In collaboration with

مجلــس دبـي للمستقبـل
DUBAI FUTURE COUNCILS
الأعمال الإنسانية
Humanitarian Aid

HUMANITARIAN WORK

→

INSIGHTS IN BRIEF

United Nation 2020 estimates indicate that 168 million people (1 in 45 people around the world) will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This number is expected to rise dramatically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
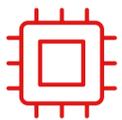
Due to social distancing restrictions of the pandemic, technology is becoming a critical requirement for the delivery of humanitarian work where traditional and physical activities are no longer possible.

The pandemic and its related travel ban will create a stronger push to 'localise' humanitarian work towards a more sustainable humanitarian model.

CURRENT SITUATION

As the Covid-19 global pandemic continues to spread rapidly around the world, disrupting societies and crippling economies, the anticipated impact on world populations is becoming more evident. The pandemic is not only disrupting emergency responses in vulnerable communities, but also increasing unemployment, reducing global remittances, and worsening hunger around the world.

Sectors that are mostly impacted by Covid-19 are those directly related to humanitarian work such as logistics, supply chains, health care, and others which have disrupted humanitarian response models. Governments facing unprecedented challenges are moving towards community and citizen-led responses including neighborhood volunteer groups and neighborhood associations, teachers or others helping to inform the public on the risks and needed steps.

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/collecting-open-government-approaches-to-covid-19/

ACCORDING TO UNCTAD, THE GLOBAL MARKET FOR CCI GOODS HAD AN AVERAGE

● 168 million (1 in 45 people around the world): estimated number of people who'll need humanitarian assistance and protection (United Nation 2020 estimates). This number is expected to rise dramatically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

168
MILLION PEOPLE

1 IN 45
PEOPLE NEED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE & PROTECTION

● From 135 million to 265 million: number of acutely hungry people worldwide as a result of COVID-19 (UN World Food Program).

● $110 billion: decline in global remittances in 2020 as migrant workers are laid off in economies hit by coronavirus shutdowns. Money sent home by relatives working abroad far exceeds global aid flows, providing income that can help during crises (World Bank).

● $13.74 billion: current global deficit in funding humanitarian assistance. This deficit will increase dramatically as governments are considering redirecting or restricting humanitarian funds to introduce economic support and stimulus packages to meet some of the most pressing needs of their populations.

During the past few months, the UAE has played an active role in assisting countries and communities in need, providing them with assistance and aid to alleviate the impact of the coronavirus on populations around the world:

1,277
TONS OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES & FOOD AID

107
COUNTRIES

1.2 M
MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ASSISTED

https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/23/04/2020/coronavirus-humanitarian-aid-response
https://www.csis.org/analysis/impact-covid-19-humanitarian-crises
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2020-enarfrz[h]

OPPORTUNITY

There is a silver lining to every crisis; although the UAE has claimed top positions in global humanitarian and giving rankings, this crisis offers an unprecedented opportunity to revisit and disrupt the humanitarian model for a post COVID-19 world.

01

Accelerated Adoption of Technology

It has been long argued that technology presents the opportunity to expedite and magnify the impact of humanitarian efforts through greater efficiency and responsiveness.

Due to social distancing restrictions of the pandemic, technology is becoming a critical requirement for the delivery of humanitarian work where traditional and physical activities are no longer possible. Expediting the deployment of technologies for good such as drones, artificial intelligence, block chain, crowdsourcing platforms, social media and mobile technology, will completely transform methods of conducting humanitarian work.

02

More Localized and Sustainable Humanitarian Work

This pandemic and its related travel ban will create a stronger push to 'localise' humanitarian work towards a more sustainable humanitarian model. It is bringing more evidence to believe that overseas aid is increasingly inefficient, ineffective and unsustainable. Strengthening the capacity of local and national workers to address their community needs will be further highlighted as the right way forward.

https://here-geneva.org/after-covid-19-time-to-reset/

03

Proactive vs Reactive Measures

The crisis will force entities to come up with innovative measures to tackle humanitarian issues. Entities will plan ahead to ensure crisis prevention rather than crisis management through identifying and reducing vulnerabilities and managing risks. This will entail identifying vulnerabilities at the source, thus enabling collective long-term outcomes and moving away from individual silos and projects with short-term goals.

Limited resources will enable entities to focus on existing methods and ways in which to improve. Rather than approach humanitarian work as a funding exercise, entities will focus on empowering communities, complementing the efforts of existing institutions to provide a comprehensive service to the beneficiaries.

Utilizing existing platforms: Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI) has invested heavily in developing its e-learning platform Madrasa that aims to provide every underprivileged child in the Arab world with access to free educational content. Last year, it deployed offline solutions ranging from Madrasa tablet, Wifi hotspot device, Madrasa Flash memory USB and Madrasa bag to ensure ease of access and expand its outreach. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Madrasa was recognized by the UNESCO as a powerful digital learning solution to help children across the world continue their education amid recent school closures.

https://mediaoffice.ae/news/2020/March/17-03/Recommended-by-the-UNESCO-for-distance-learning
https://mediaoffice.ae/news/2020/March/17-03/Recommended-by-the-UNESCO-for-distance-learningp

In addition to that, Dubai Cares, part of Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI), has joined the UNESCO's Global Education Coalition for COVID-19 Response, a multi-sector partnership between international organizations, private sector and civil society, that aims to help countries find solutions for distance learning and minimize educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The coalition strives to expedite advice on technology, pedagogy and content to allow countries to set up digital learning solutions and provide millions of children and youth around the world with an alternative to school during this global lockdown.

04

Doubling Efforts in International Assistance

The coronavirus pandemic has prompted countries and governments around the globe to become increasingly inward-looking. This tendency is expected to grow stronger and the willingness of the developed countries to help other countries will be minimal. UAE should play a vital role in filling the vacuum in humanitarian work, enhancing its presence in international aid, and setting the example for other countries and sharing best practices. A major opportunity for Dubai and the UAE would be attracting NGOs to locate their headquarters or regional presence in the country.

The International Humanitarian City (IHC) in Dubai is one of the world's largest humanitarian hubs, that plays an integral role in facilitating efficient first responses to crises at a global level. In collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the IHC is doubling its efforts to extend support to people in distress and communities affected by the COVID19 all around the world.

05

Unification and Integration

As a response to this crisis, a new sense of urgency to unify and integrate humanitarian efforts has emerged. The need to cooperate and establish joint efforts in facing humanitarian challenges is becoming more important than ever. The UAE should capitalize on this tendency and work actively in enhancing its humanitarian partnerships and synergies

LOOKING AHEAD

1. Technology-empowered solutions

a. Humanitarian aid must expedite the adoption of safe technological solutions that are far more efficient and effective in service-delivery.

b. Humanitarian work should encourage Digital humanitarianism by enabling its people and every willing person to contribute to the humanitarian causes and efforts of the country via modern technological solutions.

2. Prioritization of healthcare and technological infrastructure

a. The current pandemic has emphasized the critical importance of investing in healthcare services to combat any similar threats in the future. Humanitarian work will be allocating more funds towards establishing healthcare facilities, securing health equipment, and building capacity of health care providers.

b. Building technological infrastructure will be another priority for humanitarian work, being the key requirement for remote working, e-learning as well as responding to humanitarian needs.

3. Capacity-building ●

a. Based on a key trend in the future of humanitarian work on localising capacity-building: UAE's future efforts must invest in building local capacities around the world to ensure the sustainability of communities and their independence in the long run. Humanitarian work will move from single acts of aid to building local capacities within communities in need, such as providing beneficiaries with training and empowering them to become financially independent.

4. Proactive measures ●

a. Humanitarian work will become more data-driven, given the access to large volumes of personal data, thus the UAE must work with its global partners to plan ahead for potential vulnerabilities that could turn into a crisis and mitigate them at the source.

5. Integrated humanitarian work

a. UAE should engage in dialogues with the international community around enhancing synergies in humanitarian work.

b. UAE must bring key stakeholders –both local and global- to work on complementing each other's efforts to avoid duplication and ensure maximum benefit to the receiver. An integrated multisector effort with the help of technological advances will produce a well-rounded service-delivery experience to all people in need.

6. Role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)

a. Limited resources during the economic crisis post COVID-19 will restrict donors' capacity to fund various Non-Governmental Organisations' activities; NGOs will need to review their business models, diversify their sources of income rather than depend on a single funding stream and public contributions.

b. NGOs need to build new alliances with other NGOs to support each other's work and complement efforts.

https://www.dianova.org/opinion/how-will-covid-19-affect-the-role-of-ngos