

Dashboard for Aid Transparency and Accountability (DATA)

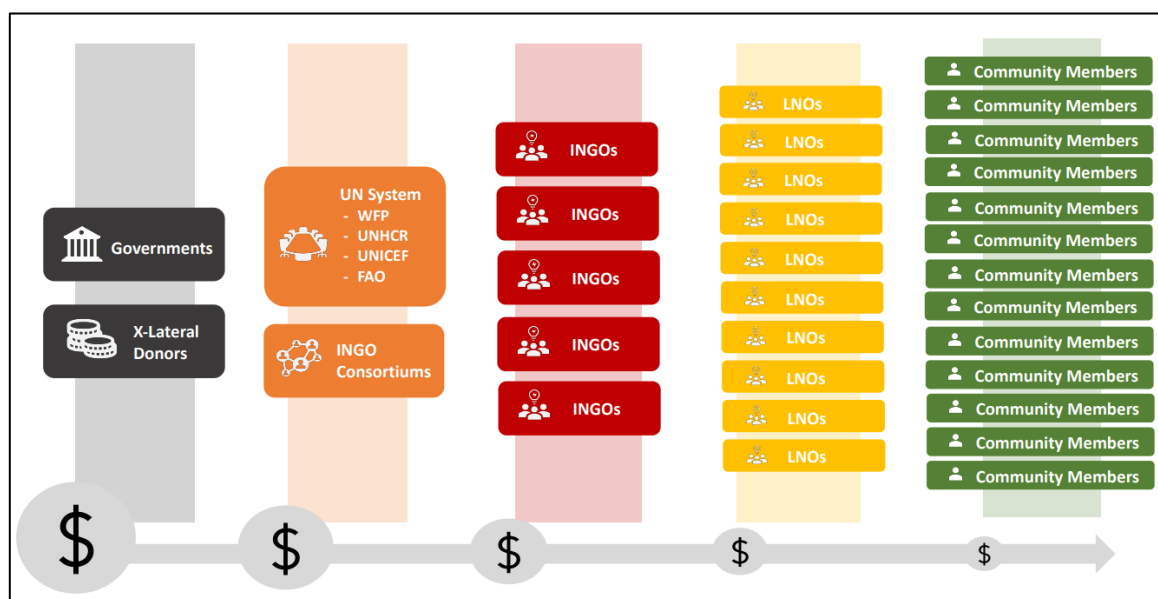
1. What is DATA?

DATA, short for "[Dashboard for Aid Transparency and Accountability](#)" is a user-friendly platform designed for NGOs in India, and donors from worldwide contributing funds in India. Its primary aim is to enhance the financial transparency of humanitarian funding in India and to track the funds reaching the grassroots organisations. It offers NGOs an opportunity to proactively demonstrate their accountability to the populations they serve. To promote transparency in the aid sector, DATA offers end-to-end information on humanitarian funding, encouraging greater participation, instilling donor confidence on recipient organisations, bringing visibility to active organisations, and enhancing coordination among donors and stakeholders.

2. Why is DATA needed?

DATA is crucial for several reasons to make sure money for humanitarian aid is used effectively and reaches the right people.

- Lack of Data on Humanitarian Funding Flows:** According to ALNAP's *State of the Humanitarian System Report 2022*¹, merely 1.2% of funding reached local and national actors directly and 0.9% indirectly to local and national actors, which is not a significant improvement since 2015 when less than 0.3% of humanitarian funding reached these actors. As of now, there is no India-level dashboard to track the flow of funds reaching local or national actors, and how these funds ultimately reach affected communities. According to the *India Philanthropy Report 2023*², while foreign funding remains stagnant, private philanthropy has grown to about 8% from FY 2017 through FY 2022. CSR funding has grown at 13%, reaching \$3.3 billion (INR 27,000 crores) in FY 2022. Retail giving has grown at 6% annually from FY 2017 to FY 2022. With the expanding middle class and the growth in the number of donors, retail giving is expected to grow at 9% annually and contribute about 29% of total private giving by 2027. Global-level reporting mechanisms like IATI and FTS capture funding flows from donors to the first level of intermediaries, but they don't track how much reaches local/national organisations and, ultimately, the affected community. DATA aims to address this gap by launching a publicly accessible dashboard showcasing the entire funding flow for humanitarian responses.



Current global funding flows, *Passing The Buck: The Economics Of Localizing International Assistance study*, The Share Trust and the Warande Advisory Centre, November 2022

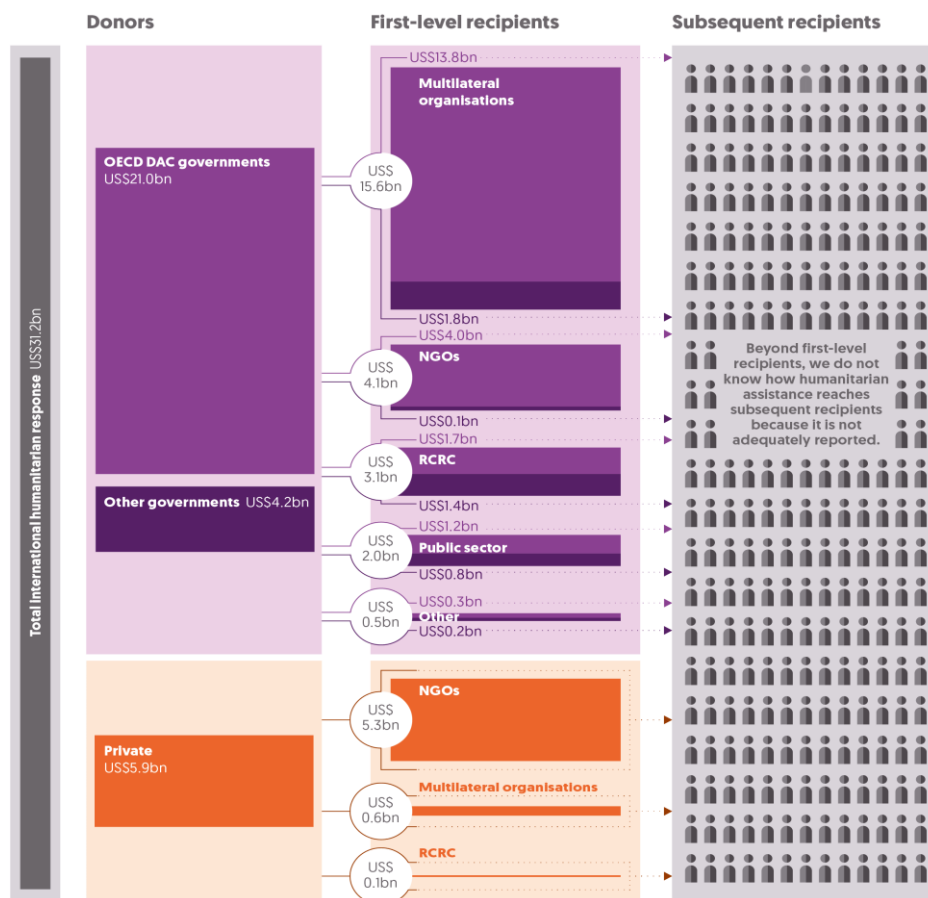
¹ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/2022-state-of-the-humanitarian-system-report-reflections-for-utilisation>

² <https://www.bain.com/insights/india-philanthropy-report-2023/>

- Addressing Trust Deficit in the Humanitarian Sector:** The India CSR Outlook Report (ICOR) 2023³ revealed that over one-third of CSR donors express concerns about the credibility of their NGO partners during board meetings. Identifying reliable organisations to support poses a significant challenge for donors, and smaller NGOs struggle to gain the visibility needed to showcase their impactful work. Consequently, local organisations receive less support and funding, resulting in fewer resources reaching the affected populations they serve. DATA serves as a transparency and self-regulation tool, fostering a culture of responsibility and integrity within the aid sector.
- Promoting Equitable Partnerships:** Currently, very few local organisations have direct access to donors, and they rarely receive adequate operation and overhead costs. This hinders their ability to invest in their growth, absorb risk, and attract top talent. Power dynamics between donors, international NGOs, and local NGOs lead to unequal partnerships, with local organisations often treated as cheap implementers of projects. This systematic issue weakens these institutions and marginalizes their role as first responders. DATA seeks to address this by providing transparency on back-donors and total project budgets, enabling local NGOs to access direct funding and advocate for their fair share of overheads and operating costs including adequate costs for social security coverage of frontline workers.

3. What was the problem with previous systems?

Previous systems were either too complex or not inclusive enough, making it hard for smaller organisations to use them. A 2016 high-level panel report “[Too important to fail – addressing the humanitarian financing gap](#)” identified that less than 0.3% of the humanitarian funding was accessed by local and national actors, who are always the first responder to disasters. To address this gap, one of the commitments made under the Grand Bargain was to pass on at least 25% of the funding to local and national actors as directly as possible. However, according to ALNAP’s [State of the Humanitarian System](#) report, merely 1.2% of funding was passed on to local and national actors in 2022.



Funding channels of international humanitarian assistance, 2018. Source: Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2020, Development Initiatives

³ <https://csrbox.org/media/India-CSR-Outlook-Report-2023-by-CSRBOX.pdf>

As of now, there are two international platforms to publish financial data, i.e., Financial Tracking Service (FTS), managed by UN OCHA and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). While FTS and IATI capture global level funding, DATA will have additional features to make it more relevant for country-level reporting and tracking, which will include:

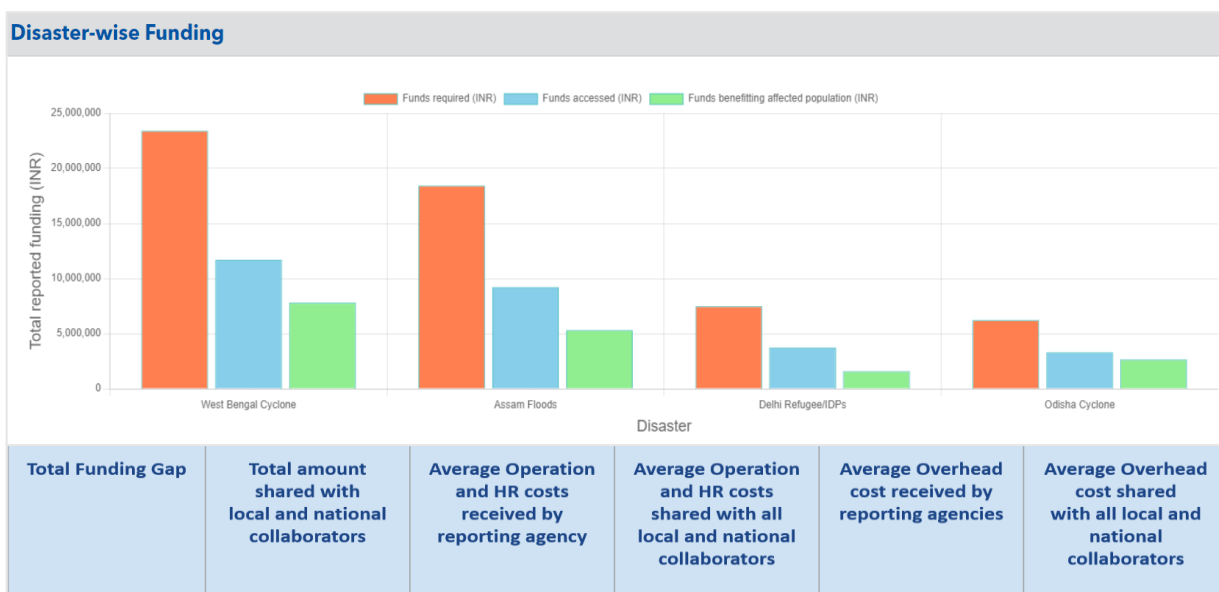
- Country-level reporting relevant for humanitarian responses in India
- Simplified reporting templates so even smaller organisations can report
- Data fields to capture humanitarian funding flowing into India from both domestic and international sources
- Data fields to capture fund utilisation pattern till it reaches the affected communities
- Data fields to capture funding passed on to local or national organisations

4. How does DATA work?

- Reporting on DATA is completely voluntary. DATA is an initiative for the Indian NGO sector, made by and regulated by NGO sector members.
- NGOs and donors need to register on the dashboard before they can share their data. The registration process is straightforward and takes about 15 minutes.
- Once the registration request is screened and approved, NGOs and donors can start publishing their financial data.
- DATA allows for precise tracking of each funding transaction layer for a specific disaster or emergency. This provides a clear view of the actual flow of funding, which is easily visible on the homepage. If needed, CSV files of the data can also be downloaded.

5. What data is available on the dashboard?

- Currently, DATA focuses exclusively on humanitarian funding, specifically for emergency responses, humanitarian crises, and disaster management.
- The DATA dashboard provides curated, contextualized, and simplified data on funding and transaction layers, showing how funds flow until they reach the end beneficiaries.
- This includes details on fund utilization in various categories, overhead costs, funding directed to local organisations, and the actual amount reaching affected communities.
- The source of this data is organisations reporting their financial information on the dashboard who are solely responsible for the authenticity of the reported data.
- Users can filter the financial data to suit their specific needs. This means you can view the amount of funding received, how, where, and when it was spent. Additionally, donors can also display the amount of money they have contributed.



Total Funding Gap	Total amount shared with local and national collaborators	Average Operation and HR costs received by reporting agency	Average Operation and HR costs shared with all local and national collaborators	Average Overhead cost received by reporting agencies	Average Overhead cost shared with all local and national collaborators
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6. How is the data stored?

- All reported data is securely stored on DATA's servers.
- Sensitive information, like registration details of reporting organisations, is not publicly accessible on DATA. It is used solely for organisation verification during the onboarding process.
- Data privacy and protection norms are strictly adhered to, in line with DATA's Data Protection Policy.

7. Who can use DATA?

The dashboard is accessible to every stakeholder involved in humanitarian efforts in India and to the global community.

- Donors and Governments within and outside India can use DATA to publish the funding they have channelled for humanitarian responses in India
- NGOs, including local, national and international NGOs involved in humanitarian efforts in India
- Affected communities receiving aid in India

8. How can DATA be used?

DATA provides a simple way for them to share how they're using funds, which builds trust and helps improve aid efforts.

i. For Donors and Governments:

- **Identify trusted NGOs:** Donors often find it challenging to identify trustworthy NGOs that are actively working for humanitarian response, resulting in lengthy due diligence processes and delayed funding decisions for emergency response. DATA can be used to identify who are the active and transparent NGOs responding to the disaster/emergency and what the funding gaps is so that funding support can be channelled accordingly
- **Ensure efficient utilisation of your money:** There is an acute need to ensure the most efficient utilisation of limited resources in the face of growing humanitarian needs. Donors and governments can use DATA to identify which organisations are actively responding, track their contributions to NGOs and how their funding is utilized, and analyse the effectiveness of NGO spending, ensuring funds reach their intended recipients.
- **Track Cost-Effectiveness and Fund Distribution:** DATA helps identify overfunded, underfunded, and neglected areas or disasters, ensuring aid allocation is equitable and effective.
- **Evidence of Cost-Efficiency:** According to the Passing the Buck: The Economics of Localizing International Assistance study, it is estimated that local intermediaries could deliver programming that is 32% more cost-efficient than international intermediaries, by stripping out inflated overhead and salary costs. DATA can be used to analyse the cost efficiency of current funding flows and inform decision-making for better deployment of resources to reach affected communities
- **Improve coordination:** DATA can be used as a tool to support coordination among donors, inform decision-making on fund allocations and thereby reduce inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and resource wastage.

ii. For NGOs and Humanitarian Actors:

- **Demonstrate your Accountability:** NGOs, by openly sharing their data, can showcase their accountability and strengthen the sector's reputation. DATA can be used as a transparency tool for NGOs to hold themselves accountable to those they seek to assist, those from whom they accept resources and to each other in the aid sector. Concurrently, aid recipient communities can get an understanding of how funding truly reached them. It also incorporates in-kind support from donors to provide an overall picture.
- **Demonstrate your Transparency:** NGOs committed to transparency and accountability can use DATA to publish each rupee raised, utilised, and how it reaches affected communities. Proactive transparency

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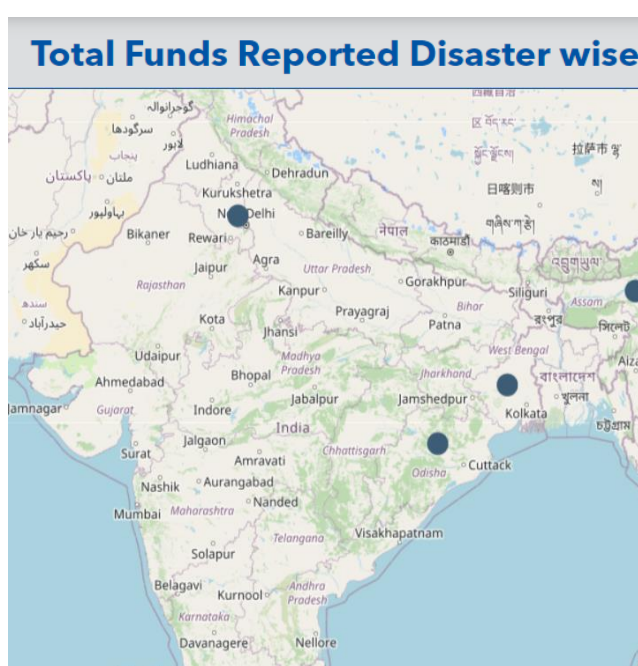
Website: www.hai-india.org | Twitter: [@humanaidint](https://twitter.com/humanaidint) | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/humanitarian-aid-international>

from the NGO sector will help to gain more trust from the government, institutional and individual donors and strengthen the reputation of the NGO sector

- **Improve visibility of your work:** DATA enables NGOs to showcase their humanitarian work and discover new partnership opportunities, publish funding appeals, and showcase the presence of local actors on the ground.
- **Reducing Reporting Requirements:** With greater buy-in from aid agencies, DATA has the potential to streamline reporting needs. It can also assess funding quality (long-term, flexible, predictable, with overhead costs, etc.) in addition to quantity.
- **Facilitating Collaboration and Coordination:** By making funding information accessible, DATA encourages organisations to collaborate, pool resources, and avoid duplication of efforts. It fosters a culture of partnership and equitable collaboration in the sector.
- **Monitoring Duration of Funding:** DATA assesses whether funding is primarily short-term for immediate relief or long-term for durable solutions.
- **Measuring Timeliness of Funding:** Timeliness is crucial in humanitarian response when it comes to life-saving aid. Funding is also often delayed due to long due diligence processes and does not provide flexibility to adapt to changing needs on-ground. DATA captures when funding reaches different actors in the response cycle, enabling analysis of response timeliness and effectiveness.
- **Advocate for equal partnerships:** Most grassroots, local NGOs are not introduced to or informed by their partners of who the back-donor is nor what the total project budget is, making it difficult for them to access direct funding in the future and ask for their fair share of overheads and operating costs. The dashboard would address this lack of transparency issue too.
- **Advocate for Localisation of Humanitarian Aid:** The dashboard's data helps identify barriers faced by local actors in accessing funding directly and assesses the quality of partnerships with donors and intermediaries. Such analysis will help in taking up advocacy issues in favour of grassroots organisations.

iii. For Affected Communities Receiving Aid:

- **Respect for Beneficiaries' Dignity:** Aid recipients have a right to know where the assistance they receive is coming from and how it is being used. They also have the right to information, the right to participate in decisions affecting one's community, and the right to receive assistance in times of need. Transparent funding practices respect the dignity of beneficiaries by treating them as informed partners rather than passive recipients. Communities can use DATA to access information on how much funds have been mobilised on their behalf and how much has been utilised/reached them directly.
- **Informed Consent and Participation:** Transparency allows affected communities to be actively involved in the aid process. When they have access to information about funding sources, they can make more informed decisions about their involvement and contribute to shaping the aid programs that affect them.



9. Who has developed DATA?

[Humanitarian Aid International](#) (HAI), through its LOCAL platform, is launching DATA for the wider humanitarian community in India to publish their financial data in the public domain for optimum accountability and transparency. LOCAL, (Local Organisations' Coalition for Advancing Localisation), is a platform of small and grassroots Indian organisations, promoted by HAI for strengthening the local humanitarian response mechanism by strengthening local and national Indian NGOs.

DATA will be hosted by [Financial Management Service Foundation](#) (FMSF). FMSF is a Resource Organisation, which seeks to promote accountability. Since 1995, FMSF has been working towards building capacities of civil sector organisations in the area of Governance, Financial Management, and Legal Compliance. FMSF is a pioneer organisation providing a comprehensive range of services and resources to build robust systems and enhance organisational effectiveness of the development organisations by focusing on the areas of governance, financial management, and legal compliance.

DATA is being supported by [Voluntary Action Network India](#) (VANI) which is a national network of Indian Voluntary Development Organisations (VDOs). With 624 members and outreach to 10,000 VDOs in India, VANI's membership ranges from grassroots to national organizations. They work on various development issues prioritized by the government such as education, health, environment, and poverty alleviation. VANI aims to build a strong civil society sector at the national, regional, and local levels.

DATA was developed by HAI with support from LOCAL members and FMSF with technical support from IndiaInternets and funding support from Vitol Foundation.

10. How can I get involved with DATA?

NGOs keen on demonstrating their commitment to transparency can register their organisation and start publishing their humanitarian fund utilisation here: <https://www.data-india.org/ngos/registration>

Donors interested in publishing their donations for humanitarian responses can register their organisation here: <https://www.data-india.org/donors/register>

For more information, please visit the DATA website www.data-india.org or contact info@data-india.org