

# REACH NEWS

MARCH 2023

The 2023 Global Humanitarian Overview presents a bleak outlook on the scope and scale of the needs of crisis-affected people this year. Bringing together analysis from 38 crisis contexts, the report warns that forced displacement is at an all-time high, estimated needs and costs of humanitarian response have both risen from last year, disease outbreaks like cholera and Ebola have been spreading, and "the largest global food crisis in modern history" continues to unfold.

Amidst these alarming trends where needs are outpacing funding and response gaps are increasingly difficult to mitigate, evidence-based and people-centred humanitarian action is more critical than ever, to ensure limited resources are utilised **efficiently and effectively**.

In this edition of our newsletter, we reflect on the role of REACH Multi-Sector Needs Assessments (MSNAs), which are conducted in 20+ humanitarian contexts to enable exactly this kind of evidence-based prioritisation of how funding should be allocated, both within and across crises. We'll look at what was achieved in 2022 and what's in store for 2023 in terms of:

- Estimating the scope and severity of household needs
- Supporting a more accountable and inclusive response
- Comparing needs across crises to inform global decision-makers

## What is an MSNA?

MSNAs are annual, nationwide surveys that cover all crisis-affected geographic areas and population groups, designed and implemented through a collaborative process that incorporates inputs from humanitarian agencies operating within the response. MSNAs produce statistically generalisable data about needs, vulnerabilities, and priorities of crisis-affected households. These findings then feed into annual response planning places and donor allocation processes. In 2022, REACH facilitated MSNAs in 25 countries.

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## Estimating the scope and severity of household needs

The "multi-sectoral" aspect of the MSNA refers to the collection of key indicators according to the primary humanitarian response sectors – for example food security, health, shelter, WASH, protection, or education.

By collecting information about multiple dimensions of a household's needs through a single survey, the MSNA offers a unique opportunity to understand how these different components relate to one another, intersect, and drive vulnerabilities of crisis-affected people.

- Nicholas Archdeacon, REACH Global Humanitarian Planning & Prioritisation Manager.

To capitalise on the potential for multi-sectoral analysis, REACH developed a framework for combining the results of individual sectoral indicators into an overall, composite understanding of household severity, as well as understanding how experiencing needs in multiple areas may relate to overall severity of needs. A number of REACH teams conducted this composite analysis in 2022. A few examples include:



**Niger.** The MSNA highlights the high prevalence of needs across Niger, with 77% of households found to be experiencing the most extreme levels of unmet need. Food security was a key sectoral driver, particularly among displaced households.



**Ukraine.** Although needs were also widespread, the MSNA found that the most severe levels were found among households in conflict-affected areas of the east and south. This may be due to proximity to the frontline and direct impact of on-ground hostilities.



**Colombia.** In a context of mixed migration dynamics, internally displaced households were found to have the highest proportion of extreme unmet needs. WASH, livelihoods, and protection were found to be key drivers of these needs.

## IN 2023

In 2023, our global team will review the MSNA analysis framework for further development, in particular to strengthen the normative understanding of how "humanitarian need" is defined.

## Supporting a more accountable and inclusive response

According to Margot Fortin, REACH Global Accountability & Inclusion Manager, "listening to the feedback reported by crisis-affected people, especially satisfaction with assistance, perceptions of aid actors and their presence in the community, access to information, and communication pathways with aid organisations, is essential to gauge whether the priorities of aid organisations are aligned with the communities they aim to support."

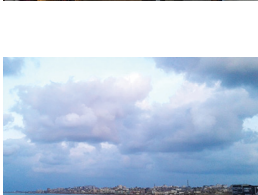
To support this aim, REACH teams are increasingly using MSNA data to produce dedicated analysis on accountability and inclusion issues within the response. Examples from the past year include:



**Haiti.** Conducted for the first time in Haiti, where a legacy of mistrust towards aid workers persists, the MSNA found a significant portion of households – 20% – reported they were dissatisfied with the behaviour of aid workers in their area, with perceptions of fraudulent or corrupt behaviour most often cited as the reason.



**South Sudan.** The REACH team conducted a more in-depth AAP component through focus groups, which found that protection risks, non-registration, long travel distances, aid diversion, and corruption/nepotism were all commonly reported barriers to either accessing assistance as a recipient, or were perceived to be affecting the distribution of aid.



**occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).** Although a quantitative survey is not always the best way to capture nuanced inclusion trends, our team in oPt was able to pilot a gender-disaggregated analysis of key MSNA indicators. A key finding was that among households at risk of eviction, female-headed households in West Bank (49%) were more likely to report fear of eviction due to Israeli orders than male-headed ones (22%).

## IN 2023

In 2023, REACH plans to continue strengthening the accountability component of MSNAs, including through piloting new approaches to disseminating findings back to local response actors and affected people

## Comparing needs across crises to inform global decision-makers

Over the last few MSNA cycles, our global team of data specialists have been aggregating individual country datasets to determine the extent to which key indicators, and overall estimations of need, can be compared between crises.

If done carefully and with a sound methodology, this kind of comparative analysis can support global donors and other decision-makers with prioritising funding towards humanitarian emergencies where needs are greatest. We believe we're moving in the right direction for building the technical tools to enable evidence-based prioritisation.

- Katie Rickard, Global REACH Director

One seemingly simple but critical step in enabling cross-crisis analysis is the standardisation of not only the MSNA indicators, but to the extent possible, also ensuring individual survey questions are asked the same way in each context. After several years of a global standardisation push, for the first time in 2022, REACH produced a [global comparative analysis of MSNA data](#). Key trends from this analysis:

- Crisis-affected households in Central and East Africa appeared to have the most prevalent and severe gaps in both sectoral and multi-sectoral needs.
- Within the Central Sahel region, the most prevalent and severe gaps were found in the border regions between the three countries.
- Overall across all crises included in the analysis, displaced households often appeared to have significantly more prevalent or severe gaps compared to non-displaced households.

## IN 2023

In 2023, REACH plans to continue building upon the analysis from 2022, with the aim of moving towards a stronger global comparative analysis system for humanitarian crises.

Check out the 2022 MSNA information products referenced in this newsletter:

- [Colombia – MSNA bulletin \(IDPs and host communities\)](#)
- [Global analysis - key findings factsheet](#)
- [Haiti - AAP brief](#)
- [Niger - MSNA bulletin](#)
- [oPt - gender & inclusion brief](#)
- [South Sudan - community perceptions key findings report](#)
- [Ukraine – MSNA bulletin](#)

Along with related blog posts and think pieces:

- [Presenting women's perspectives through humanitarian research](#)
- [Putting needs first: Making effective use of data and analysis](#)

## Coming soon – updated quarterly newsletter!

Starting with our next edition, the REACH quarterly newsletter will be rebranded as the IMPACT quarterly newsletter. As **IMPACT is the hosting organisation** of the REACH initiative, the reason behind this change is to expand the scope of information, insights, and analysis that we can share with our subscribers to include not only REACH data, but also findings from other IMPACT-led research initiatives. You will keep receiving the same informative content, just with a slightly wider thematic lens, and our **monthly REACH Bulletin** will continue to share the latest insights from acute humanitarian emergencies.

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## About REACH Initiative

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT, its sister-organisation ACTED and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme UNOSAT.