



**2022 Edition**

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# **THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM**

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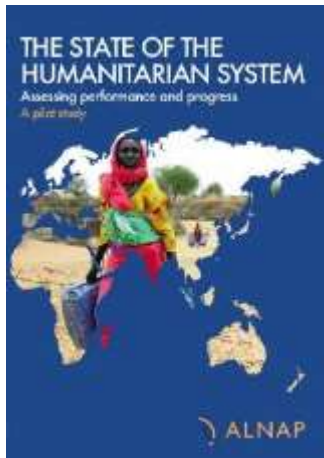
**Dhaka**

**20 May 2023**

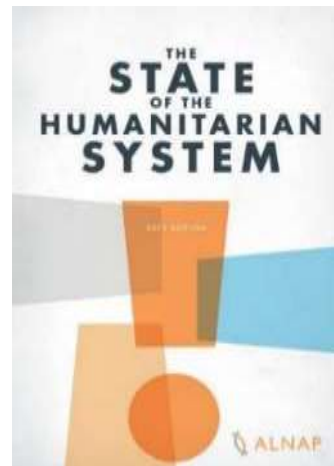


# 15 years of monitoring performance

The longest running evidence base on the performance of international humanitarian action



2007-2009



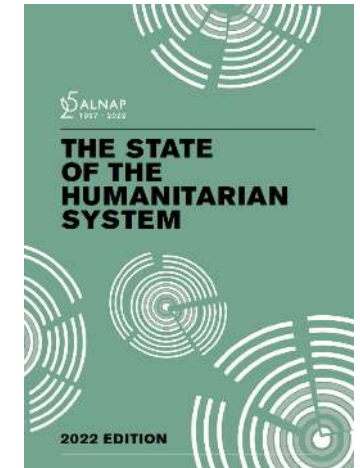
2010-2011



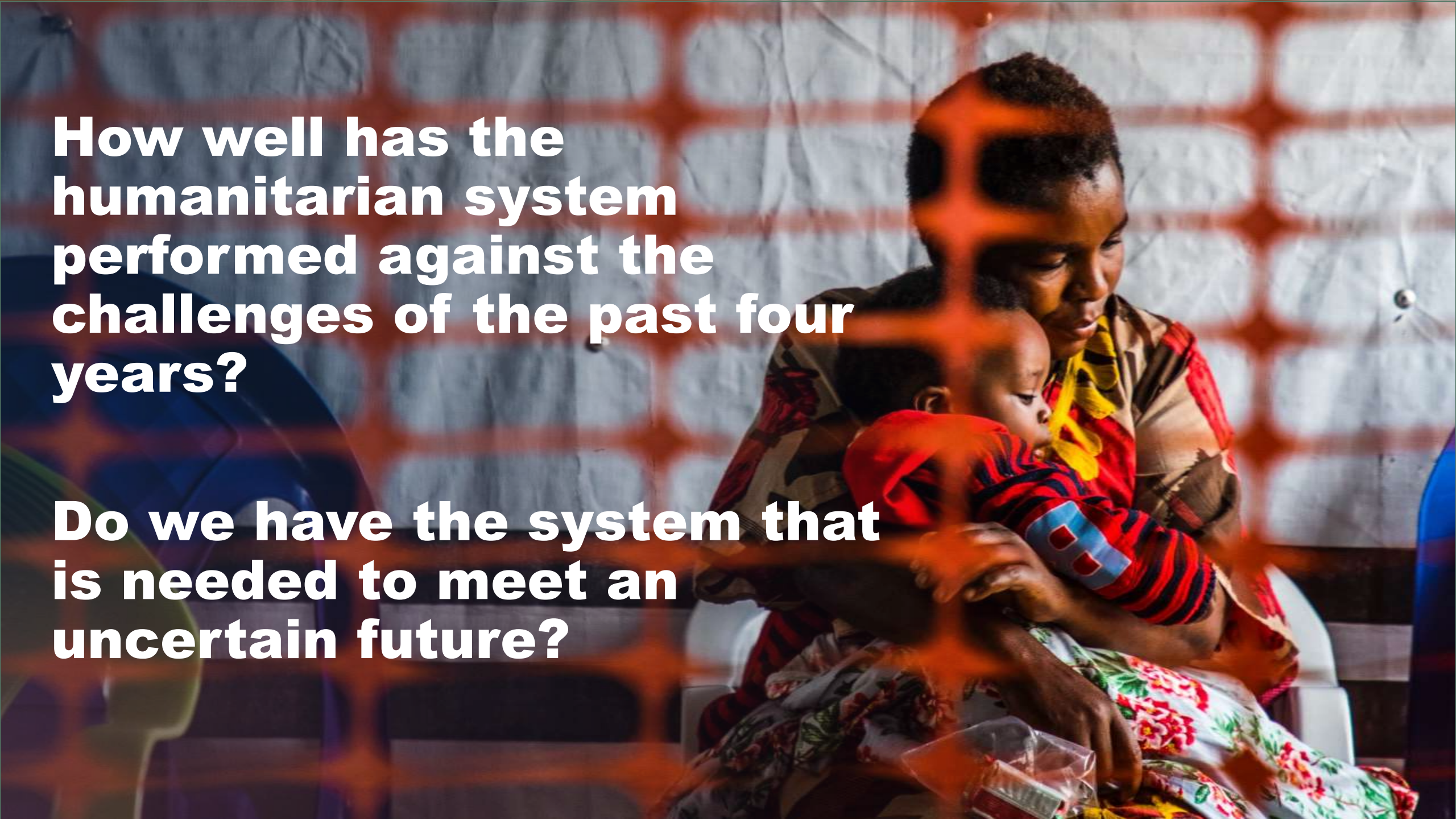
2012-2014



2015-2017



2018-2021

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a patterned top, is seated and holding a baby. The baby is wearing a red and black striped shirt. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background is a white wall with a grid pattern. The overall scene suggests a humanitarian or medical setting.

**How well has the humanitarian system performed against the challenges of the past four years?**

**Do we have the system that is needed to meet an uncertain future?**



**1**

**The demand  
for  
humanitarian  
action:  
crises,  
caseload &  
context**

**2**

**The size and  
capacity of  
the  
humanitarian  
system**

**3**

**Performance  
of the system**

**4**

**Commitments,  
change and  
contestation**

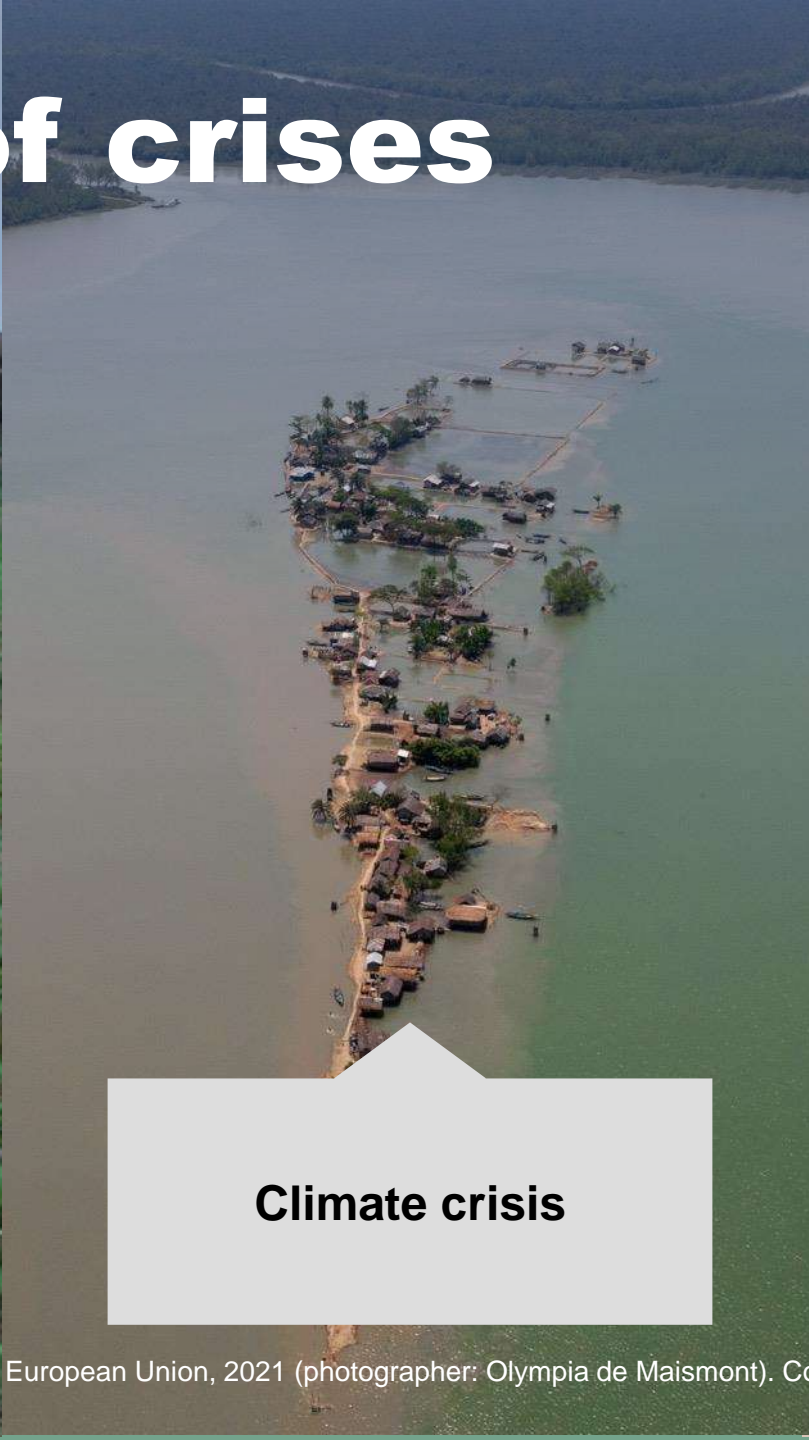


# **The demand for humanitarian action: Crises, caseload & context**

# Four years of crises



**Ongoing conflicts**

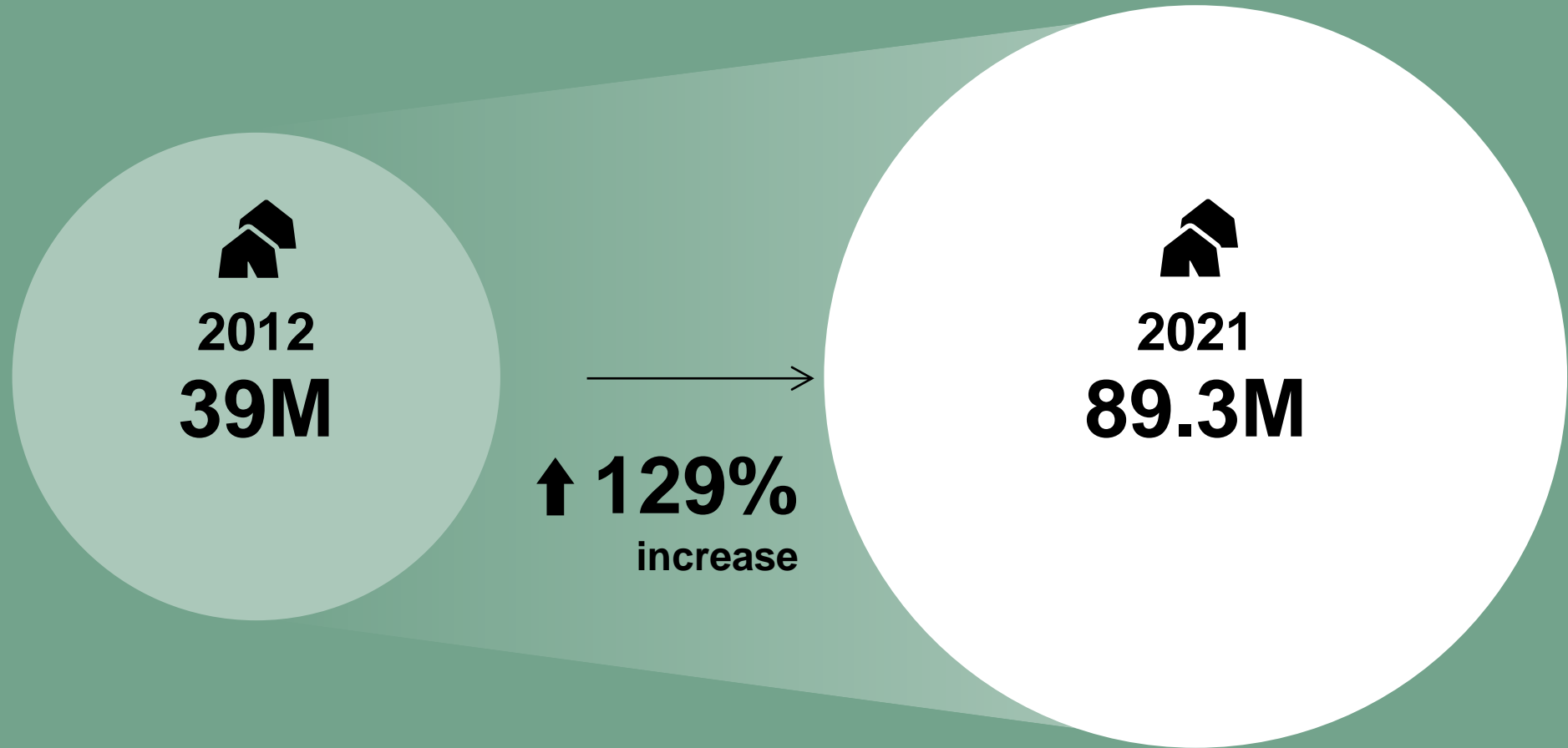


**Climate crisis**

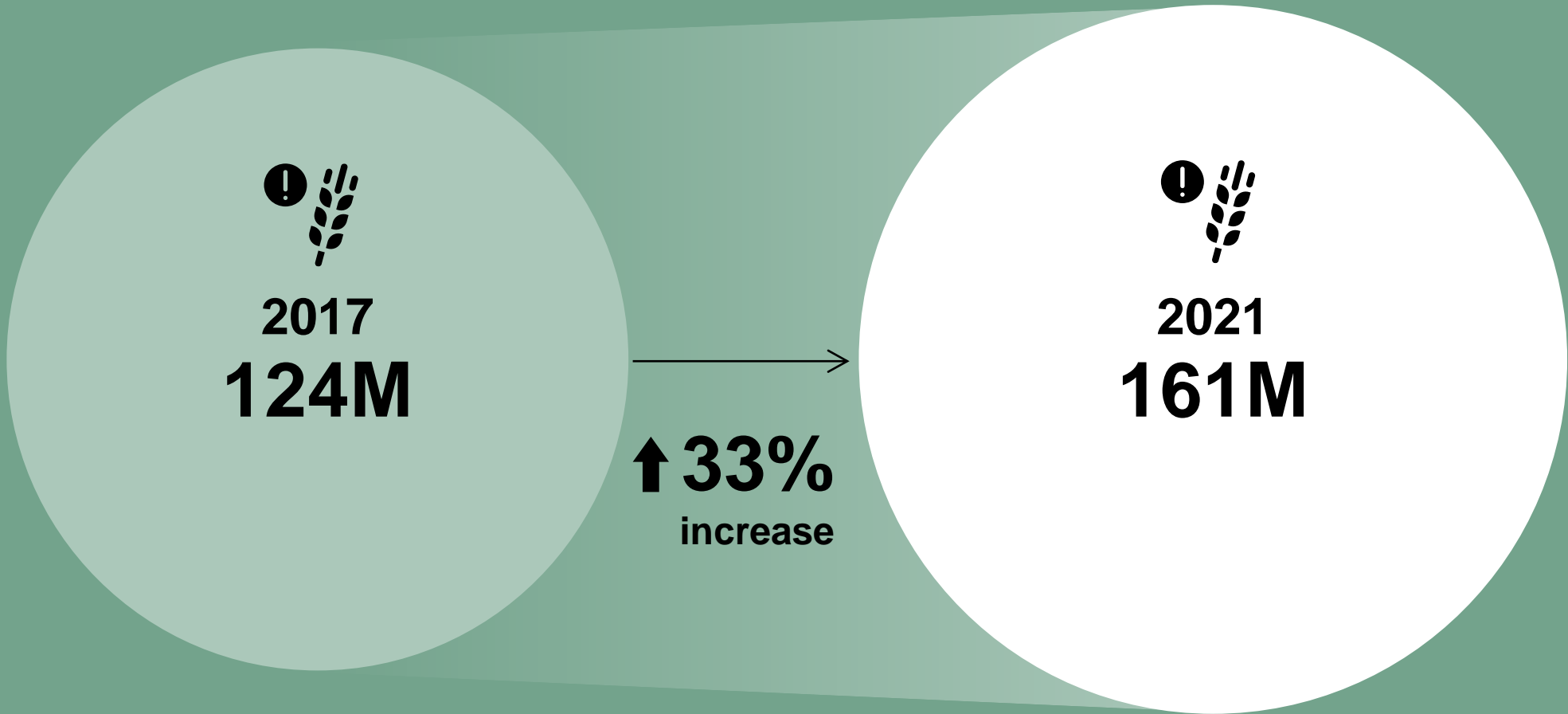


**COVID-19**

# Displacement more than doubled



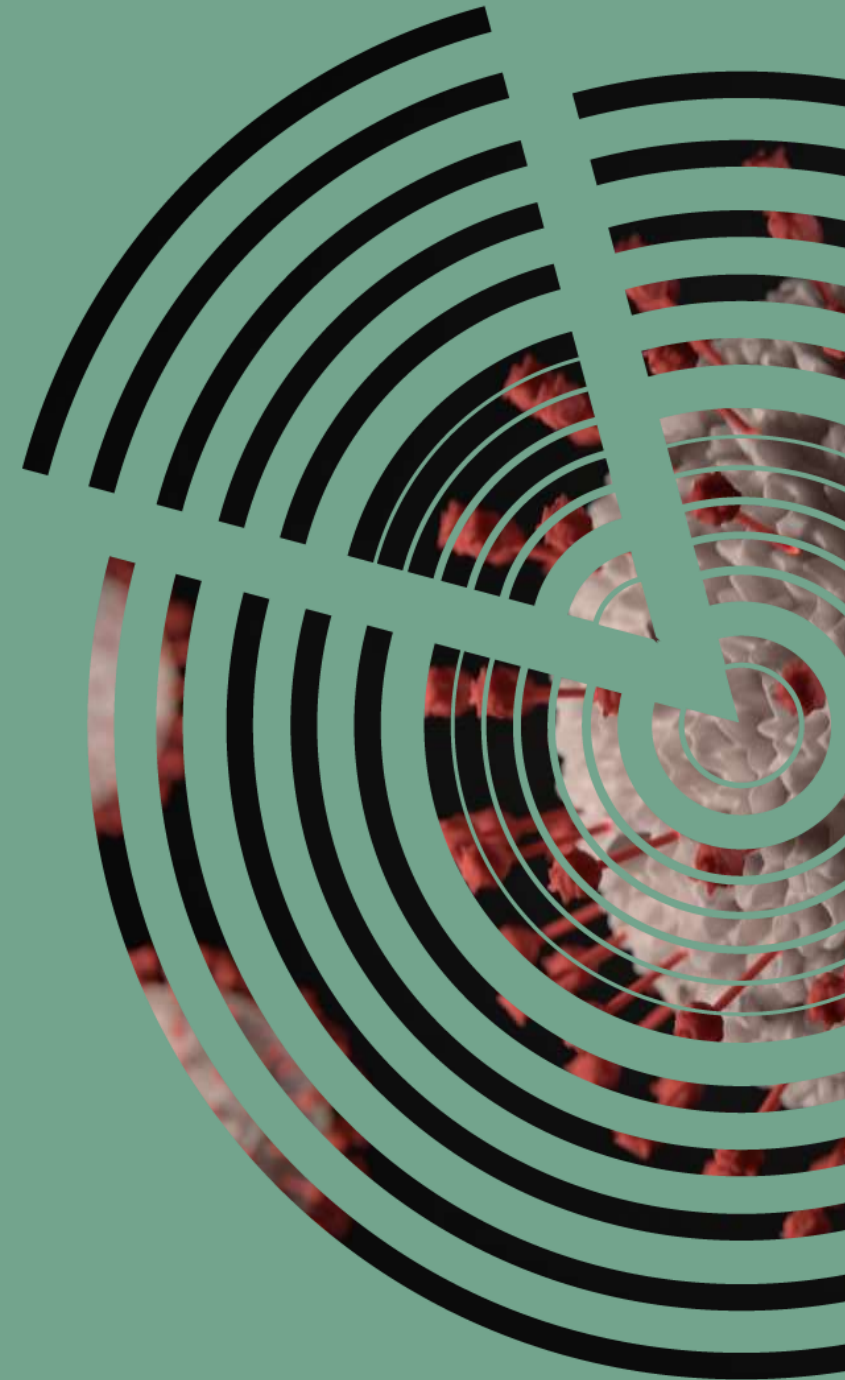
# Acute food insecurity has risen



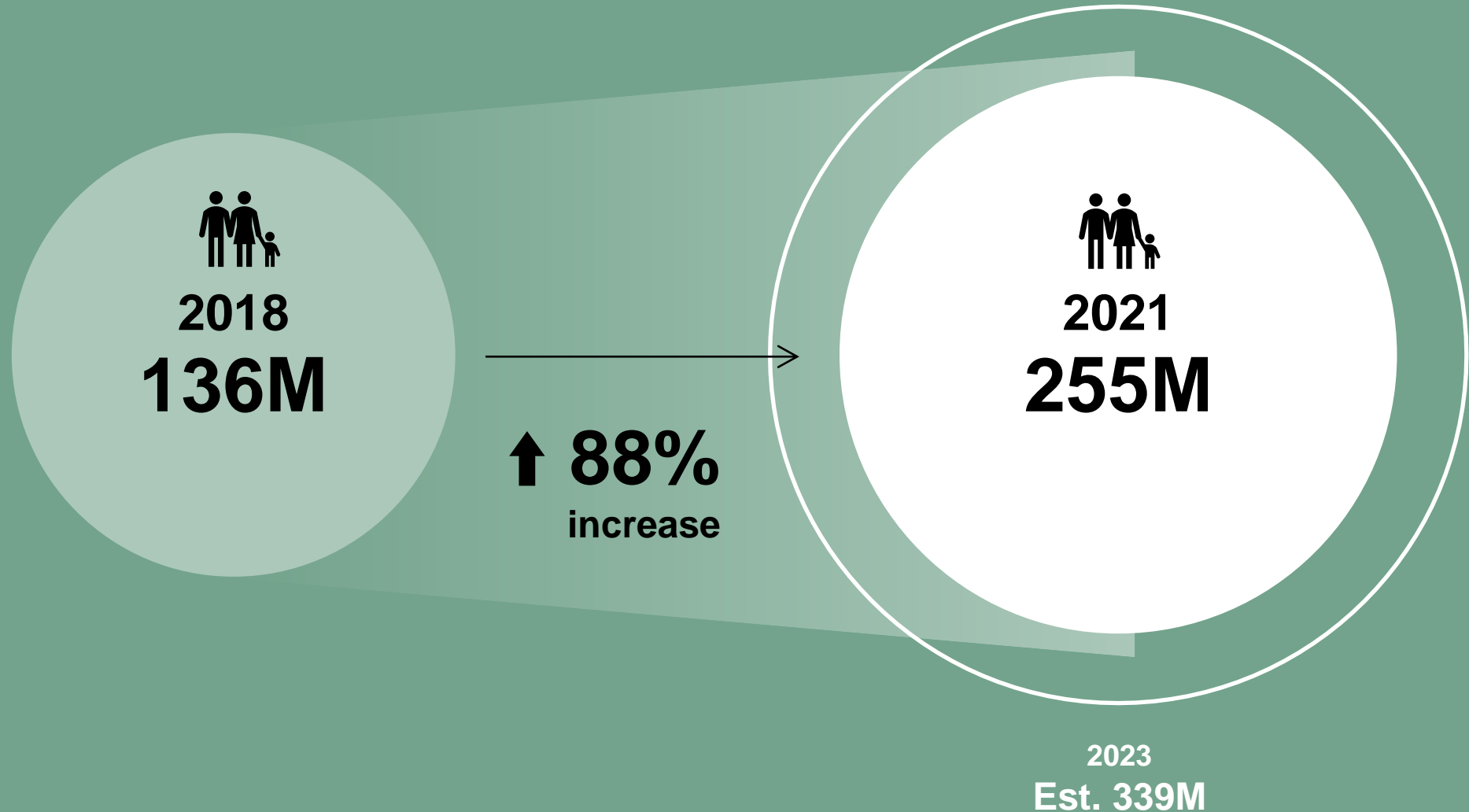


# COVID-19

- Impacts of lockdowns/restrictions more severe than the virus in many contexts
- Sharp increase in protection risks and education needs
- 97 million estimated to have been pushed below extreme poverty line



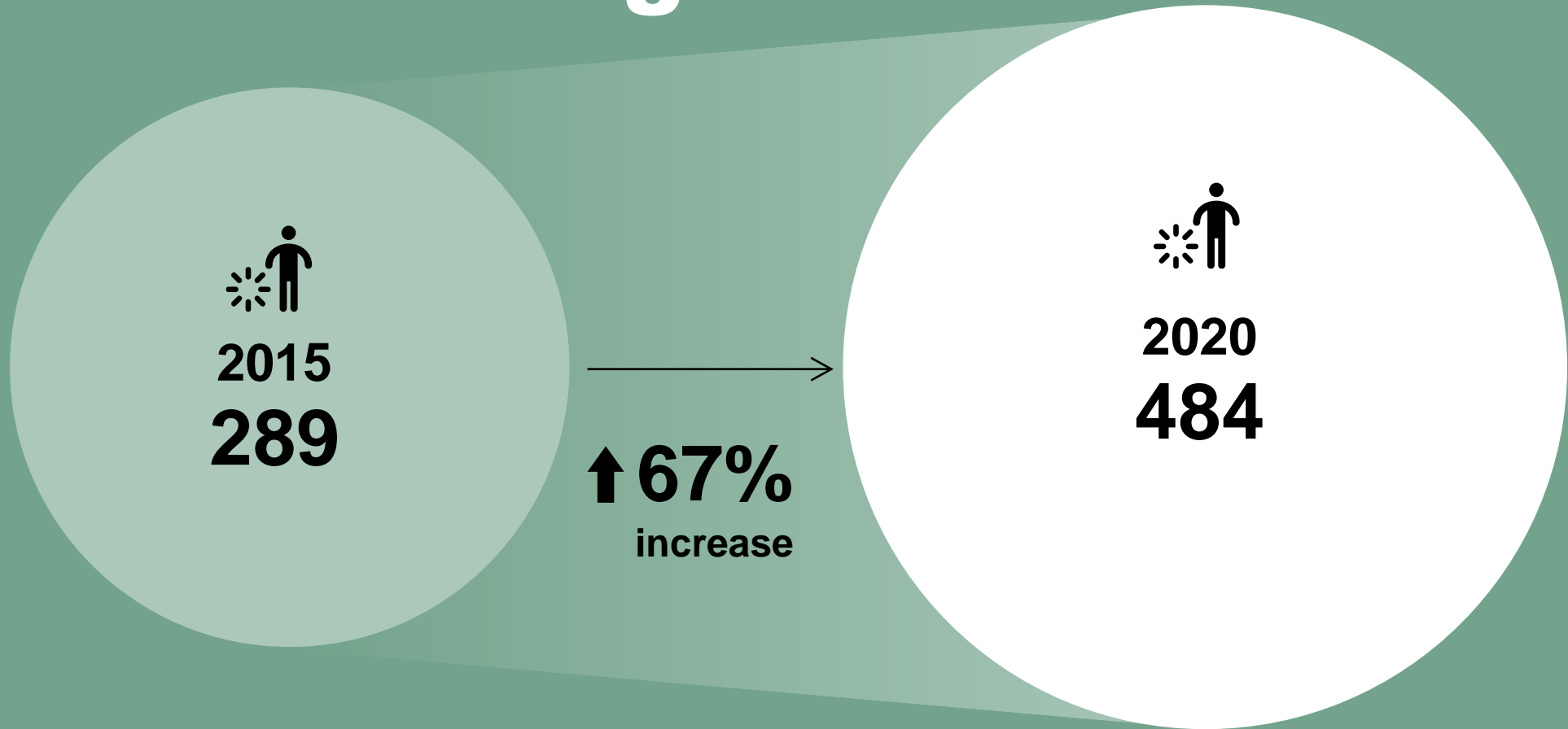
# More people in need






**As humanitarian caseloads grew, the enabling space to address them shrank**

# Number of aid workers being attacked is rising







**“We’re in an  
absolute crisis  
of a fight for  
core norms”**



# **The size and capacity of the humanitarian system**

# What is the system?

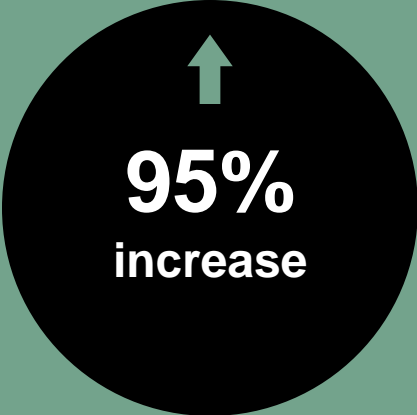


# There are more staff...



2012

324,000

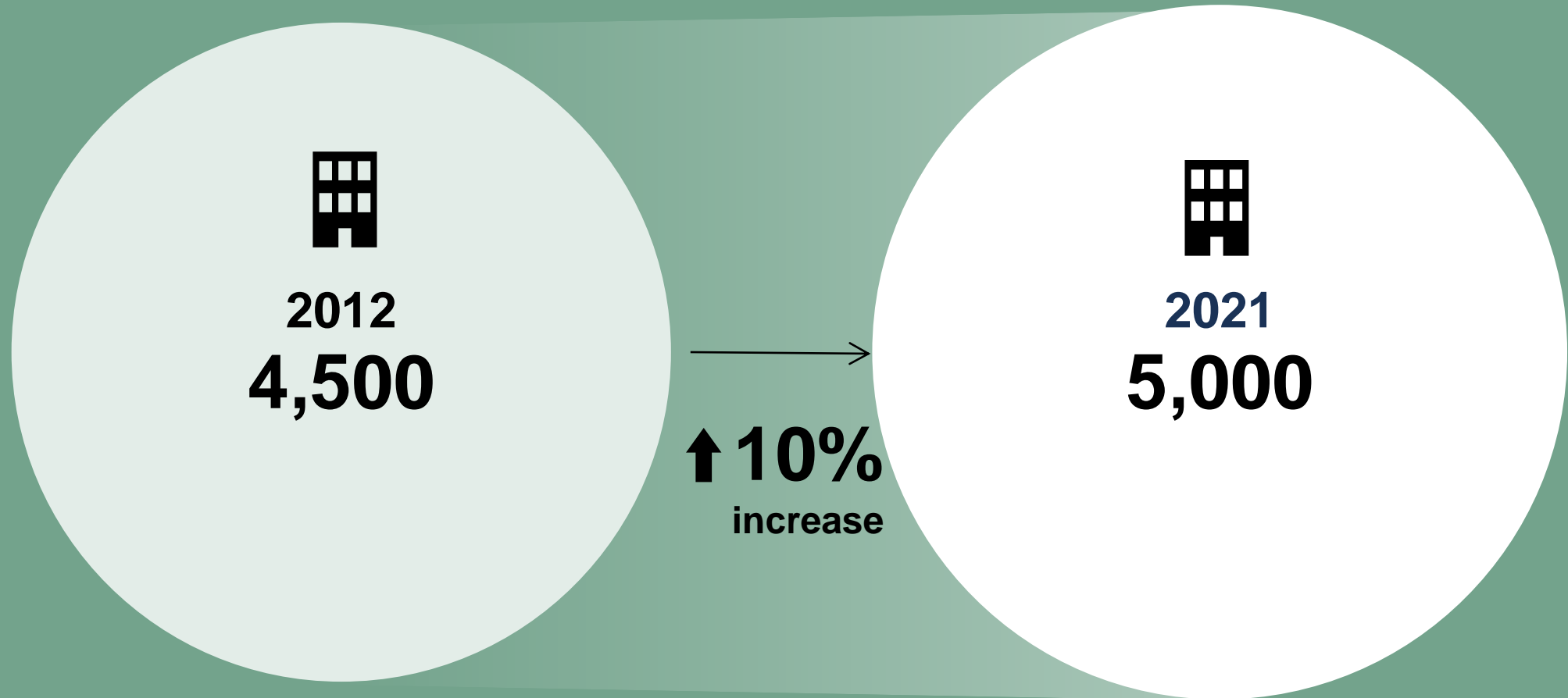


2021

632,000

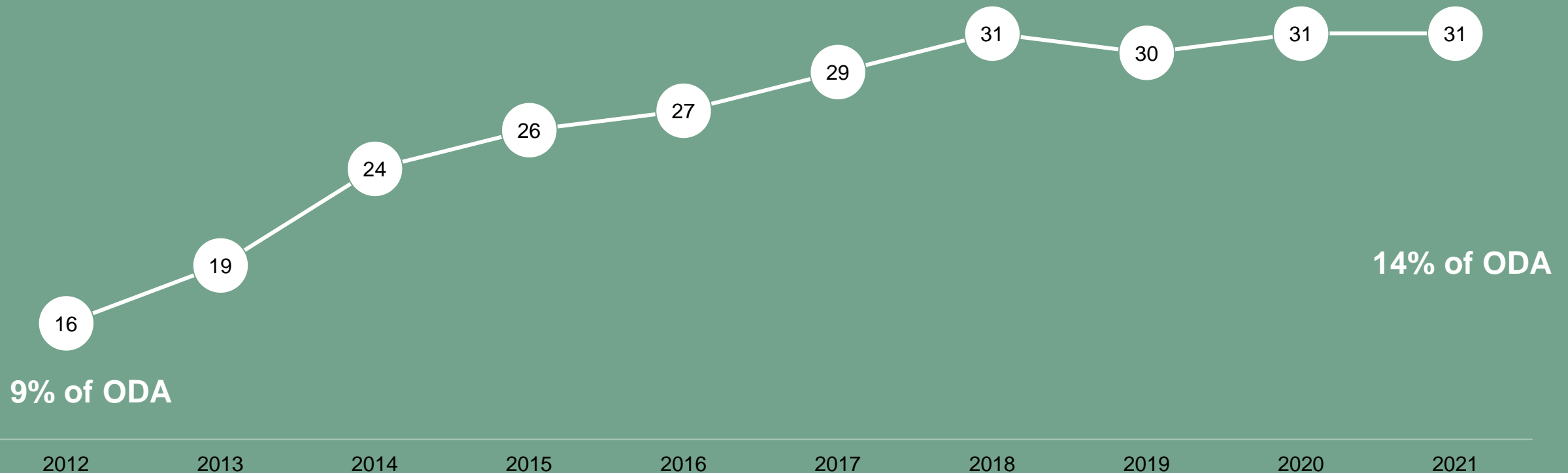


# ...working for more organisations



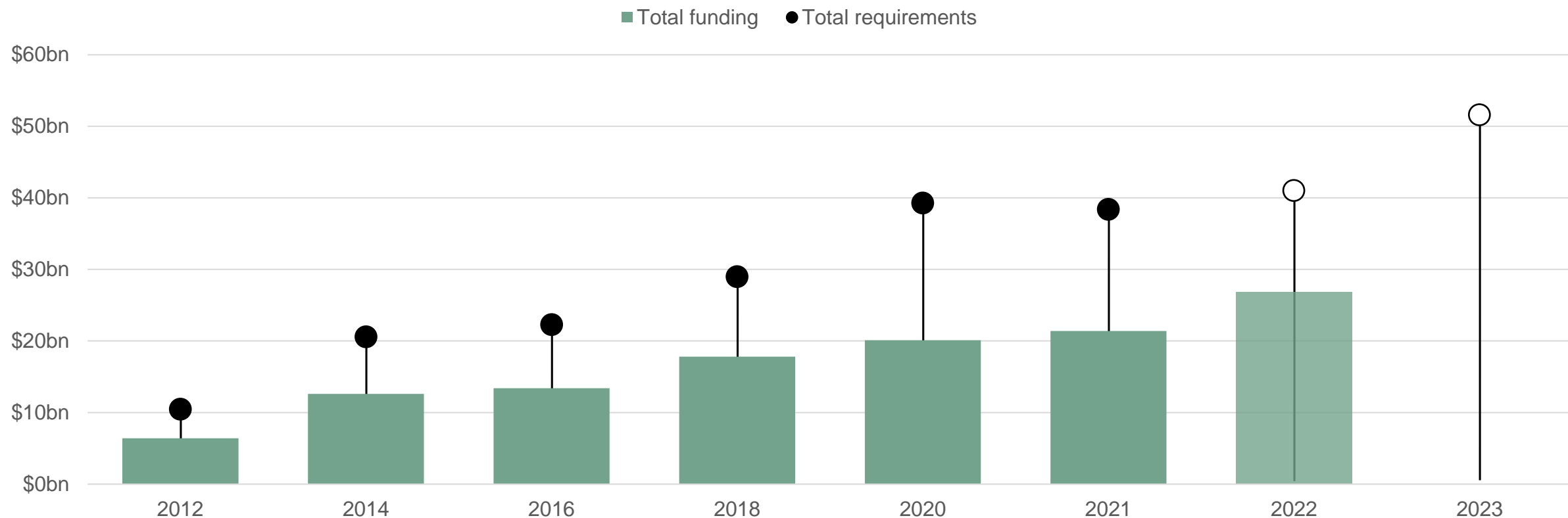
# Funding doubled over a decade

International humanitarian assistance (in \$billion)



# ... but funding didn't keep pace with requirements

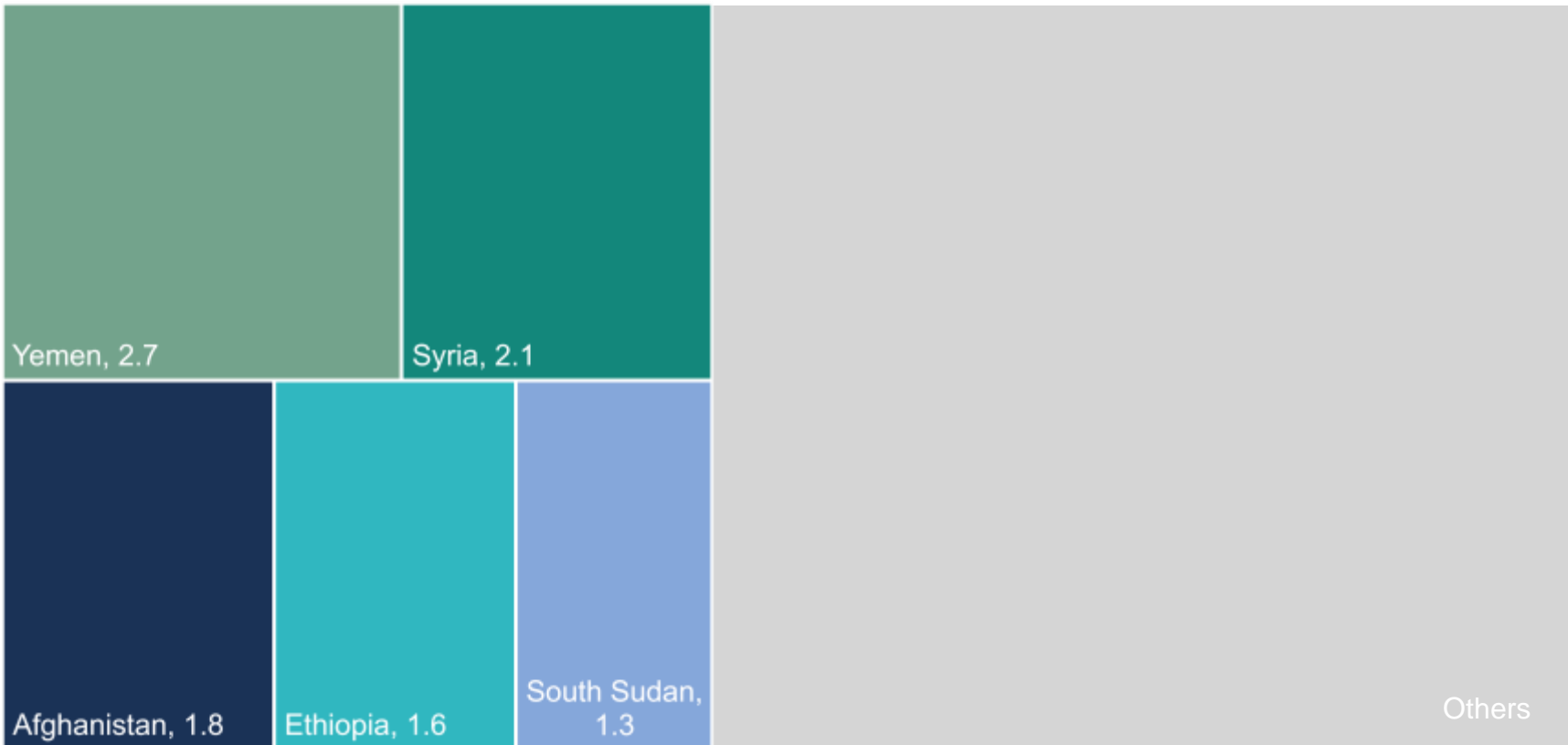
Funding and unmet requirements, UN-coordinated appeals, 2012–2021



# Concentration to a handful of countries

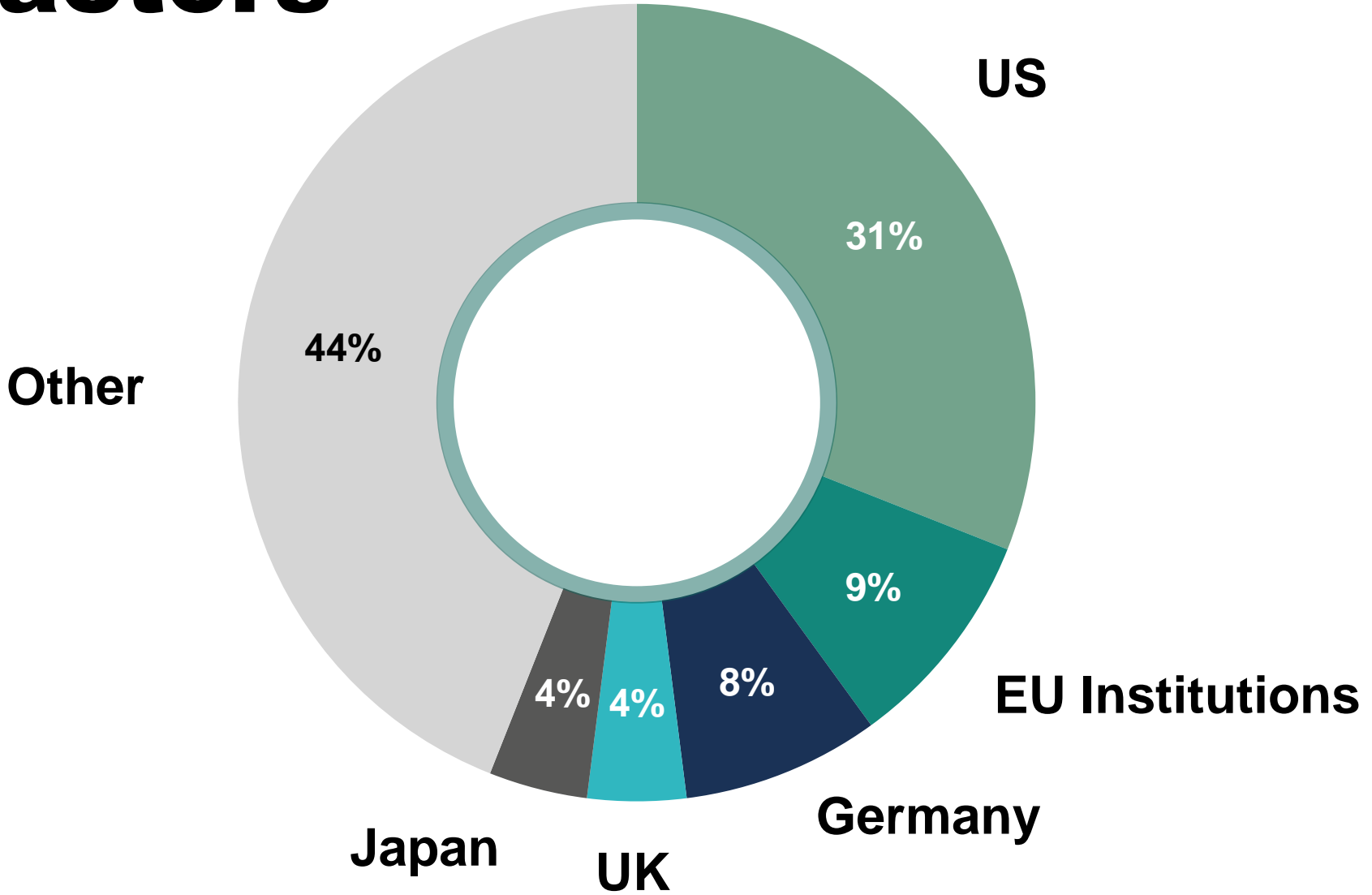
Around 40% of aid went to just five countries

Amount in USD (bn)

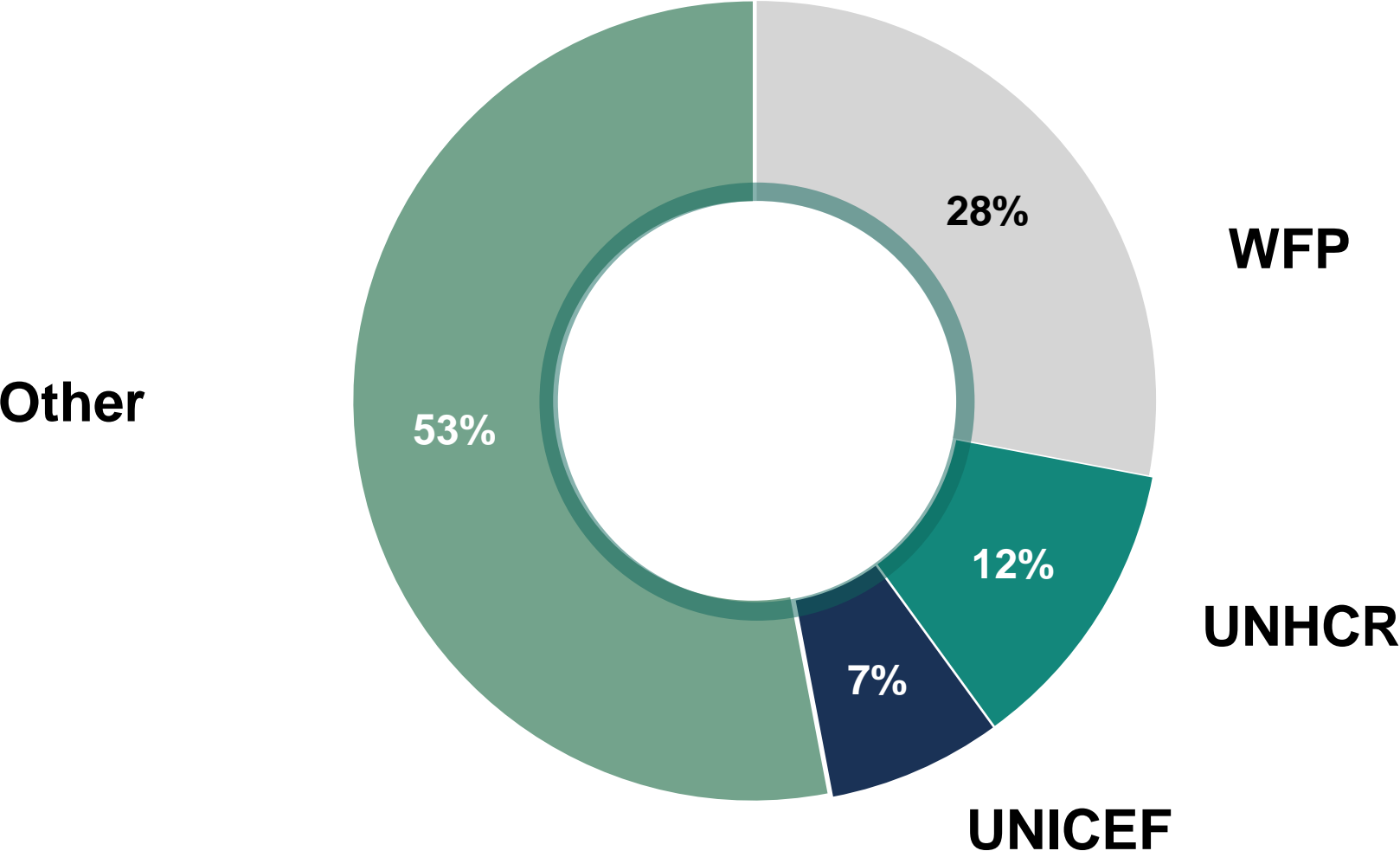




# In 2021, 57% of funding provided by top 5 actors

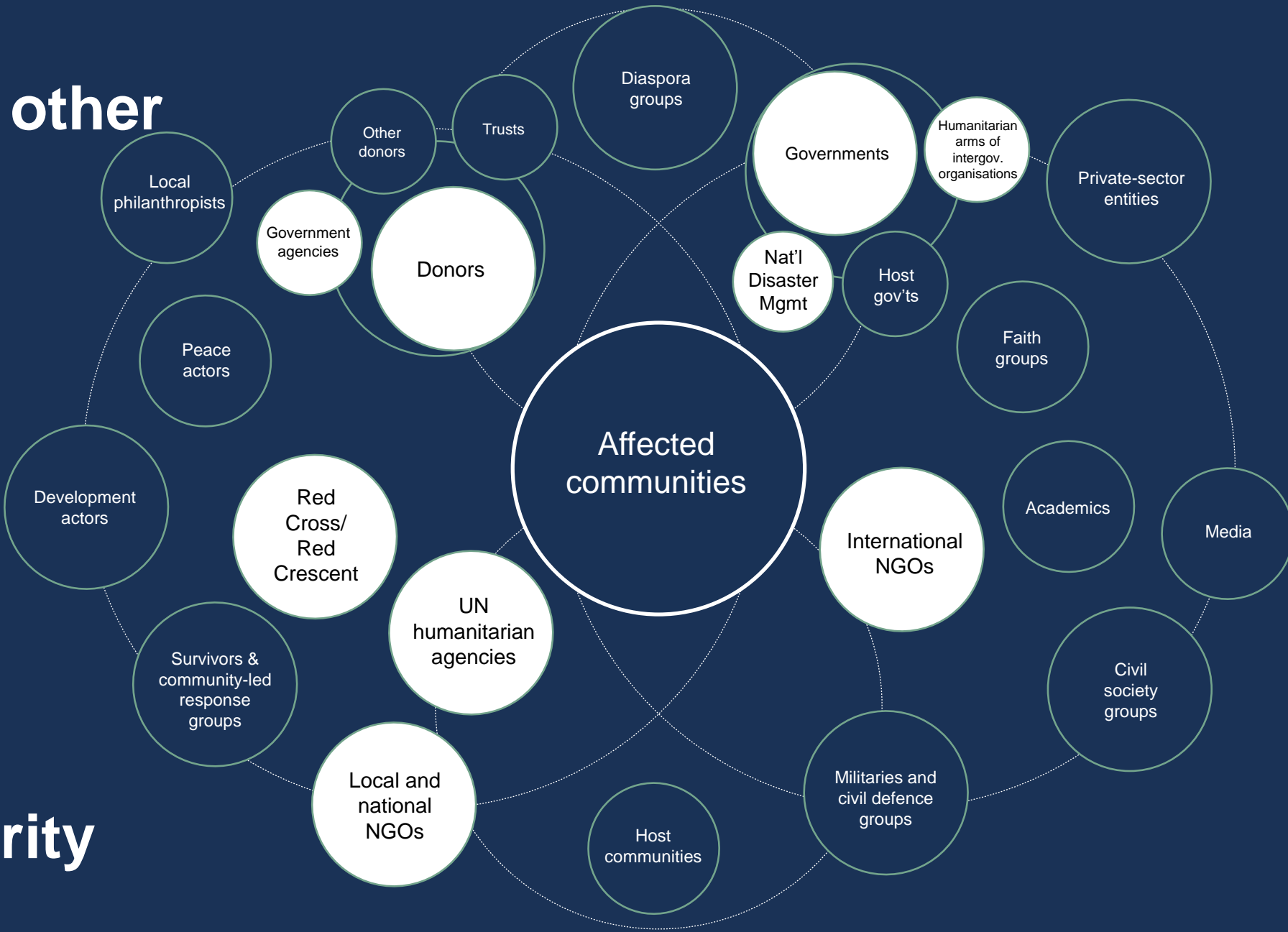


# 47% of funding over 2018-2021 went directly to 3 agencies





**Growing awareness of other sources of support...**



**...but little complementarity**



**The  
performance of  
the system**



# **How well did the system work?**

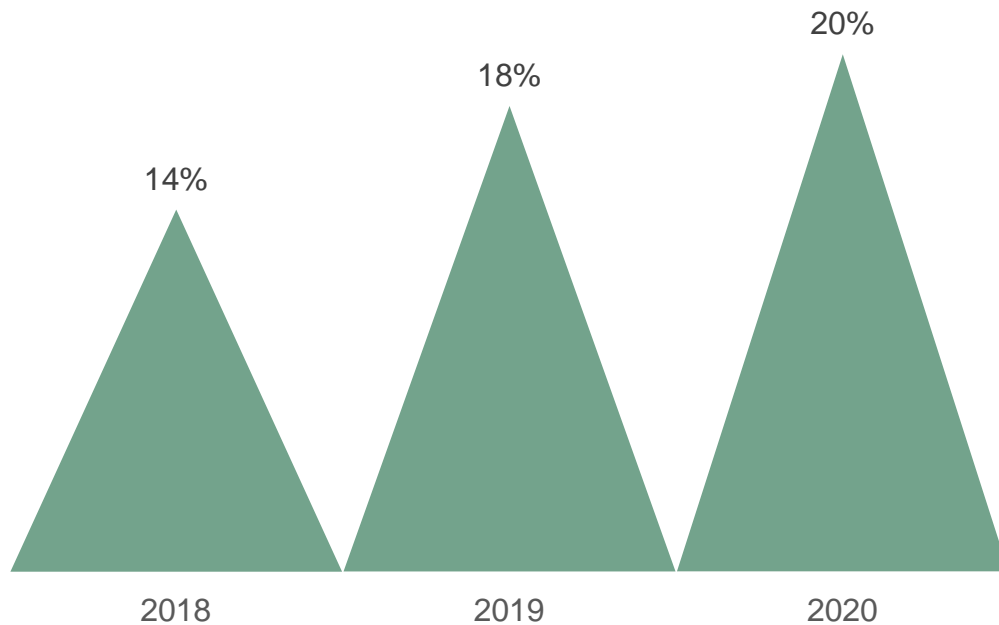
**Gaps in measuring outcomes**

**But clear evidence of effectiveness  
across sectors**



# Cash: effective and growing

Proportion of funding for humanitarian cash and voucher assistance out of total IHA, 2018-2021



## Positive outcomes



Improved educational outcomes



Improved food security & diet diversity



Increased feelings of dignity



Lower morbidity for children under five



Decline in child labour & early marriage



A white medical helicopter is shown in flight against a clear blue sky. The helicopter is viewed from a low angle, looking up. It has a white body with blue and red accents. The word 'EMERGENCY' is visible on the side of the fuselage. The main rotor blades are blurred, indicating motion. The landing gear is extended. The background is a clear, bright blue sky.

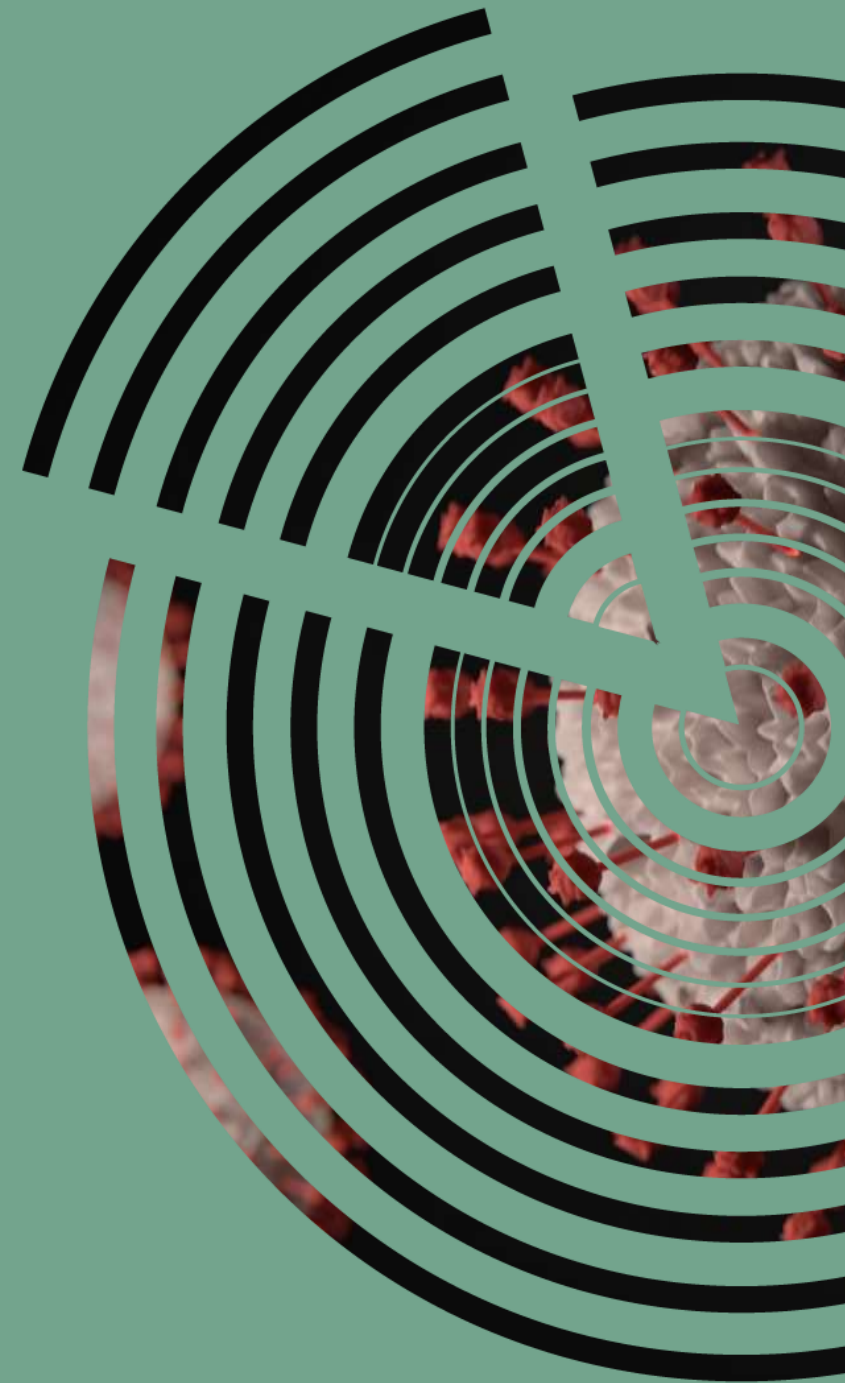
**Preparedness and  
anticipatory action  
improved the timeliness  
of humanitarian aid**

Source: ©EU/ECHO/Daniel Dickinson.

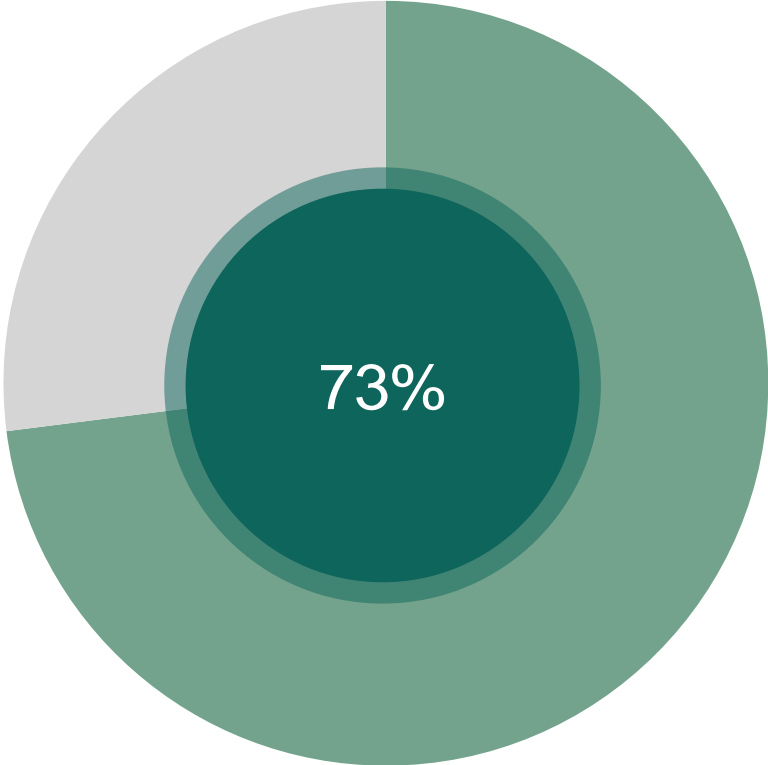
# COVID-19 in Cox's Bazar

- **Managed health risks well**
- **Limited funding for non-health activities**
- **Lack of contact increased protection risks**

**“I’ve seen them lose trust in the international justice process, in the Bangladesh government, and humanitarian actors, and in each other”**

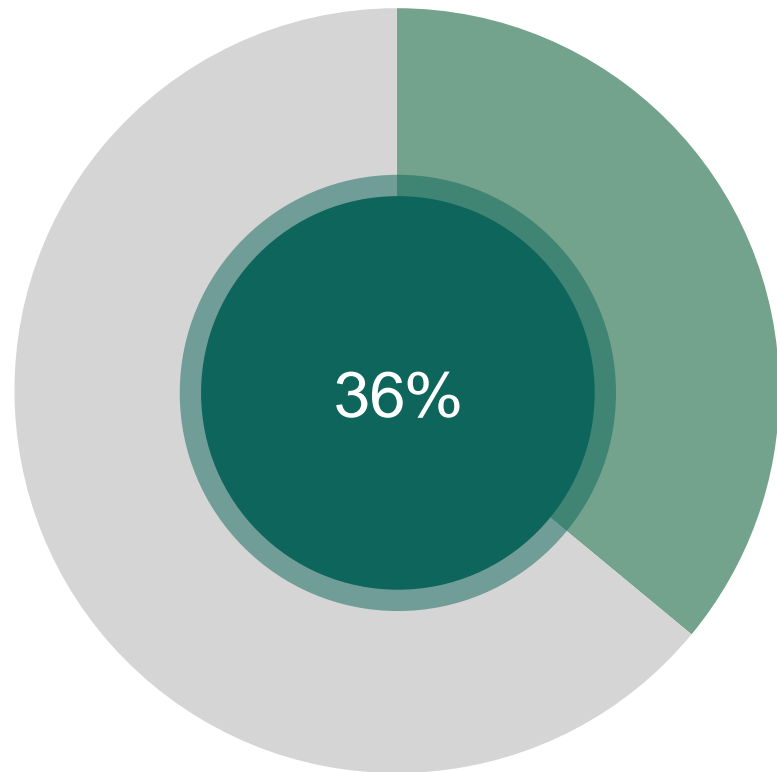


# How well did the system treat affected people?



**73% of aid recipients said they were treated with respect and dignity**

# What affected people want to know: does aid go to the right people?



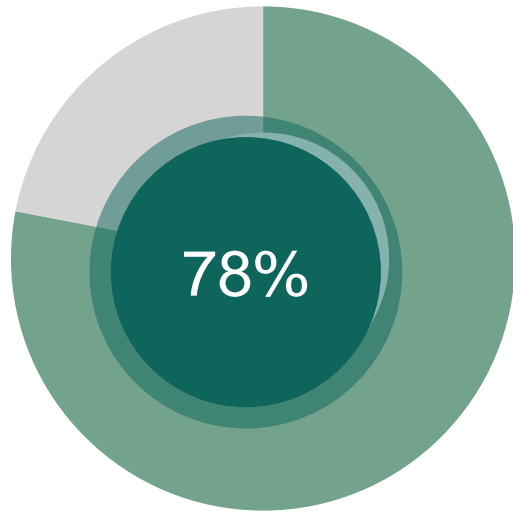
**Only 36% of recipients said aid went to those who needed it most.**

# **New and old targeting challenges**

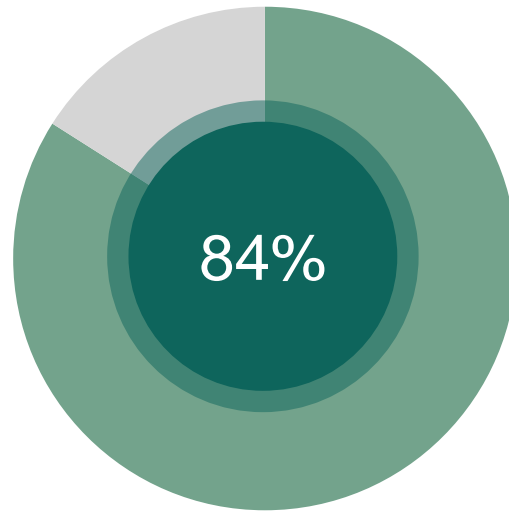
- **Confusion about criteria**
- **Different ideas of fairness**
- **Interference and diversion**
- **Applying gender, age, disability guidelines**



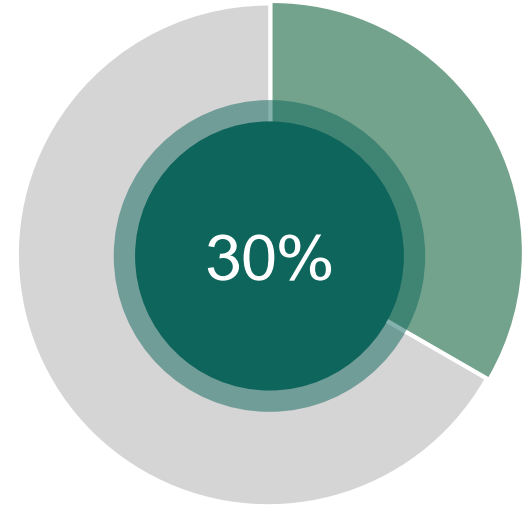
# Perspectives of aid recipients in Bangladesh



Support for COVID-19



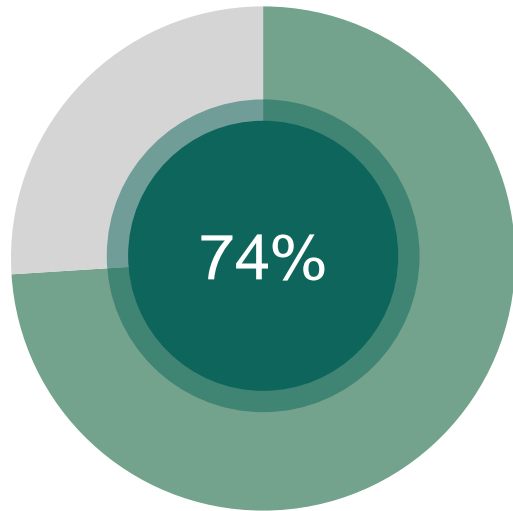
Assisted by government



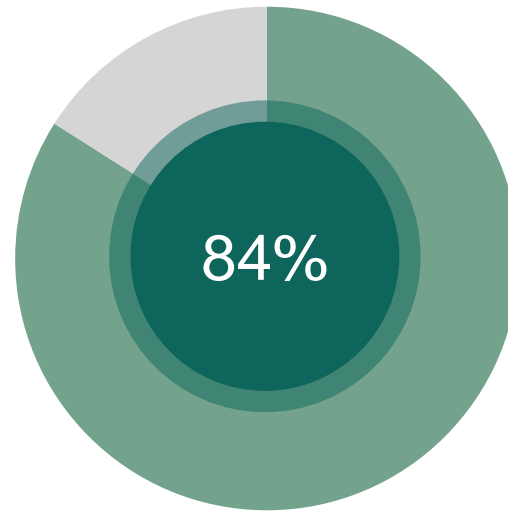
Targeting the most in need



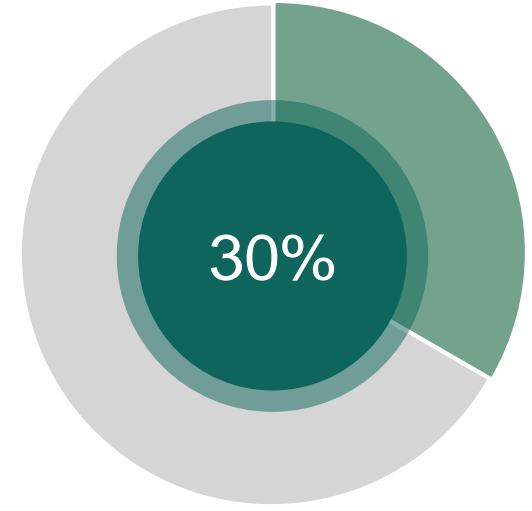
# Perspectives of aid recipients in Bangladesh...outside of Cox's Bazar



Support for COVID-19



Assisted by government



Targeting the most in need



# Engagement leads to better performance

Survey respondents consulted about the aid they were receiving were:

**2.2**

**times**

more likely to say that aid addressed their priority needs

**2.5**

**times**

more likely to say that the amount of aid was sufficient

**2.7**

**times**

more likely to say that the aid they received was of good quality

# **COVID slowed engagement progress**

**Only one in three  
aid recipients said they  
could provide feedback or complain...**

**... the same as in 2018**

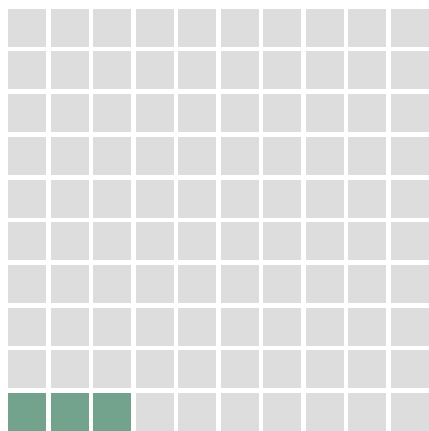
**Challenges in both gathering feedback and  
responding**



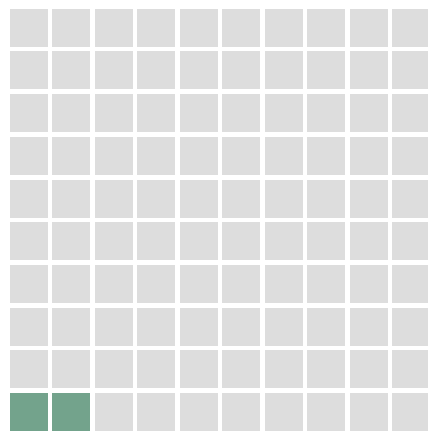


# **Commitments, change and contestation**

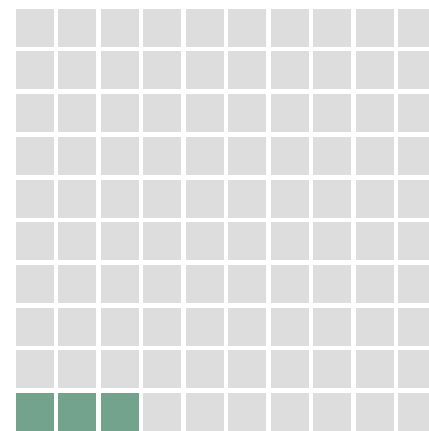
# Direct international humanitarian funding to national and local actors, 2018–2021



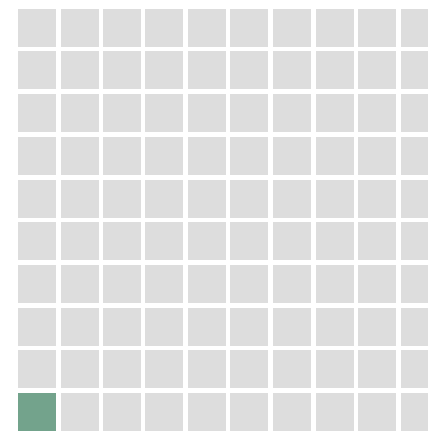
**3.3%**  
**2018**



**1.8%**  
**2019**



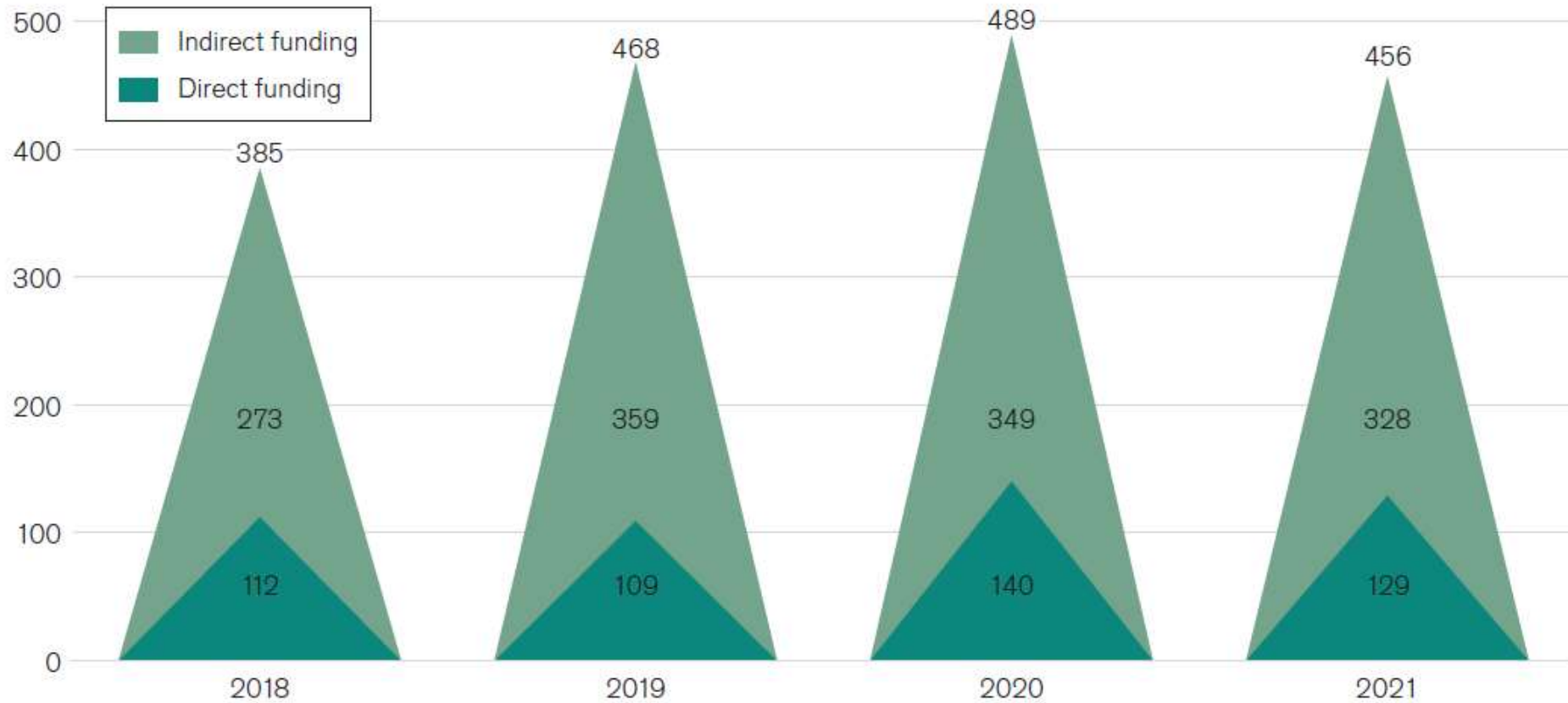
**3%**  
**2020**




**1.2%**  
**2021**

**Figure 36: Total direct and indirect funding to national and local NGOs, 2018–2021**

*Direct and indirect funding to national and local NGOs decreased by nearly 10% in 2021 to \$129 million and \$328 million respectively. Direct funding accounted for around 40% of the share received by local and national actors in the same period.*





**“the capacity  
building university  
is some black hole  
that you enter into  
as a local NGO and  
never graduate”**



# Leadership & Power

- **Low scores for supporting local leadership and sharing power**
- **Sub-contracting risk rather than partnering**



# Lack of adaptation to duration of crises is impacting relevance

34% of aid recipients said aid addressed their priority needs...

... Slightly less than 2018 (39%)



# **New Nexus language but limited connections**

**'Triple nexus' conceived...**

**...but many are confused about what it means in practice...**

**...questions over mandates and responsibilities persist**





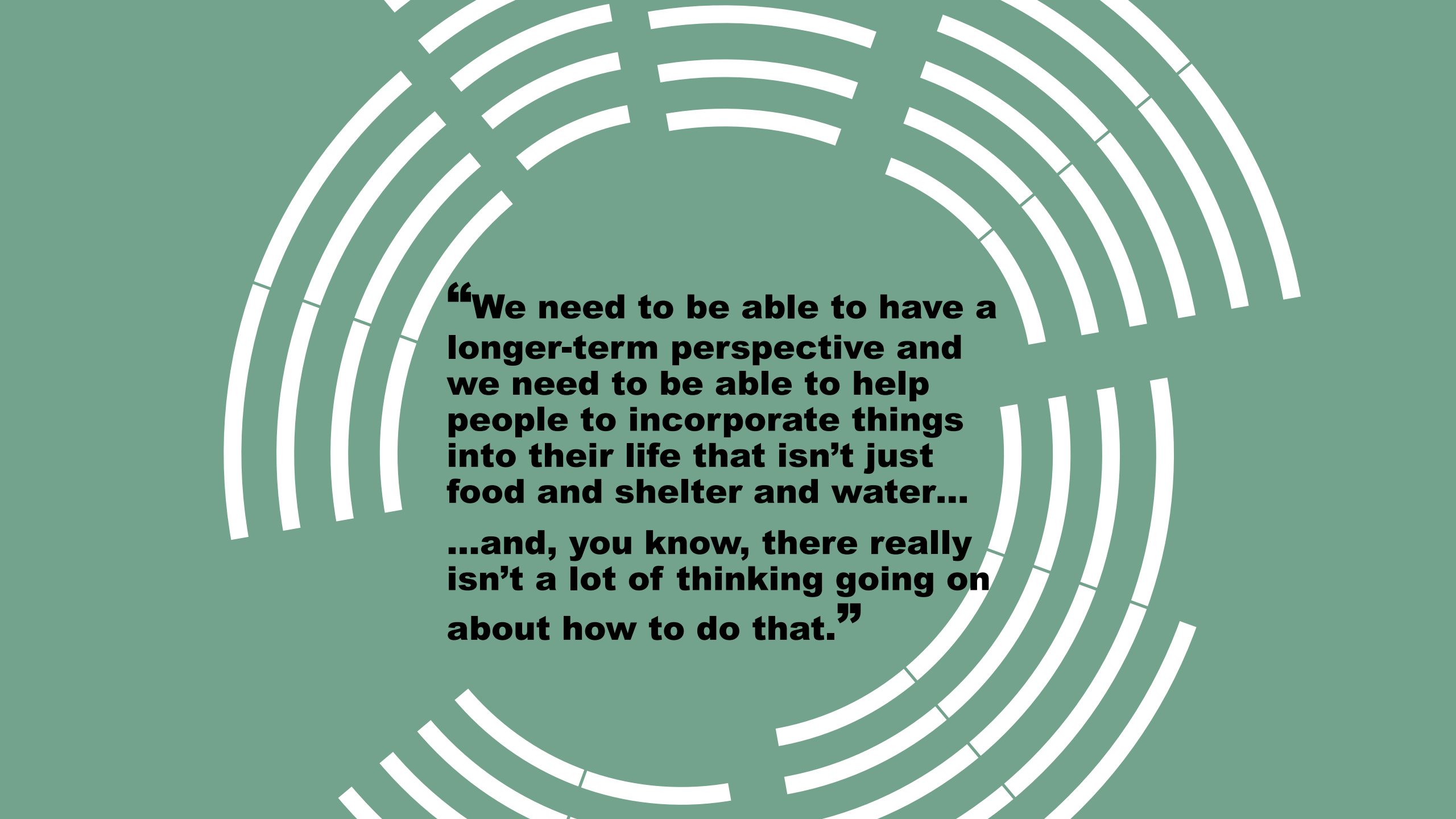
# **Durable solutions remained elusive**

**Refugees felt 40% more consulted...  
...but 60% less satisfied with amount of aid**

**States 'constructive abroad, obstructive at home'**

**Durable solutions progress faltered, particularly  
during pandemic**





**“We need to be able to have a longer-term perspective and we need to be able to help people to incorporate things into their life that isn’t just food and shelter and water...**

**...and, you know, there really isn’t a lot of thinking going on about how to do that.”**



**Taking stock**



# What have we learned?

**In sum, the system is:**

- **larger but not in proportion to the size of the problem**
- **effective but narrowly so**
- **not putting affected people fully at the centre**
- **evolving, but slowly**
- **under increasing pressure**





# **Reaffirming solidarity with people affected by crisis**

- ambitious for affected people
  - humble about the system's role
- 



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# **THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM**

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**Dhaka**

**20<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

