

Briefing note

# Grand Bargain: field perspectives 2018

May 2019

[groundtruthsolutions.org](http://groundtruthsolutions.org)

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# Background

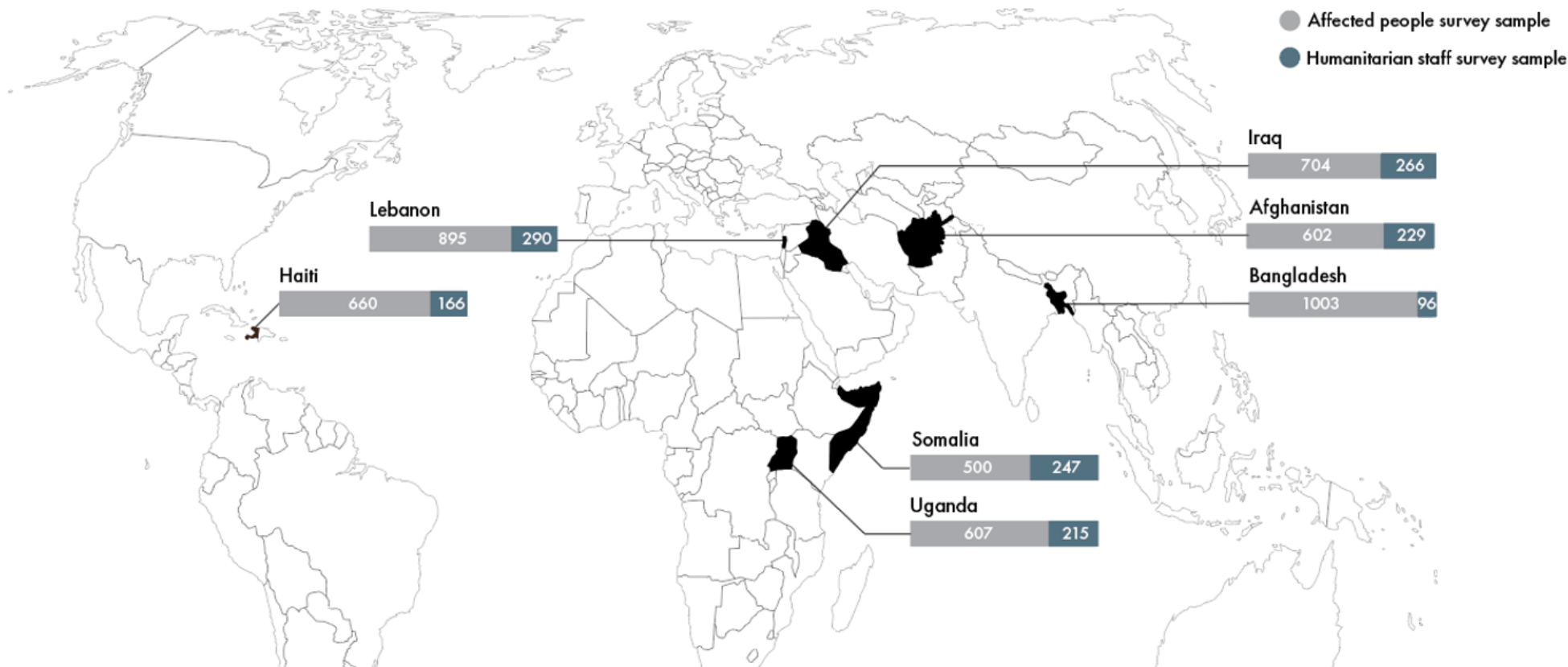
Some 59 organisations have endorsed the Grand Bargain, a range of reciprocal commitments made by humanitarian donors and operational agencies aimed at providing more and better aid to people affected by crisis.

Since the Grand Bargain was agreed in 2016, Ground Truth Solutions and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with support from the German Federal Foreign Office in 2017 and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in 2018, have been tracking progress through the first-hand experience of affected people and aid providers in seven countries.

**This report presents the main findings from surveys we conducted in 2018 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Haiti, Lebanon, Uganda and Somalia.**

As in the previous exercise in 2017, we looked at whether there has been a shift from what the Grand Bargain describes as a supply-driven model dominated by aid providers to one that is more demand-driven, with the aid system becoming more responsive to the people it sets out to serve.

We also probe affected people's views on whether they see progress in going beyond meeting basic needs to creating self-reliance and restoring opportunity, especially in the context of protracted crises and recurring vulnerabilities.



The surveys of affected people included interviews with a total of 4,971 individuals in seven countries. In six countries these were face-to-face interviews, while in Somalia, data was collected from affected people via phone. The staff surveys, which were completed by 1,509 humanitarian workers in the same seven countries, look at their assessment of the quality of humanitarian aid as well as the level of engagement with affected populations. All surveys were conducted between July and December 2018. In each country, sampling frames for affected populations were developed with the objective of having robust samples for the most affected regions, coverage of the different groups of affected people in the country, and a balanced gender ratio.

Respondents were randomly selected. Face-to-face interviews took place in their place of residence, in public places, on the street, in camps, and/or in social gatherings. In each country, care was taken to ensure samples were comparable to the first round of surveys in 2017. Where conditions on the ground had changed, sampling was adjusted accordingly – for example, to reflect a shift from displacement to return in many parts of Iraq. **See the [country reports](#) for more information on sampling.**

# Summary

1. Response patterns in the survey of affected people are largely the same as in the previous round in 2017.
2. People feel safe and respected, but see aid as inadequate to meet their most important needs, let alone end those needs.
3. There is some progress on the Participation Revolution, with an increase in scores since 2017.
4. Staff are more positive than affected people on most accounts, but sceptical about long-term solutions and progress on localisation.

# Country samples

In Afghanistan, the same geographical regions were covered as in 2017: Central, East, North, Northeast, South, Southwest and West. Due to access restrictions, it was not possible to survey the province of Paktika.

In Bangladesh, all interviews were conducted with Rohingya refugees in camps in Cox's Bazaar.

In Haiti, the sample covered the departments most affected by Hurricane Matthew: Sud, Grand'Anse and Nord-Ouest.

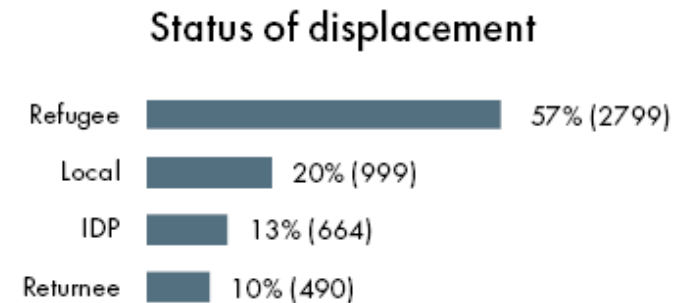
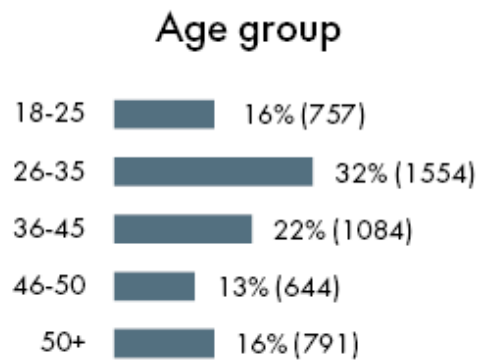
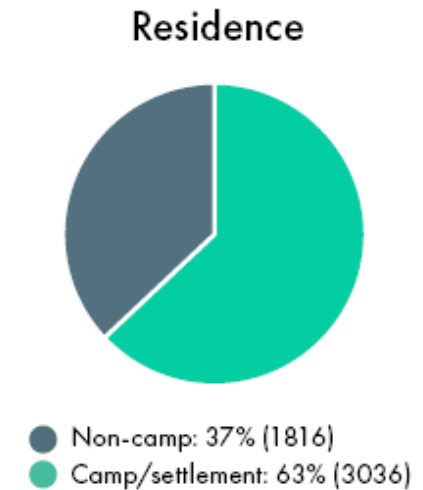
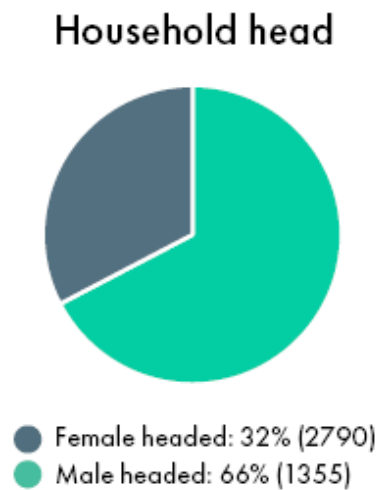
In Iraq, the sample included the Anbar, Erbil, and Ninewa governorates, which reflects a consolidation from the 2017 sampling strategy in line with a shift in the distribution of affected people on the ground.

In Lebanon, as in 2017, all eight governorates were covered.

In Uganda, interviews took place in Yumbe (Bidi Bidi camp), Arua (Rhino camp) and Kiryandongo (Kiryandongo refugee settlement).

In Somalia, the same geographical regions as in 2017 were selected for the 2018 survey: Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sool, Sanaag, Bari, Nugaal, Mudug, Gedo, Lower Juba, Galgaduud, Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle, Bakool, Bay, Lower Shabelle and Banadir. Due to the presence of Al Shabaab, Middle Juba in the South Central area of Somalia was not included.

# Overview of demographics: affected people (n=4,971)



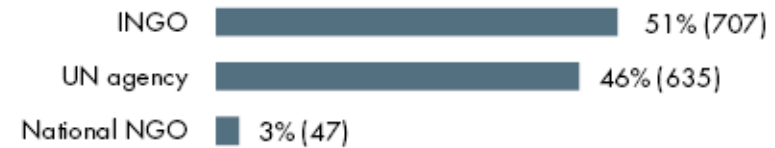
# Overview of demographics: humanitarian staff (n=1,509)

Staff role

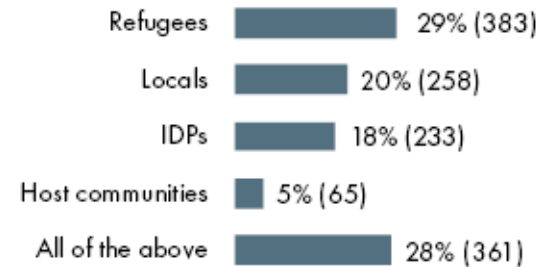


● HQ staff: 29% (362)  
● Field staff: 71% (884)

Type of organisation



Target groups served





# Thematic scope – survey of affected people

The surveys were designed to capture the spirit of the Grand Bargain through the perceptions of affected people. The questions are based on those that Ground Truth Solutions has tested in over 20,000 interviews worldwide and are designed to explore how people view the quality of aid, its outcomes, and the relationship to aid providers.

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Respect	Do aid providers treat you with respect?
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Safety	Do you feel safe in your place of residence?
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Relevance of aid	Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs?
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Fairness	Does aid go to those who need it most?
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Life prospects	Overall, is life improving in your country/community?
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Agency	Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?
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Participation	Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid?
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Information	Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you?
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# Thematic scope – survey of humanitarian staff

Questions to humanitarian staff mirror some of the same topics covered in surveys of affected people, including the fairness and relevance of aid. But the staff surveys also include more specific Grand Bargain commitments that are relevant to humanitarian agencies, such as the harmonisation of reporting requirements and the humanitarian/development nexus.

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Relevance of aid	Does the aid provided cover the most important needs of affected people?
Reporting time	Do you feel the amount of time you spend on reporting is appropriate?
Harmonised reporting	Do you feel reporting requirements from different donors are sufficiently harmonised?
Localisation	Do local and national aid providers receive sufficient support in this country?
Cash-based reporting	Has your org. increased or decreased the share of cash-based programming the past year?
The nexus	Do humanitarian and development actors work together effectively?
Participation	Does your organisation take opinions of affected people into account during design and implementation of programmes?

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The surveys consisted of closed-ended questions on a scale from 1 (most negative) to 5 (most positive), and open-ended follow-up questions. For closed questions, bar charts show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option, with colours ranging from dark red for negative answers to dark green for positive ones. The graphs in this note also show mean values for each question.

1 Not at all   2 Not very much   3 Somewhat   4 Mostly yes   5 Yes completely



# Key findings

# Affected people surveys

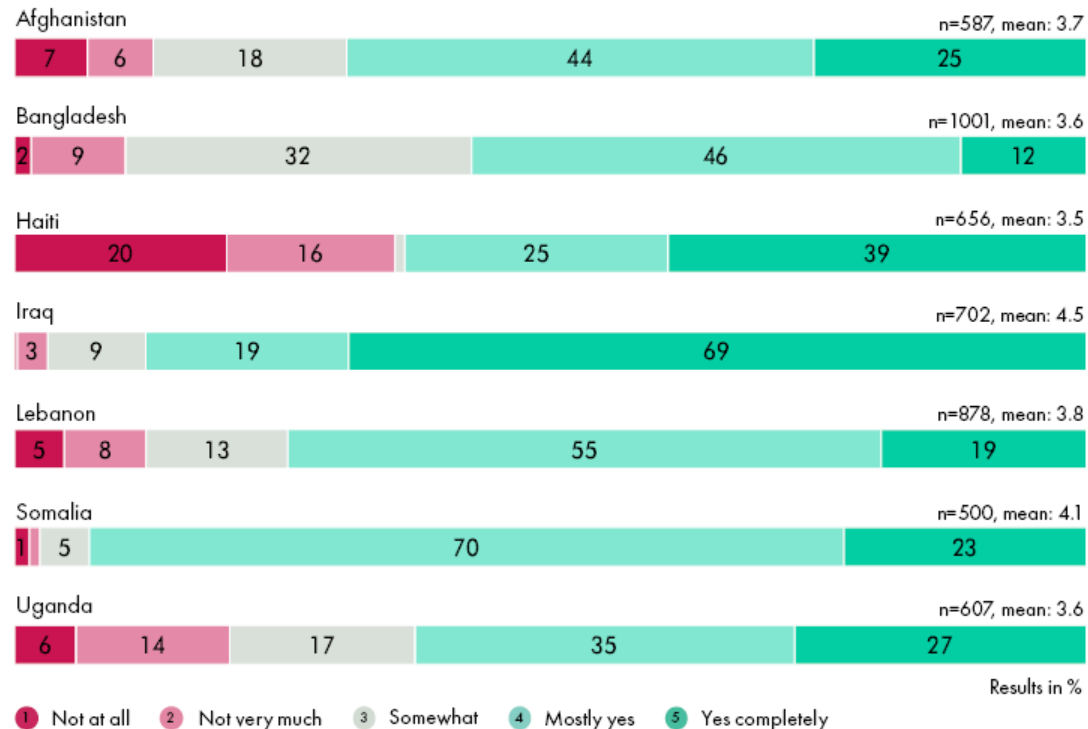
For five of the six countries that were included in the first round of surveys in 2017, the findings indicated that most people who received humanitarian assistance felt treated with respect. They also felt largely safe in their places of residence.

Asked the same questions in the most recent round of surveys, response patterns in six of seven countries reveal a remarkably similar picture. Haiti is an exception to this and represents the outlier with strong differences between rounds (see [page 25](#)).



# People feel safe

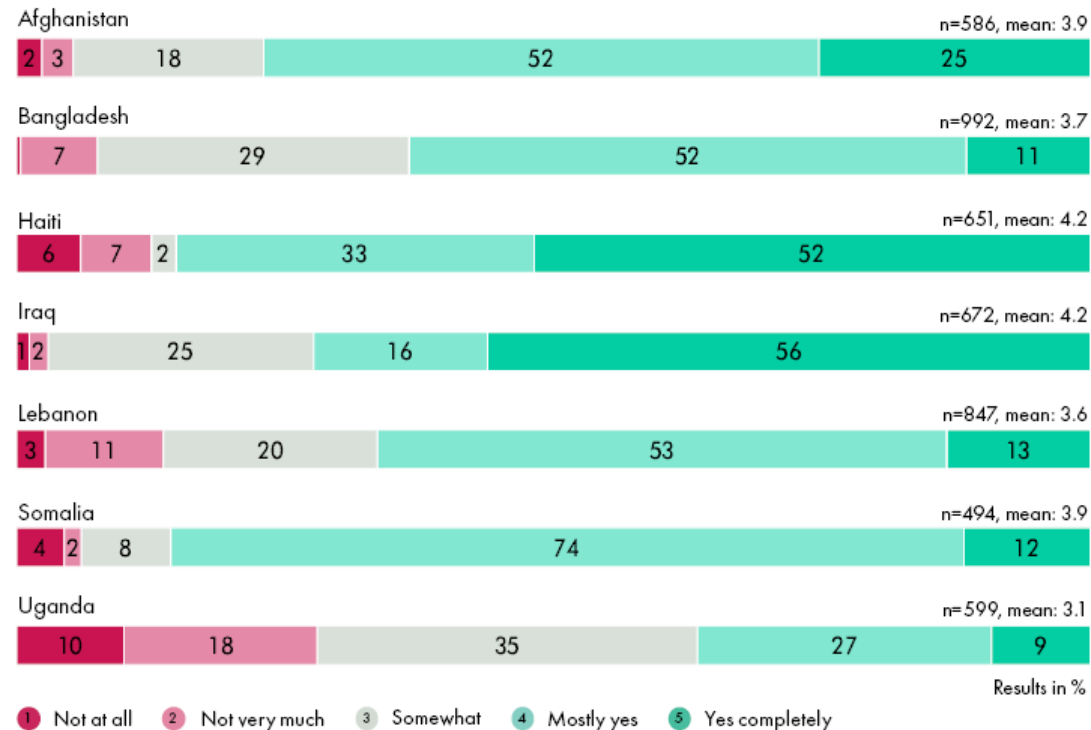
Affected people survey: Do you feel safe in your place of residence?



Across countries, people on average (mean = 3.8 out of 5) say they feel mostly safe. It should be noted that our sampling was designed to cover locations where aid is being provided, mostly in camps or settlements. This presence of humanitarian actors can provide a sense of safety, even where the actual services or goods provided are not seen as crucial.

# People feel treated with respect

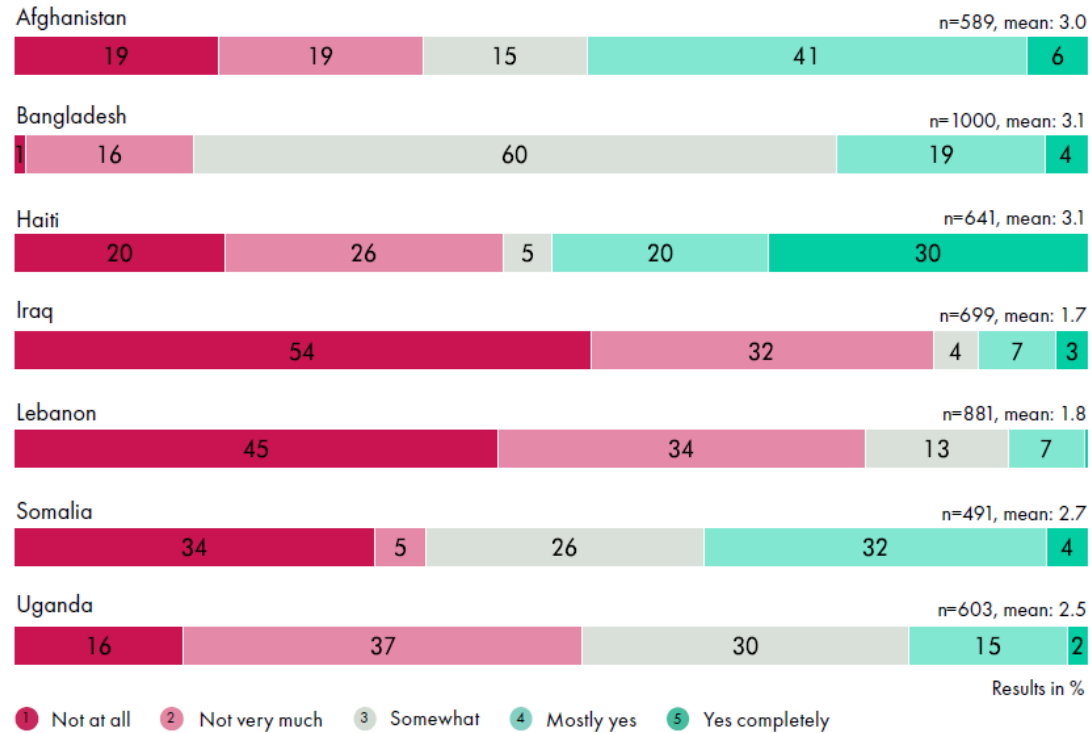
Affected people survey: Do aid providers treat you with respect?



People feel treated with respect by aid providers, with an overall mean score of 3.8 and they mostly trust them to have their best interests at heart. This positive score should not be taken for granted, especially where goods and services provided fall way short of what people need.

# Aid does not meet priority needs

Affected people survey: Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs?



In previous surveys, respondents criticised the quality and relevance of aid and did not feel that it would help them to become self-reliant in the future. The same trend is visible again in the most recent surveys: the support humanitarian staff provide is rarely seen as meeting affected people’s most pressing needs, let alone ending those needs in the longer term as the Grand Bargain sets out to achieve.



# The top unmet needs of affected people



Cash



Food



Health services

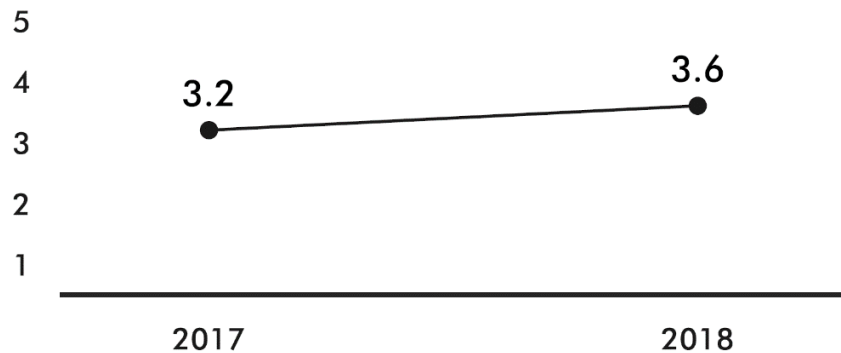
In most countries, unmet needs have shifted notably between the first and second rounds of surveys, suggesting that what people consider to be unmet is context-dependent and pointing to the need for regular monitoring.

Younger people in our sample tend to be more likely than older people to feel that their needs are met. But across all seven countries, there are no reliable differences in unmet needs between genders, as a result of disabilities, or linked to displacement status.

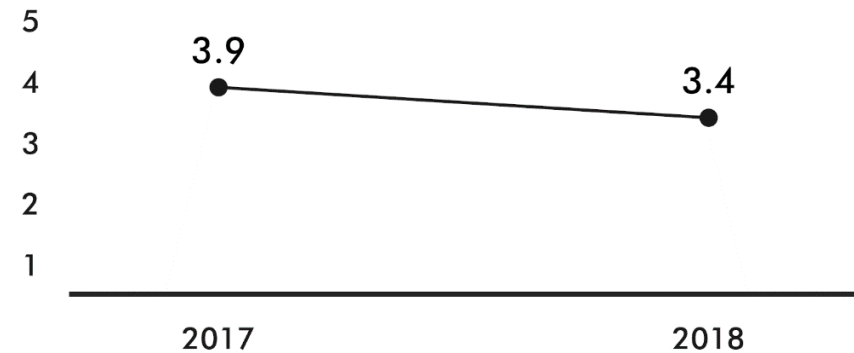


# Affected people are largely satisfied with cash assistance, while staff are slightly less enthusiastic about it

Affected people survey:  
How satisfied are you with the cash support that you receive?



Staff survey:  
Does cash assistance lead to better outcomes than other types of aid?

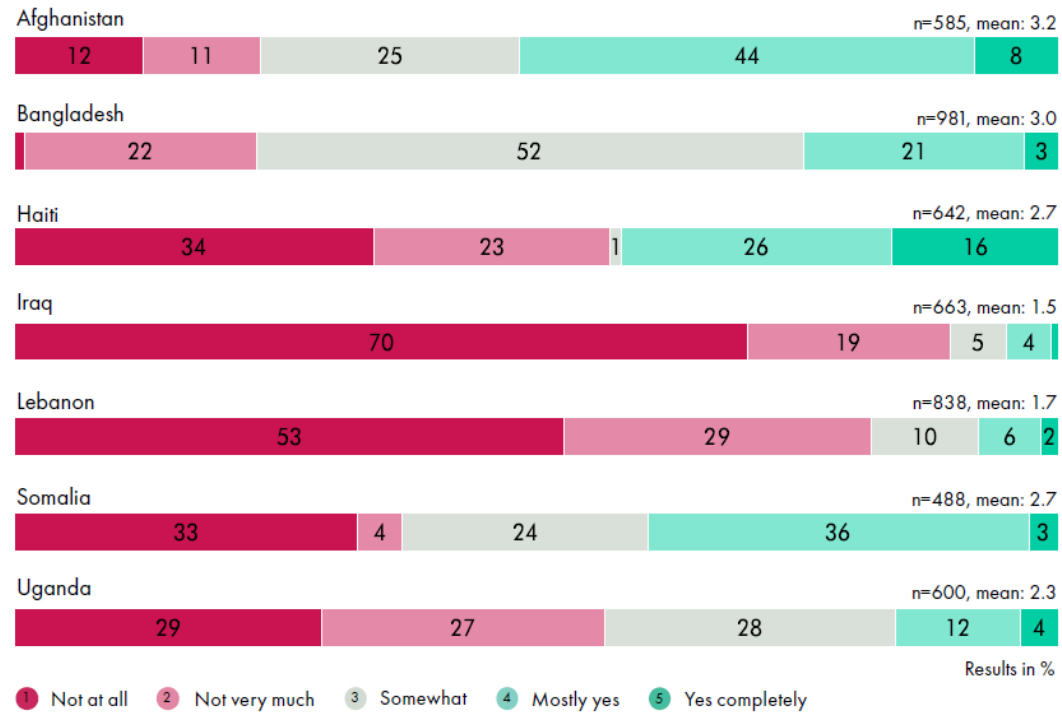


1 = not at all 2 = not very much 3 = somewhat 4 = mostly yes 5 = yes completely

Those who receive cash assistance say they are mostly satisfied with it – even more so than in previous surveys. Where this is not the case, transfer amounts are considered too low. Despite high overall satisfaction, we know from other research (see [cashjourneys.net](http://cashjourneys.net)) that the basic features of cash programmes remain a mystery to cash recipients and non-recipients alike. Surveys in Kenya (n=264) and Iraq (n=333) show, for example, that only some 10% of people know how humanitarian agencies decide who receives cash and who does not. Similar confusion is apparent regarding the setting of transfer values, the duration of and graduation from cash-based programmes. While staff surveyed still find cash to be more effective than other kinds of aid, their enthusiasm has dropped. In the 2017 survey, three-quarters (76%) said cash mostly or always contributes to better outcomes than other types of aid. In the recent survey round, just over half (52%) felt this way.

# Self-reliance remains elusive

Affected people survey: Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant/  
live without aid in the future?



Most people find aid ‘not at all’ or ‘not very’ empowering, with an overall mean score of 2.4. While exact needs are context-specific, this question repeatedly produces some of the most negative responses in our surveys. The latest survey data underlines that what people want is the kind of support that will help them to live without aid in the future. All the countries covered are long-term recipients of humanitarian aid, which is typical of the sector today. Financial data from Development Initiatives shows that almost three quarters of all humanitarian assistance is provided in such contexts, where aid efforts have been ongoing for eight years or longer.

Most common themes in response to the question:

## What would you need to live without aid in the future?

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Afghanistan	Income-generating activities, shelter, better-quality aid
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Haiti	Income-generating activities, shelter, better-quality aid
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Iraq	Jobs, cash assistance, shelter support
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Lebanon	Jobs, returning home, increased assistance
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Somalia	Income-generating activities, continued aid, financial support
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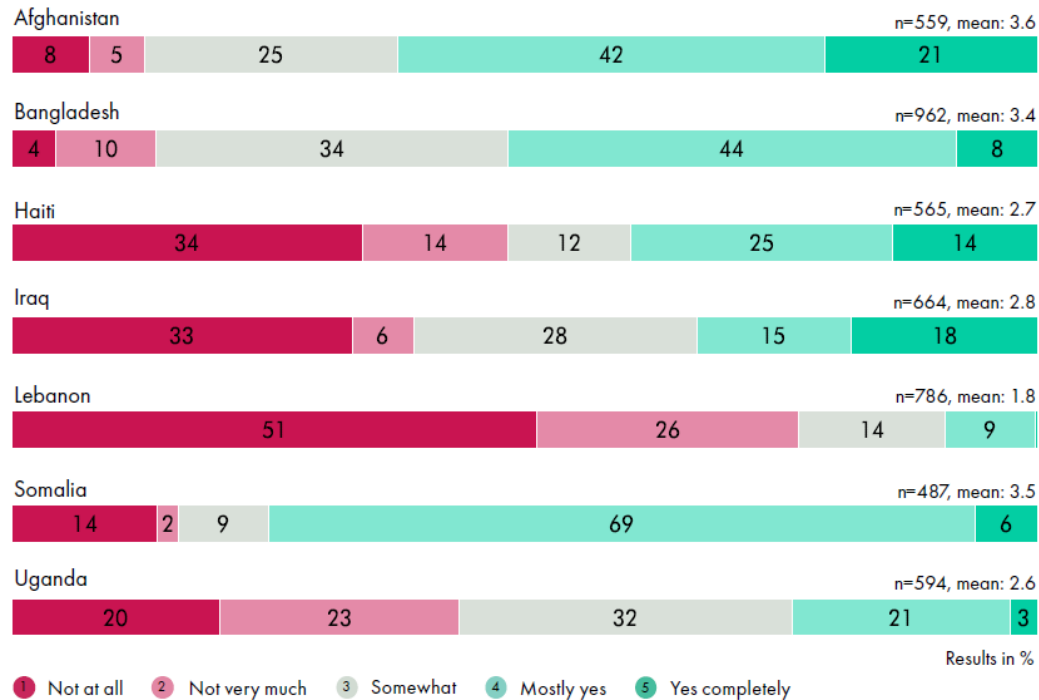
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Uganda	Agricultural activities, cash, support to start businesses
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# Progress on participation, but from low base

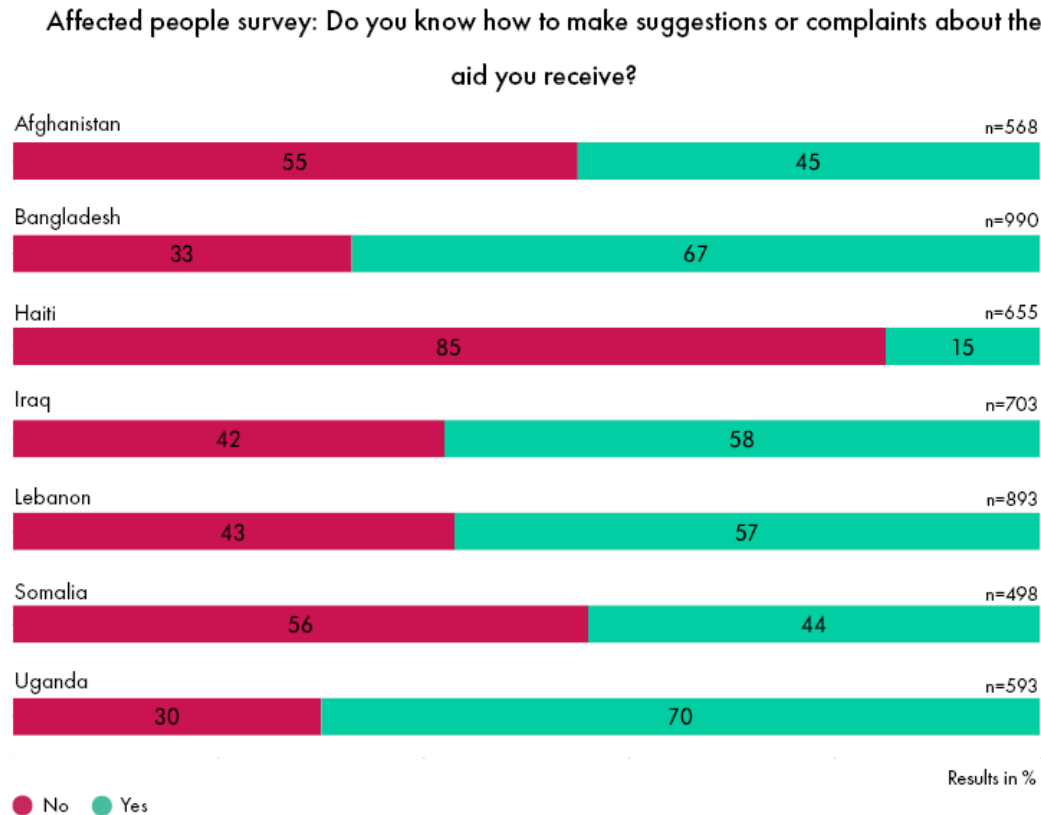
Affected people survey: Do you feel aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid?



Compared to previous surveys, more people (41%) say that humanitarian agencies are taking their opinion into account. While not exactly proof positive of the ‘participation revolution’ that is a goal of the Grand Bargain, this improvement signals progress in an area where agencies have struggled in the past. In the first round of Grand Bargain surveys, Somalia was the only country where people, on average, felt positively about participation (i.e. showing a mean of 3.0 or above). After the second round of data collection, scores in Somalia, Afghanistan and Bangladesh were

positive, with clear improvements in Haiti, Uganda, and Iraq. Our data still shows substantial room for improvement, especially but not only in Lebanon. More detailed analysis does not reveal clear participation champions among sectors. In other words, there are no consistent links between the type of aid people say they receive and their sense of participation. Nor does the age and gender of respondents have much influence on whether they feel their views are considered by humanitarian organisations.

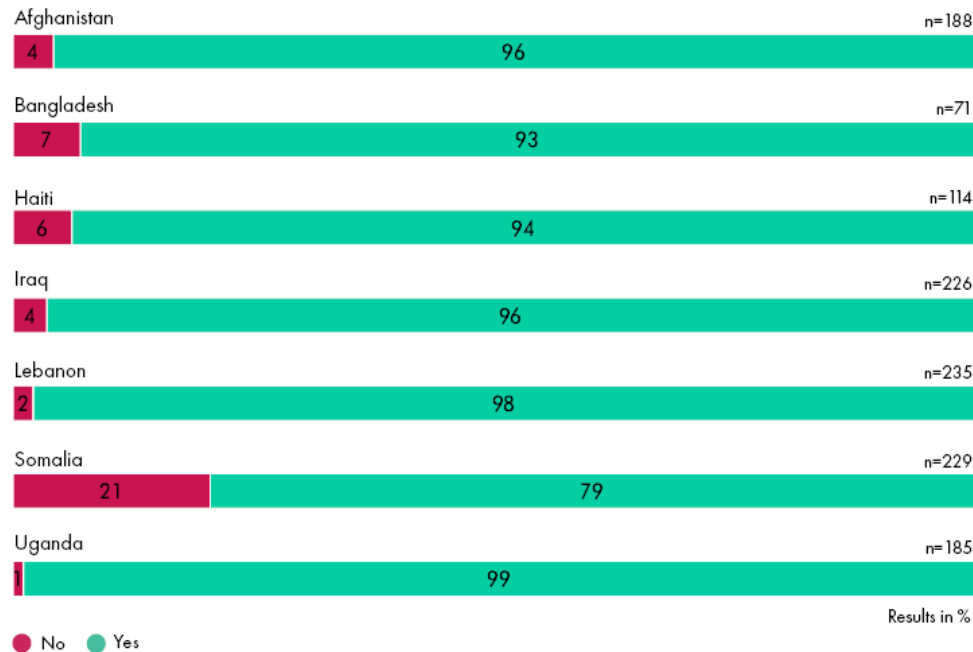
# Mixed awareness of feedback mechanisms



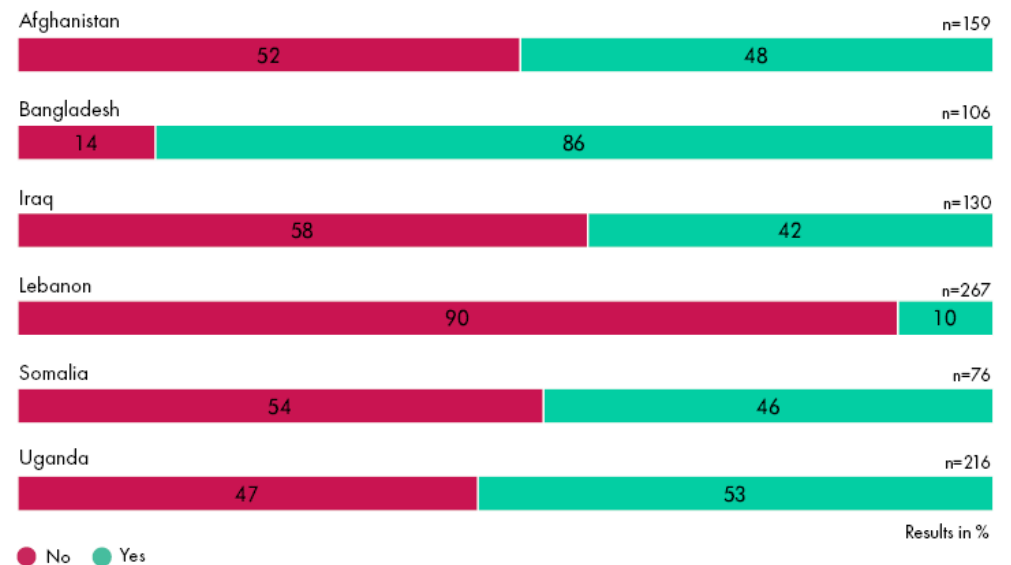
One element of participation that has seen a lot of investment from humanitarian agencies is the setting up of feedback mechanisms. Amongst affected people, typically just over half know how to make suggestions or complaints to agencies. When asked for their preferred channels for doing so, most prefer face-to-face communication, whereas much of the effort by aid agencies seems to go into setting up helplines.

# Staff overrate the effectiveness of existing complaint mechanisms

Staff survey: Do you think that if affected people make a complaint to your organisation, they will get a response?

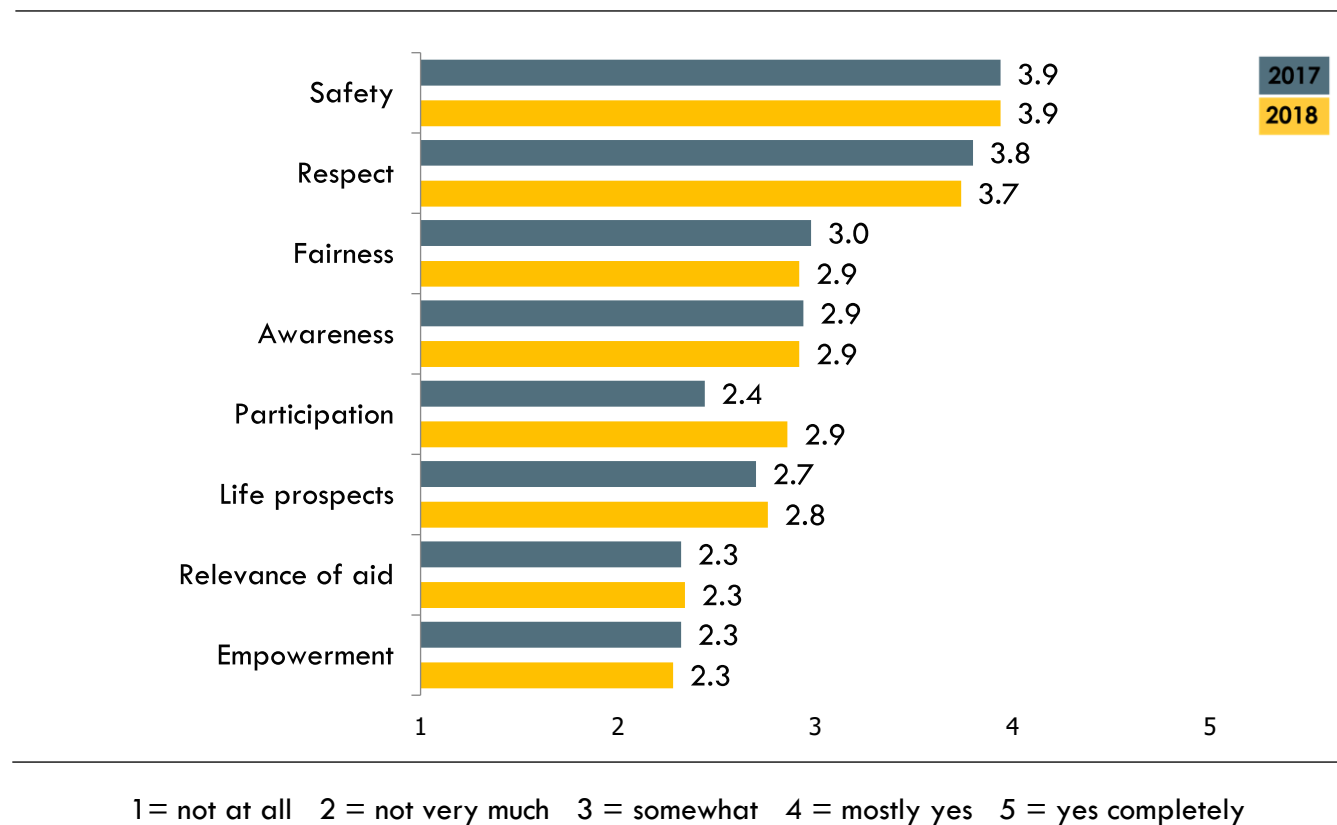


Affected people survey: Have you received a response to your suggestion or complaint?



While staff are almost certain that those making complaints or suggestions will receive a response from their organisation, affected people who have filed complaints or made suggestions often do not get an answer.

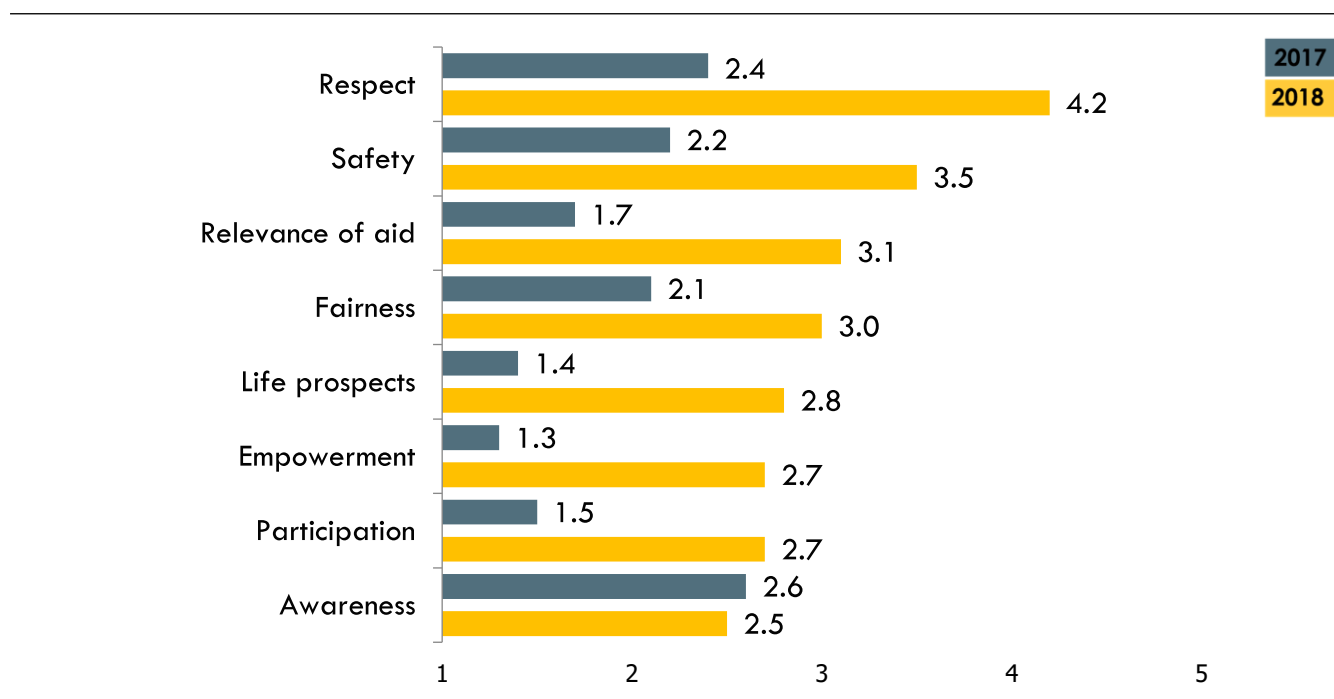
# Overall, there is little change in affected people's views



To sum up, mean scores for the main questions show that the picture remains largely unchanged from 2017 from the point of view of people affected by crisis. In 2018, the ranking of performance-related questions is still largely the same as in the previous round, with scores for respect and safety highest and self-reliance and relevance lowest in most countries. This overview excludes the outlier Haiti, where we saw exceptionally strong changes between rounds.



# Clear improvements in Haiti, from low baseline



1 = not at all 2 = not very much 3 = somewhat 4 = mostly yes 5 = yes completely

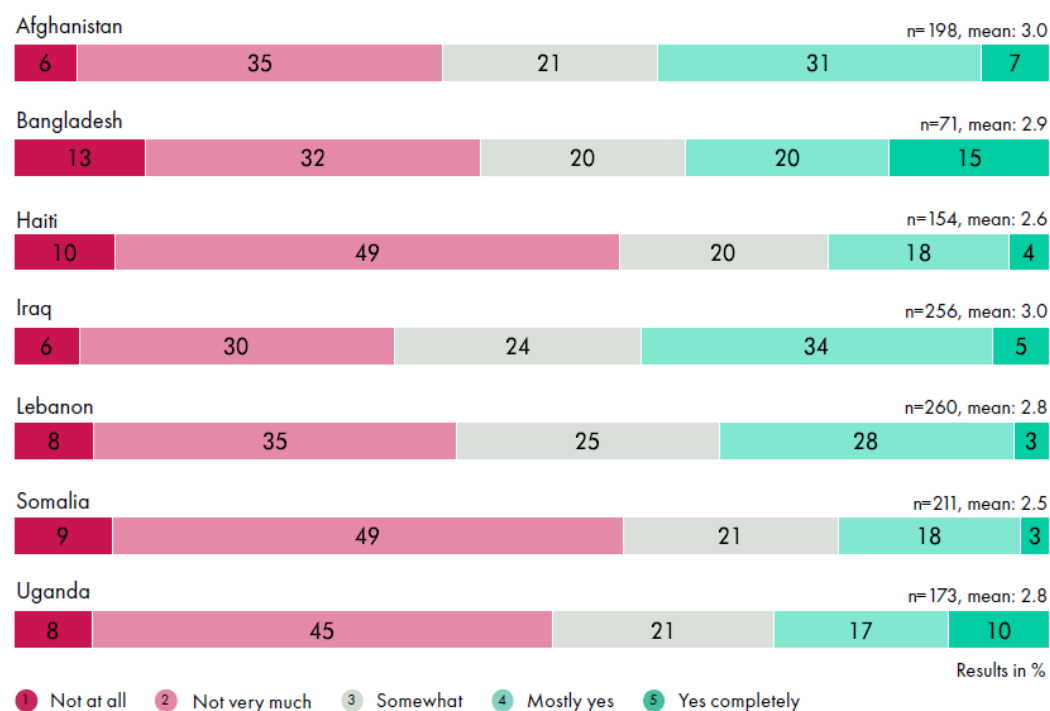
While people in Haiti gave by far the lowest scores on most aspects of humanitarian performance in the 2017 survey, most recent data shows marked improvements. The focus of our surveys has been on parts of the country most affected by Hurricane Matthew, which hit with devastating force in September 2017. Clearly, things have progressed since the early days of the response. The cluster system is now in place and aid programmes have become more structured and targeted. In previous surveys, most respondents did not feel treated with respect by aid providers or safe where they were living. This year, the majority feel treated with respect and safe in their place of residence.

These positive developments should not obscure many differences of view: people in the Nord-Ouest department express considerably more negative views than in Sud and Grand'Anse, as do those living in rural areas compared to those in towns. Staff interviewed also point to the need for more progress on accountability to affected people, fostering resilience and preparedness for natural disasters, and support for local organisations.

For more information, see the [Haiti country report](#).

# Staff see lack of progress on nexus ...

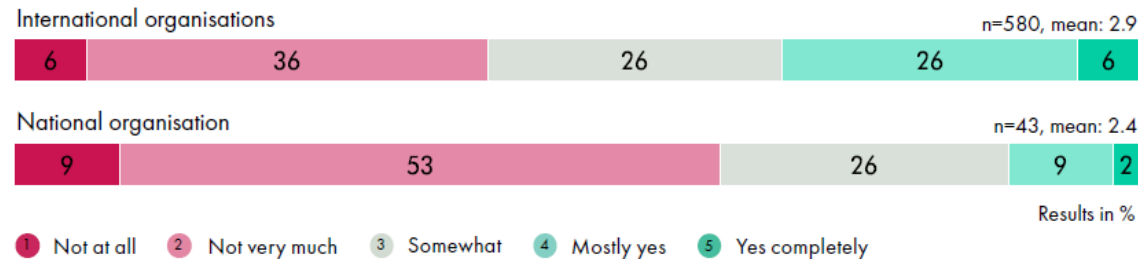
Staff survey: Is there an adequate balance between funding for emergency needs and funding for durable solutions?



While staff are quite positive about the quality of aid in their respective countries of operation, they are concerned about the humanitarian-development nexus and the imbalance between funding for emergency needs and durable (i.e. long-term) solutions. Despite their general optimism about other elements of performance, almost half of staff (47%) don't find the current balance satisfactory.

# ... and on localisation

Staff survey: Do local and national aid providers receive sufficient support?

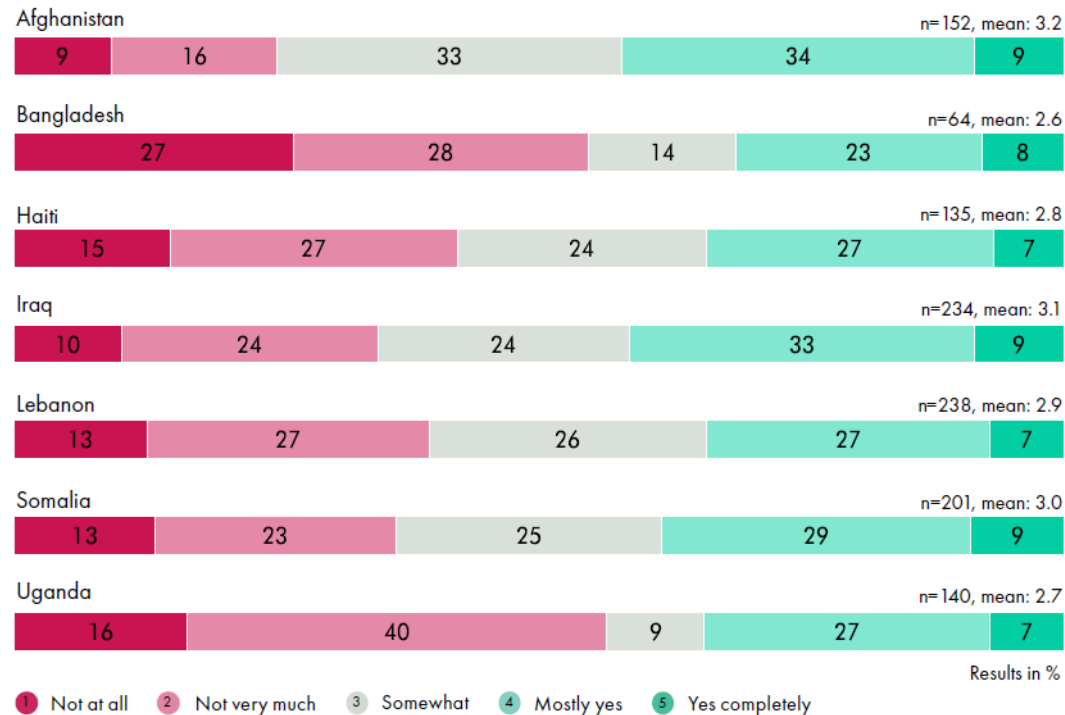


Consistently across countries, more than two-thirds of respondents from humanitarian organisations feel that a combination of international and local organisations is best placed to provide aid to people in need. At the same time, respondents are split as to whether the capacity of local organisations is sufficient to provide quality aid, and whether local organisations receive enough support from their international counterparts.

Local organisations and international partners see things differently, with national organisations rating their own capacity higher and the support they receive lower than their international counterparts – and slightly lower than they did last year.

# Slow progress on harmonised reporting

Staff survey: Do you feel reporting requirements from different donors are sufficiently harmonised?



Finally, humanitarian staff are relatively critical of progress on harmonised reporting. This aspect is rated most negatively of all the questions posed to staff.

What next?

# The challenge

With the progress on Grand Bargain commitments slow to materialise and the perspective from the ground largely unchanged, how can we make sure that feedback solicited from affected populations is integrated in the design, delivery and review of programmes?



# Recommendations

As signatories seek to define more clearly what success of the Grand Bargain will look like, they should ensure that indicators chosen link directly to the experience of affected people. Aid will become more relevant when signatories to the Grand Bargain pair commitments at the global level with tracking impact on the ground through the views of affected people. Aid agencies should develop indicators based on people's perceptions that are aligned to their project and programme goals rather than just focusing on traditional output and outcome indicators. Such perceptual indicators can serve as an additional metric in advancing the strategic objectives of any response. The Humanitarian Country Team in Chad demonstrates how this can be done, with a list of priority indicators included in the 2019 [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (p.17).



Shift from focus on policy discussions at global level to tracking impact of Grand Bargain commitments on the ground.



Test indicators developed by Grand Bargain workstreams to measure progress ...

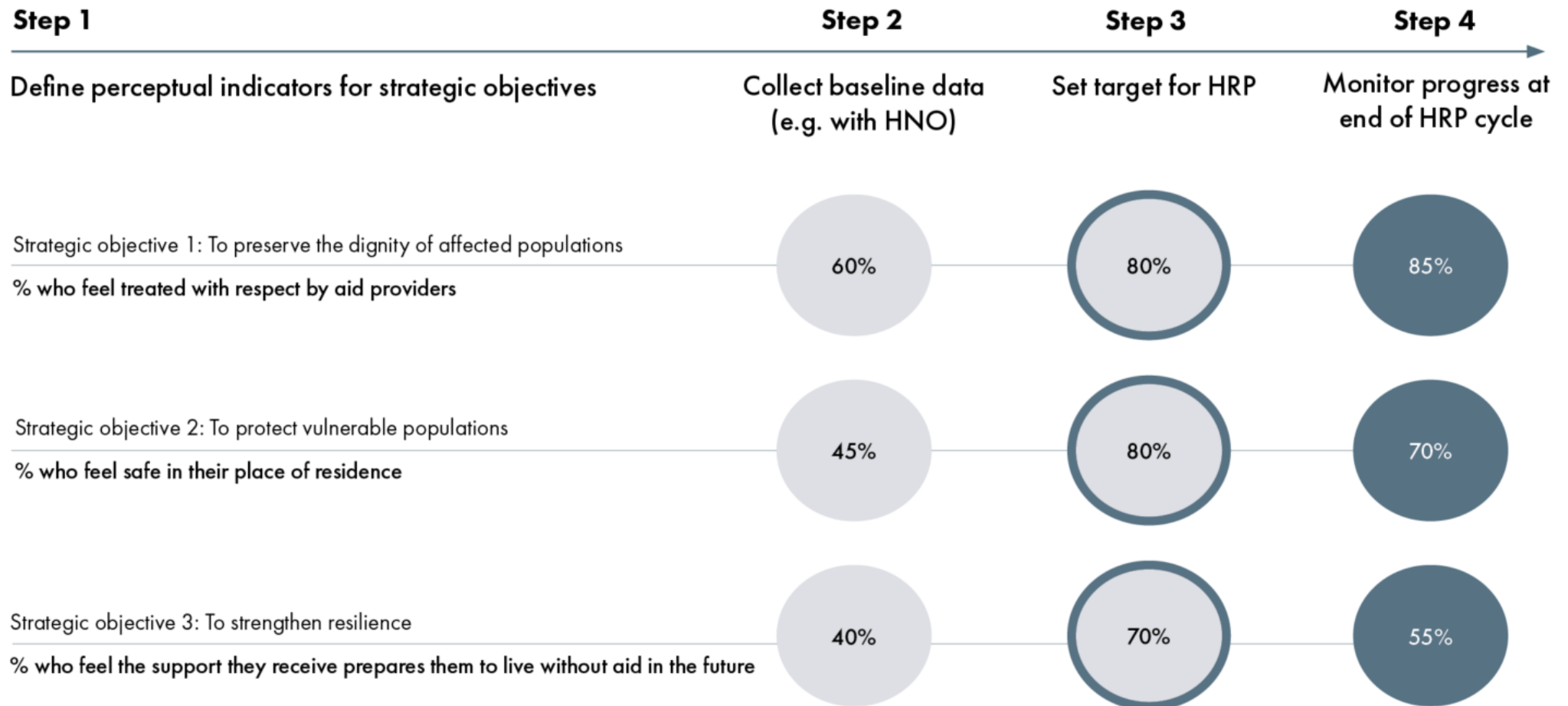
... but pair them with indicators derived from affected people's perceptions of progress from their on-the-ground experience.



Base tracking of performance on people's views of success in achieving strategic goals of Humanitarian Response Plans in countries.

# Including perceptual indicators in response plans

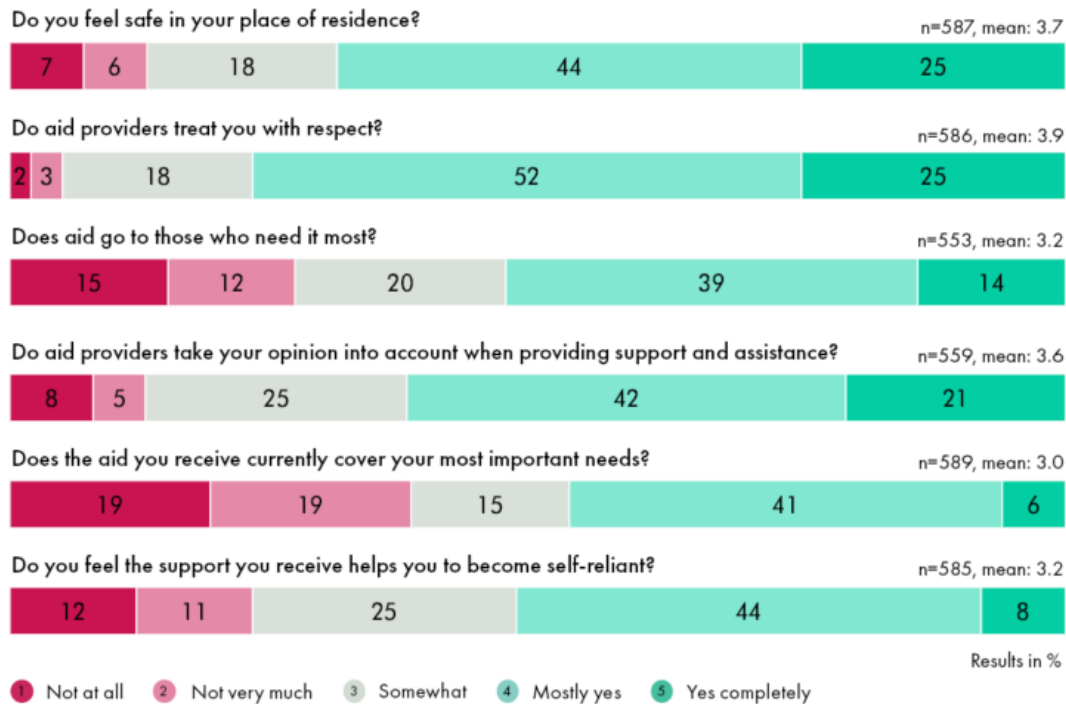
Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) typically define a small number of strategic objectives, such as the ones listed below. To monitor such objectives, perception indicators should be used alongside other types of measures. This allows setting specific and measurable targets which can be tracked with regular data collection by clusters, individual agencies or third parties. The exact indicators should be developed and tested for each specific context. This approach allows managing performance while enhancing accountability to affected populations in a practical way.





# Country summaries

# Afghanistan



- Similar response pattern as in 2017, with slight improvements.
- People in Kabul feel more positive, particularly in comparison to respondents in Balkh, Helmand and Herat, which were heavily affected by drought in 2018.
- More respondents say that aid providers are taking their opinion into account, and they feel more informed about aid available compared to the previous survey in 2017.
- Most respondents feel safe and treated with respect by aid providers.
- Affected people feel slightly more optimistic than before about being able to live without aid in the future, and prospects of life in Afghanistan more broadly.
- Views on relevance of aid are still mixed – just under 40% say aid does not meet their most important needs.
- Staff find support for national and local organisations less sufficient than before and collaboration between humanitarian and development actors less effective.

# Bangladesh



Do you feel safe in your place of residence? n=1001, mean: 3.6



Do aid providers treat you with respect? n=992, mean: 3.7



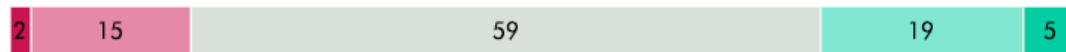
Does aid go to those who need it most? n=931, mean: 3.7



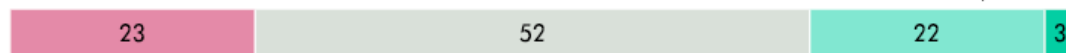
Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing support and assistance? n=962, mean: 3.4



Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs? n=1000, mean: 3.1



Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant? n=981, mean: 3.0



Results in %

1 Not at all   2 Not very much   3 Somewhat   4 Mostly yes   5 Yes completely

- Most Rohingya respondents feel informed about the kind of aid available to them, but only 24% say their most relevant needs are met. 43% report selling the aid items they receive in exchange for cash.
- Less than a quarter of Rohingyas feel the support they receive will help them become self-reliant.
- Just over half (57%) of Rohingya respondents feel safe in their place of residence.
- Half are not convinced that aid providers sufficiently include their opinions when making decisions, and one-third don't know how to complain.
- Humanitarian staff are generally more positive across questions, but feel reporting requirements from different donors are insufficiently harmonised.

# Iraq



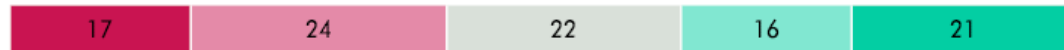
Do you feel safe in your place of residence? n=702, mean: 4.5



Do aid providers treat you with respect? n=672, mean: 4.2



Does aid go to those who need it most? n=695, mean: 3.0



Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid? n=664, mean: 2.8



Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs? n=699, mean: 1.7



Do you feel the support you receive enables you to live without humanitarian aid in the future? n=663, mean: 1.5



Results in %

1 Not at all 2 Not very much 3 Somewhat 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

- Despite a slight upwards trend compared to the 2017 survey, response patterns observed in the 2018 survey are very similar.
- Over 70% of affected people do not feel informed about available aid, a slight decrease since the last survey in 2017. Over a third (37%) of respondents say aid is not reaching those most in need.
- Respondents in Iraq feel more aware of complaints mechanisms and their sense of participation in aid provision has improved compared to the previous year. This is mirrored by humanitarian staff, who also report greater consideration of affected people's opinions.
- Affected people are less convinced the aid they receive covers their basic needs than they were in 2017. Most (90%) expect to remain dependent on aid, only 19% see life improving.
- Humanitarian staff see a need for more funding for durable solutions.

# Lebanon



Do you feel safe in your place of residence? n=878, mean: 3.8



Do aid providers treat you with respect? n=847, mean: 3.6



Does aid go to those who need it most? n=805, mean: 2.0



Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid? n=786, mean: 1.8



Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs? n=881, mean: 1.8



Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant? n=838, mean: 1.7



Results in %

1 Not at all   2 Not very much   3 Somewhat   4 Mostly yes   5 Yes completely

- Responses to our survey in 2018 are slightly more negative compared to the previous one (2017).
- Over half of respondents (52%) feel uninformed about aid available, with lower ratings compared to 2017.
- Most respondents (79%) say aid does not adequately cover their priority needs.
- Affected people don't feel that aid providers take their opinions into account.
- Participants tend to feel safe where they live, but relations with host communities have deteriorated.
- Aid is not seen as empowering and very few say their life is improving.
- Humanitarian staff call for more durable solutions, which echoes affected people's call for employment opportunities. On other topics, the gap is widening between views of affected people and staff.

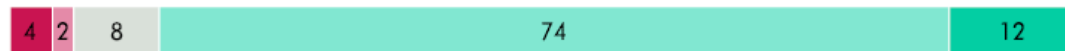
# Somalia



Do you feel safe in your place of residence? n=500, mean: 4.1



Do aid providers treat you with respect? n=494, mean: 3.9



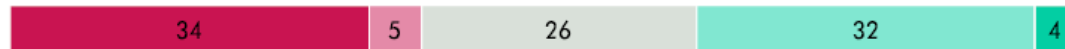
Does aid go to those who need it most? n=496, mean: 3.5



Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing support and aid? n=487, mean: 3.5



Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs? n=491, mean: 2.7



Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant? n=488, mean: 2.7

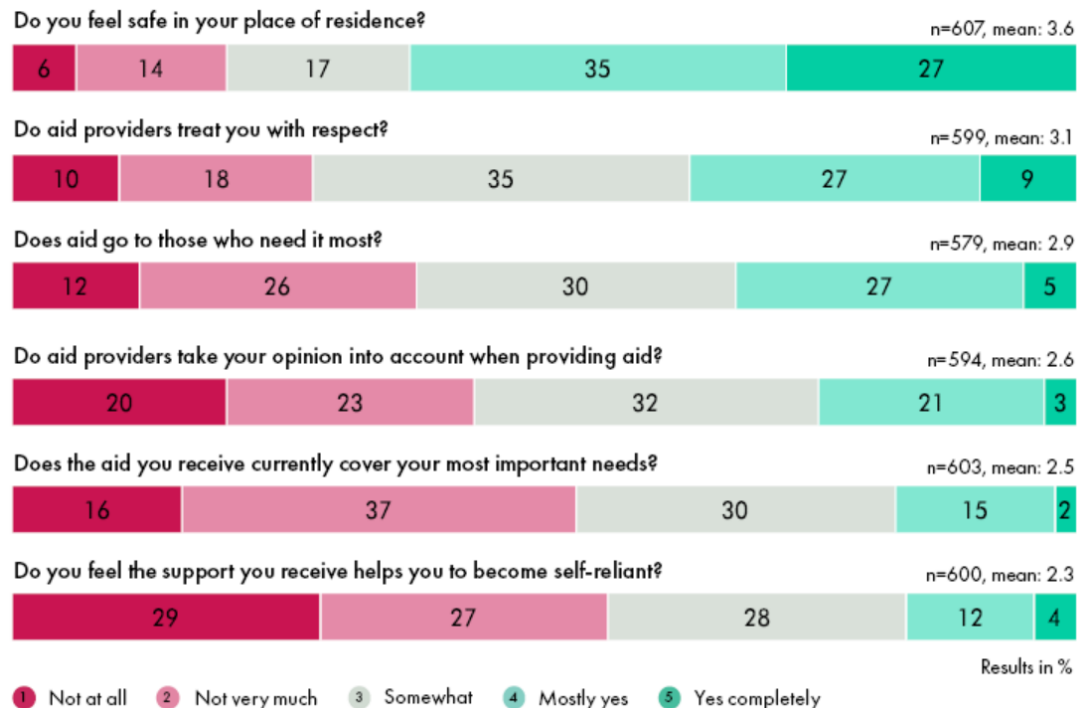


Results in %

1 Not at all   2 Not very much   3 Somewhat   4 Mostly yes   5 Yes completely

- Affected people are a little less positive than they were at the time of the last survey in 2017.
- They feel well informed about the different types of aid available, but the majority (56%) do not know how to lodge a complaint or make a suggestion.
- A larger share of respondents say the support received covers their most important needs, but 39% disagree.
- Fewer affected people see themselves on a path to self-reliance, compared to the previous round.
- Affected people generally consider that aid is provided fairly.
- Three-quarters of affected people surveyed feel their views are taken into account. Staff feel increasingly optimistic about participation as well.
- Staff are skeptical of progress concerning localisation (i.e. support to national aid actors).

# Uganda



- Respondents seem slightly more positive compared to the 2017 survey on questions related to resilience and prospects, but a little more negative on other topics.
- Despite improvement since 2017, most refugees (53%) say aid does not cover their most important needs.
- Refugees have mixed views about fairness of aid provision, with the largest cohort (38%) saying aid does not go to those who need it most.
- The majority (56%) of refugees surveyed do not see themselves as becoming more self-reliant. Less than a third feel that their lives are improving.
- Respondents seem better informed about available services than in 2017, with almost half (46%) saying they have the information they need. 70% say they know how to make a complaint.
- Staff see an imbalance in funding between emergency relief and durable solutions. Some 70% are in favour of investing more in durable solutions.

Visit [groundtruthsolutions.org/grandbargain](https://groundtruthsolutions.org/grandbargain) to see all findings from this project.



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