effective manner. Each humanitarian response leverages the strengths of the DRA members able to respond - allowing for the rapid delivery of life-saving humanitarian relief in both protracted and acute crisis settings.

The Alliance is currently active in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. Joint Responses have previously been completed in Ethiopia, Nepal, Somalia, Vanuatu, Zimbabwe and the countries impacted by the Ebola crisis (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

### **DRA Strategic Objectives 2018-2021**

- Contribute to life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian assistance in response to ongoing crises
- Contribute to the rapid delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid in sudden onset emergencies
- Ensure improved accountability of humanitarian action
- Drive innovation and learning to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Foster increased collaboration between humanitarian actors to enhance effectiveness
- Increase the involvement of local actors in humanitarian responses.



Syria Joint Response

## **JOINT RESPONSE PROGRAMMES**



Rohingya Joint Response

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The DRA allows for the design, implementation and evaluation of high quality humanitarian Joint Response programmes. Each response is designed and implemented by the Alliance members best placed to respond to a particular crisis. A member is assigned to lead each response and works with two other members to form a Response Task Force.

Peer review mechanisms are in place to ensure the quality of each Joint Response proposal. Members determine which organisations will participate in a particular intervention and the level of funding allocated to each member.

Every response is monitored and evaluated to ensure high levels of quality and relevance throughout the implementation. Relevant goals of the Grand Bargain - the UN-endorsed humanitarian system change agenda - are progressed in each action. Particular focus is devoted to enhanced localisation - the capacity building of (and collaboration with) local responders.

DRA Joint Response programmes address both protracted and acute crisis situations. In the event of a sudden onset emergency, the DRA designs an Acute Crisis Joint Response within 72 hours.

A total of 33 Protracted and Acute Joint Responses were launched in the period of 2015 to 2017 to address humanitarian crises in seventeen countries.



Iraq Joint Response

## THE DRA FUNDING MODEL

The DRA receives funding through its partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Funds were allocated to each Joint Response from the Dutch Relief Fund (DRF). The fund was created by former Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Lilianne Ploumen, to enable the Netherlands to respond to increasing global humanitarian needs. From 2015 to 2017, a total of €202 million was provided to the DRA for humanitarian response programmes.

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has committed to fund the DRA through the period 2018 to 2021. The funding provided to the DRA enables members to use their expertise, knowledge and presence in fragile states to propose the most effective response to both protracted and acute crisis situations.

Approximately one-third of the annual DRA budget is reserved to respond to unforeseen acute crisis situations.

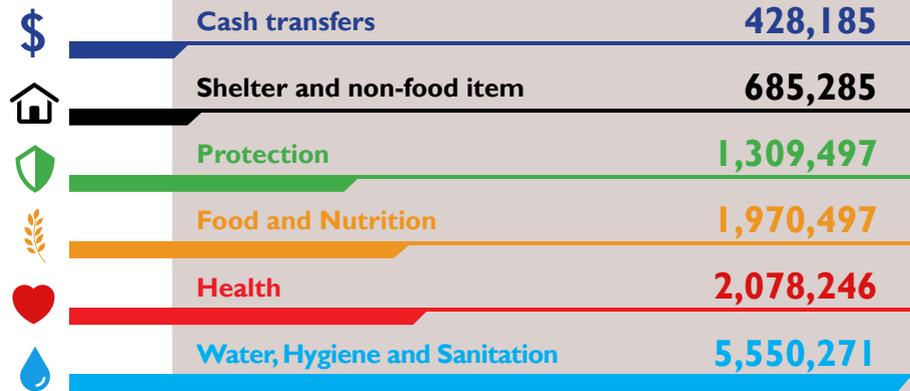
Staffing and organisational costs are kept low through the unique DRA structure. The DRA governance, leadership and management is provided by staff members of participating organisations. DRA members host and participate in meetings at their own expense.

### RESULTS

By the close of 2017, DRA Joint Response programmes have reached an estimated twelve million people in seventeen countries with life-saving and life-sustaining assistance.

In the Central African Republic, DRA interventions have ensured that more than 250,000 people affected by fighting were able to meet their basic food needs. In two years, the Northern Iraq Joint Response reached more than 450,000 conflict-affected Iraqi citizens with life-saving assistance. In Zimbabwe some 250,000 people were provided with life-saving food and livelihoods assistance in one year.

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH THE DRA JOINT RESPONSES 2015-2017\*



\* Total reach based on 2015 and 2016 reports, and estimated reach in 2017



### THE FUTURE

The DRA has proved to be an innovative mechanism for the efficient and effective allocation of humanitarian funds. The relationship between the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and national NGOs allows for increased collaboration and more flexible funding mechanisms - resulting in rapid and robust humanitarian responses.

The coming years will see the DRA members work together even more closely to develop programmes that ensure people are reached with rapid, effective humanitarian assistance. To meet this ambition the DRA will seek additional funds from international donors.

The DRA will also collaborate with humanitarian actors outside the Netherlands to ensure the increased impact of its interventions. Other European governments have expressed interest in adopting the DRA model and the possibility of connecting Relief Alliances in different countries will be explored.



Rohingya Joint Response

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul saw UN agencies and INGOs commit to ten actions (the Grand Bargain) to improve the mobilisation, allocation and use of humanitarian funds. Grand Bargain commitments prioritised by the DRA are:

1. Increased transparency of the flow of humanitarian funds through open data
2. The increase in the role of local and national humanitarian actors in responding to humanitarian crises
3. An increase in the use of cash transfers to people affected by crises
4. An increased involvement of communities affected by crises
5. Joint collaborative assessment of the needs of crisis-affected people.

## BRIDGING THE HUMANITARIAN FUNDING GAP

The economies of scale and increased collaboration inherent in the DRA model are a response to the worldwide increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance.

In 2016 there were some 164 million people in need of international humanitarian assistance, including 65 million forcibly displaced people. The number of people requiring assistance delivered through the UN's inter-agency consolidated response programmes has increased threefold over the past ten years. It is expected that this number will continue to rise - incidences of conflict, climate change and natural disasters are all predicted to grow over the coming years and crises are not being resolved.

The gap between humanitarian needs and available funding is vast - and growing. Figures from UNOCHA estimate that the total humanitarian funding requirement for 2016 as a whole was US\$22.1bn. Actual funding for 2016 (met through UN-coordinated appeals) was significantly lower at US\$13.1bn - leaving a US\$9bn (or 40 per cent) shortfall.

The majority of funds raised were directed towards the chronic complex emergencies in Nigeria, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen and territories affected by the Syrian crisis - leaving significant needs in other nations unmet.

The Dutch Relief Alliance has sought to progress these improvements since its inception in 2015. The Alliance has demonstrated its ability to effectively allocate €90 million per annum to innovative, high quality humanitarian responses. Through its four-year strategy in the period 2018-2021, the DRA will increase the level of collaboration between both members and local responders to meet the ever-increasing global humanitarian needs. The Alliance will also trial innovative approaches to improve effectiveness and efficiency.



Ukraine Joint Response

**THE DRA:  
PROVEN TO BE  
EFFECTIVE AND  
INNOVATIVE**



The DRA was set up in 2015 to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to major crises in a timely, relevant, effective and efficient manner. The creation of both the DRA and the DRF was initiated by the Netherlands' Government to help progress its humanitarian policy.

The 2017 OECD Peer Review of the Netherlands' humanitarian activities reported positively on the creation of the DRA and DRF. The report states: "The DRA [has served to] strengthen dialogue with NGOs. This dialogue allows the Netherlands to match its response to any emerging crisis with its partners' field presence and response capacity, which is good practice. Since significant funds are available, the alliance is solid and has gained credibility."

**An evaluation of the DRA undertaken in October 2017 by ECAS (Europe Conflict and Security Consulting) found that:**

- "The DRA has changed the Dutch humanitarian landscape, and the vast majority of staff in the Netherlands and the field believe it has improved collaboration in the sector."
- "The DRA has been able to provide timely assistance to people in need..."
- "DRA project documents confirm that programmes align with international needs assessments and that DRA assistance is seen by beneficiaries as appropriate to their needs."
- "Joint Responses regularly surpass their targets, and beneficiaries report being satisfied."



Central African Republic Joint Response

In its conclusion ECAS found that: "the real potential of the DRA for improving humanitarian assistance is to be found by building on synergies evident in Joint Responses. It is clear that the so-called 'collaborative impact' as a result of the DRA, has grown over the years. In the mid-term evaluation from 2016, the added value of the DRA was to be found mainly in the Netherlands. Now, however, there are growing numbers of examples in different countries of different partners working together in various ways on different issues that indicate that the DRA is no longer a Dutch story alone. Even the most pessimistic voices agree that the DRA succeeds at avoiding duplication of timely, relevant and effective individual programmes, and that occasional synergies lead to better delivery of aid."

Further implementation of the recommendations from this mid-term evaluation have been incorporated in the vision for the DRA 2018-2021.

# DUTCH RELIEF ALLIANCE

The Dutch Relief Alliance is a collaboration of Dutch Humanitarian NGOs, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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