

Humanitarian organizations dataset

Codebook

Version 1, September 2019

This document presents the Humanitarian organization dataset and provides information on:

- The criteria for inclusion of a specific organization in the database;
- The types of variables included and the coding rules of each of them.

The database compiles existing lists of humanitarian actors such as:

- The Humanitarian Response database of humanitarian actors
- The Yearbook of International Organization
- The members list of national NGO consortiums;
- The members list of global humanitarian networks
- The list of organisations provided in the Financial Tracking Service

Data on each organization was mainly collected through an analysis of each organization's:

- Websites;
- Annual reports and, when relevant, other publication;
- Social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn)

We hence rely on how each organization **self-declares** its activities.

Criteria for inclusion

In this research project, we consider as a humanitarian actor any actor who:

- a. works in an **emergency/ chronic emergency** context. Such contexts include:
 - o armed conflict settings be they inter-state or intra state conflicts as defined by the UCDP dataset on armed conflicts (Allansson, Melander & Themnér 2017)
 - o natural disasters as defined by the dataset of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters – CRED (2017)
 - o situations of multifaceted vulnerabilities (political, social, medical, economic) as defined by the 2017 Fragile States index. The database includes States whose level of vulnerability ranges from warning to high alert (Fund for Peace 2017)
- b. defines at least 30% **its activities** using the following key words: “humanitarian”, “emergency,” “relief”, “disaster”, “crisis”.

Both conditions are jointly necessary. In addition, the dataset includes data on organizations providing support services to organizations meeting criteria a) and b).

The database only includes organizations which were still active in 2017-2018.

Included variables

Name

Entire name and acronym of the organisation.

The name of the organisation is the one used in 2016. Note that all the information collected under the following variables relates to the organization holding this specific name.

Year

This variable refers to the founding year of the organisation. If an organisation has changed name over the course of its organisational history – without changing structure - the year refers to the creation year of the organisation.

Type

The database includes 12 types of organizations, as follows. Types have been defined to a) enable cross country comparison; b) analyse the institutional structure specific to the humanitarian sector.

1 = “Governmental entity” refers to a) any branch, department, agency, or instrumentality of a state government as well as to b) the association between the entities mentioned in a).

2 = “Intergovernmental organization” (IGO). Our definition of intergovernmental organisations is based on the adaptation of the Correlates of War Project’s definition taking into account some specificities of humanitarian aid. According to the COW project, IGOs meet three criteria (Pevehouse, Nordstrom 2003: 2)

1. An IGO must consist of at least three members of the COW-defined state system;
2. An IGO must hold regular plenary sessions at least once every ten years;
3. An IGO must possess a permanent secretariat and corresponding headquarters.

Our definition departs from the COW project as far as emanations of IGO are considered. Wallace and Singer (1970) in the first presentation of the COW dataset consider IGOs emanation only if two conditions are satisfied:

1. “Its membership is not selected wholly or in part by another IGO and,
2. The organization is serviced by administratively distinct secretariat personnel who function under the authority of the organizational plenum” (*Ibid*, 248)

Most of the time, the specific nature of humanitarian aid is reflected by the fact that it is managed by specific department/ branches or emanations of IGOs. To have a more precise view of the organizations included in such field, the HOD includes data on such organizations.

3 = “Non-governmental organizations” (NGOs). Identifying NGOs raises definitional issues since the private nature of such organizations make their definition and status highly dependent on national regulatory frameworks. To identify the criteria defining NGOs, we build on the definition of non-profits produced by the John Hopkins non-profit sector project (<http://ccss.jhu.edu/research-projects/comparative-nonprofit-sector-project/>).

We hence consider an organization to be an NGO if it meets the following criteria:

1. Gathering individuals – specific categories are created for NGO federations and networks
2. Relying on a **formal institutionalised** structure

3. Being **institutionally separate from government** and not exercising governmental authority
4. **Voluntary**, i.e., involving some meaningful degree of voluntary participation. This involves two different, but related, considerations: First, the organization must engage volunteers in its operations and management, either on its board or through the use of volunteer staff and voluntary contributions. Second, “voluntary” also carries the meaning of “non-compulsory.” Organizations in which membership is required or otherwise stipulated by law are excluded from the non-profit sector. These include some professional associations that require membership in order to be licensed to practice a trade or profession
5. **Being non-profit** i.e., not returning profits generated to their owners or directors. Non-profit organizations may accumulate surplus in a given year, but the profits must be ploughed back into the basic mission of the agency, not distributed to the organizations’ owners, members, founders, or governing board. The fundamental question is: how does the organization handle profits? If they are reinvested or otherwise applied to the stated purpose of the organization, the organization would qualify as a non-profit institution.
6. **Self-governing: equipped to control their own activities.** Some organizations that are private and nongovernmental may nevertheless be so tightly controlled either by governmental agencies or private businesses that they essentially function as parts of these other institutions even though they are structurally separate. To meet this criterion, organizations must control their activities to a significant extent, have their own internal governance procedures, and enjoy a meaningful degree of autonomy.

4 = “NGO Federations” refers to a specific type of inter-NGO coordination. To be considered as a federation, a grouping of NGOs shall:

1. Gather at least three affiliates meeting the criteria of the NGO category
2. Share a common organizational identity referred to in the use of a common name/brand (such as CARE, Oxfam)

In the case where an individual NGO joins a federation over the course of its institutional life, the date mentioned in the founding year refers to the date of creation of the organization and not to the date in which the organization joins the federation.

NGOs federations vary considerably in terms of autonomy of organizational members and the scope of inter-organizational coordination (for a presentation see Gordenker and Weiss 1996).

5 = “Red Cross/ Red Crescent” refers to the components of the Movement of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent (<https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/components-movement.htm>):

1. The International Committee of the Red Cross;
2. The Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;
3. the National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies as recognised by the ICRC.

6 = “Corporations/Business” refers to a private, non-governmental organization whose primary objective is to provides goods and services – with a lucrative purpose - to crisis-affected populations or to humanitarian organizations. We only considered companies whose core business is focused on humanitarian action, as reflected in their business plan. This category includes diverse types of businesses whatever their purpose and orientation.

7 = “Foundations/ funds” refers to a specific type of non-profit organization. Although their definition, rooted in tax laws, highly varies across countries, they refer to a common image and terminology: “a separate, identifiable asset (the root meaning of fund, fonds) donated (the root of stift) to a particular purpose, usually public in nature (implying the root of philanthropy)” (Anheier 2001: 2). Our definition of a foundation builds on the criteria developed by Anheier (2001) for the comparative analysis of European foundations. “Foundations” builds on the definition of non-governmental organizations (see 3) while differing in:

1. **Being asset-based formal organizations.** The foundation must rest on an original deed, typically signified in a charter of incorporation or establishment that give the entity both intent of purpose and relative permanence. Other aspects include some degree of internal organisational structure, relative persistence of goals, structure and activities, and meaningful organisational boundaries. What are excluded are ad hoc and temporary funds and other assets that have neither real organisational structure around them, nor relatively permanent identity and purpose. Also excluded are membership-based associations and owner-based organisational forms. Thus, a foundation is not only a financial or other type of asset, but also an identifiable organization
2. **Having a public purpose:** Foundations should do more than serve the needs of a narrowly defined social group or category, such as members of a family, or a closed circle of beneficiaries. Foundations are private assets that serve a public purpose. The public purpose may or may not be charitable or tax-exempt in the relevant laws of a country, what is important is that the purpose be part of the public domain.

8 = “Networks” refers to a grouping of actors involved in humanitarian action and connected by ties. Networks differ from NGO federation in that:

1. They do not merely include NGOs but draws upon a large diversity of actors (corporations, foundations, IGO, governmental agencies)
2. Members organization have a greater level of autonomy and do not share a common name/ brand

Networks vary in terms of organizational structure. They may lead to the creation of a separate NGOs, with a dedicated staff or be more loosely connected alliance of actors.

10 = “Autonomous conferences series” does not refer to an organization as such but represents a continuing series of international meetings which has a name which could be assumed to refer to an international body (Union of International Association).

11 = “Religious entities, orders and fraternities” refer to a body or an organization whose membership draws upon a single or an association of churches or religious orders.

12 = Other: it corresponds to all remaining organizations that we were unable to classify in one of the above-mentioned categories.

Subtype

The subtype variable adds a second level of structure to the variable “type” to further specify the nature of the organization.

11 = “Aid agency” refers to a governmental agency organising the distribution of humanitarian aid (also called donor agency in the sector)

12 = “Governmental department/service” refers to governmental departments and services organising humanitarian response activities in a specific state

The subtypes 21 to 25 refer to organizations belonging or being linked to the UN system, as follows:

21 = “UN organs” refer to the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the UN Secretariat

22 = “UN offices, programmes, agencies”

23 = “UN missions” refers to a temporary mission created by a resolution of the USC and including a humanitarian purpose

24 = “Specialised agencies” belonging to the UN system or having a specific relationship with the UN (*cf.* <https://outreach.un.org/mun/content/un-family-organizations>)

25 = “UN clusters” refer to the cluster established at the global and country levels through the 2005 UN led humanitarian response

26 = “Regional IGOs” refer to IGOs established at the regional level

27 = States informal groupings/ other IGOs

Regarding NGOs, the following subtypes were created:

31 = “Community-based NGO”: NGO working in a specific region or district of a single country. For this type of NGO, the variable “Country of Operating activity specifies the location of its HQ and activities.

32 = “National NGO”: NGO established and working within national boundaries. For this type of NGO, the variable “Country of Operating activity” specifies the location of its HQ and activities.

33= “Regional NGO”: refers to an NGO which operates across national boundaries of states situated in a specific region, as defined by the present codebook. An NGO being established in a specific country and operating in a foreign country belonging to the same region is also considered as regional NGO.

34 = “International NGO” refers to an NGOs operating across national boundaries and in at least two regions, as defined by this codebook. An NGO being established in a specific country and operating in a foreign country outside its region of HQ is considered as an international NGO.

40 = “Umbrella Organization” refers to the organisation in charge of coordinating the different branches of the federation. Umbrella organizations are often referred to using the denomination “international” after the federation name. This category also includes regional umbrella organizations, i.e. organizations in charge of coordinating the activities of a federation members at the regional level.

41 = “Mother organization” designates the first organization created within a federation.

42 = “Federation members with international activities” refer to organizational entities members of an NGO federation and operating across national boundaries. Members established in a specific country and working in a foreign country are also included in this category

43 = “Federation members with national activities” refer to organizational entities members of an NGO federation and operating within national boundaries.

44 = “International NGOs national office”. This type refers to an NGO federation per se but allows to distinguish between NGOs structured in federations and international NGOs having a range of national country offices.

51 = “Red Cross/Red Crescent National Society”

52 = “International Committee of the Red Cross”

53 = “International Federation of the Red Cross”

81 = “National NGO network”: Network gathering NGO members at the national level.

82 = “Transnational NGO network”: NGO gathering NGO members at the transnational level

83 = “Global policy network” refers to networks made up of a diversity of members such individuals, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, corporations and governments involved in activities at the international level which cover the humanitarian policy cycle, including agenda setting, policy formulation, negotiation, rule-making, coordination, implementation, and evaluation.

84 = “Other issue network”

85 = “Regional policy network”

HQ Location

This variable refers to the location of each organization’s headquarters. For organizations declaring several HQ locations, we only consider the biggest HQ (in terms of staff and financial resources).

HQ Region and Regions of activities

This variable indicates the region where the headquarters of the organisation are located. Our typology of region is slightly adapted from the Correlates of War project. For organizations declaring several HQ locations, we only consider the biggest HQ (in terms of staff and financial resources). The seven following regions are considered:

1= North America

2= Caribbean/Centr. +South America

3= Europe (incl. Russia/former CIS States)

4 = MENA

5 = Africa

6 = Asia

7 = Oceania

The same regions are used to refer to the regions the organization declares operating in 2017-2018.

Country of activities

For organizations operating within national boundaries, we indicate the country where the organization operates.

Activities

The set of variables related to the activities undertaken by the organization draws upon the OECD classification of humanitarian assistance activities while completing it. The list refers to the activities as stated by the organization in its activity report. For each organization, we list all the activities of intervention, no matter their relative importance.

In kind

Provision of in-kind assistance

Advocacy

refers to activities aiming at a) raising awareness of policy-makers and the general public on humanitarian emergencies or at b) influencing the policies and actions of local, national, regional and international institutions and actors to better address humanitarian issues.

Coordination

indicates that the organization is involved in coordination activities. Coordination means working to ensure the activities and objectives of organizations adjust to each other (Axelrod and Keohane, 1985).

Capacity building and training

Refers to activities aiming at strengthening and developing the capacities of organizations involved in humanitarian response. This category includes training activities in any sector, incl. disaster risk management and reduction.

Cash

Provision of cash assistance/ support to crisis-affected people

Funding

used for organizations involved in funding activities, typically aid agencies, or foundations.

Evaluation and standards-setting

refers to organizations involved in the following activities: a) evaluation and monitoring of programmes as well as the sector performance and b) development of quality and accountability standards.

Policy making

refers to organizations involved in the formulation of sectoral or cross-sectoral policies.

Information and communication

Organizations involved in activities related to the provision of communication and information services before, during and after crises.

Research

Organizations involved in self-declared research activities.

Areas of interventions

Data related to the areas of intervention of an organization is based on its activity report. Variables hence refer to the way organizations qualify their own interventions. For comparative purposes, the definition of areas draws upon the clusters established by UN OCHA as well as by ALNAP in the State of the Humanitarian System.

Target populations

This variable indicates whether the organization is targeting a specific group in its mandates. The items reflect the terminology used by the organizations in their mandate statement.

Faith

This variable captures whether the organization refers to faith in its values and mandate and the religious denomination it refers to. Religious denomination is only mentioned for the most frequent ones, the variable “other” captures the less frequent ones (e.g. Sikhism).