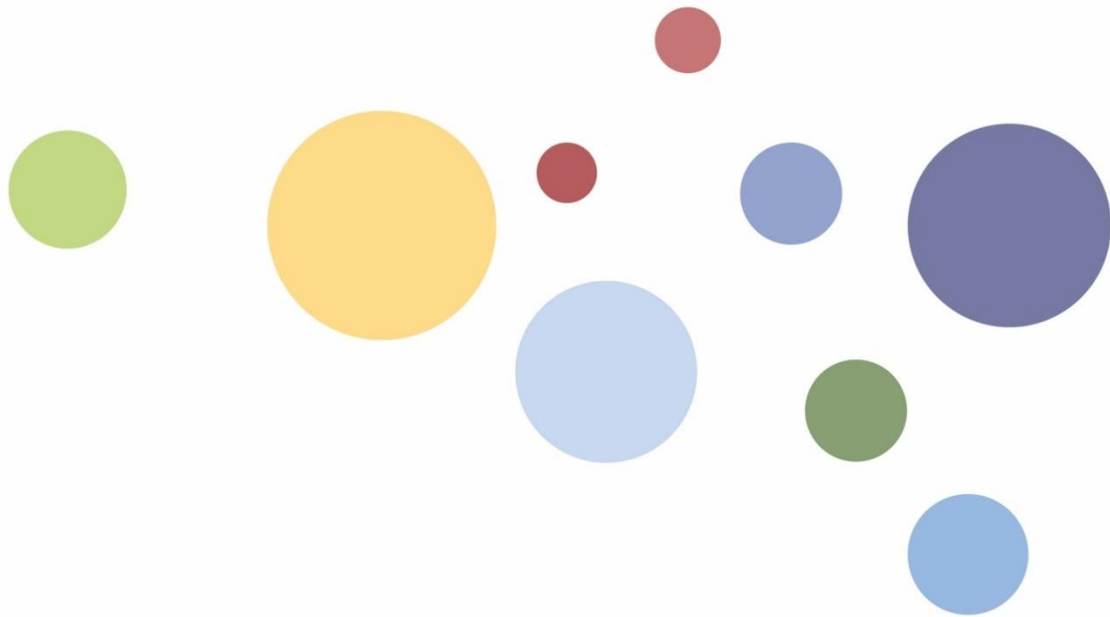


Humanitarian Aid in the Polycrisis

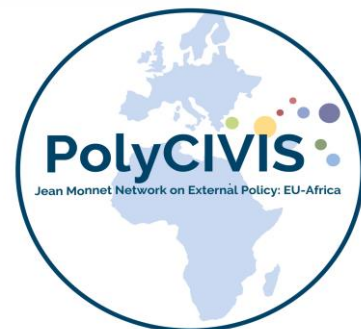
Local and Systems Thinking Approaches

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By Evika Karamagioli, Manos Pikoulis, Chrysafo Arvaniti



The Polycrisis & Policy Brief Series is coordinated by the *Policy Work Package* which is part of the [PolyCIVIS Network](#). The PolyCIVIS Policy brief series aims to provide actionable insights and recommendations for policymakers, at various levels and to foster dialogue among stakeholders on effective policy responses.



**This policy brief is a preliminary version. An updated version will be published at a later stage, incorporating necessary corrections and improvements. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to sharing the final version with you.

Executive Summary

The humanitarian sector is transitioning from conflict-driven crises to more frequent and overlapping climate and health-related emergencies, complicating further the global challenges in a "polycrisis" landscape. These crises —intensified by political instability, armed conflicts, pandemics and resource pressures— demand a systemic transformation. In 2025, an estimated 305 million people will need urgent aid, requiring over \$47 billion in funding. Without addressing these pressures, the sector risks falling into a "permacrisis." This policy brief offers actionable alternatives to address these pressing challenges by advocating for *localized humanitarian responses* and *systems-thinking approaches*.

Localization empowers local actors with cultural knowledge and access to affected populations, while systems thinking enables a deeper understanding of feedback loops and interconnections, offering holistic solutions to interconnected crises.

Key messages

1. The need to foster long-term capacity-building initiatives, flexible and equitable funding, and meaningful partnerships. Pre-crisis scenario planning must integrate local actors as stakeholders, alongside international organizations and governments, ensuring context-specific, community-driven responses.
2. Despite its potential, localization is hampered by power imbalances and underfunding. Genuine decentralization requires dismantling these colonial legacies, streamlining compliance processes, and promoting trust through transparent communication and accountability. Addressing systemic biases, raising public awareness, and ensuring inclusive leadership — especially by empowering local actors— are vital steps.
3. Embedding systems-based approaches into localization efforts ensures that interventions are resilient, adaptive, and attuned to dynamic, long-term systemic risks. Transparent practices that reduce compliance burdens and foster authentic partnerships with local organizations were strongly emphasized during a complementary focus group discussion, conducted to validate and expand upon insights from the literature ¹.

¹ The focus group discussion was held on December 18, 2024, and included experienced professionals with extensive backgrounds in development and emergency humanitarian work.

(1) Introduction

At the 2023 World Economic Forum, global leaders and experts discussed the emerging "global polycrisis," a state of perpetual upheaval marked by interconnected and compounding crises. These crises arise when immediate shocks—such as political unrest, price surges, or extreme climate events—interact with slower, persistent pressures like socio-economic inequalities or climate change. Such dynamics can destabilize global systems, including food production, security, and financial markets. For example, inflation control in Western nations can raise debt servicing costs in developing economies, while global shocks—like the European conflict—can exacerbate food insecurity in East Africa. Interconnectedness complicates solutions, as seen with China's lockdowns disrupting global supply chains. Policymakers, facing strained resources, call for collective action, but current multilateral systems lack effective enforcement mechanisms.²

The humanitarian sector is on the verge of being transformed by climate change, creating a critical situation, in which adaptation is essential for survival. The incidence of climate change-related disasters, including storms, wildfires, droughts, flooding, and heatwaves, has about tripled during the past four decades. As weather-related disasters occur more frequently, environmental concerns become more complex and have a significant impact on many facets of society.³ Consequently, the humanitarian sector will encounter an increasing number of crises and disasters that are marked by more frequent occurrences, larger sizes, and greater intensity.

Simultaneously, international humanitarian law is increasingly violated without

consequences, worsening humanitarian conditions globally.⁴ The ascendance of populism, frequently coupled with anti-refugee attitudes, has undermined asylum protections in numerous countries. Despite augmented funding from multiple sources, the current humanitarian system is overwhelmed by over 110 million individuals forcibly displaced and unprecedented conflict-related fatalities. The situation has deteriorated since 2017, underscoring that the existing humanitarian framework is obsolete and necessitates a reconfiguration focused on the needs and objectives of impacted populations.⁵

The current global and national evidence base is insufficient for understanding the complexity of the polycrisis, with a heavy reliance on correlational and descriptive studies, and limited geographic representation, particularly from regions like Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.⁶ These trends highlight both the urgency and the inadequacy of existing systems, indicating the need for a holistic approach. Systems thinking bridges these evidence gaps by encouraging the use of participatory modelling, dynamic analysis of long-term trends, and interdisciplinary approaches to data collection and interpretation. It emphasizes viewing threats through a systemic risk lens, focusing on interconnected and non-linear causal structures.

This policy brief focuses on two essential questions: Firstly, **how can the humanitarian sector adapt to confront a global polycrisis, while also addressing the current system's enduring limitations?** Secondly, **what strategic changes are required to ensure that humanitarian efforts leave a maximum impact instead and capable of meeting**

² United Nations Children's Fund, 2023; Lawrence et al., 2024

³ Steinke, 2023

⁴ Spiegel et al., 2024

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kwamie et al., 2024

constantly shifting demands?

(2) Background

From Polycrisis to Permacrisis

The 2024 SDG Report highlights that only 17% of SDG targets are on track, and the COVID-19 pandemic has tested the resilience of social, economic, and health systems at multiple levels. The frequency of emerging infectious diseases like COVID-19 is expected to rise, occurring alongside worsening climate change and ongoing global conflicts, with low-income countries bearing the brunt.⁷

This shift in the nature of global crises is evident as climate-driven emergencies, once secondary to conflicts, now take a larger role in humanitarian efforts. These climate crises will likely occur more frequently, simultaneously, and have long-lasting impacts in altered environments. They will increasingly overlap with ongoing conflicts and pandemics intensifying resource pressures and fuelling new or prolonged conflict dynamics. As such, the climate crisis will permeate all facets of humanitarian action, demanding a shift in focus from isolated disasters to addressing interconnected, cascading risks within a global "polycrisis."⁸

Despite certain advancements in the humanitarian sector, such as improved outcomes-focused monitoring and a heightened emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the sector is now under greater strain due to polycrisis. The ongoing polycrisis has significantly raised the demand for humanitarian aid, with 305 million people expected to require urgent assistance and protection in 2025, 190 million of whom face life-threatening situations.⁹ This crisis is

driven by an unprecedented number of armed conflicts and the rising frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that over \$47 billion will be needed to address these critical needs and save lives.¹⁰ However, this mounting pressure on the humanitarian sector risks escalating into a "permacrisis" if not effectively managed. In response, humanitarian actors are now addressing a broader range of crises, often stepping in where governments are unwilling or unable to act. With protracted crises becoming the norm, humanitarian assistance is increasingly seen as a temporary fix in the face of persistent challenges, filling the gaps left by diplomatic failures to resolve underlying causes of need and conflict.¹¹

At the same time, humanitarian aid in conflict zones has become increasingly instrumentalized, often serving political and military purposes. Humanitarian policies in conflict zones now operate within a shifting geopolitical landscape, where the commitment to traditional humanitarian principles is increasingly uncertain.¹² Ongoing examples include Russia's war in Ukraine, escalating violence in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon, and civil wars in Sudan and Tigray. At the same time, the global community has to respond to significant natural disasters, such as major earthquakes in Syria, Türkiye, Morocco, and Afghanistan, alongside widespread flooding in regions across Asia, North Africa, and East Africa. Events like the Türkiye-Syria

⁷ Kwamie *et al.*, 2024

⁸ Chawla & Smith, 2024

⁹ ECHO, 2024

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Chawla & Smith, 2024.

¹² Alkhalil *et al.*, 2024

earthquake, Storm Daniel in Libya, and Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar highlight the growing frequency of natural disasters occurring in politically unstable environments that hinder humanitarian access.¹³

Humanitarian aid often becomes an instrument in political and military strategies, particularly in conflict zones. For example, in Africa, armed groups and governments have restricted access to aid as a tactic to control populations, as seen in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and parts of Sudan. In Europe, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has highlighted how humanitarian assistance can be used to gain influence and to propagate certain national narratives, shaping public opinion and drawing geopolitical lines.¹⁴ In a most recent example, the conflict in Sudan has progressed to the point that over 25 million civilians face starvation, as both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are allegedly using food as a weapon by obstructing humanitarian aid. Local initiatives have evolved to assist impacted families, but they are severely hampered by deliberate violence against humanitarian workers and a lack of relief funds.¹⁵ Despite donor assurances, financing for the humanitarian response in Sudan remains severely low, failing to fulfil the immediate needs of those affected by the violence. Experts underscore the need of international funding for local humanitarian organizations, pointing out that community-led initiatives are successfully delivering millions of meals every day through disaster response activities.¹⁶ The ongoing war has not only led to a massive displacement crisis, with around 6.5 million internally displaced and nearly 2 million fleeing to neighbouring countries, but it also poses threats to regional

stability in the Horn of Africa and beyond.¹⁷

At the same time, the lack of effective governance structures and benchmarking mechanisms may impede the sector's ability to navigate these complex legal landscapes efficiently. The absence of comprehensive data on polycrises can lead to fragmented interventions, diminishing their impact. Additionally, the escalating costs of humanitarian operations and inadequate budgeting practices, coupled with the absence of diversified revenue streams, further strain the sector's ability to respond effectively.¹⁸ Underinvestment in critical areas like capacity building and technology exacerbates the sector's challenges in responding to interconnected, multi-dimensional crises.

(3) Reimagining the Humanitarian System through Localization and "Systems thinking"

As armed conflict evolves and the widespread effects of climate change deepen, experts agree that the core humanitarian principles—humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence—must be revisited in the way they are implemented.¹⁹ This reassessment is especially crucial in the context of asymmetric warfare, the growing influence of non-state armed groups, and the increasing challenges posed by sanctions and restrictions that hinder effective humanitarian responses.²⁰ While some experts call for a complete rethinking of these principles, there is a broader consensus that the focus should instead be on how these principles are applied in response to the changing dynamics of conflict and crises. This shift calls

¹³ Chawla & Smith, 2024

¹⁴ United Nations Human Rights Council, 2024

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2024

¹⁷ Demissie & Soliman, 2024

¹⁸ Next Generation, 2024

¹⁹ Clarke & Parris, 2022; Steinke, 2023

²⁰ Spiegel *et al.*, 2024

for placing affected communities at the

centre of responses, with global institutions adapting and potentially relinquishing some of their established power structures to foster a more equitable and effective humanitarian landscape.²¹ The global humanitarian architecture stands at a crossroads, where the traditional UN-centric approach must evolve to prioritize local needs, signalling a significant departure from past norms.

A critical component of this evolution is dismantling colonial legacies in humanitarian aid. Empowering local actors is paramount, requiring long-term investments in training, infrastructure, and financial autonomy, while also fostering trust between international organizations and local entities.²² This is especially necessary as crises increasingly unfold in politicized environments, where international institutions face growing access challenges. As a result, alternative response models may be needed, where national NGOs and local institutions take the lead, and the international system adopts a supporting role. Although entrenched power dynamics may resist this shift, there is a growing recognition of the value of locally driven efforts, particularly in regions like Myanmar, Sudan, and Syria.²³

Localization in humanitarian aid is not just important, but imperative. Local and national actors, who possess the knowledge, networks, and access to affected populations, are better equipped to lead crisis responses. Their involvement ensures that assistance is timely, cost-effective, culturally sensitive, and more relevant to the immediate needs of those affected. Strengthening collaboration with local actors and building their capacity enhances crisis anticipation, fosters community-led solutions, and supports long-term recovery.²⁴ However, the localisation agenda has

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struggled due to persistent underfunding, power imbalances, and frustrations among local humanitarian actors. Decentralization efforts, such as direct funding and local representation, have often unintentionally reinforced the power of international organisations. Despite the central role local actors play in aid delivery, international organisations continue to control funding, set agendas, and dictate participation.²⁵

Top-down approaches continue to dominate, undermining the intended outcomes of localisation and community participation. This persistence can be attributed to the competing paradigms of resilience and surveillance, which impose contradictory requirements on local actors. As a result, legitimacy work often becomes symbolic rather than substantive, obscuring the systemic challenges within the current model. Meaningful localisation thus requires not only a critical examination of the prevailing power dynamics but also a comprehensive restructuring of aid processes to achieve genuine community empowerment and ownership.²⁶

While international actors have increasingly relied on local organisations for the delivery of aid, they have failed to transfer meaningful leadership or authority to these local entities. Instead, capacity-building initiatives have perpetuated a cycle of dependency, often prioritising the fulfilment of donor requirements over the strengthening of local

²¹ Chawla & Smith, 2024

²² Spiegel *et al.*, 2024

²³ Chawla & Smith, 2024

²⁴ European Commission, n.d.

²⁵ Khoury & Scott, 2024

²⁶ Mulder, 2023

autonomy.²⁷ For localisation to be realised, the power structures within international aid must be addressed by enabling local actors to take the lead, set agendas, and control resources. This shift requires moving beyond tokenistic participation towards genuine empowerment, where local organisations are entrusted with the authority to make decisions and manage risks, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian responses.²⁸

Localization in humanitarian aid remains a crucial, yet evolving concept, with ongoing discussions about its definition and implementation. Despite differing views on decentralization versus transformative shifts in power, it's clear that humanitarian responses must adapt to the cultural contexts and specific needs of affected communities, integrating perspectives such as gender and a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach.²⁹ A new vocabulary aligned with contemporary humanitarian concepts—such as decolonizing aid, nature-based philanthropy, and equitable impact—can help drive collective action and foster a shared understanding of how best to reshape the future of humanitarian aid.³⁰

Fostering networks of experts and promoting funding structures that encourage cooperation is critical. Intermediaries, coalitions, and infrastructure organizations play a pivotal role in facilitating these efforts.³¹ However, traditional funding models often prove slow and overly bureaucratic, hindering the capacity for effective responses in polycrisis situations. More flexible, pre-approved funding models offer the advantage of allowing quicker, more

responsive interventions while engaging a diverse range of stakeholders³². These new financial models should be performance-based, with a strong emphasis on delivering both measurable impact and returns on investment. Promoting the localization of aid allows local actors to lead culturally sensitive, relevant responses. Addressing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is key, advocating for sustainable funding and AI integration to enhance humanitarian health responses.³³

As global crises intensify, the emphasis on anticipatory action and real-time analysis becomes increasingly critical. While local initiatives show promise, existing systems remain fragmented, and humanitarian analysis often struggles to keep pace with rapidly evolving challenges. This highlights the necessity for a coordinated, adaptable, and data-driven approach to humanitarian response, complementing localization strategies. Tools such as AI and machine learning can significantly enhance decision-making, improve resource efficiency, and boost the overall effectiveness of interventions.³⁴

Multidimensional and longitudinal datasets that incorporate indicators from diverse global threats provide a strong foundation. For example, in Burkina Faso, Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems have expanded to include climate indicators, enhancing early-warning systems.³⁵ However, scholars argue that these datasets should also integrate emerging threats, such as conflict, to improve crisis preparedness.³⁶

²⁷ Khoury & Scott, 2024

²⁸ Khoury & Scott, 2024

²⁹ Spiegel *et al.*, 2024

³⁰ NetHope, 2024

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Spiegel *et al.*, 2024

³⁴ NetHope, 2024

³⁵ Barteit *et al.*, 2023

³⁶ Kwamie *et al.*, 2024

Despite these advancements, significant policy gaps persist, particularly in understanding the complex interactions between climate change, conflict, and health. Burkina Faso's experience illustrates a common challenge among national plans: while national policy frameworks acknowledge interactions of emerging crises, they often fail to implement them effectively, resulting in critical gaps in operationalization.³⁷

✳ Participatory approaches, including soft systems methodology and critical systems heuristics, offer a structured way for stakeholders to address systemic challenges collaboratively. By expanding stakeholders' understanding of system boundaries and behaviours, this approach enables a more comprehensive way to hypothesize complex interactions between global threats.

Gaps in data accessibility, as well as underinvestment in institutionalization, monitoring, evaluation, and participatory planning, have been identified as obstacles to policy implementation. In response, it is suggested that complexity science-based applied *systems thinking* can enhance our ability to analyze polycrisis threats through varied research methodologies.³⁸ Systems thinking tools, such as dynamic modelling, process maps, and causal loop diagrams, allow real-time testing of system properties like feedback, emergence, and tipping points.

Additionally, participatory approaches, including soft systems methodology and critical systems heuristics, offer a structured way for stakeholders to address systemic challenges collaboratively. By expanding stakeholders' understanding of system boundaries and behaviours, this approach enables a more comprehensive way to

hypothesize complex interactions between global threats. In terms of systemic risk, climate change, conflict and pandemics act as risk multipliers, whose effects can and should be studied over time through longitudinal research, highlighting the impact of time delays often missed in cross-sectional studies.³⁹ This is crucial because correlational, descriptive studies often neglect the role of time as a complex factor, with most global literature relying on cross-sectional, short-term findings that fail to capture the hidden temporality of systemic changes. A systemic risk perspective promotes research that considers the tensions between near-imperceptible, irreversible interactions (like climate change) and acute interactions that cause system shocks (such as conflicts, pandemics, and epidemics).⁴⁰

(4) Policy Recommendations

The traditional approach of seeking single solutions to individual crises is no longer sufficient in addressing the complex nature of polycrises. In response to these growing challenges, scholars are focusing on identifying "leverage points" to guide societies away from destabilization and toward stability. Government officials are urged to adopt policies rooted in a scientific, interdisciplinary approach that integrates biophysical, economic, cultural, and humanities insights. Scholars propose applied systems thinking that can enhance the evidence base and guide complex policy actions, especially in countries severely impacted by polycrisis, by enabling better theorizing, participatory solutions, and methods to hypothesize, visualize, model, and test solutions over time al.⁴¹ This broader approach, incorporating diverse perspectives across sectors and regions, is vital for creating a comprehensive framework to

³⁷ Kwamie et al., 2024

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

develop effective crisis response strategies.⁴² Several initiatives, including the Past4Future group, Future Earth's IHOPE group, and the Cascade Institute, are already working to gather policy-relevant insights on navigating polycrises.⁴³

The Johns Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health and the Lancet Commission are particularly focused on transforming the humanitarian system, especially regarding health in the context of conflicts and forced displacement. These initiatives highlight the need for systemic change, better integration of local knowledge, enhanced interagency cooperation, and inclusive decision-making processes.⁴⁴ Similarly, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) has introduced its Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, which calls for a coordinated, context-specific response that prioritizes community resilience and strong protection for vulnerable populations. The plan also advocates for innovative humanitarian financing and a strategic review of emerging risks to adapt to the evolving global environment.⁴⁵

Insights from Focus group, December 2024

A focus group conducted by the authors in December 2024 brought together participants with extensive experience in designing and delivering humanitarian and emergency aid programs. The discussion centred on the content of this policy brief, with participants providing valuable insights and feedback on the proposed recommendations and strategies. Localization emerged as a pivotal theme for the future of the humanitarian sector. A key concern highlighted was the necessity of building trust with local actors, which requires a long-term commitment, contextual sensitivity, and effective communication—especially in light of increasing political divisions globally. Participants stressed that empowering local NGOs is essential for crisis preparedness; however, they noted that power imbalances persist, as international organizations continue to control significant resources and agendas.

⁴² Hoyer et al., 2023

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Spiegel et al., 2024

⁴⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2023.

Key recommendations for the future of humanitarian aid in polycrisis are presented below, based on the findings from the focus group discussion and the literature review.

Sector Changes:

- i. Organizations should adopt collaborative, technology-driven systems that focus on outcomes and evidence-based methods.
- ii. Creating a polycrisis data repository: Supporting evidence-based policymaking through centralized, comprehensive data.
- iii. Promote equity in data gathering and research by involving diverse stakeholders.
- iv. Improving impact management through reliable, transparent data, leveraging AI for insights, and emphasizing data literacy are essential.
- v. Organizations should also prioritize training in data analysis, privacy, and ethical technology development while addressing unconscious bias.
- vi. Humanitarian organizations should also embrace a data justice approach, ensuring transparency and reflecting the real impact of local participation to address structural inequalities and avoid symbolic legitimacy work.
- vii. Avoid echo chambers by engaging diverse societal and political perspectives, ensuring humanitarian discourse remains inclusive and impactful.
- viii. Shifting humanitarian discussions: Moving beyond the stigmatization of illegal entry to address political realities in Europe and the UN.
- ix. Policymakers should better integrate the interactions between climate change, conflict, and pandemics in national policy frameworks.

Cross-Sectoral changes

- i. Integrate systems thinking methodologies like dynamic modelling and participatory approaches to engage stakeholders from diverse sectors.
- ii. Use these methods to co-design adaptive and equitable policies that address interconnected threats (e.g., climate change, conflict, and pandemics).

Organizational Changes

Rethinking the roles of international and national NGOs is necessary for a more integrated humanitarian response.

- i. Involving the next generation: Appointing qualified, competent young changemakers who want to influence both capital flow and development direction. Young people's tech-savviness drives the shift to data-driven social development.
- ii. Embracing technology: Enhancing reporting and communication with reduced resource strain. Particularly AI-driven funding models will improve reporting, transparency, and maximize returns.
- iii. Establish pre-crisis plans with local organizations and maintain a registry of pre-validated actors for clear emergency roles.
- iv. Develop tailored and long-term capacity-building programs that address the specific cultural, social, and operational needs of local organizations.
- v. Concerns about conflicts of interest arise when NGOs are heavily funded by governments involved in conflicts. Scrutiny and reduced co-funding were recommended to prevent biases.

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- vi. A shift from in-kind donations in conflict zones was urged to avoid inefficiencies and promote sustainable aid, alongside public education on effective giving.
 - vii. Comprehensive post-crisis evaluations should be publicly shared to improve transparency and future responses.

Funding Changes

Regarding funding recommendations, the following strategies should be prioritized:

- i. Outcome-driven investments: Aligning financial returns with measurable social benefits.
- ii. Community-focused fundraising: Fostering collaboration among local organizations.
- iii. Specialized platforms: Verifying organizations, easing transactions, and promoting global giving.
- iv. Results-oriented funding: Simplifying processes, enhancing coordination, and ensuring accountability.
- v. Collaborative financing: Uniting multi-donor and public/private funding for greater impact.
- vi. Co-funded models: Blending innovative funding methods for measurable outcomes.
- vii. Simplify funding models to make them accessible to smaller, community-based organizations.
- viii. Create a global, unearmarked crisis response fund managed by a trusted entity for rapid, need-based allocations.
- ix. Develop mechanisms to forecast disaster impacts, enabling immediate fund mobilization and timely interventions.

(5) Conclusion

As humanitarian needs grow amidst funding cuts and increasingly complex crises, international systems face immense strain, heightening the risk of systemic failure.⁴⁶ Many argue that the overlap of climate change, conflict, COVID-19, and other global challenges is slowing progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.⁴⁷ Addressing these challenges requires a paradigm shift that emphasizes both scaling-up humanitarian action to meet rising demands and skilling-up capacities to deliver effective responses.⁴⁸

Systems thinking is particularly relevant for

addressing polycrises, such as the interplay of climate change, conflicts, and pandemics, which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. In its scope, strengthening local institutions and shifting



international aid towards a more facilitative role can greatly enhance the effectiveness of crisis management.⁴⁹ This transition involves empowering local responders, ensuring culturally attuned approaches, and fostering inclusive governance at all levels. The localization agenda calls for international organizations to adopt a supportive role, enabling equitable leadership and decision-making.

⁴⁶ Chawla & Smith, 2024.

⁴⁷ Kwamie et al., 2024

⁴⁸ Steinke, 2023.

⁴⁹ Chawla & Smith, 2024



Diversified financing, such as outcomes-based models and flexible, unearmarked funding, is necessary to realize this vision and guarantee that resources reach a wider range of stakeholders. To inform local communities, NGOs, and donors and enable proactive, community-led responses, it is imperative to use real-time data for monitoring and decision-making.⁵⁰ Globally, maintaining UN humanitarian leadership and encouraging significant involvement from both domestic and foreign NGOs in IASC frameworks can lessen the over-reliance on UN operations and encourage integrated responses, especially in situations where there is little international presence.⁵¹ Last but not least, limited data access and underinvestment in monitoring, evaluation, and participatory planning contribute to poor policy implementation. To improve crisis responses, the humanitarian system must evolve to focus on transdisciplinary research, involving diverse stakeholders and accounting for both slow (climate change) and acute (conflict, pandemics) threats.⁵² In sum, collaboration is the cornerstone of transforming the humanitarian sector and is essential to achieving these goals.

⁵⁰ Chawla & Smith, 2024

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Kwamie et al., 2024

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