REACH Activity Report
2015

Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

REACH 2015 Activity Report

Contents

Foreword

In recent years, humanitarian actors have come under growing strain to provide an adequate response to populations affected by crisis. On the one hand, the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters has increased, while conflict-related crises are becoming more protracted and characterised by shrinking humanitarian space and access. On the other, the rise in humanitarian need has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in available resources, putting additional pressure on humanitarian actors. In this context, it is paramount for humanitarian action to be effective in its targeting and delivery mechanisms, requiring above all a capacity to develop a thorough and timely common understanding of crisis-affected populations. Despite a number of efforts made in this direction in the framework of the humanitarian reform and the transformative agenda, the timely availability of quality evidence to inform joint humanitarian planning and action remains a challenge.

REACH was created in 2010 as an independent initiative of IMPACT, ACTED and UNOSAT, with the aim of enhancing the availability of timely and quality information on crisis-affected populations, and to promote the effective use of evidence by humanitarian actors. In its first phase of development, between 2010 and 2014, REACH progressively acquired credibility through the design of innovative technical tools and the successful implementation of a number of assessments that enabled evidence-based planning and response by humanitarian actors, first in Kyrgyzstan, then in Libya, and by 2015 in 18 countries. This gradual growth was based on partnerships established primarily at country level with a variety of humanitarian stakeholders, and through a first global partnership with the Shelter Cluster.

By 2015, REACH has grown to become a leading international humanitarian assessment and information management initiative, repeatedly contributing to addressing humanitarian information gaps and to promoting evidence-based, and thereby more effective, humanitarian responses. In the course of 2015 REACH was able to consolidate the tools and products built over the years, while in parallel strengthening a number of flagship programs, notably on displacement and assessing hard-to-reach areas, and reinforcing and expanding its global and county level partnerships.

Going forward, we believe that REACH can play a catalytic role in promoting a systematic application of evidence-based planning by humanitarian actors, by further developing its actions, its global and country level partnerships and its advocacy at the policy level. In the context of the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, REACH intends to contribute to the evolution of a humanitarian architecture which not only is aware of the importance of evidence, but also has the capacity to effectively collect and use it in a systematic, predictable and shared manner.

Through this yearly report, we are happy to share some of REACH's achievements and lessons learnt for 2015. We would also like to warmly thank all our staff members and our partners for their engagement and support over the past years. We look forward to your continued collaboration with REACH.

Luca Pupulin   **Einar Bjorgo**   **Marie Pierre Caley**
Executive Director   Manager   Chief Executive Officer
IMPACT Initiatives   UNOSAT/UNITAR   ACTED

About REACH

The REACH Partnership

REACH is a joint initiative of two NGOs (IMPACT Initiatives and ACTED) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH builds on the expertise and experience of the three organisations to develop information products that enable more effective humanitarian action.

IMPACT Initiatives is a Swiss-based association created in 2010 with the aim of influencing policies and promoting best practices among aid actors. In addition to hosting the REACH global team in Geneva, IMPACT supervises REACH activities at country level, hires international staff, provides backstopping to field teams, defines country interventions, and validates all REACH products. At global level, IMPACT engages with REACH's global partners and oversees rapid deployments. IMPACT is also responsible for REACH's global communication, resource centre, webmaps and dashboards.

UNOSAT supports the core purposes of the United Nations system through applications of technology for sustainable development, respect of human rights and towards international peace and security. Specifically, the programme makes satellite imagery analysis and geographic information data, tools and methods accessible through mapping of current events, such as humanitarian disasters and conflict situations, as well as training & capacity development. UNOSAT brings to REACH its unique remote sensing expertise and mandate, as well as backstopping in terms of GIS and data management.

ACTED is an international relief and development NGO and a sister organisation of IMPACT. Present in over 30 countries, ACTED hosts REACH's field-based teams, providing them with operational and grant management support. ACTED is also responsible for hiring national staff, and provides security and logistics support.

REACH Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Humanitarian actors effectively support crisis-affected communities to recover

OUR MISSION

To strengthen evidence based decision making by humanitarian actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis in contexts of crisis.

REACH was created in response to critical information gaps that characterise many humanitarian responses. In contexts of conflict and disaster, aid actors face serious challenges in collecting data in a systematic and comprehensive way. As a result, there are often significant gaps in the information required for designing and planning aid, and a limited understanding of crisis-affected communities.

To contribute to addressing these gaps, REACH **strengthens evidence-based humanitarian decision-making through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency.** In all its interventions, REACH is deployed in support of humanitarian coordination platforms or agencies.

*REACH in action: presenting in Zaatari Camp, Jordan*

Why REACH?

In contexts as volatile and dynamic as those that characterise natural disasters and complex emergencies, timely access to high quality information is a critical pre-condition for effective aid delivery. Unfortunately, recent crises have exposed the continued shortcomings of the humanitarian community in its capacity to rapidly gather and effectively use information on the key needs and priorities of affected populations.

REACH addresses three common issues encountered in humanitarian response in order to enable evidence-based humanitarian planning and decision-making.

1. Reducing the gap between demand and supply of information in a crisis

In the aftermath of a sudden-onset crisis, humanitarian actors often face significant gaps between availability and demand of data to facilitate the planning, targeting and coordination of aid:
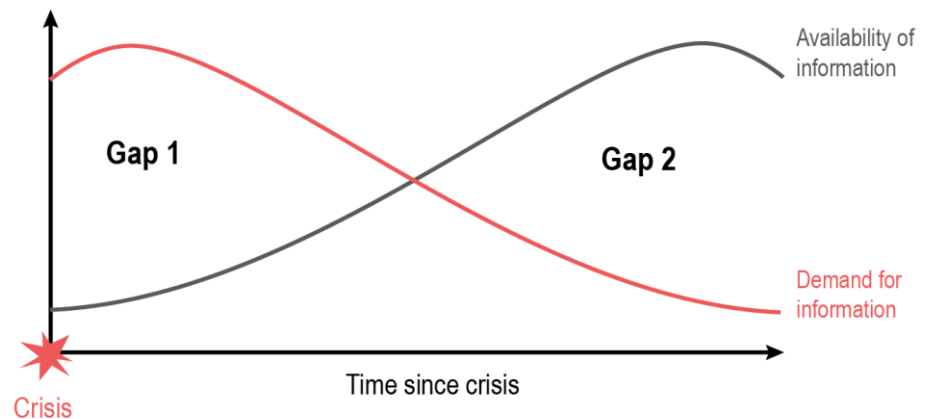
- Gap 1 is in the emergency **phase** of a crisis, when **insufficient information is available to meet demand**. As data products become increasingly available, demand for them decreases as humanitarian actors increasingly focus on their operational priorities.

- Gap 2 is in the recovery and development phases, when the **availability of information products exceeds demand**. Eventually this leads to a decline in the supply of information products and in a resulting lack of preparedness once a new crisis occurs.

In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, REACH increases the rapid availability of information products that add value to the emergency response. In the recovery phase, REACH promotes the continued use of information products among aid stakeholders, making key data more accessible and useful for decision making purposes.

## 2. Ensuring that evidence is available for all areas affected by a crisis

Humanitarian planning requires comparison of vulnerabilities and resources across all areas affected by a crisis, whereas information is often available only in areas where humanitarian actors operate or intend to become operational. Without coverage of all affected areas, there is a tendency towards prioritising areas where aid is already available, rather than those where it may be most needed.

Gaps between data availability and demand for certain areas can be particularly acute in protracted crises. Globally, humanitarian needs are increasingly in conflict zones with restricted access, leaving large swathes of conflict-affected populations unidentified and without support. Shrinking humanitarian space requires a renewed focus on information management to enable more effective identification of vulnerability, response planning and monitoring.

> *Through adapted methodologies and effective use of technology, REACH enables data collection in all crisis areas, including the most difficult to reach. As such, REACH promotes a humanitarian planning which takes in consideration the needs of all crisis affected communities.*

3. Informing settlement-based planning

Humanitarian response is too often planned and conducted in a linear way, whereby sector-specific assistance is targeted to individual beneficiaries. The development of the cluster system and minimum humanitarian standards have reinforced this idea, often at the expense of a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple vulnerabilities and resources of affected communities.
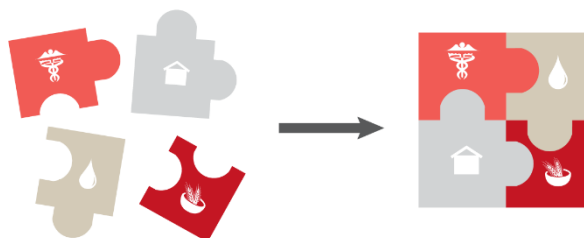
In context of crisis, socio-economic and spatial dynamics are often redefined, and need to be correctly understood in order to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of aid. An understanding of community-level vulnerabilities through a settlement-based approach can help aid actors to respond to the multiple needs in a given community, while an understanding of existing community structures can facilitate more efficient planning and aid delivery.

> *REACH promotes humanitarian action that goes beyond the need—beneficiary dichotomy by ensuring that this is complemented by an understanding of the territorial and community dynamics of a given crisis. This includes understanding of community dynamics; promoting multi-sector approaches; and using maps to understand spatial trends.*

What We Do

1. Supporting evidence-based planning, everywhere

- **Field based primary data collection**: REACH teams collect quantitative and qualitative data quickly. Underpinned by a thorough review of secondary sources, primary data helps aid actors to make decisions based on timely and reliable evidence.
- **Remote data collection in hard-to-reach areas**: REACH has developed tools and methodologies to monitor humanitarian situations in areas where access is challenging, providing granular data on crisis-affected populations, their changing vulnerability and access to resources. UNOSAT satellite imagery analysis is fundamental in this regard.
- **Informing humanitarian milestones**: REACH provides information throughout the Humanitarian Programme Cycle to inform flash appeals, humanitarian needs overviews, strategic response plans, cluster strategy, and response evaluations

2. Enabling partnerships for a better response

- **Support to coordination platforms**: Through its work, REACH supports humanitarian coordination teams, clusters, technical working groups, NGO coordination platforms, OCHA, UNHCR and other UN-coordination agencies, with information, analysis and technical expertise to identify and address information gaps in each context.
- **Inclusion of all humanitarian actors:** REACH systematically encourages the participation of humanitarian actors in its work, in order to maximize the use and impact of its programmes. REACH seeks the input of relevant actors in defining research questions, collecting data and analyzing findings, and building capacity where needed.
- **Global partnerships**: REACH partners with humanitarian coordination platforms at global level, providing a rapidly deployable assessment capacity at the onset of a crisis; providing training to build technical capacity; and contributing to the creation of guidance and standards.

3. Promoting innovation

- **Data collection**: REACH uses and promotes innovative approaches for data collection. With the support of UNOSAT, REACH makes extensive use of remote-sensing, derived primarily from satellite imagery. REACH has also piloted the use of crowd sourcing, as well as extensively using social media as a data source. REACH is at the forefront of mobile data collection, which it uses for the vast majority of its assessments, including the UN-ASIGN application.
- **Data analysis and dissemination**: Since its outset REACH has made systematic use of interactive platforms to display and present its data, including dashboards and webmaps. This enables a more tailored access to information, as well as outreach to a wider audience.

4. Providing a better understanding of settlements:

- **Use of spatial data:** REACH conducts spatial analysis to understand how vulnerability and resources vary across different settlements, and the factors that affect them. Participatory mapping is used to better understand communities, in order to enable holistic multi-sector planning which builds on the local response.
- **Use of key community informants:** An understanding of settlements allows the identification of community-level key informants, who have valuable knowledge about their sector of expertise. In addition, in areas which are difficult to access, qualified community key informants are able to gather detailed information on key humanitarian trends pertaining to their community.

Our Programmes

REACH interventions respond to information needs in a specific context. Over the years, we have developed a range of products, which are grouped into three programmatic directions:

1. Planning in Emergencies

Promoting better planning among humanitarian actors in contexts of sudden and protracted crisis.

In 2015 REACH has supported planning in emergencies by*:*
- Facilitating coordinated assessments
- Analysing the humanitarian situation in hard-to-reach areas
- Strengthening humanitarian information management

2. Understanding displacement

Supporting aid actors to better assist displaced communities and target the most vulnerable.

In 2015 this has included:
- Assessing needs and vulnerabilities in camps and camp-like settings
- Understanding needs and vulnerabilities in of displaced people outside camps
- Monitoring displacement and intentions

3. Assessing Community Resilience

Understanding social cohesion, access to services and markets, community tensions and shared priorities that could bridge the gap between the humanitarian response and development planning.

In 2015 this has included:
- Assessing markets in times of crisis
- Mapping hazards and vulnerability
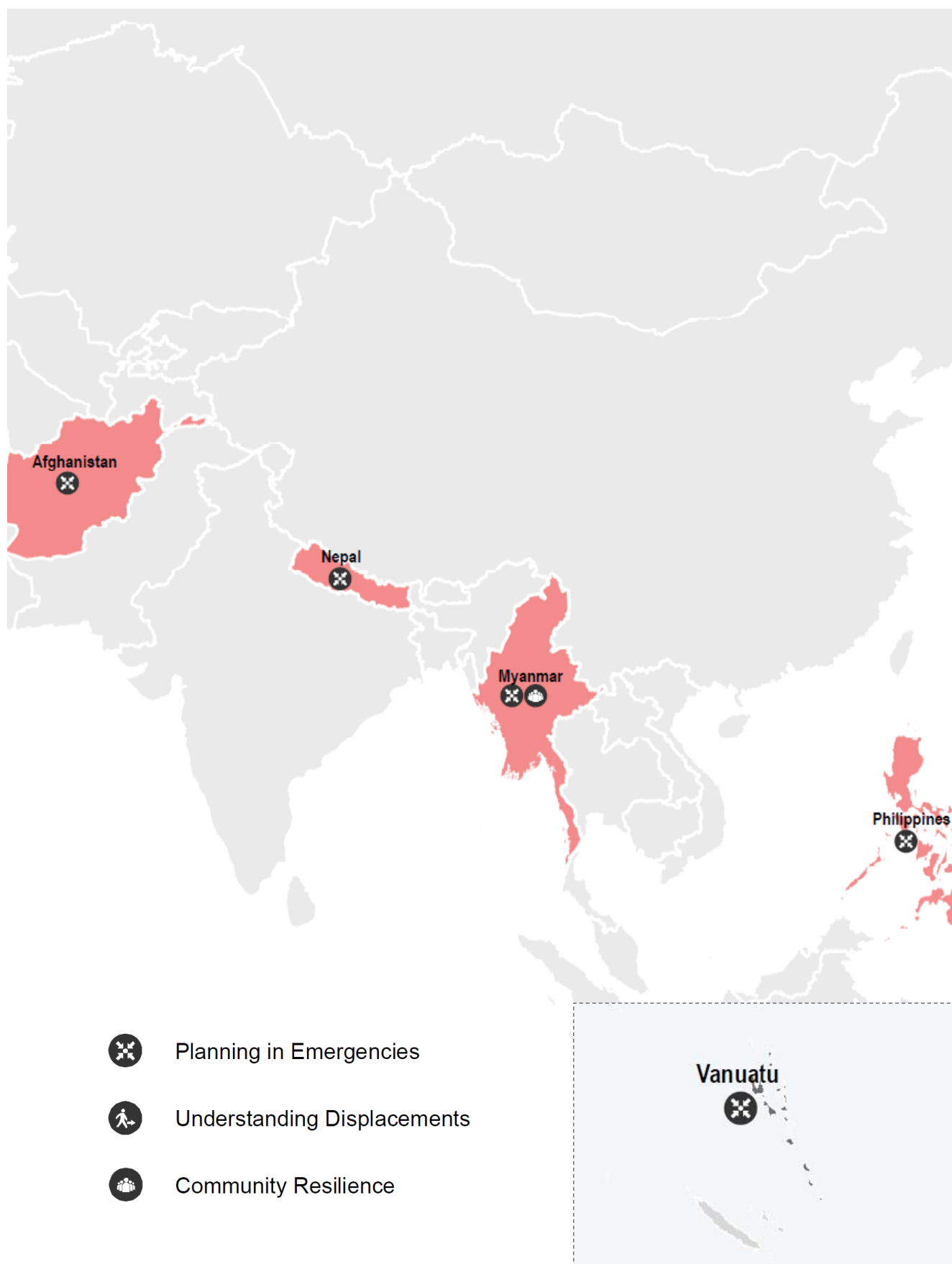- Understanding access to services and pressure on resources

Community-level data collection in South Sudan

REACH Operations

Where We Work

Afghanistan

Nepal

Myanmar

Philippines

Vanuatu

Planning in Emergencies

Understanding Displacements

Community Resilience
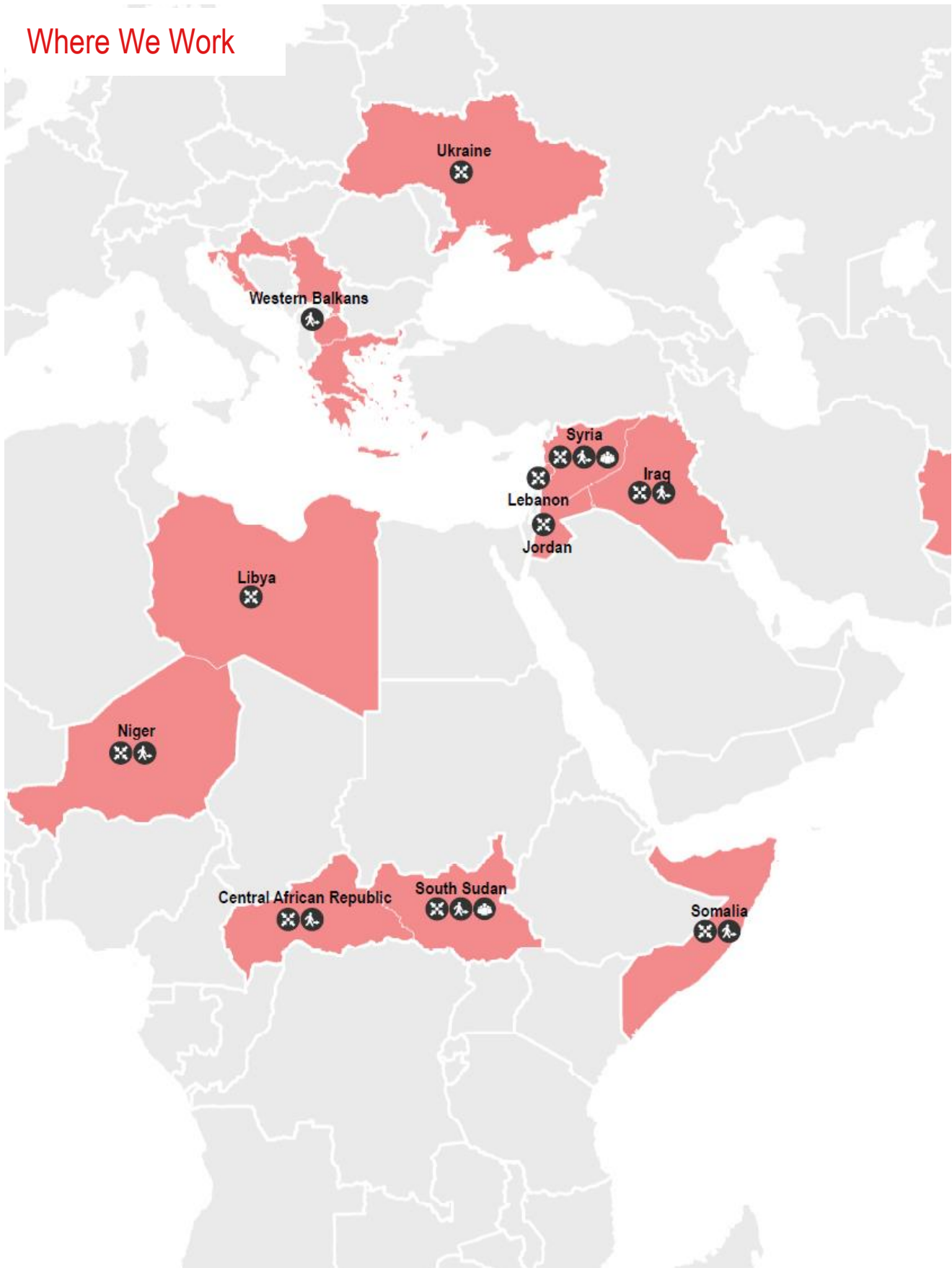
REACH Products

REACH information products respond to the differing needs of partners at different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle.

Total information products published in 2015

153 Factsheets

65 Reports

561 Maps

22 Situation Overviews

5 Interactive Dashboards

12 Webmaps

The REACH Resource Centre www.reachresourcecentre.info is an online library of all REACH products, live since 2014.
REACH products are also available in other global, regional and country specific humanitarian portals.

Reports

REACH reports provide in-depth analysis on a specific topic, to inform response planning by humanitarian actors and decision-makers. Reports commonly include detailed sector analysis, triangulated with secondary data to examine trends and vulnerability.
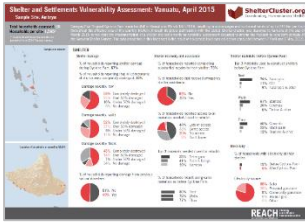
65   reports were published in 2015

Situation Overviews

REACH Situation Overviews provide a timely context or situation analysis at a specific time of a crisis, to inform strategic planning. Situation overviews include cross-sector analysis and are specific to the crisis timeline in a given context.

22   situation overviews were published in 2015
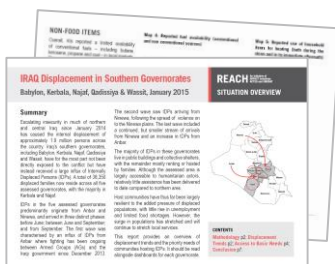
Factsheets

REACH factsheets present key indicators and their values at a glance for easy reference. Factsheets inform operations planning and joint analysis, providing granular information across specific geographic areas.
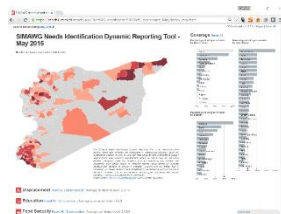
153 factsheets were published in 2015

Maps

REACH maps present spatial data related to a specific geographic area or theme. Teams combine remote sensing data and analysis with spatial data collected on the ground to inform operations, response planning and strategic planning.
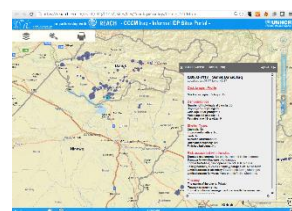
561 maps were published in 2015

Interactive Dashboards

REACH interactive dashboards present key indicators and their values in an easy-to-use web page, allowing partners to select the information they need for response and operational planning.

5 interactive dashboards were published in 2015

Webmaps

REACH webmaps present spatial data in a format that is easy to use and allows partners to visualise only the values or areas they want. Webmaps inform response and operational planning, providing data directly to partners in an accessible format.

12 webmaps were active in 2015, including one new webmap

The Evolution of REACH

REACH presence, by country (2011 to 2015)
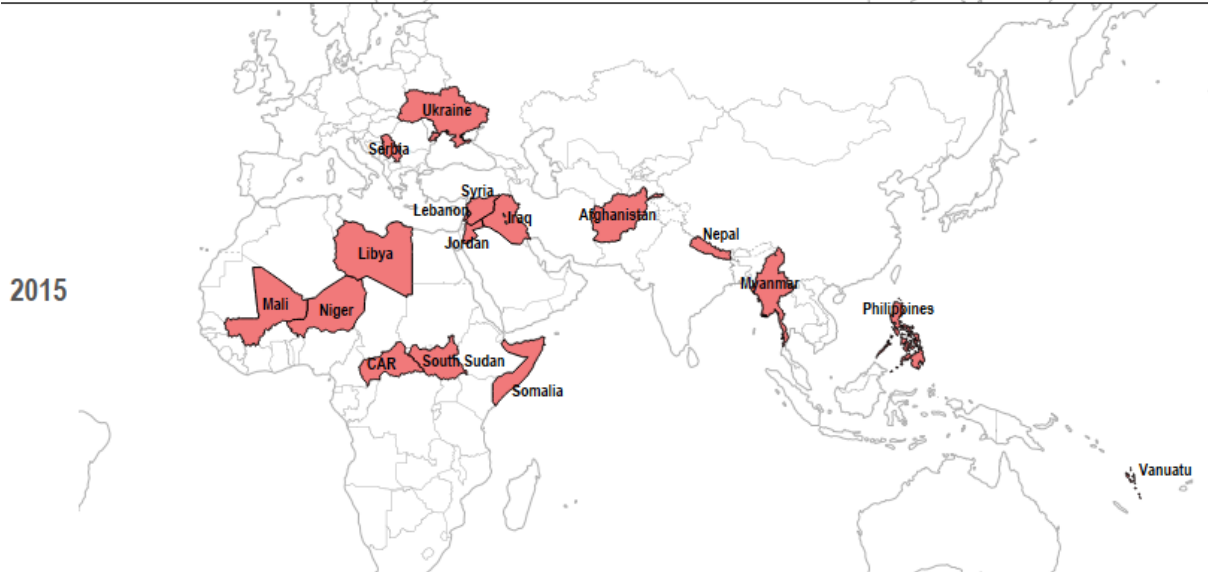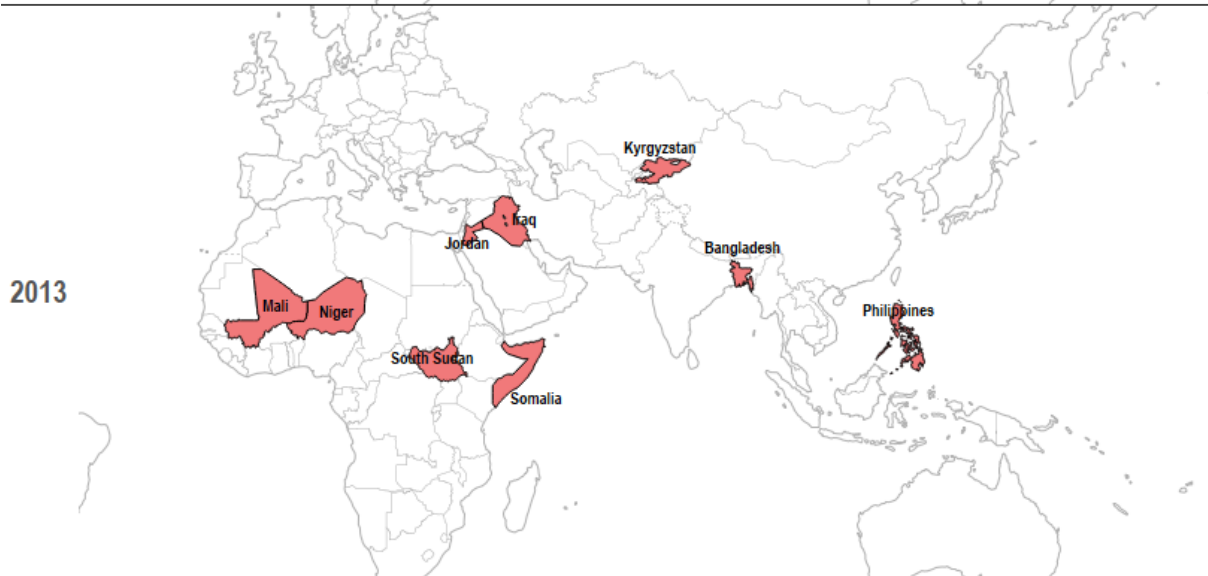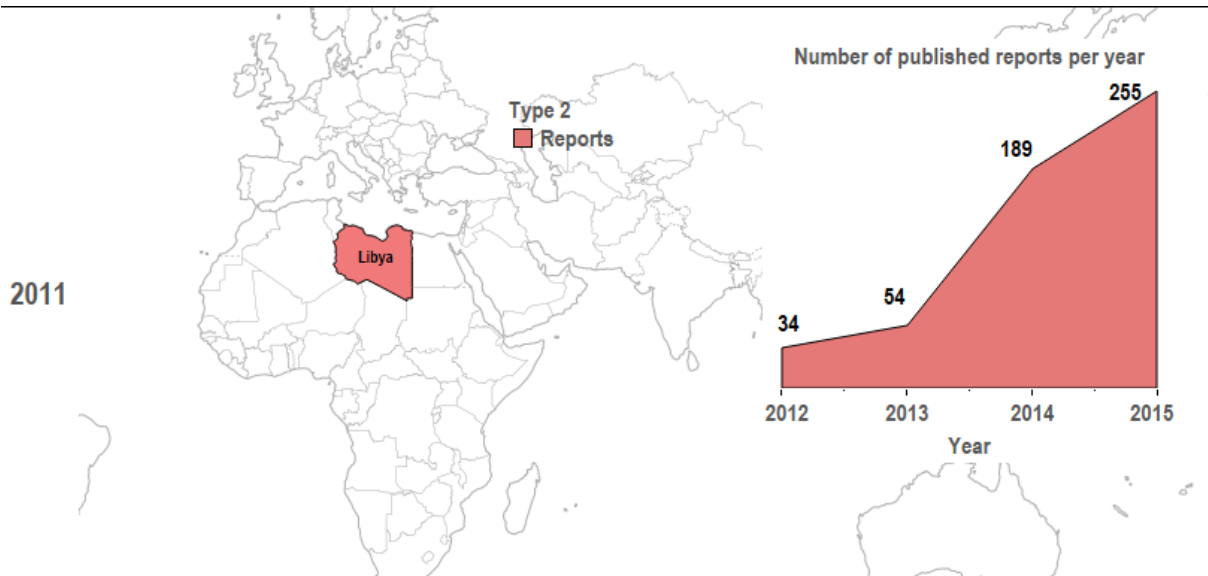
REACH Programmes

1. Planning in Emergencies: Support to Coordination

Coordinated assessments

REACH facilitates and leads coordinated assessments in support to humanitarian coordination structures, including at cluster/sector and inter-cluster/sector level. Assessments are timed to inform specific milestones along the humanitarian programme cycle, such as Flash Appeals, Humanitarian Needs Overviews, and strategic response planning. Assessments are conducted in a participatory manner, promoting active engagement of partners throughout the assessment cycle. This means ensuring agreement on research questions, coordinating data collection among partners, and facilitation of joint analysis and dissemination, thereby increasing the ownership and use of data.

Specifically, coordinated assessments include:

- **Support to Clusters**
  Cluster assessments provide timely, sector specific data to partners, leveraging on the knowledge, expertise and logistical capacity of cluster members. In 2015, REACH provided support to seven clusters at both global and country level, including Shelter, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Food Security, Early Recovery, Protection and Education.

  At crisis-specific level, data collection facilitated by REACH on behalf of clusters has informed flash appeals, cluster strategy, Humanitarian Needs Overviews, response monitoring and evaluations.

  At global level, REACH supports the Shelter, WASH, and Food Security Clusters, through co-chairing technical working groups, contributing to the guidance and training for cluster partners, and through seconding staff to cluster support teams.

- **Multi-Sector Needs Assessments**
  REACH has supported many coordinated multi-sector needs assessments in recent years. In addition to several multi-sector needs assessments in displacement contexts, which are detailed further below, in 2015 REACH facilitated a multi-sector needs assessment in Libya at the request of the Humanitarian Country Team.

Global Shelter Cluster
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

Support to the Shelter Cluster

REACH has partnered with the Shelter Cluster since 2010, when it facilitated an interagency assessment to support shelter planning and response in Kyrgyzstan. Since then, REACH has supported the shelter cluster in more than 15 different crises, facilitating interagency baseline assessments to inform shelter cluster strategy and response, monitoring changing needs over time, and conducting outcome monitoring. REACH also supports the Shelter Cluster at global level, acting as its assessment focal point, conducting trainings, developing tools and methodologies and guidance and co-chairing the Accountability and Information Management working group. In 2015, REACH was deployed on behalf of the Shelter Cluster to facilitate five assessments: four in sudden onset emergencies (Vanuatu and Nepal), and one in a conflict situation (Ukraine).

NEPAL

3 assessments

26 partners

8,487 households

The following pages detail examples of coordinated assessments in 2015.

Nepal

Shelter and Settlements Vulnerability Assessments, *April and September 2015*
Joint Assessment of Food Security, Livelihoods & Early Recovery, *May-July 2015*

The earthquakes in Nepal in April and May 2015 are estimated to have affected eight million people, or one third of the population. The earthquakes caused damage on a vast scale, destroying homes, and disrupting livelihoods.

In the direct aftermath of the first earthquake, REACH was deployed to conduct a **baseline shelter assessment** on behalf of the Shelter Cluster.
- The baseline assessment was the largest study conducted at the time, based on a sample of 1,776 households across 14 affected districts. Household level findings were complemented by key informant interviews in five hard-to-reach areas, providing case studies of the particular challenges faced in these areas.
- The assessment verified the coverage of emergency shelter and non-food item assistance and supported the shelter cluster to define a comprehensive shelter & settlements recovery strategy.

"The REACH assessment is really the only way we gain a precise overview of gaps on the ground in humanitarian response"

Victoria Stoddart, Shelter Cluster Coordinator, IFRC, Philippines

REACH was deployed again in September 2015 to facilitate a **shelter response monitoring** assessment for the Shelter Cluster.
- The second assessment provided evidence to help shelter actors to better understand the role of vulnerability in relation to recovery in the Nepali context. The study included analysis by socio-economic grouping and the type and modality of aid received, in order to determine the factors that had best supported self-recovery among affected households.

In September and October 2015, REACH facilitated a joint **Food Security and Early Recovery assessment** to monitor and inform broader early recovery efforts related to food security, livelihoods, agriculture, service access and protection.
- The 4,184 assessed households were statistically representative of affected communities across 11 of the most severely-affected districts.
- The response monitoring assessment provided updated information on key thematic areas included in a previous Post Disaster Needs Assessment, identifying and measuring change since this baseline. The study also identified key trends, gaps and risks across the assessed sectors and provided stakeholders with relevant information to define cluster and agency-specific early recovery and development strategies.

Vanuatu

Shelter Needs and Vulnerability Assessments, *March and July 2015*

In March 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam affected an estimated 188,000 people in Vanuatu. REACH was deployed to conduct a baseline assessment of shelter damage and vulnerability in the aftermath of the cyclone, and again in July 2015 to conduct a response evaluation.

- The assessments verified the coverage of emergency shelter and non-food item assistance; provided gap analysis; enabled the shelter cluster to define a comprehensive shelter & settlements recovery strategy; examined the utility of shelter interventions; monitored the recovery of affected households; and set out recommendations to inform preparedness, contingency planning and disaster risk reduction.
- Focused on 13 sample sites, across 16 islands which had sustained significant shelter damage from Cyclone Pam. The assessed households provided a representative sample of the population on affected islands, with a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 10%.

Ukraine

Shelter and Non-Food Item Needs Assessment, *April-July 2015*

Conflict in Ukraine had affected an estimated 5.2 million people as of June 2015. REACH was deployed from April to July 2015 to support the Shelter Cluster conduct a household level assessment of Shelter conditions and Non-Food Item needs, with a particular focus on internally displaced people.

- The assessment provided representative quantitative information about shelter and non-food item needs of internally displaced households in five regions (*oblasts*) across eastern Ukraine. The study also established a baseline against which humanitarian response could be monitored and tailored, including a better understanding of shelter adequacy.
- The study provided representative quantitative data on the situation and needs of the 850,000 IDPs registered by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, based on a sample of 2,573 households across 135 affected districts. The sample consisted of 35 clusters, classed as rural or urban, in order to understand the different needs and situation of IDPs in these areas.

VANUATU

2 assessments

10 partners

1,633 households

LIBYA

1 assessment

8 partners

509 households

177 key informants

Libya
Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, *July 2015*

Following years of political instability and a progressive deterioration of the security situation, UN agencies estimate that conflict in Libya had caused the internal displacement of some 400,000 individuals as of July 2015. Working on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team to inform the 2015 Libya Humanitarian Appeal, REACH facilitated a multi-sector needs assessment with JMW consulting to provide more granular information about the needs and situation of different population groups in twenty locations across the country.

- The Assessment provided a community-level overview of the humanitarian needs of conflict affected populations across Libya, including internally displaced persons, host communities, migrants and refugees. It also allowed comparisons with an earlier inter-agency needs assessment, conducted in November/ December 2014, enabling changing needs and priorities to be measured over time.

- Data was collected at both community and household level from 509 households and 177 key informants. Locations and were purposively sampled, therefore the sample was not statistically significant of the situation in affected areas throughout Libya. Rather, the information collected was sufficient to enable comparisons between the situation, needs and priorities of communities in the East, West and South of Libya and between the needs to four vulnerable population groups: the host population, refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants. Further longitudinal analysis will be possible through a follow-up community-level assessment in February 2016.

Informing the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)

Data collected in the Libya Multi-Sector Needs Assessment in July 2015 fed directly into the Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2015. The information collected provided the primary data source upon which sector analysis was based, facilitating the joint prioritization of needs and allowing the information collected to be used alongside the latest humanitarian profile data.
REACH aims to time all assessments to coordinate with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. This ensures that up-to-date primary data information is available to inform appeals, strategic planning, cluster and sector response plans.

Humanitarian situation analysis in hard-to-reach areas

Hard-to-reach or conflict affected areas are often those where needs are greatest, but also those where restrictions on access to goods, people and information mean that data on needs and vulnerabilities is systematically lacking. In 2015, REACH has continued to develop its capacity to conduct remote-data collection, predominantly structured around a good understanding of communities and the use of key-informant networks.

Among REACH's flagship programs are Remote Damage Assessments in areas of Iraq and Syria with limited humanitarian access, and the Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) programme, which uses the "Area of Origin" methodology (see insert). Based on the same methodology, similar programmes were also piloted in Iraq and South Sudan in 2015. The following pages show examples of work in hard-to-reach areas in 2015.
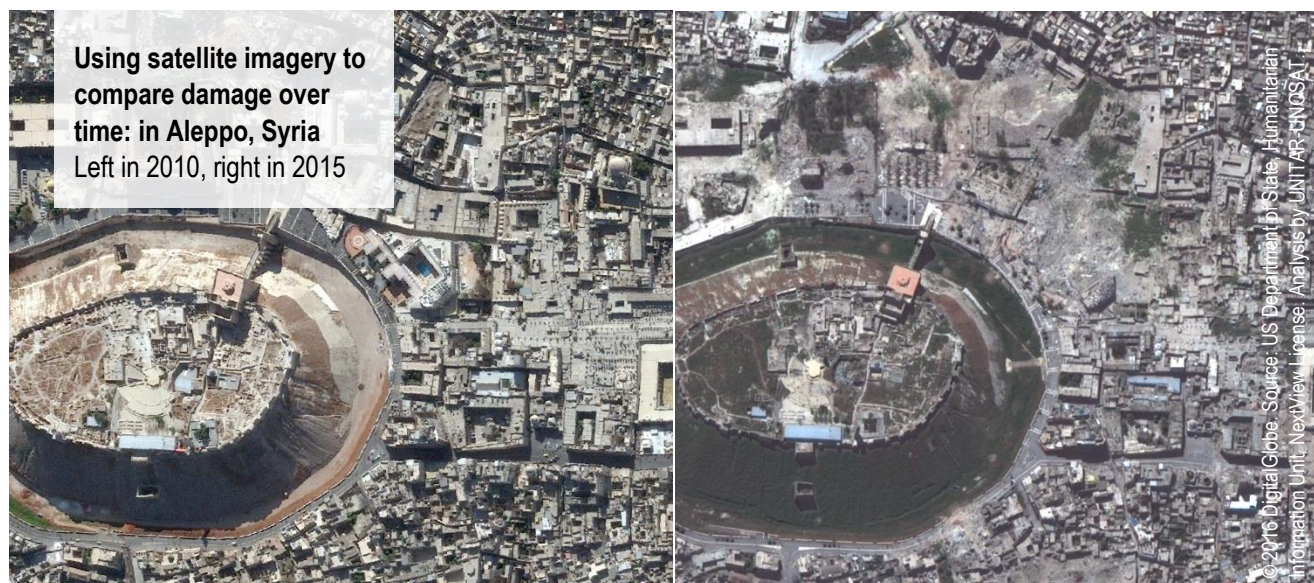
Remote Damage Assessments

A lack of humanitarian access causes serious limitations to understanding the situation and needs of affected communities. Remote damage assessment using satellite imagery offers enormous potential for understanding the extent of damage in such areas, the movement of people, and the functionality of key infrastructure and services.

Through UNOSAT, REACH conducts detailed remote damage assessments in conflict-affected areas of Syria and Iraq. The assessments use high-resolution remote sensing imagery to better understand the situation in areas with limited humanitarian access, through comparisons with earlier imagery of the same areas. Satellite image analysis allows visible damage (from above) to be geo-located and classified as moderate, severe or destroyed. While this methodology is not suitable for capturing all damage to buildings, such information, when collected periodically, provides valuable insight into the changing situation. Information collected can also be triangulated with information collected through key informants and field teams.

In 2015, remote damage assessments were conducted in eleven cities in Syria and Iraq. Remote sensing analysis has supported humanitarian action by providing an indication of the damage inflicted over time in the various neighbourhoods of assessed cities. Damage analysis has also served as important source of data for other assessments, allowing for the triangulation of data and informing participatory mapping.

"Support provided by REACH was instrumental for the cluster to develop exceptional response in such complex remote management emergency context."

—Dher Hayo, CCCM Cluster Coordinator, UNHCR, Syria

Remote Damage Assessment in Dar'a, Syria

Damage between May 2014 and June 2015 is shown in red (destroyed), orange (severe damage) and yellow (moderate damage). This assessment recorded damage to 616 buildings in one year.

Using satellite imagery to compare damage over time: in Aleppo, Syria
Left in 2010, right in 2015

The image above shows Aleppo, Syria, as seen on 21 November 2010 before the conflict, and then on 6 April 2015. REACH uses satellite images such as these to assess damage and monitor how situations change over time. In the 2015 image, one can clearly observe the destruction of large areas in the middle of the image.

The benefits of satellite imagery

Satellite imagery and remote sensing data provide a key source of information about hard-to-reach areas. Satellite imagery provides the following key benefits:

- **Objective information** to a range of stakeholders, particularly in conflict situations. Such data can be used to analyse physical damage to buildings, track the locations of displaced populations, or verify the location of physical infrastructure in temporary settlements. As the saying goes, a picture does not lie.
- **Information in situations where there is no access**. In the direct aftermath of natural disasters, many areas cannot be reached due to logistical challenges such as flooded roads and damaged bridges, while in conflict situations, physical access is often challenging due to security concerns for field staff. Satellite imagery can be collected anywhere and at any time, regardless of constraints on the ground.
- **Timely information.** Satellite imagery can be delivered and analysed on the same day the image is taken.
- **Access to historical archives and analysis of change over time.** Analysis of satellite imagery over time can provide precise information about key changes to population, damage and extents of flooding.
- **Baseline information for all humanitarian actors.** The information derived from satellite imagery provides core situation specific baseline data that can be used by all sectors and clusters and thus contributes to more effective humanitarian coordination.

Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) Programme

The dynamic and multi-faceted nature of the Syrian crisis has posed significant challenges for humanitarian information management. Accessibility and security issues within Syria have impeded systematic data collection efforts, limiting the effectiveness of humanitarian planning and programme implementation.

Through its Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria (HSOS) programme, REACH supports better humanitarian planning by providing regular updates from within Syria at governorate, subdistrict and community level. Online dashboards, factsheets, flash updates and thematic reports are broadly disseminated through humanitarian coordination platforms, in close partnership with the Needs Identification Framework, OCHA and Whole of Syria clusters.

Using its Area of Origin methodology, REACH is able to collect and analyse humanitarian on a monthly basis data which is comparable across different geographies and over time. As of December 2015, REACH collected regular data from 318 communities across Syria from its teams based in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.
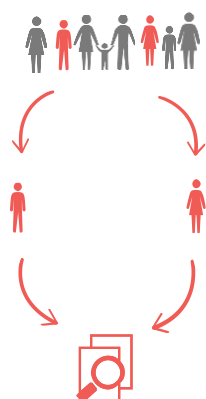
What is the Area of Origin Methodology?

REACH's "Area of Origin" methodology is a flexible means of collecting primary data, which can be adapted to different levels of access.

The methodology works with "participants", often displaced persons or refugees, who remain in contact with family or friends in their area of origin and are able to collect up to date information on a regular basis. REACH taps into this existing flow of information, through asking participants to collect information about these communities through their contacts, known as key informants. Information from key informants in each community is then consolidated and analysed by REACH teams, and triangulated with available secondary data.

Findings are given a confidence score, so that information provided by participants with the best community-level knowledge of a specific sector is given the highest weighting. The use of standard, sector-specific questions enables changes to be monitored over time.

Humanitarian Situation Overview, Syria

As of December 2015, monthly data was collected from key informants in:

318 communities

171 sub-districts

Pilot Situation Monitoring Unity State, South Sudan

Over a three-month period in late 2015, data was collected in Unity from:

**391** key informants

38 communities

South Sudan, Pilot Situation Overview in Unity State

In Unity State, South Sudan, over half a million individuals were estimated to be internally displaced as of December 2015. Many areas are largely inaccessible to humanitarian actors due to ongoing conflict and logistical constraints, resulting in a lack of comprehensive knowledge of the situation outside major displacement sites.

REACH conducted a pilot assessment in September and November 2015 to understand the situation in communities throughout Unity State, in order to provide granular multi-sector information about the humanitarian situation at community, county and state level.

Using the Area of Origin methodology, which was first developed to monitor the Syria crisis, data was collected from internally displaced persons in major displacement sites, who provided information about the situation in their area of origin. These individuals either remain in contact with family and friends in their home communities, or travel regularly to and from their current location and can therefore provide up to date information. This pilot will be followed by periodic updates from multiple states in 2016.

*Detail of reported displacement trends in Unity State*
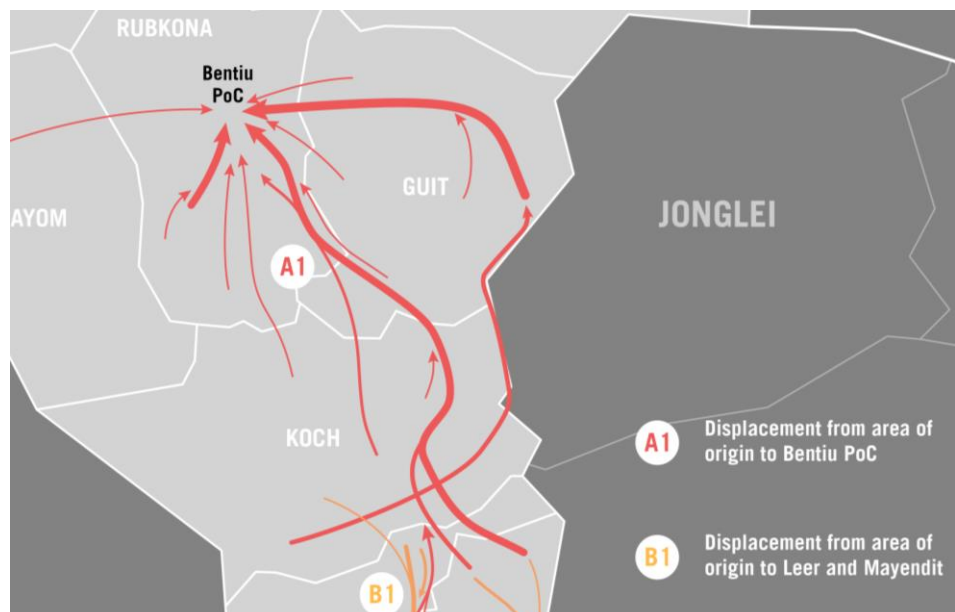
Humanitarian Information Management Support

In a number of crises, REACH has supported humanitarian actors with the provision of information management solutions and expertise. Examples of information management support in 2015 include:

In the **Central African Republic**, REACH supported information management for the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). Coordinated by UNICEF, NGO partners of the Rapid Response Mechanism have been able to react to shocks across the country, conducting rapid assessments, providing WASH and Non-Food Item assistance, and conducting post-distribution monitoring. Since the beginning of 2015, REACH has centralised reporting among partners, tracking situation needs and response and providing periodic updates to all partners through monthly factsheets and an interactive online dashboard.

In the **Diffa region of Niger**, REACH supported UNHCR and NGO actors responding to the Diffa crisis with information management for the humanitarian response. REACH teams collect monthly data from agencies operating in Diffa on activities, progress and funding, by location. Information feeds into an online dashboard, allowing the easy identification of who does what, where. Information collected has also been used to measure progress against the humanitarian response plan, and to identify gaps in provision across the region.

Online dashboard to track who does what, where in the Diffa region of Niger
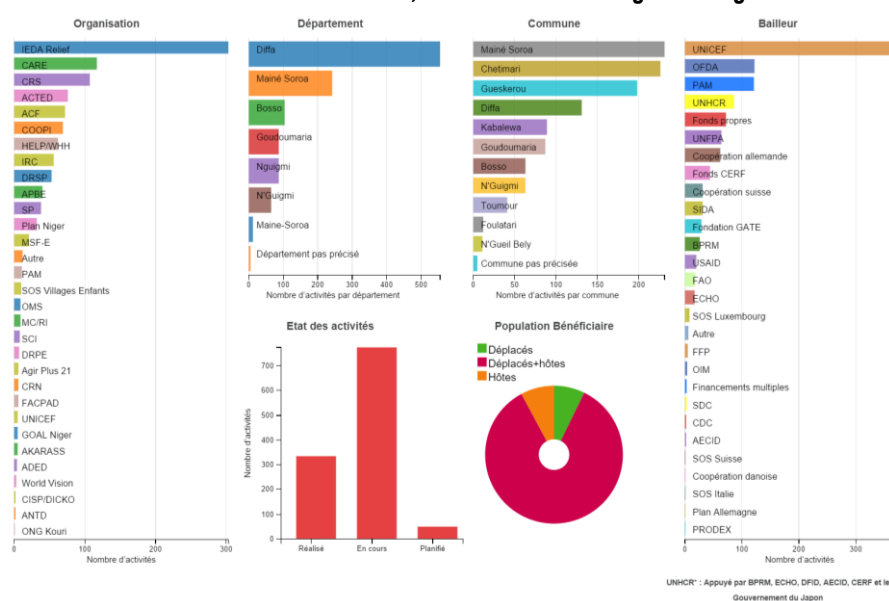
At **global level**, REACH supports the Global WASH Cluster through the participation of an Information Management Officer in its Field Support Team. REACH's information management specialist is deployed to various emergencies to support in country clusters with data, information management and mapping. Roles and responsibilities include cross sectorial data gathering and analysis, mapping of operational capacity and needs, creation of information products (infographics, dashboards, maps, etc.) and information sharing through online platforms. When not deployed to support country operations, the Information Management Officer either provides remote support to countries or works on developing tools and best practices at the HQ level.

2. Understanding Displacement

With growing displacement over increasingly protracted periods, those forced to flee their homes represent an increasingly vulnerable population with specific needs and resources. Understanding displacement enables better aid delivery and planning for long term solutions.

In 2015, REACH has supported needs assessment and information management in both camps and non-camp settings. Working in both refugee and internal displacement context, REACH has promoted a better understanding of the differing needs of displaced communities, their capacities, intentions and access to services, in order to improve the delivery of adequate support and better equip humanitarian actors to respond in the case of future displacement.

Enabling better planning in camps

Work in displacement sites has formed a significant component of REACH's work in 2015. REACH has continued to support UNHCR, UNICEF and other humanitarian actors with information management in refugee camps in Jordan, Iraq, Niger, and South Sudan. In contexts of internal displacement, REACH has supported the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster in displacement sites in Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan. Below are some examples of REACH's work in 2015 in support to humanitarian response in camp and camp-like situations:

In **Za'atari and Azraq Camps, Jordan,** REACH has continued to update infrastructure, services, population and response maps on a periodic basis; conduct regular population counts; conduct household level assessments; facilitate joint post distribution monitoring; and provide training to partner agencies operational within the camp. Notable assessments in 2015 include comprehensive child-focused assessments in both Za'atari and Azraq camps, conducted in partnership with UNICEF. Based on census style data collection from a total of 90,620 individuals, the assessments collected detailed information on the camp population, attendance of formal and informal education, and information on disabilities, which enabled better targeting of assistance to children and families within the camp.

"REACH delivers high quality products on which other actors can make programmatic decisions"

Andrew Cusack, Senior Policy Officer, UNHCR, Global

Za'atari Camp, Jordan

REACH has been mapping Za'atari camp in Jordan since 2012 through a combination of satellite imagery and on-the-ground data collection. This map shows household level boundaries in the camp, to

IDP Camps, Iraq

In partnership with the CCCM Cluster, REACH conducted regular needs assessments in:

36 formal camps

609 informal sites

In **Iraq**, REACH conducted a profiling exercise of 36 camps for internally displaced people, in partnership with the Camp coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. In each site, REACH assessed a statistically significant sample of the population, allowing access to services and assistance to be monitored against minimum humanitarian standards. Each profile included a camp map, providing up-to-date operational information about the location of general infrastructure and services, and tracking the performance of the humanitarian response against a set of jointly-agreed indicators.

In addition, REACH conducted a census of 880 informal sites, assessing the availability of basic infrastructure, the type of management, land tenure status, and vulnerability to risk. Together with the CCCM Cluster, REACH also developed a Severity Index to determine the vulnerability of specific sites, compiling all data in an interactive webmap that could be filtered by partners according to their information needs.

Example of a camp profile, showing conditions in Al Nabi Younis IDP Camp, Iraq

Informing humanitarian planning in host communities

The vast majority of displaced people live outside camp settings, often residing in urban areas in host communities. In such settings, displaced people face differing needs and vulnerabilities, but are often not immediately visible. This poses challenges for humanitarian actors who seek to assist them, requiring appropriate methodologies and tools to identify these populations and understand their needs. In 2015 REACH supported humanitarian planning by gathering and analysing information on displaced populations in several non-camp settings including Niger, Somalia, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq.

In **Niger**, REACH mapped 120 villages hosting refugees and returnees in the Diffa region, most of these for the first time. REACH teams mapped general infrastructure, including water points, schools, and health centres in order to geo-locate key services and provide updated information to operational actors in the region.

In **Somalia**, REACH collaborated with the Protection Cluster, JIPS and DRC to profile spontaneous settlements in Mogadishu. Assessment teams from 18 agencies, including REACH, enumerated 80,657 internally displaced, economic migrant and host community households residing in 486 urban settlements. Using data from the enumeration, a sampled household survey, and service mapping in each settlement, REACH produced detailed spatial analysis of services available to these vulnerable populations.

In **Lebanon**, REACH conducted a multi sector needs assessment of community vulnerability in 252 communities across Lebanon. The study built on a vulnerability ranking and mapping exercise led by UNICEF, and was conducted jointly with the Government of Lebanon, OCHA and UNHCR. REACH assessed villages or neighbourhoods in over two hundred of the most vulnerable cadastral zones, including a total of 13,120 household interviews. Together with an analytical report, REACH produced 207 community profiles, detailing the differing needs and priorities of refugees and host communities.

In **Jordan**, REACH conducted a comprehensive assessment of food security of refugees in host communities, in partnership with the World Food Programme and other food security humanitarian actors. Based on a statistically representative sample of 5,088 households, the assessment evaluated the level of food security of Syrian refugees in Jordan, to identify changing vulnerabilities between 2014 and 2015. The study informed a tiered system of food assistance targeting by the World Food Programme, ensuring that the most vulnerable households were identified to receive assistance.

Assessing food security in host communities, Jordan

Working with the World Food Programme, REACH assessed the food security of host community refugees from:

5,088 refugee families

Displacement Trends, South Sudan

REACH analysed trends of displacement to ten major sites, collecting statistically significant data about an IDP population of:

267,093 people

Monitoring displacement and intentions

The identification of displacement trends is crucial to understand the vulnerability of displaced communities, the likelihood of further displacement and their longer term intentions. Such information can contribute to the ongoing response and to longer term planning for durable solutions. In 2015, REACH has monitored displacement trends and intentions in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Jordan and the Western Balkans.

In **South Sudan**, REACH assessed the profile and intentions of displaced persons in ten Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites and informal settlement sites in the six most conflict-affected states. The study used primary data collected through household level surveys, complemented by information from key informant interviews, community group discussions, and secondary data, to better understand the intentions of displaced persons and the possibility of returns, and to inform planning for durable solutions.

In **Syria**, REACH has supported the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster to monitor and map the movement of internally displaced persons in Syria's northern governorates. REACH has provided monthly updates on movement, based on reports by CCCM. The maps use Thiessen polygons, which create a spatial representation of a community based, and enable the broad tracking of IDP caseloads.

Detail from a map showing IDP locations in Aleppo Governorate, December 2015

Migration Trends, Europe

In September 2015, REACH conducted rapid studies of migration at key transit points along the Western Balkans route, and in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria to better understand intentions and routes.

In response to a dramatic increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in **Europe** via the Western Balkans, REACH conducted a series of rapid assessments in areas of arrival (including Croatia, Greece and Serbia) and areas of origin (Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon). The assessments sought to address a lack of comprehensive information about the reasons and triggers for the sudden increase in the number of people arriving in the European Union, and the underlying push and pull factors. Based on information collected from over 50 group discussions and 93 key informant interviews, together with secondary data from daily monitoring of key social media, the assessments provided EU decision-makers with detailed information about the demographic and socioeconomic profile of those arriving. The analysis of motivations and mediating factors also sought to provide a better understanding of ongoing and likely future migration trends to the EU.

Since the initial rapid assessments in September 2015, REACH has set up a migration monitoring system with the support of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department to continue to monitor migration trends in the Western Balkans.

Detail of migration routes from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria to Europe

3. Assessing Community Resilience

Natural and man-made crises can have a devastating effect on service delivery, resources and livelihoods, often leaving community safety nets and municipalities as last resorts to meet the basic needs of vulnerable populations. In situations of protracted conflict and displacement, prolonged instability can quickly erodes communities' capacity to recover from shocks and stresses, and lead to community tensions as different groups compete for scarce resources.

In order to promote better preparedness to crisis and plan an effective response, it is paramount to have an accurate understanding of resilience in crisis-affected and crisis-prone communities. In 2015, REACH has conducted assessments to better understand community resilience, the functioning of markets, vulnerability to hazards, and access to services in Syria, South Sudan, Myanmar and Jordan.
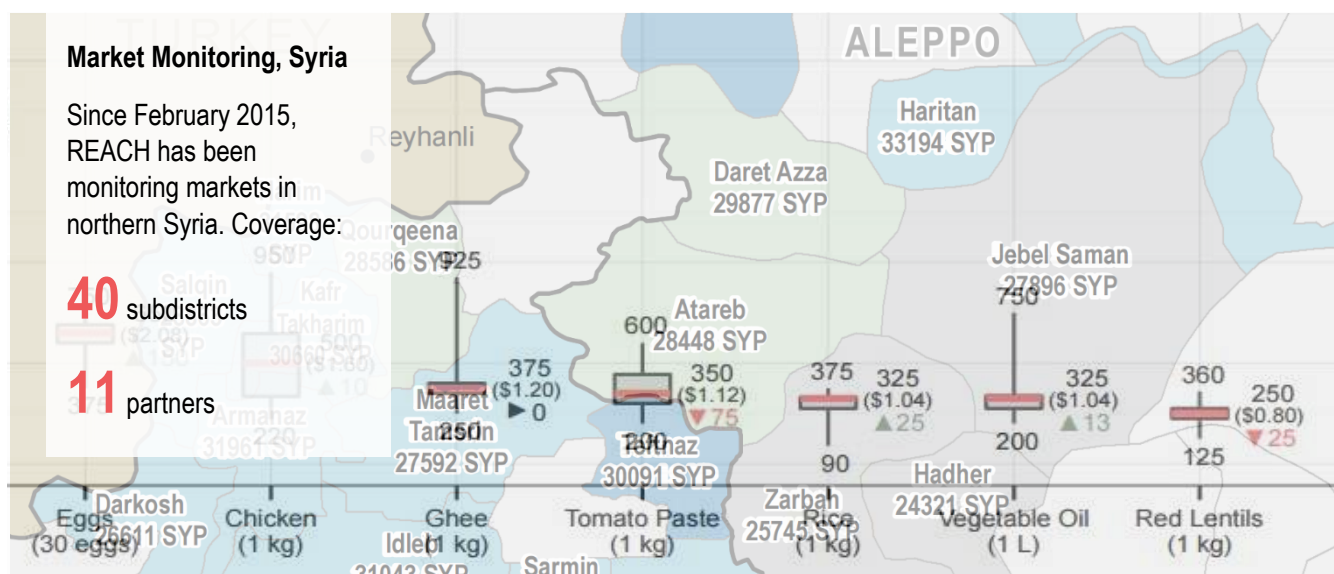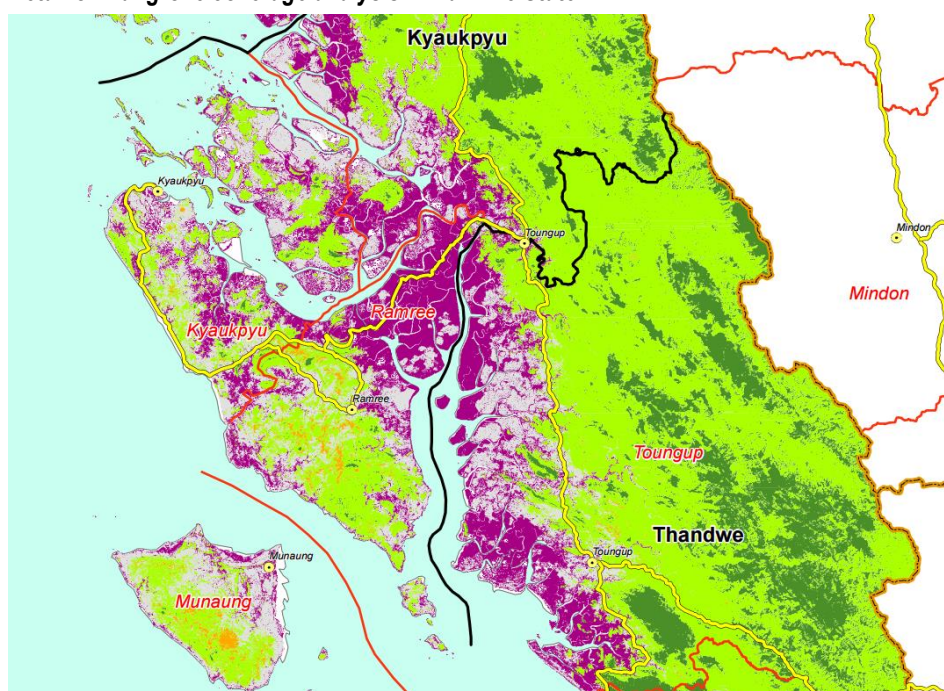
Emergency Market Assessments

In times of crisis, markets continue to play a vital role in allowing people to access food and household goods and to earn a living. Understanding market functionality is key for humanitarian response: firstly to determine the extent to which affected populations are able to access good and services; and secondly to understand whether and how humanitarian assistance can best support access to essential commodities through markets. Market assessments can help humanitarian actors to determine appropriate modalities and amounts of assistance; address blockages in supply; and better tailor distributions to address unmet needs.

In **Syria**, REACH has supported the Cash-based Responses Technical Working Group to monitor markets across Northern Syria, in order to understand the prices and availability of food and basic household goods and fuel. The exercise provided monthly factsheets detailing the changing cost of a standard basket of household goods, in order to inform the humanitarian actors planning and implementing cash-based responses across the assessed areas. REACH also provided a clean dataset with which partners could perform their own analysis, conducted comparative analysis of changes to markets over time.

"REACH's leadership of the joint market monitoring initiative has herded a dozen NGOs into alignment, to all collect the same data at the same time, every month – this is no small feat!"

—Nathan Kennedy, Cash-Based Response Technical Working Group Interim Coordinator, GOAL, Turkey

Market Monitoring, Syria

Since February 2015, REACH has been monitoring markets in northern Syria. Coverage:

40 subdistricts

11 partners

Detail of mangrove coverage analysis in Rakhine State

Hazard and Vulnerability Mapping

Natural hazards are affecting increasing numbers of people every year. People affected by natural hazards often lack the knowledge, capacity and resources to avoid them. Understanding the multiple dimensions of vulnerability can help humanitarian actors to identify the most vulnerable households and individuals, and to plan appropriate interventions in the emergency, recovery and development phase that increase people's resilience to hazards in the longer term.

In **Myanmar**, REACH conducted an assessment in Rakhine State of knowledge, attitudes and practices related to Disaster Risk Reduction. The assessment was conducted on behalf of the inter-agency Program for Improved Disaster Management and Resilience Against Natural Disasters. REACH conducted a household level assessment of 1,275 individuals to inform programme activities as well as wider policy change in Rakhine State by highlighting key gaps in people's current approach to natural disasters, as well as capabilities and entry points for increased resilience.

Mangrove coverage analysis, Myanmar

UNOSAT analysis enabled a study of changing mangrove coverage in Rakhine State based on

3,284,374 ha of multispectral imagery between 1988 and 2015.

Services and Social Resilience, Jordan

For the Jordan Emergency Services and Social Resilience Programme, REACH surveyed:

1,164 households
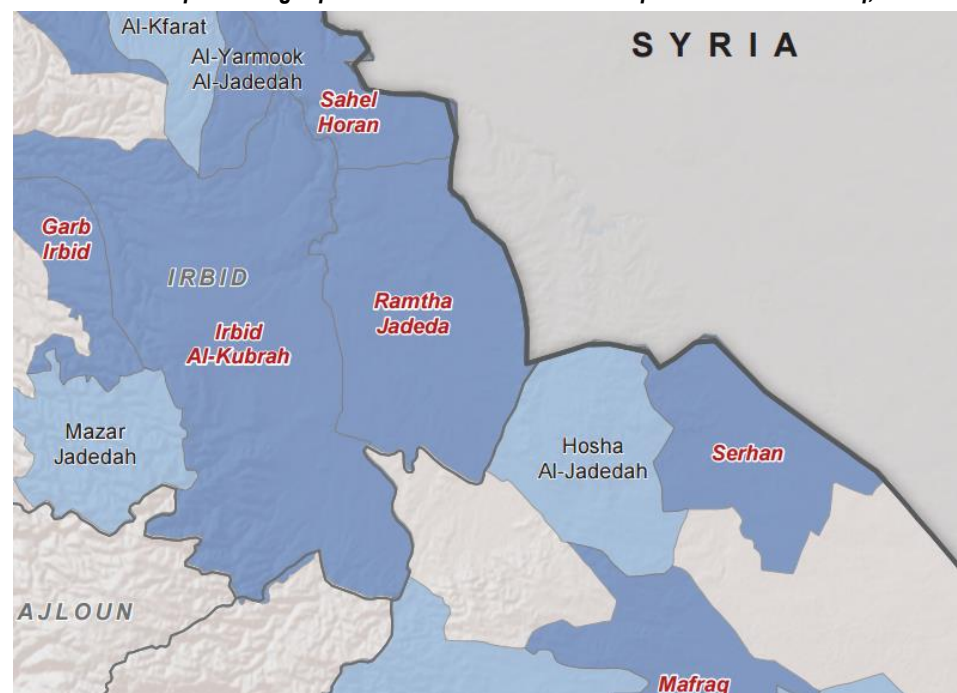
16 municipalities

Access to services

Large-scale displacement can lead to intensified competition for scarce resources, and increased demand for housing, livelihood opportunities and critical municipal services. It can also place a considerable burden on the service delivery capacity of the national and local governments, which if not addressed can lead to or exacerbate community tensions.

In **Jordan**, REACH has conducted studies into social cohesion and community resilience in support of the Jordan Emergency Services and Social Resilience Programme. The program aims to strengthen the capacity of municipalities by investing in social infrastructure and supporting visible and tangible improvements at the municipal level. REACH conducted a baseline assessment of 16 municipalities in northern Jordan to understand existing access to services, identify priority interventions and to serve as a baseline.

Detail from a map showing reported satisfaction with municipal services in Marfaq, Jordan

REACH Partners

Founding partners

IMPACT Initiatives

UNITAR
United Nations Institute for Training and Research

UNOSAT

ACTED

Bi-lateral and multi-lateral donor agencies

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

UKaid
from the British people

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

UN agencies and international organisations

OCHA

WFP

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

unicef

UNDP

FAO

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

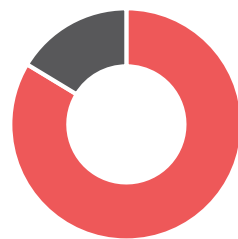# Cluster partners

Other partners

REACH in Numbers

People

By the end of 2015, REACH had a total of 104 contracted staff worldwide. These staff members are also supported by over 600 temporary staff in order to conduct large assessments.

Location of programme staff

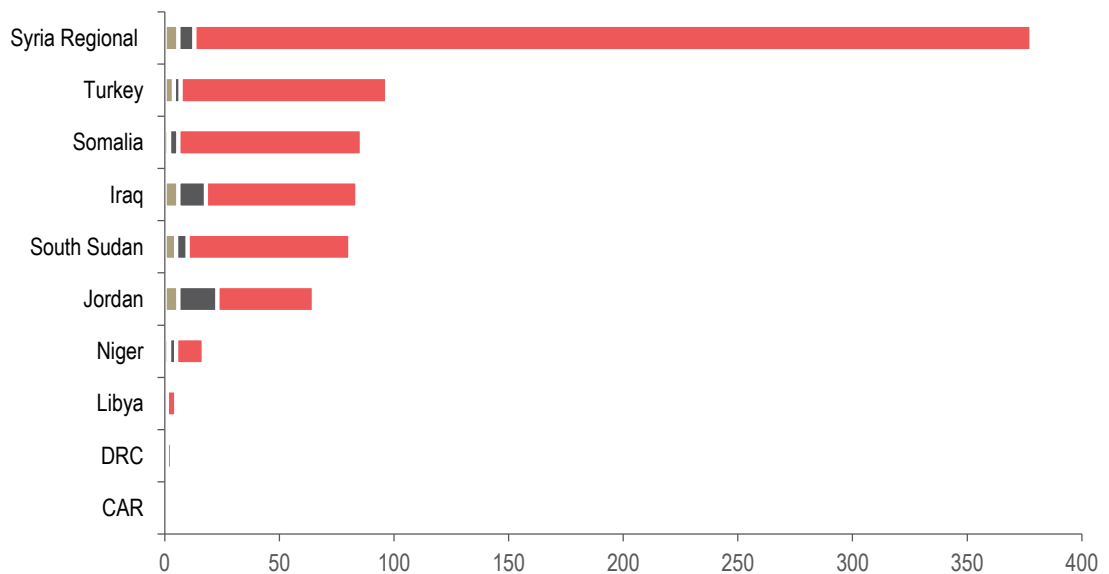The vast majority of REACH staff are located in field operations.

84% field staff

16% headquarters

Field staff by country, December 2015

Most of our field staff are employed locally. Some field staff travel regularly to support programmes in other countries of operation.

Field staff by contract type, December 2015

34 national staff

53 international staff

665 temporary staff[1]

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[1] REACH takes on a large number of temporary staff to conduct large assessments. This number therefore fluctuates throughout the year. The figure above represents the maximum employed in each country at any one time.

Budget

REACH's estimated provisional budget for 2015 comes to a total of **7,048,955** Swiss Francs (CHF). Actual budgets will be confirmed upon closure of 2015 accounts.

Annual budget, by donor

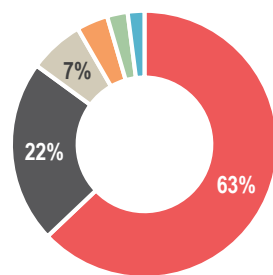REACH's work was primarily funded by bilateral donors and United Nations agencies.

57% Multi- and bi-lateral donors

36% UN & international organisations

7% Others

Annual budget, by region

Over half of REACH's global budget was for the Middle East and North Africa region.

63%
22%
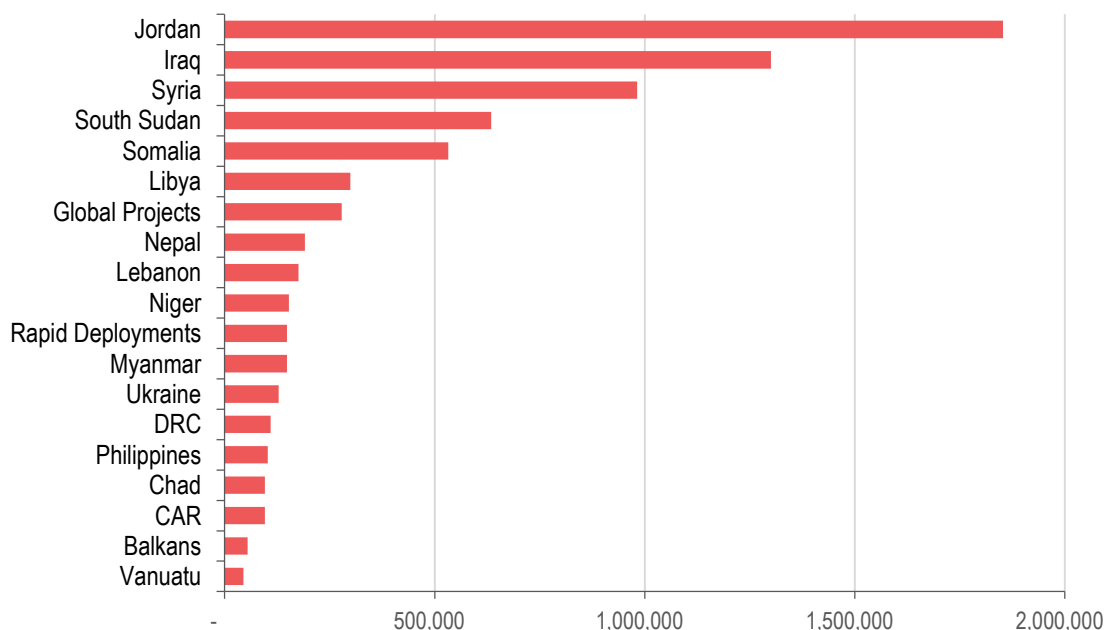7%

- MENA
- Africa
- Asia
- Global Project
- Europe
- Other

Annual budget, by country (CHF):

Together, operations in Jordan, Iraq and Syria account for more than half of REACH's total annual budget.

Jordan
Iraq
Syria
South Sudan
Somalia
Libya
Global Projects
Nepal
Lebanon
Niger
Rapid Deployments
Myanmar
Ukraine
DRC
Philippines
Chad
CAR
Balkans
Vanuatu

-    500,000   1,000,000   1,500,000   2,000,000

REACH