

HEKS/EPER thematic factsheet 2023



**HEKS
EPER**
Bread for all.

Humanitarian Aid

HEKS/EPER Global Cooperation's challenges, strategy, promising practices, achievements and perspectives on humanitarian aid.

Why Humanitarian Aid Matters

Global Challenges – Context¹

The world is in a grave state of humanitarian crisis. In March 2023, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that **347.7 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance in 2023**. This represents an increase of 446% compared to the number of people in need in 2015 (77.9 million) and more than a quarter increase of the number estimated 14 months before 2022 (274 million).

During the last decade, the main driver behind this trend were conflicts that often led to protracted crises keeping people from covering their basic needs and positively transforming their societies. Some examples include Syria, with 6.8 million internally displaced along with more than 8 million Syrian refugees worldwide; the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with conflicts in the region of the great lakes, South Sudan, where 2.2 million people have been displaced internally, and over 2.3 million to neighbouring countries, and the massive displacement of Rohingya from Myanmar to Bangladesh. After 14 months of the war in Ukraine, more than 8.1 million refugees were recorded across Europe and IOM tracked almost 5.4 million internally displaced people. An estimated 103 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced, including 32.5 million people displaced across international borders and 53.1 conflict-related internally displaced persons, among others. In many cases, their displacement is linked to a conflict, but an increasing number of people are forced to leave their homes due to disasters caused by natural hazards and the effects of climate change. According to the World Bank, climate change could force 216 million people to migrate to their countries by 2050.



Senegal: Effects of climate change reduce access of people to natural resources such as soil, water or wood. Agricultural production and food security are hampered.

The impacts of climate change are already killing people and devastating lives and livelihoods every year, and they will only get worse without immediate, determined action. The frequency and intensity of climatological disasters are increasing (35% since the 1990s), with more category 4 and 5 storms, more heatwaves breaking temperature records, and more heavy rains, among many other extremes. Loss of natural resources, food insecurity, direct and indirect health impacts, and displacement are likewise rising. In the past ten years, 83% of all disasters triggered by natural hazards were caused by extreme weather and climate-related events, killing more than 400'000 people since 2010.

Hunger is rising, with 222 million people facing acute food insecurity at the end of 2022. Fuelled by variants and a lack of vaccines, **COVID-19** has claimed huge numbers of lives and devastated economies and livelihoods. E.g., in Lebanon, shaken by an economic and political crisis and the Beirut Blast, a required heavy lockdown strongly contributed to a large part of the population becoming dependent on aid. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerable the world is to a truly global catastrophe. But another catastrophe has been building for many decades.

How HEKS/EPER responds – the HA strategy

The provision of humanitarian aid worldwide is one of the mandates HEKS/EPER given by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (EKS). HEKS/EPER has carried it out over the past decades in many small- and large-scale emergencies worldwide and renewed it in the new HEKS/EPER International Programme. The humanitarian aid is anchored in the HEKS/EPER International Programme (2021-2024) global results framework as **outcome 1, 'Basic needs during the crisis are covered'**. The outcome aims to be achieved by two outputs addressing different phases after a crisis.

HEKS/EPER's strategy output 1.1 'Means for basic needs are provided': HEKS/EPER responds to conflicts, disasters, and protracted crises and encompasses interventions to cover the basic survival needs of affected population groups in a timely and professional manner according to Sphere (core humanitarian) standards. HEKS/EPER works through

¹ Data from UNHCR, OCHA's Global Humanitarian Overview 2022, and the World Bank's updated Groundswell report.

international alliances, direct implementation or local partners whose capacity are actively enhanced. HEKS/EPER is committed to the **localisation agenda** and our priority is working with local partners/CBOs/civil society organisations. Where HEKS/EPER is present with its development programmes, we rely on the network of long-term local partners to deliver humanitarian aid. Usually, these partners are part of the Disaster Response Plan and capacity strengthening on humanitarian aid is done before a crisis. Where external conditions allow (e.g., functioning banking system and competitive markets), **cash-based approaches** are the preferred implementation methods as they allow recipients greater flexibility and dignity. In most crises, the host communities have been just as severely affected as the refugees or IDPs. Thus, HEKS/EPER addresses the needs of host and displaced communities and **acts conflict-sensitively**. Irrespective of the nature of life-saving interventions, emphasis is put on linking these with the subsequent phases of rehabilitation, livelihood recovery, and development, focusing on increasing the affected population's resilience to future threats. **People in hard-to-reach areas** are often even more affected by a crisis than those in more easily accessible locations. However, support by humanitarian actors is predominantly provided in areas where organisations can easily and safely operate. In the past, HEKS/EPER committed itself to serving the most vulnerable in humanitarian aid and development settings. To continue doing so, and with more and more people being affected by conflicts, HEKS/EPER works in more complex and risky environments.

HEKS/EPER's strategy output 1.2 'Livelihoods and infrastructure are restored': Disasters and humanitarian crises often result in massive destruction of private and public infrastructure and means of livelihood. Communities and local authorities are usually not resilient enough to anticipate and independently recover. Therefore, **HEKS/EPER continues implementation beyond relief**. During the rehabilitation phase, the livelihoods of the most affected and most vulnerable groups are enhanced, and private houses and public infrastructure are reconstructed. Committed to the human rights-based Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), HEKS/EPER applies principles like participation, empowerment, accountability, equality, and non-discrimination.

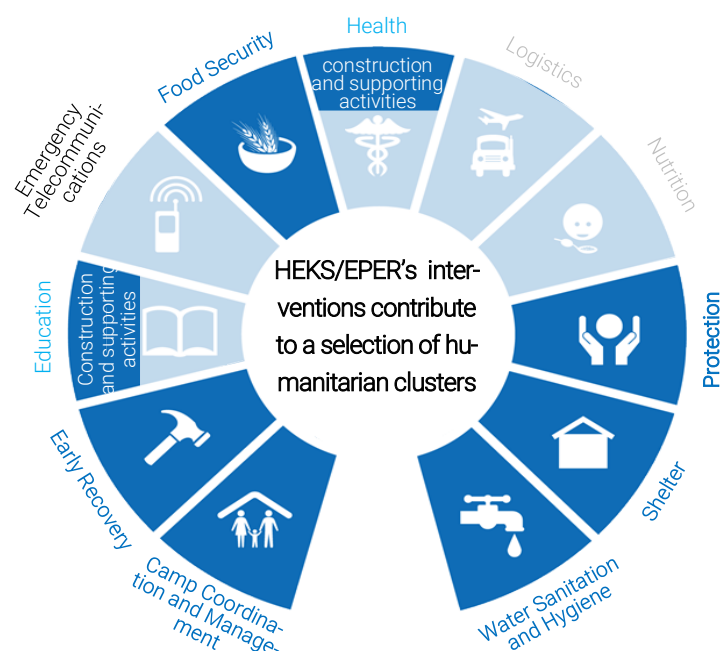
HEKS/EPER emphasises 'building back better' in all reconstruction projects, ensuring that the rehabilitated infrastructure can withstand a future disaster. Preference is given to locally available and environmental-friendly construction materials and traditional construction technologies, which will be improved where required. Ownership of households is increased by applying owner-driven approaches and flexible construction designs, coupled with technical support and capacity building, to ensure high-quality buildings.

To lessen a disaster's impact on the local population, HEKS/EPER works with communities and local actors to strengthen their resilience and be prepared in the event of a disaster. These efforts are formally a part of our development programs, but this conceptual attribution loses its significance with our increased efforts to strengthen our triple nexus programming.

Contribution to effective coordination: HEKS/EPER closely coordinates all its humanitarian interventions with respective governments, local authorities, and humanitarian coordination bodies.

With its projects, HEKS/EPER primarily contributes to food security, protection, shelter, WASH, camp coordination and management, and early recovery clusters and actively participates in the coordination mechanisms. HEKS/EPER partially supports the health and education sectors by constructing and providing equipment to schools and health facilities and supporting the continuation or resumption of school classes or health services. Service provision and capacity building are left to specialised agencies.

Crosscutting issues and quality assurance: As a member of the CHS Alliance, HEKS/EPER commits to the Core Humanitarian Standards on Quality and



HEKS/EPER is active in eight out of eleven humanitarian clusters.

Accountability (CHS) and aligns its interventions with the Sphere Standards. Projects comply with national law and consider respective donor standards.

Before any humanitarian aid intervention, HEKS/EPER conducts a needs assessment and analyses the working area's power dynamics. The projects are planned and implemented in a **conflict-sensitive** manner. By consulting the affected people already in project planning, understanding and addressing their concerns through complaint mechanisms and conducting post-distribution monitoring or equivalent evaluation tools, HEKS/EPER is mainstreaming **accountability**. HEKS/EPER exclusively provides **needs-based humanitarian aid** and never makes religious affiliation a criterion in beneficiary selection. The principle of non-discrimination will also be followed for other characteristics, including age, gender, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, disability, health status, political or different opinions, and national or social origin. HEKS/EPER's behaviour and interventions are subject to the imperative need to follow and be perceived as following, the core humanitarian principles of **humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence**.

Where HEKS/EPER works

HEKS/EPER responds to humanitarian crises, where HEKS/EPER is already present with a development cooperation office and in additional countries, if needs on the ground justify doing so and if the national government and civil society cannot assist crisis-affected populations. The following map shows the **18 countries** where HEKS/EPER provided its main humanitarian aid activities in 2022. Compared to 2021, the countries affected by the **War against the Ukraine**, starting in February 2022, led to Eastern Europe being the biggest HA intervention area of HEKS/EPER.



Main humanitarian interventions in 2022, with Ukraine intervention in 5 countries, DRC, Venezuela and Ethiopia being the countries with the most funds spent and people reached.

Promising Practices Worldwide

Bangladesh – supporting Rohingya refugees and host communities

More than one million Rohingya displaced from Myanmar stay in refugee camps near Cox Bazaar. Both the Rohingya, but also the host community require humanitarian support. With Bangladesh insisting on the repatriation of Rohingya to Myanmar and Myanmar not providing the required safety and rights to the Rohingya, the refugees will likely stay in the camps and remain dependent on support for years to come.

With **24'000 households supported to repair and upgrade their shelters in 2021**, HEKS/EPER manages an extensive caseload in the Rohingya response. In 2021, vegetable gardening on the shelter's roofs improved nutrition and reduced the heat in the shelters. Settlement interventions (drainage, pathways, stairways, bridges, slope protection) improve camp safety, especially during the monsoon season. In 2021, HEKS/EPER focused on improving **hygiene and infection control in 400 health facilities in host communities** by training health staff and improving hygiene infrastructure. In addition, as per the needs and in consultation with the competent authorities, the distribution of a comprehensive list of hygiene items in health facilities has started. COVID-19 prevention messages are also strongly promoted in the host community. IOM currently supports interventions in Bangladesh.



The Bangladesh government allows Rohingya to construct shelters only from temporary materials and respecting its objective to repatriate the refugees. HEKS/EPER trains households and provides construction material to do essential constructions and repairs for quality shelter.

DR Congo – covering basic needs in hard-to-reach areas

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo**: Over decades, the Eastern Congo has been destabilised by conflicts in the great lakes region, primarily due to global economic interests related to exploiting natural resources. Outbreaks of Ebola, Cholera and Measles from 2018 to 2023 and climate-related shocks add additional layers of complexity and vulnerability. In the whole country, more than 5,5 million people are internally displaced, and almost 26 million are food



HEKS/EPER engages to **restore road infrastructure**, so people in remote areas have access to economic centers to sell their agricultural products. Designed as a cash-for-work programme the project participants also gain direct income.

insecure. The needs in the DRC exceed the capacities of the international community, which has led to organisations mostly implementing projects in easily accessible and safe areas, leaving those most heavily affected in the hard-to-reach zones behind.

In 2019, HEKS/EPER adjusted its DRC strategy to support **those living in hard-to-reach areas**. HEKS/EPER expanded its presence in DRC and, since 2020 – in addition to its 'development cooperation' office – **also runs a 'humanitarian aid' office based in Goma**. This office manages new large-scale emergency interventions in hard-to-reach North and South Kivu areas. Being on the ground with experienced expatriates who know the conflict and the actors allows HEKS/EPER to roll out

need-based aid actions in conflict-affected zones. ECHO, BHA-USAID, SDC, Pooled Funds and UNICEF currently support the programme and made it possible for HEKS/EPER in 2021 to assist more than 460,230 vulnerable people affected by the conflicts in hard-to-reach areas of North and South Kivu and the internally displaced people in the M23 crisis. In the DRC, HEKS/EPER cooperates with DCA (Dan Church Aid) and MEDAIR and further increases its collaboration with ACT Alliance Network members. In 2022-2023, the HA volume invested in DRC increased to CHF 7.7 million.

For more information on how HEKS/EPER applies conflict sensitivity and principles of the triple nexus in its efforts to rehabilitate rural roads in North Kivu, please refer to the factsheet on “Conflict Sensitivity”.

Syria – Rehabilitating Public Bakeries

Bread is the staple food in Syria. Despite the country’s war and economic crisis, the state still subsidises bread and charges people only some 5% of the production costs. The functionality of this system is crucial for the food security of the population that has experienced more than a decade of war, loss of lives, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure. However, many bakeries’ buildings and production lines are in bad shape.

HEKS/EPER supports the Directorate of Bakeries in repairing buildings, installing additional production lines, and establishing new bakeries. It ensures that bakeries stay operational and expand production capacity, especially in areas where demand exceeds bread supply and people have to queue long to get bread. As the state commits to providing the required flour, fuel and workforce to operate the bakeries, the rehabilitation of each bakery ensures access to bread for up to 100’000 people per bakery. HEKS/EPER completed the first bakery in 2022 and will rehabilitate 17 more bakeries in 2023, of which 15 were affected by the earthquake on 6 February 2023.



People receiving bread from the newly opened bakery in Sahnaya in the outskirts of Damascus, which produces 120 tons of bread per week and serves some 45’000 people.

Venezuela – HEKS/EPER’s response in Venezuela growing in size and adapting to the changing needs

When HEKS/EPER started its humanitarian response in Venezuela in 2020 in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, emergency aid was the most appropriate response to the needs of Venezuelans. In 2022 the situation has changed. After seven years of severe crisis and sharp contraction, the Venezuelan economy did not contract in 2022 for the first time in 10 years, with a growth rate close to the 6% mark. However, the poverty rate has reached 81.5% of the population, with extreme poverty at 53.3%.



Capacity reinforcement on WASH and IPC (Infection Prevention and Control), to medical and maintenance staff, in La Victoria Health Center, Apure State.

In the face of weak or non-existent public services and livelihoods and food security that have suffered enormously over the past years, HEKS/EPER gradually adapted its response to the realities of the country and the needs of the population. While the delivery of kits was still adapted in 2021, 22 schools and 27 health centres in Apure and Amazonas were later supported with their WASH needs and now have improved capacities and clean water and sanitation systems. In 2022, HEKS/EPER Venezuela’s response started supporting vulnerable families to strengthen their livelihoods by generating income and improving their food production.

In 2023, with funding from OCHA, HEKS/EPER will provide comprehensive, multi-sectoral support to communities in Apure to meet their needs for clean water and food production. With the possible addition of a protection component, we believe this is the way forward in the country. In 2022, with its consolidated presence in Venezuela, HEKS/EPER signed four contracts with donors in addition to the two signed in December 2021 and implemented during the year. The annual volume of the response increased significantly from CHF 524'773 in 2021 to CHF 2'228'030 in 2023, reaching 301,077 direct beneficiaries.

A short video of our 2022 work in the country can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1dH3k57gmg>

Responding to the urgent needs of Ukrainians for humanitarian assistance and protection



Neighbourhood distributions in Zaporizsja: Queuing to register to receive food and other urgent relief items to cover everyday needs of families.

To respond to the crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, taking advantage of its long-term presence in the region, HEKS/EPER decided to roll out an important humanitarian aid operation to respond to the needs of the IDPs in Ukraine and the refugees in Romania, Moldova, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Due to the complex and big scale of the response, a Regional Coordination Office has been set up to act as the support office for all the regional operations

(technical thematic, fundraising, knowledge sharing) and to facilitate the coordination and communication among the HEKS / EPER Country Offices, HQ and donor organisations. Given the complexity of the response, a coordinated planning and reporting system needed to be established from the outset to help ensure the delivery of high-quality humanitarian projects with the Whole of the Ukraine region.



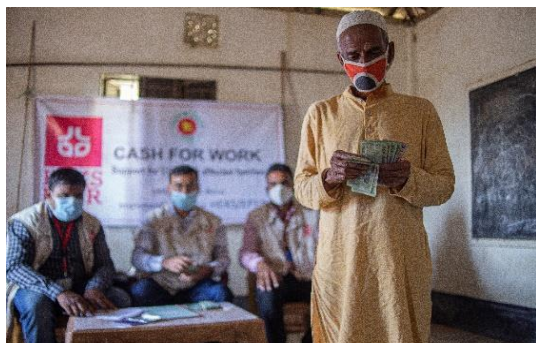
Community kitchen in Mykolai, supported by HEKS/EPER.

During ten months of response, HEKS / EPER managed to assist **more than 652'000 Ukrainians** both as refugees in **Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic and Moldova** as well as internally displaced people and vulnerable people along the conflict line in **Ukraine**.

The focus was on the most urgent relief and life-saving services through multi-sectoral support, such as food security, protection, wash, shelter, and multipurpose cash assistance.

For more information on the response in each country, please refer to the **factsheet on the 'War on Ukraine'**. In the factsheet on 'Conflict Sensitivity', you can find further information about how HEKS/EPER has been applying a triple nexus approach in its response in Romania.

Cash programming



Bangladesh: Cash for Work to maintain roads. A project participant receives its cash at the HEKS/EPER desk – this compensates his income after the COVID-19 losses.

In 2022, HEKS/EPER ran **cash programmes in 10 countries** in response to a broad array of crises: COVID-19 (Bangladesh), situations of conflict and displacement (DRC, and Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine), desert locust invasion (Ethiopia) and natural disasters (drought in Ethiopia, earthquake in Haiti,) and an industrial disaster (port explosion in Beirut, Lebanon). These used different disbursement modalities such as direct cash, mobile money, bank checks, payments through banks and vouchers. In Romania, lesson learning changed from cash in hand to online transfers. While both unconditional and conditional cash approaches were applied, there has been a considerable shift towards unconditional cash in recent years. Conditional cash transfers have proven to be a vehicle to promote social cohesion

between host and refugee communities. Both participate in joint activities to improve the living conditions for both communities but have also been used in other situations. Some cash and voucher assistance did include some type of condition, mostly linked to cash for work activities serving community rehabilitation works, but also individual business plans. A few projects involved restrictions in participants' options when using the money (for specific products, providers or activities). When unrestricted cash is judged the best option, participants have the most freedom to decide how they want to use the money, which gives them decision power.

A quick but sound market analysis is required to decide on the appropriate cash method, if at all. It is often most effective to cleverly combine the cash approach with other activities and approaches and link it to pre-conditions. Cash programming offers fewer opportunities for fraud than in-kind distributions, as procurement, transport and storage are not handled by the implementing organisation. HEKS/EPER has integrated post-distribution monitoring (PDM) into its cash and voucher assistance, mainly, but not only, analysing what the money is used for by participants and their level of satisfaction and feedback.

HEKS/EPER recognises that communities and survivors are mostly the first responders to a humanitarian crisis. Based on the learnings of Local to Global Protection (L2GP) and in collaboration with Christian Aid, the survivor and community-led response (sclr) methodology is being piloted along with Flexible Small Grants in the Whole of Ukraine response. As part of CVA, HEKS/EPER has been concentrating on putting micro-grants in place to support sixty-nine communities. An estimated 11'400 people benefited from these community-led projects in Hungary during 2022. As most initiatives were carried out in the first part of 2022, they have responded to diverse urgent needs: food and accommodation support, refurbishment of accommodation centres, clothes, winterisation, etc. The success of the approach is measured in beneficiaries' satisfaction. As to the principle of the sclr methodology, the community microgrants are designed by the beneficiaries, responding to needs otherwise uncovered by other humanitarian interventions. They are treated as group cash grants, for which the community holds the main accountability during the entire cycle. One of HEKS/EPER's priorities is empowering affected communities and ensuring localisation.

HEKS/EPER knows that cash programming does not replace working towards mutual accountability, participation and ownership as defined in the CHS. The right to choose goods freely does not automatically ensure ownership and decision power. Gender-sensitive cash programming remains a challenge, just as for in-kind distributions.

Cash and voucher assistance in 2022

Bangladesh: unconditional unrestricted cash responding to the consequences of COVID-19 and conditional restricted cash to assure specific business support to individuals.

DRC: unconditional and conditional unrestricted cash assistance for people displaced by conflicts in the eastern part of the country.

Ethiopia: unconditional unrestricted cash responding to drought, conflict and desert locust invasion.

Haiti: Mostly conditional unrestricted cash for people affected by the 2021 earthquake in Grand'Anse. Restricted cash for parents to assure enrolment of their children.

Hungary: unconditional unrestricted cash and food and non-food vouchers for refugees and host communities.

Lebanon: unconditional unrestricted cash for people affected by the 2020 explosion in Beirut and street-connected children.

Moldova: unconditional restricted voucher for refugees and host communities.

Romania: unconditional unrestricted cash and restricted voucher (food and non-food) for refugees.

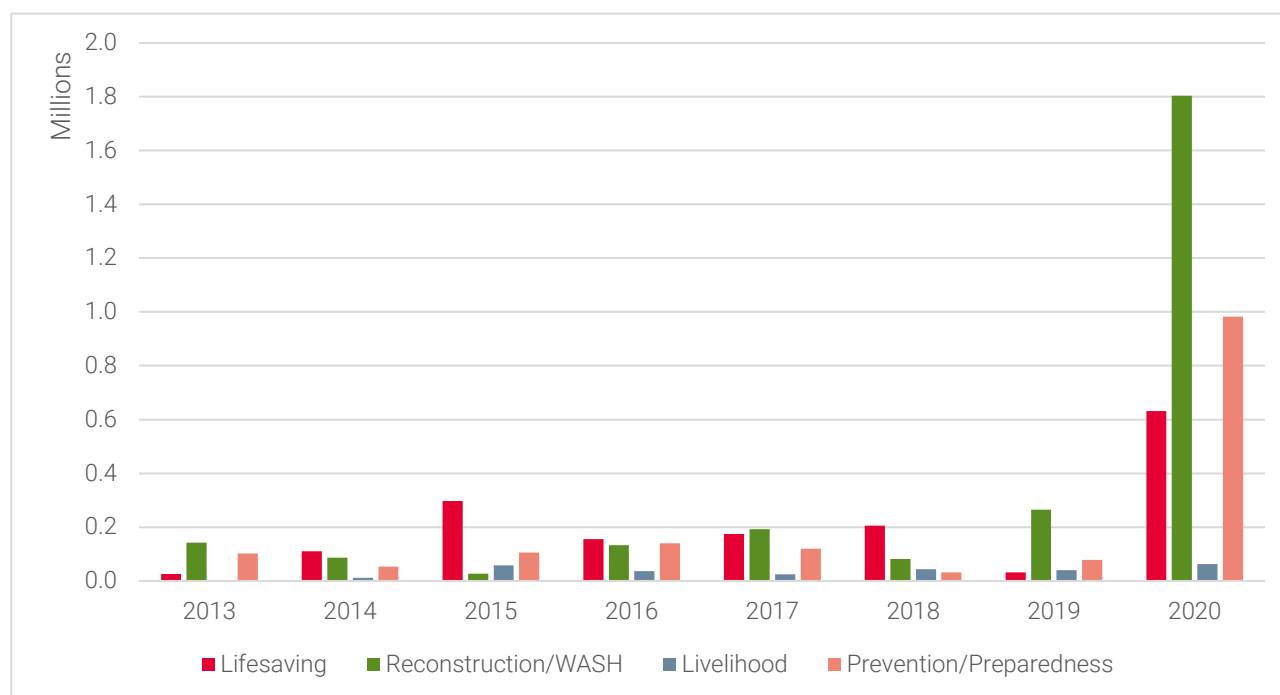
Serbia: unconditional unrestricted cash for people on the move.

Ukraine: unconditional unrestricted cash for IDPs.

Achievements & Perspectives

Achievements in the past years

Between 2013 and 2020, HEKS/EPER assisted **5.5 M people** with humanitarian assistance. Thereof, **1.6 M people** benefited from **life-saving emergency activities**, including the distribution of food, NFI, WASH, and cash interventions. In addition, **278'000 people** were supported to restore their **livelihoods**, and **2.7 M people** benefitted from the **reconstruction** of their houses and public infrastructures such as schools and health facilities. **Disaster prevention and preparedness**, including **COVID-19** prevention and emergency aid (hygiene, water, sanitation, food security, etc.), played a pivotal role for **1.6 M people** in the countries in which HEKS/EPER works.



HA data 2013-2020: Number of people reached through HEKS/EPER's humanitarian assistance. The high numbers in 2020 are related to the COVID-19 programming with comparatively low costs per person (like hygiene awareness or the rehabilitation of health centers in Bangladesh alone reaching out to almost 1.7 M people).

In 2021, HEKS/EPER reached with **44 humanitarian projects** and a budget of **16.8 M CHF** directly **528'184** people and indirectly **4'475'560** individuals. Humanitarian projects in 10 countries did cash programming. **27.2 % of the global HA** spending were allocated to this approach.

Achievements 2022

In 2022, HEKS/EPER reached in **18 countries** with its **72 humanitarian projects** and net expenses of **29 M CHF** directly **1'521'896 people**. **2'390'920 individuals** were reached **indirectly**, e.g. through rehabilitation of health infrastructure in a region (Bangladesh), rehabilitation of water and hygiene infrastructure (Uganda) or widespread hygiene education measures (Venezuela), or rehabilitation of public road infrastructure (DRC).

Humanitarian projects in **10 countries** did **cash programming**, accounting to more than **5 M CHF** spent, or **17.5%** (2021: 27.2 %) of the global HA spending. The ratio was lower in 2022 as in some of the main intervention areas, such as the Ukraine, Venezuela, Syria, Iraq or Bangladesh, this approach was not the best option for supporting the people in need; with either cash or debit card systems unavailable, or people being on the move (Eastern Europe) and distribution of emergency goods and providing temporary shelter were the best possible key activities.

Countries (18)	Project Participants		HA net expenses (CHF)	Volume of Cash Programming (%)
	direct	indirect		
Bangladesh	57'950	580'000	1'723'638	5%
Czech Republic	485	0	97'705	0
DR Congo	112'656	460'230	7'729'476	28%
Ethiopia	181'531	250'000	2'675'383	15.4%
Haïti	75'000	30'000	1'017'851	25%
Hungary	105'013	0	844'774	5%
Iraq	7'628	2'784	313'493	0%
Lebanon	3'677	0	929'403	100%
Moldova	1'530	0	370'240	70%
Myanmar	5'100	9'259	40'611	0%
Palestine	1'500	5'000	240'518	0%
Romania	158'500	0	235'0841	25%
Uganda/South Sudan	35'000	258'000	530'619	0%
Serbia	4'500	1'500	434'076	70%
Syria	60'060	40'240	1'056'263	0%
Ukraine	416'510	0	6'617'760	3%
Venezuela	294'756	754'407	1'610'110	0%
Other HA activities			442'976	0%
total	1'521'896	2'390'420	29,025,737	5'089'717
				17.5%

The newly introduced key indicator '**satisfaction with assistance**' with in-depth questionnaires was assessed in Bangladesh and Haïti with 1653 interviews of project participants. Overall **82.6 %** of the project participants reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received – the target for 2022 was 88%.

In Bangladesh, the positive feedback was overwhelming reaching 99% being satisfied (16.1%) or very satisfied (83.5%), with 3'100 different support services linked to cash programming and income-generating activities, such as goat raising, producing and selling vermicompost or handicraft production. The HA focused in Bangladesh on female project participants: 99%.

In Haïti, 622 interviews revealed a differentiated picture considering 'satisfaction' assessing more than 2'200 assistances, all linked to agricultural inputs/trainings. 11.5% of the project participants (50 % men, 50% women) stated that to be very satisfied, 47.1% satisfied. 35.8% were partly, and 5.4% were not satisfied at all. The main reason for dissatisfaction was the fact that the assistance arrived too late, others stated it was insufficient or the distributions points to far away – critic that is fair as it was difficult to reach out to the communities scattered in remote rural and hilly areas with a bad road infrastructure.

HEKS/EPER wants and must promote this indicator in more countries active in HA. Yet, requirements of direct donors (SDC, SWS, USAID, ECHO, etc.) to receive other indicators' data makes it in HA project difficult to come up with in-depth analysis and questionnaire designed of and for HEKS/EPER, as resources to collect data are limited. The target of satisfaction set for 2023 is 85%, and we want 6-8 countries to contribute to the data collection.

Perspectives

The humanitarian situation worldwide is constantly being monitored, and preparedness measures are being taken to the extent possible. HEKS/EPER will respond to new major natural or man-made disasters in countries without yet more likely with its previous presence with ongoing humanitarian or development programmes.

In 2023, the Ukraine response, Venezuela, DRC, Uganda, Ethiopia and the Middle East will remain core humanitarian action areas of HEKS/EPER. Yet, after the earthquake hitting Turkey and Syria on 6 February 2023, HEKS/EPER

launched another major humanitarian response. With its existing experience, partnerships and agreements with the relevant Ministries, HEKS/EPER was very well placed to respond immediately in the earthquake-affected Governorates in the government-controlled areas. Being the only organisation in the country with an MoU with the Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection (MOITCP), HEKS/EPER agreed with the ministry to rehabilitate all 15 damaged bakery buildings as part of its broader response. After a thorough engineering assessment, the construction work in the first four bakeries started already five weeks after the earthquake and in five more bakeries in mid of April. This will allow about one million people to access bread, which will significantly impact food security in the affected areas.

In 2023, HEKS/EPER will develop its Global Cooperation Strategy for the 2025-28 phase. This process will include in-depth reflections, discussions and decisions regarding priorities in and across the organisation's humanitarian, development and church cooperation work both on operational and policy levels.

This is HEKS/EPER



HEKS/EPER is the aid organisation of the Swiss protestant churches. It operates towards a more equitable and peaceful world (and Switzerland) with resilient communities, focussing its work on four topics: **Climate Justice, Inclusion, Right to Land & Food, and Refuge & Migration.**

In 2022, HEKS/EPER supported with more than 60 projects in Switzerland the inclusion of 98'000 people, and with 232 projects in 30 countries, 2.5 million people directly in economic, social or humanitarian need. The operating income of the whole organisation has risen to 114 M CHF and expenditure to 108.13 M CHF – of which 54.54 M CHF were net costs spent for the international programme.

In the Global Cooperation division, HEKS/EPER ameliorated with 17.8 M CHF (net costs) spent on 96 **development projects** the life of 946'267 people focusing on access to land and resources, securing basic services, fostering sustainable production and inclusive market systems, and it also promoted the social inclusion of marginalised, inclusive governance structures and conflict transformation. About 23.4 M benefitted indirectly – e.g., through successful advocacy for new rights or policies (e.g., right to land, water, education, health, market access.).

HEKS/EPER's **humanitarian aid** spent more than 29 M CHF (net costs) in 72 projects in 18 countries reaching directly 1.522 M people affected by conflicts and disasters, another 2.4 M were indirectly reached with health prevention campaigns or rebuilt public sanitation, road or health infrastructures.

In the frame of **Church Cooperation**, HEKS/EPER enabled with 2.26 M CHF social work of Reformed Churches in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, reaching out to more than 30'000 people through 29 projects.

To **sensitise in Switzerland** the public, media, politics and other stakeholders about the needs and rights of people and communities worldwide, addressing causes of global inequality, and to advocate towards a transition to a more equitable, peaceful world, preserving the limited natural resources, HEKS/EPER spent 4.5 M CHF on policy work.

HEKS/EPER Global Cooperation strives towards systemic change with its human rights-based approach, promoting ownership, innovation, and the nexus between humanitarian aid and development activities. Together with competent partners and well-interconnected alliances, HEKS/EPER fosters constant dialogue between civil society, the private sector, and Government actors enabling people and communities to advocate for their needs and rights. The international divisions' conflict- and gender-sensitive programming is risk-informed and evidence-based. A proficient institutional governance framework allows effectiveness and transparency.

In Switzerland, HEKS/EPER supported with 34.2 M CHF net costs of more than 60 projects in 15 cantons disadvantaged people in becoming socially and economically integrated by promoting equal opportunity and assisting jobless people, refugees, and other individuals by providing day structures, legal advice, vocational training, language courses, dialogue platforms, etc.

The nine core values of HEKS/EPER: Justice / Self-Determination / Participation / Respect / Solidarity / Support without Borders / Close to People / Effectiveness, / Accountability.


Strategies, policies, guidelines, and reports published on ID's Governance Website: https://en.heks.ch/Institutional_Governance

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