Hoa lost her livestock and her home was flooded when typhoon Damrey hit in November 2017. With the Start Fund, Save the Children was able to provide a cash grant, enabling her to buy food supplies to last for two months (page 58).
The home and crops of Anh and Hoa’s* family were flooded by typhoon Damrey in November 2017. With the Start Fund, Catholic Relief Services was able to provide a cash grant, enabling their mother to buy food supplies for two months (page 59).

*Names changed to protect identity.
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Foreword

Ireland is proud to have been the first donor to the Start Fund, the flagship programme of the Start Network. We are also proud of the Start Fund’s enabling of frontline organisations to deliver aid to overlooked crises quickly and effectively, notwithstanding the complexity of the humanitarian system nor, indeed, the complexity of those crises. Since April 2014 the Start Fund has reached more than 7 million people with life-saving aid.

This is a bittersweet achievement, at once too much and not enough. It is not enough in the context of a world where this year it is expected that more than 135 million people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection. People in places that are in the headlines and in places which, while not in the news, should be at the forefront of our attention. And this achievement is too much, because many of the crises to which the Start Fund responds are not entirely natural and, to an extent, preventable.

Each one of those 135 million people at risk this year is a reminder that our responses, individually and collectively, to crises and emerging crises can always be better. We literally cannot afford to be complacent.

Famine, poverty, migration and conflict cast a long shadow, a shadow which darkened the island of Ireland over 150 years and whose effects still mark us. Our famine saw a quarter of the population disappear in less than a decade. It changed land use patterns, changed how we formed families, and accelerated a tradition of migration that has ensured that Ireland, uniquely in western Europe, has a smaller population today than it did in 1800. In our difficult times, others came to our assistance – the generosity to people an ocean away shown by the Choctaw nation at a time of great stress to native Americans is one such story. Their display of humanitarianism, of solidarity, of giving from their little to those who at that time had less, is a call to us all privileged to live with plenty to share with others – and to do so with generosity.
The Start Network’s approach to change and its willingness to challenge the humanitarian system is an important contribution to more effective international responses to crises.

Through a single relationship, Ireland, as with all the Start Fund contributors, has immediate access to trusted and effective frontline NGOs in nearly all countries of the world whose work each year improves the lives of over 300 million people. The Start Fund has provided the means for Irish funding to reach emergencies in parts of the globe where our reach is limited, helping people most in need - from flooding in the Gambia to volcanic eruption in Vanuatu: without the Start Network it would be much more difficult for us to respond in a timely and effectively way to such emergencies.

The Start Network helps to convert the Grand Bargain commitments, made at the World Humanitarian Summit by Ireland and other stakeholders, into real tangible support for the world’s most vulnerable people. By supporting humanitarian responses by national organisations closest to the ground, and through innovation, including the use of cash transfers and investing in alerts to crises before they happen, the Start Network is contributing to a transformation of humanitarian action.

I look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the Start Network in its work to better support people in need today and in its innovation to better deliver to people in need tomorrow.

**Ciarán Cannon, T.D.**
Minister of State for International Development and the Diaspora
Ireland
Introduction

Now moving into its fifth year of operation, the Start Fund is the fastest collectively-owned funding mechanism in the world. It is a leading enabler of rapid, needs-driven humanitarian response for overlooked crises. Filling a critical gap in humanitarian financing, it pools funding from donors for immediate release for crises around the world. By March 2018, the Start Fund had responded to 143 disasters across 57 countries.

In 2017-18 alone we awarded over £9 million to respond to the unmet needs of 2,050,546 people across 44 crises in 31 countries (page 20). This reach is likely to rise by around 110,000 people once final reports have been submitted in June 2018. We helped crisis-affected communities in Togo, Timor-Leste, Tajikistan, Vanuatu, Albania, Vietnam and Tonga for the first time. We continued to receive generous support from the governments of the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Ireland, as well as from the European Commission. We were proud to announce the Belgian government as our latest donor.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain sent a clear signal: to meet the challenges of the modern world, the humanitarian system must change. We must work together to break down the behaviours and institutional barriers that hinder us, ensuring greater transparency, collaboration, flexibility and local financing within crisis response. The Grand Bargain gives us a great opportunity to consider how, collectively, we can become more effective and accountable to those we serve (page 8). The Start Fund aims to do just that: to deliver more effective emergency aid, harnessing the power and knowledge of our network to make faster and better decisions to help people affected by crises.

In 2017, we launched the Start Fund Bangladesh – the first national Start Fund – and this was activated three times within its first four months (page 53). In line with our commitment to localised and collaborative action, we have provided training in project selection for members in countries with high numbers of alerts (page 42). Anticipatory alerts, aimed at shifting behaviour towards early action, are now an entrenched part of the Start Fund: 10 anticipation alerts were raised this year (page 35). We have also invested in research into blockchain technology, exploring its potential to improve humanitarian financing (page 40).
Among the hundreds of activities implemented in our fourth year, Start Fund projects have built infrastructure to alleviate the severity of anticipated flooding in Tajikistan; provided safe spaces in evacuation centres for displaced children in Vanuatu (page 14); and enabled people with disabilities to regain their freedom to move by providing immediate mobility aids after flooding in Nepal.

The past year has been a period of consolidation, learning and design for the future, with the focus on scaling up our pooled funding mechanism over the coming three years (2018-2021) to plug a critical gap in the humanitarian system. Our ambitions are to grow the global Start Fund disbursement pot to £20 million a year to provide direct, lifesaving assistance to over 15 million people affected by at least 300 crises by 2021.

In 2018, more than 135 million people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection. The UN have warned that the world is facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. This means it is vital to ensure that the Start Fund is sufficiently resourced to fulfil our mandate to respond rapidly to the increasing gaps and unmet needs of people in, or on the verge of, humanitarian crisis.

A well-financed Start Fund will enable our members and local partners to save lives, protect livelihoods and restore the dignity of women, men, boys and girls around the world as crises hit. We will fill the gap where others are unable to respond.

On behalf of the Start Network and the more than 7 million people reached through the Start Fund, I wholeheartedly thank our donors, members and partners for your work and support in enabling us to play this critical role in the humanitarian sector. And for future supporters: together we can continue to implement rapid and effective humanitarian assistance to the underfunded disasters of tomorrow, whatever and wherever they may be.

Thank you to everyone who makes the Start Fund a reality, today and for the future.

Catherine Sneath
Head of Funds

"A well-financed Start Fund will enable our members and local partners to save lives, protect livelihoods and restore the dignity of women, men, boys and girls around the world as crises hit. We will fill the gap where others are unable to respond.”

Catherine Sneath, Head of Funds
The Grand Bargain gives us an opportunity to think about how the humanitarian system must change to deliver effective aid in a challenging modern world. For the Start Network, this journey started eight years ago. The Start Fund plays a critical role in meeting these commitments.

The Grand Bargain was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, so that more is given to those in need. The 10 commitments are outlined below.

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The Start Fund is committed to increasing the flexibility of emergency financing and ensuring that those closest to the crises – both local responders and the people affected – are at the heart of decision making.

Over the past year, the Start Fund has made positive steps towards the aims of the Grand Bargain. Throughout the report, look out for icons that indicate the progress towards each commitment.
Using the power of the network to increase the momentum for change, the Start Fund MEAL team has also developed three reports which share good practice and concrete recommendations on localisation, cash programming and accountability.

**LOCALISATION**
This is a non-negotiable principle that is fundamental to the Start Network. *The Start Fund, Start Network and localisation: current situation and future directions* assesses Start Network projects against a baseline for localisation, and makes recommendations on how to progress the localisation agenda.

**CASH PROGRAMMING**
In response to the Grand Bargain commitment to increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming, the Start Network commissioned a review: *Start Fund: learning from cash programming*. The review shared lessons and good practice from the use of cash in 63 Start Fund response projects in 25 countries.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
The Grand Bargain commitment to a ‘Participation Revolution’ – which means including the people receiving aid in decision making that affects their lives – must be at the forefront of Start Fund responses. The review *Start Fund: learning from accountability to crisis-affected communities* uses the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) to review how accountable its projects are to communities and how this accountability influences the quality and relevance of these projects.

To read these reports as well as several other learning products from the Start Fund, visit the [Start Fund Learning page](https://startnetwork.org/start-fund/learning) on the Start Network website.*

*https://startnetwork.org/start-fund/learning
Why is the Start Fund needed?

CHAPTER 1

It is predicted that in 2018 over 135 million people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection – and new disasters and worsening protracted crises are rapidly increasing the number.

More funding than ever before is required to help these people, yet there is an increasing gap in funding which risks leaving millions of people affected by disasters without life-saving assistance. And a disproportionate amount of the limited funding available is spent on headline-grabbing crises at the expense of those that go under the radar.

The Start Fund fills this critical funding gap by providing rapid financing to underfunded small to medium scale crises, by providing funding to cover spikes in chronic humanitarian crises, and by acting in anticipation of impending crises.
Achievements in Year 4

The Start Fund was alerted to five of the world’s 12 most forgotten crises in 2017* and responded to four. One such response was in the Philippines (page 26), where the Marawi armed conflict left over 350,000 people displaced and the Start Fund was the first to release funding. The Start Fund has responded to many other crises this year that are too small scale to appear on the most forgotten list or to receive international attention. Beyond these ‘forgotten’ crises, in 2017 31% of activated alerts were ‘under the radar’, receiving 23% of funding for the year.**

Throughout the year, the Start Fund has also responded to spikes in protracted crises in Yemen (cholera and diphtheria, page 32), South Sudan (cholera), Democratic Republic of Congo (cholera and displacement), Central African Republic (displacement and flooding), Afghanistan (displacement) and Syria (displacement). See this year’s report Start Fund: learning from slow-onset crises for key reflections and recommendations from these types of disaster.***

For details of all crises that the Start Fund has responded to, see the alert summary table (page 64) and crisis response summaries (page 72).

For this year, Start Network members used forecasting information to submit 10 anticipation alerts to the Start Fund. Some were not funded as they were perceived to be too late, but the Start Fund took anticipatory action for five: drought in Timor-Leste, flooding and landslides in Tajikistan, election-related violence in Kenya (page 38), displacement from Pakistan to Afghanistan and flooding and cholera in Malawi.

Not only does the Start Fund enable rapid response to under the radar crises, but by doing so it shines a light on affected communities which encourages further funding from other sources. For alerts for which reported data was available at the time of publication (151-202), members had secured £11.6m in additional funding and reported that the Start Fund played a role in leveraging 91% of this (£10.7m). For these crises, the Start Fund awarded £7.2m.

Over the past four years, Start Network members have proven that the Start Fund delivers a vital contribution to the humanitarian ecosystem. To date however, our ability to disburse funding has been limited to our means, with many crisis-affected communities going without. As a result, the Start Network is opening up its membership to include more local and national responders which will enable the Start Fund to reach more vulnerable people around the world. The demand for the Start Fund’s rapid, flexible funding will increase. While we work towards providing £20 million in funding per year by 2021, it is entirely reasonable to aim to disburse at least five times this amount in the very near future. I call on all humanitarian aid donors to join and invest in this vital global public good.”

Sean Lowrie, Director of the Start Network

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*The European Commission’s Forgotten Crisis Assessment identifies serious humanitarian crisis situations where the affected populations are not receiving any or enough international aid https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/annex_4_fca_sep2017.pdf

**Based on the definition of ‘under the radar’ developed after extensive research by Glyn Taylor and Elizabeth Assefa of Humanitarian Outcomes, for the report Start Fund involvement in under the radar crises: an external analysis.

***https://startnetwork.org/start-fund/learning
UNDER THE RADAR
SMALL TO MEDIUM CRISES

The Start Fund was the fastest funding mechanism to respond to displacement from a violent conflict in Marawi, Philippines, enabling Action Against Hunger, ACTED, Catholic Relief Services, Oxfam, and local partners to respond to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable (page 26).

SPIKES IN
CHRONIC CRISES

International Medical Corps, Relief International and Save the Children were some of the fastest responders to the outbreaks of cholera and diphtheria in war-torn Yemen, in what has become the world’s largest humanitarian crisis (page 32).

FORECASTS OF
IMPELLING CRISES

ActionAid led a Start Fund consortium response to mitigate tensions in Kenya in advance of what was forecasted to be a highly contested and violent presidential election (page 38).

START FUND RESPONSES ARE UNIQUE

Alerts are timely, either starting in advance of a forecasted disaster (anticipation) or soon after crisis hits.

Our swift mechanisms and decision making means that funds are awarded within 72 hours of a crisis alert.

We aim for rapid impact: crisis responses last less than 45 days.
The Start Fund is held in very high regard by its members who have bought into the concept of it as a global public good.”

External Evaluation of the Start Fund, November 2017

Start Fund and the news don’t belong in the same category. If a disaster makes the headlines, the Start Fund does not respond. When communities are devastated by a crisis and nobody is watching, that is where you will find the Start Fund.”

Erika Glanz, Director of International Emergencies and Operations, CADENA

Start Fund projects begin implementing within 7 days and are complete in 45 days
On 12 February 2018, Tonga was devastated by cyclone Gita, the worst storm to hit the country in 60 years. Around 50,000 people were affected as the cyclone damaged and destroyed homes, leaving families without shelter and basic resources. Oxfam immediately raised a Start Fund alert and Care International were selected to provide vital water, sanitation, hygiene and shelter to the most vulnerable people. Care International worked in close partnership with two local organisations: Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (MORDI) Tonga Trust and Live & Learn Environmental Education. Within just a few days of the storm hitting, shelter and hygiene kits were distributed, roofs had been repaired and support provided to families who had lost everything. Just two weeks after the cyclone hit, when other humanitarian agencies were only starting to respond, through the Start Fund, Care International and partners had already completed the emergency phase of their own response and were well into the planning of early recovery.

The rapid process of the Start Fund enabled Care International to support families to recover quickly. We could not have done this without our strong local partners MORDI and Live & Learn.”

Bill Flinn, Senior Shelter Advisor, Care International

The WorldRiskIndex calculates the risk for 171 countries worldwide based on exposure to natural hazards, vulnerability, coping capacities and adapting capacities. The small Pacific island of Vanuatu is the world’s most vulnerable country to natural hazards, as it is located on the earthquake prone ‘ring of fire’, sits at the centre of the Pacific cyclone belt and is already suffering from the impacts of climate change. Neighbouring Tonga is a very close second. This year the Start Fund responded to crises in both.

In September 2017, the volcano on the island of Ambae, Vanuatu, started erupting. By the end of the month, the government had ordered a complete evacuation of the island, home to about 11,000 people. Soon after, Save the Children raised the alert and along with Care International were awarded funding to undertake a joint response to this unprecedented displacement. They provided children with a safe place to learn and play, which allowed their parents time to deal with other urgent issues during their displacement. They also distributed essential hygiene and dignity kits to help mitigate the risk of disease outbreak.

Additional funding was later made available by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of the Australian Government, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) of the New Zealand government. Save the Children felt that this was significantly influenced by the Start Fund award.

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Bill Flinn, Senior Shelter Advisor, Care International
Save the Children, alert 191 Vanuatu
Children displaced due to volcanic activity on Ambae island practice good hygiene at a child friendly space.
The Start Fund theory of change

The Start Fund is saving lives, alleviating suffering and protecting dignity by driving change in the humanitarian sector.

Start Fund enables its members and their local partners to respond rapidly in crises that would otherwise receive slow and inadequate funding. It challenges the status quo by focusing on disasters that do not make the headlines. This reduces the usual funding bias, driven by politics and the media, towards large-scale crises.

This change happens by harnessing the collective power of the Start Network, tapping into the global presence and diverse expertise of its 42 member agencies as well as their countless local relationships.

The Start Fund has a role to play in righting the imbalances of the humanitarian system by ensuring that local committees close to affected communities design and select the most appropriate responses to crises. Their decisions are organised to ensure timely action based on shared knowledge. This helps to reduce bias, whether personal, organisational, political or donor-driven.

"Collaboration is a central theme of Start Network decision making, indeed the Start Fund is possibly unique amongst pooled funds as a ‘peer to peer’ decision-making mechanism."

External Evaluation of the Start Fund, November 2017

Tran Thai Khuong, Catholic Relief Services, alert 195 Vietnam
Duong Thi Phan receives a hygiene kit after typhoon Damrey hit Quang Nam province in November 2017.
### ACTIVITIES

- In-country project selection
- National Start Fund in Bangladesh
- In-country standing decision-making groups
- Collective allocation meetings
- Member-owned fund management
- Member alert surveys
- Crisis anticipation community of practice (Forewarn)
- Training materials and crisis prediction tools
- Continuous improvement of alert cycle processes
- Start Fund & third-party briefing notes
- Pre-alert communication channels
- Transparent digital platforms
- Evidence-driven learning products
- Crisis learning exchanges
- 1% learning budget
- Blockchain development
- Project flexibility
- Governance model piloting

### OUTCOMES

- **ENHANCED EFFECTIVENESS & APPROPRIATENESS OF RESPONSES**
- **ENHANCED COLLECTIVE EFFICIENCY OF RESPONSES**
- **FASTER AND MORE TIMELY RESPONSES**
- **ENHANCED INFORMATION SHARING**
- **MORE NEEDS & EVIDENCE-DRIVEN RESPONSES**
- **GREATER ADAPTATION & INNOVATION**

### PRINCIPLES

- **COLLECTIVE**
- **FLEXIBLE**
- **DECENTRALISED**
- **TIMELY**
- **INFORMED**

### IMPACT

- **Meeting UNMET/IGNORED humanitarian needs**
- **MINIMISE loss of life and improve livelihoods and dignity**

**Outcomes**

- Decentralised
- Timely
- Informed
- Flexible
- Collective

**Principles**

- More needs & evidence-driven responses
- Enhanced information sharing
- Faster and more timely responses
- Enhanced collective efficiency of responses
- Enhanced effectiveness & appropriateness of responses

**Activities**

- Blockchain development
- Project flexibility
- Governance model piloting
- Evidence-driven learning products
- Crisis learning exchanges
- 1% learning budget
- Start Fund & third-party briefing notes
- Transparent digital platforms
- Continuous improvement of alert cycle processes
- Crisis anticipation community of practice (Forewarn)
- Training materials and crisis prediction tools
- Member-owned fund management
- Member alert surveys
- Collective allocation meetings
- In-country standing decision-making groups
- In-country project selection
- National Start Fund in Bangladesh
The future of the Start Network and the evolution of the Start Fund

The Start Network is on a journey. Since 2010 it has made significant progress but, like the wider humanitarian sector, it needs to evolve.

To prepare for the change needed in the future, Start Network members have worked together to co-create a vision based on our eight-year experience. In November 2017, Start Network members unanimously agreed to support an ambitious plan for the evolution of the network. The plan sets out a concrete framework designed to meet the challenges of the modern world and to tackle the inherent problems in the international humanitarian aid system. Many of its aims reflect the outcomes of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

The vision of the Start Network had long been clear, but the challenge was how to achieve it. So, in early 2017, the Start Network embarked on a process to ‘co-design’ its future. Members across the globe, as well as donors and partners, came together at conferences, events, meetings, and on task teams, while others responded through surveys or on social media.

The resulting paper sets out a clear framework of how the vision will be achieved. The Start Fund will be central to its realisation. In the long term, the aim is for the global Start Fund to become one of several funds, making up a ‘family of funds’, and instead of one centralised network a ‘network of networks’ made up of national and regional hubs will constitute the Start Network. You can read the full paper on the Start Network website (startnetwork.org/start-evolves).

The Start Network vision:

- **LOCALISATION**
  Responses to crises will be defined by those closest to them and based on humanitarian need.

- **NEW FORMS OF FINANCING**
  Early and predictable funding will reduce the impact of crises and the cost of responses.

- **COLLECTIVE INNOVATION**
  A diverse group of organisations will work together to innovate and adapt to the needs of people affected by crises.
LOCALISATION
We aim to improve localisation through hubs and improved due diligence. Power and decision making will devolve to local networks called hubs. These will be made up of local and international organisations, collectively designing their hub to best meet the needs of crisis-affected people. This will bring decisions closer to the frontline of crises and enable faster and more appropriate responses – saving more lives. See page 52 to read more on hubs.

In 2017 the Start Fund Bangladesh was launched, the first national Start Fund and potentially the first national Start Network hub. In 2018 the Start Fund Bangladesh team will work to enable local and national groups to access funds directly and to participate in decision making. See page 53 to read more on the Start Fund Bangladesh.

Another key to shifting power and decision making to local organisations is enabling them to access funds directly. To achieve this, the Start Network will create a global due diligence system which will be tiered to allow a wider range of NGOs to access Start Network funding. This will make vetting processes more accessible, yet of the highest standard. This will benefit local and national NGOs, as well as members and donors. Most importantly, people affected by crises will gain from a more localised and diverse humanitarian infrastructure, and from faster and more effective support.

Over the coming years the new due diligence system will be tested through the Start Fund, using learning from the Start Network’s Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP).* The lessons learned by the Start Fund through its work with local and national partners is key to this. See page 52-53 to read more on the Start Fund’s contribution to supporting locally driven response.

NEW FORMS OF FINANCING
Each hub will manage its own portfolio of programmes and funds. Each fund will be connected to one another, as well as to a global fund. This will provide inbuilt support if one fund is depleted and will also allow donors to channel funding throughout the network, including locations without hubs. This will ensure that funding reaches the places where it is most needed, when it is needed.

Increasingly, a risk financing approach will be used for as the basis for releasing funds. This means that where crises can be predicted, aid can be delivered earlier, reducing the impact of disasters even before they hit. Different risk indicators will be developed, which will trigger different financing mechanisms. This will enable the most appropriate response possible for each type of emergency.

Today the Start Fund is the Start Network’s flagship funding mechanism. It is the foundation from which other financing mechanisms have been developed. For example, the Migration Emergency Response Fund (MERF) evolved as a context-specific contingency fund to support the continuing migration crisis in Europe. In future, these kinds of contingency funds will be the supporting layer within a selection of funding tools for unpredictable crises such as conflict or natural disasters. Other tools, such as insurance, will be used for the many crises that can be predicted.

To develop this portfolio of financial mechanisms, the Start Network is piloting a variety of tools, alongside the forecasting methods needed to make responses clearer, faster and more informed. See page 35 to read more on anticipation and forecasting.

IN 2018 THE START NETWORK WILL BEGIN BUILDING THIS FRAMEWORK
• A fully independent Start Network will be created – the global Start Network Platform.
• The Start Network will put out a call for interest for local and national organisations to apply to join the new Start Network country-level hubs.
• A new tiered due diligence system will be tested to increase the accessibility of the Start Fund to local and national organisations.
• New risk financing tools will be tested in Senegal, Mali and Mauritania.

COLLECTIVE INNOVATION
While hubs will deliver their own programmes, the entire network will be facilitated by an independent organisation: a global Start Network Platform. This will enable network-wide learning, allowing all parts of the Start Network to share with and learn from one another. Each hub will be able to develop its own innovations and this knowledge will then feed into the global platform. This will encourage learning and collaboration, reduce duplication of effort and continually improve humanitarian action across the network.

*https://startnetwork.org/disasters-and-emergencies-preparedness-programme
In its fourth year, the Start Fund grew in scale and reach, responding to more crises, acting in anticipation of more disasters and helping more people than ever before.
In its first four years the Start Fund has received 222 alerts to crises across 71 countries. It has funded responses in 143 of these emergencies in 57 countries.

**The year in numbers**

1 APRIL 2017 TO 31 MARCH 2018

- **ALERTS AND ACTIVATIONS**
  - Year 1: 24 alerts, 16 activations
  - Year 2: 52 alerts, 40 activations
  - Year 3: 74 alerts, 43 activations
  - Year 4: 72 alerts, 44 activations

- **FUNDING**
  - £8,813,541 spent on Start Fund responses* and an additional 1% (£84,853) on learning grants

- **ALERT TYPE**
  - We were alerted in advance of more crises and focussed more on rapid onset than slow onset this year

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*For projects that have not yet submitted final reports (see page 64), amount awarded has been used as an estimate of spend.*
GREATER REACH

People reached
YEAR 4
2,050,546*
YEAR 3
1,848,242

WOMEN 50%
UNDER 18 43%
OVER 50 13%

GLOBAL IMPACT

Alerts for 39 countries, 7 of which had not been alerted before

39

Responses in 31 countries, 7 of which had not been responded to before

31

ACTING IN ANTICIPATION

67% increase in both alerts and activations from year 3 to 4

ALERTS ACTIVATIONS

YEAR 3 6 3
YEAR 4 10 5

5 NEW TYPES OF CRISIS

Wildfire
Armyworm
Electricity crisis
Anticipation of disease outbreak
Displacement due to volcanic eruption

as well as new disease outbreaks: meningitis, hepatitis and diphtheria

*This number is expected to increase to around 2,161,659 once final reports are submitted
39% of projects were implemented with at least one local partner.

91% of projects participated in post-implementation learning exchanges.

*This does not include anticipation alerts which do not sit within our 72 hour timeframe.
## Start Fund milestones

### YEAR 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>No. of Alerts</th>
<th>No. of Activations</th>
<th>Total Funding Awarded by Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APR 17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£529,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>£1,157,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNE 17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£369,124</td>
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<tr>
<td>JULY 17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>£825,627</td>
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<td>AUG 17</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>£1,107,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPT 17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>£527,779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Start Fund’s 100th response**
  - First alert for Togo and the Start Fund’s 100th response (Lassa fever)
  - First alert for meningitis (Nigeria)
  - The first alert under the new Start Fund Bangladesh was raised following a major cyclone
  - First alert for hepatitis (Niger) and fire (Pakistan)
  - First alerts for Mexico and El Salvador (cyclone and flooding)*
  - First alert for Tajikistan (anticipation of flooding and landslides)
  - The Start Fund utilises GECARR** methodology successfully in run up to Kenya elections (page 38)
  - First alert for armyworm (Ethiopia)
  - The Start Fund launches a new framework for localisation
  - First alert for Vanuatu (anticipation of volcanic eruption)

*Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala were in the past part of a wider alert for Central America. This was the first time they were alerted alone.

**Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) is a flexible inter-agency context analysis tool that provides a macro-level analysis of a country or a specific region during or in anticipation of a crisis, developed by World Vision.
Over 7 million people in crisis are reached with Start Fund assistance

Start Fund regional advisors start (page 42)

GECARR risk analysis training in London and Nairobi

First alert for Albania (flooding)

The Start Fund’s 200th alert (Yemen, diphtheria)

The Belgian Government supports the Start Fund as a new donor

First alert for Papua New Guinea (displacement)

Established two partnerships with forecasting agencies (page 45)

First alerts for Tonga and Guatemala* (cyclone and flooding)

Launch of the Latin America regional standing decision-making group

First anticipation alert for disease outbreak (Malawi, cholera)

ODI report highlights the Start Fund Anticipation Window as a leading forecast-based action mechanism***


£885,985

£436,208

£1,071,177

£1,247,339

£60,000

£488,602

12 Record number of alerts

£436,208

£885,985

£60,000

£488,602

£1,071,177

£1,247,339

OCT 17 NOV 17 DEC 17 JAN 18 FEB 18 MAR 18
In May 2017, violent conflict erupted between government military troops and the Maute group, a militant faction sympathising with the armed group calling itself Islamic State (IS) in Marawi, a city on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Over 70 thousand families were forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in adjacent towns, while road blocks and checkpoints trapped civilians who did not evacuate in time. Evacuation centres were opened, and evacuees also sought refuge with relatives and friends further afield. In all, more than 100,000 people urgently needed assistance.

Just one week after government forces first clashed with armed fighters, 11 Start Network members raised an alert to the Start Fund, requesting £250,000 to help address the rapidly developing crisis. The request received unanimous support from across the network through the member survey. Action Against Hunger and ACTED worked together to respond to the immediate needs of vulnerable families by providing emergency water and sanitation, dignity and hygiene kits, and hygiene promotion. Catholic Relief Services and its local partners* targeted people who were displaced and receiving no other relief assistance. Oxfam and its partners** prioritised evacuation centres and families in host communities, installing water points and constructing latrines and bathing cubicles. Mobile legal missions were also provided to support people with legal advice and assistance to ensure their rights were protected and upheld. Overall, the Start Fund response to the displacement in the Philippines reached 35,677 people with urgent aid.

Rapidly filling the funding gap

While the world was waking up to the crisis in Marawi, the Start Fund filled the gap and was activated faster than any other funding mechanism. Within one day of projects being awarded, the affected communities received critical assistance.

In May 2017, violent conflict erupted between government military troops and the Maute group, a militant faction sympathising with the armed group calling itself Islamic State (IS) in Marawi, a city on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Over 70 thousand families were forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in adjacent towns, while road blocks and checkpoints trapped civilians who did not evacuate in time. Evacuation centres were opened, and evacuees also sought refuge with relatives and friends further afield. In all, more than 100,000 people urgently needed assistance.

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*Maranao People Development Centre, Institute of Peace and Development in Mindanao, Nonviolent Peaceforce and the Diocese of Iligan
**Humanitarian Response Consortium and IDEALS

Source: UN OCHA
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/170913_ocha-phi-marawi_conflict_funding.pdf
In October 2017, Oxfam and partners* successfully applied for the Start Fund’s 1% learning grant to assess how appropriate the government and non-government response had been in addressing the respective needs of the most vulnerable women, men, girls and boys. This comprehensive analysis of the gender context was crucial in helping to better map, identify and understand the risks and vulnerabilities of displaced people, so that Oxfam and its partners could carry out appropriate and effective interventions in the future.

“While UN clusters were still assessing the situation, we had already alerted the Start Fund which enabled us to respond very quickly to the crisis. The mechanism was very good for mobilising further funding for the response. Even the CERF came much later. The Start Fund was the fastest.”

**Javad Amoozegar**, Country Director Action Against Hunger Philippines

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**Rahima’s story**

Rahima and her family left their home in a hurry when the violence broke out, bringing nothing but the clothes on their backs. Catholic Relief Services provided Rahima, who took refuge at one of the evacuation centres, with a household and hygiene kit for her family. She explained ‘we are very happy about the items we received. It was truly a big help to our family. I have a sister who recently gave birth and I gave her the extra towels.’

*Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation Incorporated (AMDF) and United Youth of the Philippines – Women (UnYPhil-Women)*
Howard Bacayana, Catholic Relief Services, alert 165 Philippines
Volunteers from MARADECA and Nonviolent Peaceforce explain the distribution flow to the community.
Alert data overview

This diagram shows Start Fund alert expenditure. It captures who spent the funds, how they spent them (sector) and why (crisis type). Our local and national partners are listed on page 50.

The data illustrated is from alerts 151 to 202. For alerts 203 to 222 final data was not available at the time of publication. ‘Other crises’ include fire, armyworm and volcanic eruption. FSL is an abbreviation of food, security and livelihoods.
Alerts with * include proposed reach as some project reports were unavailable at the time of publication. This map only focuses on the global Start Fund and thus does not include Bangladesh, which reached an estimated 122,306 people this year (see page 53).

Why so high in Togo and Yemen?
The Lassa fever response in Togo and the cholera and diphtheria responses in Yemen included mass face-to-face hygiene sensitisation campaigns as well as other health activities. For these reach figures, we excluded radio and TV broadcasting.
Alerts with * include awarded amount rather than final spend as some project reports were unavailable at the time of publication. This map only focuses on the global Start Fund and thus does not include Bangladesh, which made available £1,411,065 this year (see page 53).
Responding to disease outbreak in Yemen

THE WORLD’S LARGEST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The humanitarian funding system is rarely fast or flexible enough at shifting resources when there are sudden spikes in need during protracted crises. The Start Fund fills that gap.

The world is facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War and Yemen is at the centre of this catastrophe. More than three years of conflict is having a devastating effect, with widespread food shortages leaving millions in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2017, Yemen fell into the grip of a severe cholera epidemic on an unprecedented scale. By the end of the year, more than 900,000 suspected cases were reported, making it the worst outbreak of the disease in recorded history.

In May 2017 it became clear that existing aid was not enough to counter the spiralling number of cases, and the authorities announced a state of emergency. Resources from protection and nutrition programmes could not be moved fast enough within the country and lives were slipping away. Almost immediately after the state of emergency was declared, Start Network members raised an alert to the Start Fund. Within 53 hours, around £300,000 was awarded to International Medical Corps, Relief International and Save the Children to implement life-saving rapid response programmes.

The agencies focused on both treating the disease and preventing further spread, looking to long-term approaches including water quality monitoring. Health and sanitation specialists ran education sessions, distributed family hygiene kits, and mobilised community health volunteers to identify suspected cases and refer them to the nearest health centre. Cholera treatment centres and oral rehydration points were rapidly established and provided with essential supplies. Because of the international humanitarian response, the rate of new infections has slowed and the death rate for those infected with the disease fell from 2.3% to 0.3%.

Thanks to the Start Fund, Relief International was one of the fastest responders to cholera in Yemen, establishing oral rehydration points and diarrhoea treatment centres where there were previously none. The project likely saved the lives of hundreds of vulnerable people in remote areas that would otherwise have not had access to this emergency healthcare.”

Dr Tammam Al Hitari, Project Manager for Relief International’s cholera response

*https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/making-difference-delivering-services-yemeni-people-during-conflict
Not long after the cholera outbreak, Yemen is faced yet another blow when an outbreak of diphtheria struck the country. In December, the Start Fund received its 200th alert and awarded £154,863 to Relief International and Save the Children, which they used to train healthcare providers on better treatment and reporting of cases, and to set up isolation centres. They also ran awareness campaigns and education sessions at clinics, schools, markets, mosques and community gatherings.

This rapid response demonstrated how the Start Network is leading for change in humanitarian aid. In Yemen, local coordination and decision making within the Start Network enabled the rapid release of aid which reached people suffering from cholera and diphtheria within just days. Agencies were not delayed by the need for cumbersome grant applications and were allowed high flexibility to adapt their work to the situation as it evolved.

"Because of the speed of the Start Fund, teams were able to develop trusted relationships with local governments and other NGOs during implementation. This strengthened the capacity of local health systems."

Anas Homid, Save the Children

Thanks to the Start Fund’s rapid response mechanism, many lives may have been saved. But while new cases of disease were in decline in early 2018, the situation continues to deteriorate in Yemen and the risk of a surge in cases increases with seasonal rains. The Start Fund is working closely with members to act in anticipation of further spikes in disease outbreak during this devastating protracted crisis.
Ensuring effective response

CHAPTER 3

Innovation, informed decision making and transparency are critical to ensuring that the Start Fund enables effective response to crises. The allocation decisions and selection of projects benefit from the pooled knowledge of Start Network members, bringing different voices, perspectives and insights together to generate informed and objective decisions.

Enayatullah Azad, Norwegian Refugee Council, alert 199 Afghanistan

Soyra was living in the open after becoming displaced by conflict. “I wish we could go back soon to our homes. We can’t go anywhere here and it is hot in days and cold during the nights,” she said.
Anticipation Window

START FUND’S APPROACH TO FORECAST-BASED EARLY ACTION

The Start Fund’s Crisis Anticipation Window is a systematic way for Start Network members to respond earlier to support communities ahead of a crisis. This has been an important year for anticipation. Recognising its transformative potential, the Start Network has moved closer to normalising this approach.

The Start Fund received 10 anticipation alerts this year and activated five, an increase from six alerts and three activations in the previous year. In the wider sector, other pooled funds have followed our lead and are starting to adopt forecast-based action. The Start Network is now working with the Red Cross and national governments in a project led by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) looking at the potential for scaling up forecast-based early action in a range of countries.

“We are hoping for the best, but we are prepared for the worst. Our Start Fund project is enabling 11 agencies to find ways to anticipate crises in Kenya and then act in advance to mitigate their impact.”

Bijay Kumar, Executive Director, ActionAid Kenya

10 ANTICIPATION ALERTS THIS YEAR
14% of Start Fund alerts this year

£1,080,812 AWARDED TO ANTICIPATION PROJECTS THIS YEAR
12% of total Start Fund disbursements

118,692 PEOPLE REACHED BY ANTICIPATION
5% of total Start Fund reach*

50% ACTIVATION RATE
average 61% activation for all Start Fund alerts

*This includes the proposed reach for anticipation alerts 205 and 220
TIMOR-LESTE
Anticipation of drought. £193,462 reached 38,860 people with food and seeds to prepare for drought, alongside partner capacity development to support local actors to respond effectively to drought.

TAJKISTAN
Anticipation of flooding. £145,704 reached 26,864 people with community preparedness and infrastructure development, to mitigate risk of flooding and landslides caused by rapid melting of glaciers.

MALAWI
Anticipation of flooding and cholera. £49,724 awarded to reach an estimated 2,750 people with water point treatment, shelters, and sanitation support.

KENYA
Anticipation of election related violence. £224,317 reached 11,011 people by mitigating the risk of violence (page 38).

PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN
Anticipation of forced refugee returns to Afghanistan. £400,000 was awarded to reach an estimated 39,207 people with cash and protection in the event of displacement.
Informed anticipation

As well as funding five anticipation alerts this year, the Start Network has invested significantly in improving the quality of Start Fund anticipation alerts. This included training over 300 people from Start Network member organisations in anticipatory alerts; developing a global risk calendar to systematically engage members in upcoming risks; and establishing processes to ensure that learning from alerts is captured and shared widely. The Start Fund has also begun developing informed monthly risk briefings to provide an overview on global weather, volcanic, human and health events to inform members and encourage anticipatory preventative action.

Partnerships we have developed outside the traditional humanitarian system are enabling systematic use of forecasting information (page 45). The CRUISSE Network (Challenging Radical Uncertainty in Science, Society and the Environment) has helped us consider the impact of uncertainty on our decision making and supported pilots of the Delphi method to address it.* A collaboration with Columbia University’s International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) is looking at how to tailor weather forecasting to answer key planning questions. The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is helping the Start Fund understand and improve the robustness of the forecasts they use.

It is not just in the Start Fund that the Start Network leads the sector in applying anticipation to managing humanitarian risk management. The Start Network is focusing on humanitarian risk management beyond the Start Fund. One example of a tool for managing larger impact, less frequent disasters (such as drought) is a country-focused index-linked insurance scheme designed to trigger early action at the crucial moment. Similarly, a partnership with African Risk Capacity in Senegal is providing practical operational experience in contingency planning with the national government.

It is important to build evidence for the effectiveness of this anticipatory approach. The Start Network has set up a community of anticipation practitioners called FOREWARN to bring together this evidence and disseminate it across the network. The group advises on each anticipatory Start Fund alert, analysing forecasts and providing expertise in programming for early action. The next phase of FOREWARN will grow the Start Network’s capacity to understand and act upon risk. Working through members in focus countries, FOREWARN will synthesise evidence from risk analyses, co-design anticipatory projects and set threshold levels for triggering earlier action.

*The Delphi method entails a group of experts who anonymously reply to questionnaires and subsequently receive feedback in the form of a statistical representation of the ‘group response’, after which the process repeats itself. The goal is to reduce the range of responses and arrive at something closer to expert consensus.
Anticipating violence during high-stakes elections

KENYA

Hoping for the best but preparing for the worst. Enabling members in Kenya to act early to mitigate the risk of election violence, through a collaborative, informed response.

In August 2017, the people of Kenya went to the polls to vote in a fiercely contested presidential election. Ten years earlier, when the election result was disputed, more than 1,000 people died and 600,000 were displaced. Two months prior to the August elections, there were already signs of unrest and Start Network members became increasingly concerned about the developing tensions in the country and the growing risk of violence. In June 2017, ActionAid, Islamic Relief, Trocaire and World Vision conducted an inter-agency context analysis ahead of the election, using the Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) tool, supported by the Start Fund’s Analysis for Action grant. The analysis considered likely hotspots for violence and produced recommendations for a range of likely scenarios.

“

The Start Network has developed a proactive approach towards election preparedness and response; thanks to this, we have put into place a standby response team, prepositioned relief items, and are ready to respond. By granting funds prior to the election, the Start Fund has helped us plan and enabled us to respond immediately to those most at risk.”

Muktar Wardere Mohamed, Head of Office Mandera, Norwegian Refugee Council
The findings from the GECARR analysis triggered a Start Fund anticipation alert on 17 July 2017. Start Network members released £300,000 to fund a consortium project (submitted by 11 members and led by ActionAid). It focused on six high-risk counties and aimed at filling gaps in the Kenya Government National Contingency Plan. Agencies prepared for potential unrest by strengthening coordination between organisations, monitoring for signs of potential violence such as hate speech, and working with faith leaders to promote peacebuilding. They also trained local organisations on humanitarian assessments, pre-positioned supplies in high-risk areas, set up safe spaces for children, and worked to help communities develop their own plans in case violence erupted.

“
It was a long process preparing for the elections. When you get near the end, it’s very difficult to raise capital quickly – right when you see dynamics changing. The Start Fund adds value when we’re coming down to the wire. Other funding comes in after risks have materialised.”
World Vision representative in Kenya

As feared, there were considerable levels of tension throughout the country from July to November: more than 70 people died because of riots and protests. The ongoing drought in Kenya made some communities more vulnerable and compounded the tension. Human Rights Watch research confirms that there was widespread sexual violence against women and girls, and sexual attacks on men. Through the Start Fund response, conflict prevention interventions increased adoption of constitutional mechanisms by communities to address political grievances. There was significantly less conflict than in previous elections.

The result of the August election was annulled, and the election rescheduled, as had been forecast though the GECARR process. In November, President Uhuru Kenyatta was finally sworn in. Tensions and risks during this period remained extremely high, but the flexibility of the Start Fund meant that agencies were able to extend the project while it was still needed. Bijay Kumar, Executive Director of ActionAid Kenya, explained that this flexibility ‘was key to providing appropriate responses in a changing political environment.’
Transparency

As one of its core principles, the Start Network is committed to practicing radical transparency in all its decisions and activities and believes that transparency enables better accountability and increases efficiency and effectiveness in the humanitarian sector.

Transparency is also a critical condition to regaining public trust in civil society and its spending of public funding. The Start Network is committed to improving the publication of data through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

The Start Network is working on several initiatives that explore increased transparency, both for Start Network programmes as well as for the wider sector. The Start Fund online Portal is a vital element of the network infrastructure and will continue to expand in functionality in the coming years.

Start Network’s innovation work on testing blockchain as a new way of record-keeping and sharing provides one of the first test cases in the humanitarian sector of this technology.

At the end of 2016, the Estonian government announced it would support the Start Network's blockchain work for two years. Since then, the Start Network has worked together with for-profit social enterprise Disberse to build a blockchain-based platform that radically changes humanitarian financing. The platform enables field office, headquarters, donors and individuals to instantly transfer funding in a way that is safe, instant, cost-effective and – importantly – radically transparent.

At the beginning of 2018, one of the Start Network members, Dorcas Aid, participated in a proof of concept to test and give feedback on the functionality of the platform. The blockchain technology test enabled Dorcas Aid to transfer €5,000 from its international office in the Netherlands to its Albania country office. This showed that Dorcas Aid was able to conduct a cross-border transaction that was almost instant and enabled it to trace the funds through an immutable record of the transaction.

Even though this proof of concept does not yet fully reveal the efficiencies that blockchain will have when applied on larger scale, it demonstrated what a radically transparent aid transfer system can look like. The test also identified areas that need further work such as the process and eventual selection of partners that provide the interface with the traditional financial infrastructure. Nico Hoogenraad, Financial Director of Dorcas Aid, commented: ‘A journey of a thousand miles starts with a simple step.’

Now the Start Network and Disberse are working on a larger pilot, with more organisations involved, larger sums of money and a broader geographic reach. They anticipate that this will show greater efficiency gains, which will help take the project to scale in the Start Network’s existing programmes. The Start Network ensures that during all testing, lessons are captured and made available within the wider sector. This will ensure there is no duplication of initiatives and prevent organisations from wasting time or funding.

BLOCKCHAIN

Since 2015, the Start Network has been exploring the use of blockchain to address systemic challenges in the humanitarian sector. These challenges include:

• It can be difficult to ensure the effectiveness of donor funds.
• Funds can take weeks to arrive.
• Up to 10% of funding may be lost if banking fees, poor exchange rates and currency fluctuations are particularly adverse.
• There is currently a lack of transparency within the sector, heightening the risk of misuse of funds and making it more difficult for communities affected by crises to hold the aid system to account.
THE START FUND PORTAL

In 2017, the Start Network launched an online platform that allows its members, donors and the public to monitor Start Fund alerts as they happen, follow how money is spent and see how many people have been helped.* The Portal also provides information to members that can inform Start Fund decision making.

This means that every aid agency project supported by the Start Fund can be viewed and its outcome evaluated by anyone who visits the website. Details of current projects are available as they unfold in real time, and information about projects already completed is easily accessible. The Portal delivers:

- Transparency: ensuring the impact of projects and decision making around them are open to scrutiny.
- Accountability: giving taxpayers and communities affected by crises access to data on each alert, and the lessons learned, so enabling them to hold the Start Fund to account.
- Engagement: allowing many more people to engage with decision making and see the impact of the decisions.

*https://startnetwork.org/start-fund/alerts

"The new Start Fund Portal is miles ahead in providing easily accessible information to all member agencies and its partners. Concern Worldwide can find all its data from past projects and the decision making behind our responses in a heartbeat. In terms of transparency you can’t ask for much more than this.”

Damien Mosley, Programme Funding Coordinator, Concern Worldwide

INTERNATIONAL AID TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE

The Start Network’s commitment to transparency means it supports the need for common standards on data. During 2017 it worked closely with Save the Children (the host of the Start Network) to improve the level of information published through IATI.

By publishing data to IATI, the Start Network can:

- publish in the same format as other organisations, so that datasets from various sources can be easily combined;
- publish in one central location, used by other many organisations in the sector;
- update data monthly, to keep information as current as possible.

In the coming years, the Start Network will improve the level of data published to IATI so that it includes both forward looking information and information on the results of its projects.
The power of the network

The Start Network is founded on the principle that the humanitarian challenges we face are greater than any one organisation can overcome on its own. There is power in collaboration. The network gives its members the collective ability to manage resources with increased impartiality.

One of the great advantages of the Start Fund is its ability for collective decision making and shared information at project, crisis and system level. Decisions on the allocation and selection of projects benefit from the pooled knowledge of its members, bringing different voices, perspectives and insights together to generate informed and objective decisions.

This participation is increasing. This year, 24 members submitted more alert notes than they did in the previous year, while 12 maintained their level of involvement. For many crises speed is critical, and alerts are submitted by a single member to avoid delay, however half of alert notes this year were submitted in collaboration by multiple members and in some cases with local partners.

Each alert has an average of 20 different members providing their insight into the crisis, and whether they support activation, through the member survey. This information is available for use at the allocation decision meeting within 24 hours of the alert being raised.

To further embed decision making within affected countries and ensure fast, consistent and robust decisions at a local level, the Start Network has established standing decision-making groups in 12 crisis-prone countries, made up of senior-level member representatives who have been trained in project selection and can be quickly mobilised if an alert is raised.* This year, 22% of alerts (and 27% of activations) were from those countries. The team has now taken a further step to drive collaboration and action at this level by recruiting four regional advisors. The advisors have been seconded from member organisations to act as regional focal points for the Start Network, engaging directly with the standing decision-making groups.

The Start Fund also values external expertise in strengthening its decision making and response (page 43). Yearly external reviews allow learning to feed into future alerts as well as into wider discussions across the humanitarian sector. The Start Network has continued to work with the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), an NGO that provides independent information about each crisis to inform decision making (page 44). This year, it has also diversified its sources of technical expertise, particularly through partnerships with academic institutions. For example, in 2017 the Start Fund launched a collaborative project with the CRUISSE Network to review how the Start Fund’s decision-making process deals with uncertainty and bias (page 45).

*MStanding decision-making groups have been established in Kenya, Somalia, Malawi, Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Philippines, Pakistan, Latin America, Indonesia, and Myanmar

Collaborative decision making amongst peers is one of the Start Fund’s strongest assets. Every time we meet I see how the diversity of viewpoints, experience and organisational mandates helps create a shared decision built on more analysis and wisdom than a single individual or agency could ever bring alone.”

Mike Noyes, Deputy Director for Humanitarian Policy and Practice, ActionAid UK
The power of the network

The benefits of the network model are provided by both the members and the platform at the project, crisis and system level.

**PROJECT**
- Coordinating and shaping of design and implementation
- Shared information, capacity, learning peer review and learning exchanges

**CRISIS**
- Refined decision making
- Funding
- External expertise
- Joint 1% learning and learning products

**SYSTEM**
- Credibility
- Access to new relationships and networks
- Shared knowledge and external evaluations

“Joining a network of leading humanitarian organisations, planning to come down to the local level and giving voice to affected populations was a point of attraction to me. At HelpAge International, we take pride in working closer to communities (particularly older people and persons with disabilities), so this regional advisor position provided me with an opportunity to influence humanitarian organisations to embrace community-owned and community-based inclusive humanitarian interventions.”

Talal Waheed, HelpAge International and regional advisor for the Start Fund
Informed decision making

Valuing expertise: ACAPS

The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) is a non-profit project providing independent and timely analysis on humanitarian crises, as and when they happen. With evidence and needs-based analysis, ACAPS enables crisis responders to better understand how to address the world’s disasters.

PARTNERING WITH ACAPS

Since 2015, ACAPS has maintained a round-the-clock service for the Start Fund, producing timely and tailored analytical briefing notes on a range of crises and geographical areas. Within 12 to 24 hours of an alert, they provide snapshot reports with essential information on context and immediate needs. The Start Fund uses these reports as a tool to inform decisions over whether to allocate funds to a crisis. In 2017, ACAPS produced 56 briefing notes, with an average of 15 sources of information for Start Fund alerts.

When we receive an alert from the Start Fund, our team immediately begins researching on the topic, as we have no more than 24 hours to release a report. Using our analysis, the Start Fund Committee will decide whether to activate the alert.

As ACAPS monitors the entire world, we have pre-crisis data for all countries. This helps speed up the whole process. This also guarantees that we can, when applicable, mention any previous responses in the affected area and add lessons learned.

Usually one or two ACAPS analysts work on a Start Fund briefing note. We always have analysts on duty during the weekend to make sure we cover crises as they happen. On average we consult around 50 secondary sources and use about 15 to 20 of these to write the briefing note. We also triangulate our information with people from our network, including people in the field. Producing a report in such a short time makes us focus on the essential information: who is affected, where they are and what are their priority needs. We think it is more important to be approximately right, rather than precisely wrong. We think that our “good enough” approach allows decision-makers to make better decisions, on time.

To take our analysis one step further, we also forecast possible developments and then produce anticipatory briefing notes. This helps the Start Fund not only allocate funds for an ongoing crisis, but better predict future trends and shocks to help set the agenda for response in advance of a crisis.

After sending the report to the Start Fund, we usually make it publicly available on our website: we believe that widely shared information is critical to deliver more effective humanitarian action to crisis-affected people.”

Anssi Anonen, ACAPS country analyst
Without its close relationships with academic and humanitarian partners, the Start Fund would not be able to deliver on its commitment to informed decision making. These partnerships are growing year on year, providing rapid, vital information that enables the Start Fund to triangulate to make informed decisions.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE AND SOCIETY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (IRI)
The Start Fund is working with IRI to improve forecast information. IRI is designing temperature and hydro-meteorological forecast maprooms (online collections of maps and other tools) that will focus on questions and timeframes tailored specifically for the Start Fund. These maprooms can be used to inform anticipation alerts and can be used by decision makers in allocation meetings.

CENTRE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF TIME SERIES (CATS), LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
The Start Fund Anticipation Window has received Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) funding to partner with CATS in a project called ‘Improving the role of Information systems in Anticipatory Disaster Risk Reduction’ (IRIS). To improve the quality of Start Fund anticipation forecasts, CATS will use probabilistic analysis to understand the reliability of forecasting data. This will allow Start Network members to act with more confidence as they anticipate crises and will allow the Start Fund to more effectively interpret forecasts.

THE CRUISSE NETWORK
In partnership with the CRUISSE Network, which aims to bring together academics from a range of disciplines (mathematical, physical, psychological, social and other sciences), the Start Fund is undertaking a project to better understand how allocation and project decisions are taken. It focuses specifically on the conceptualisation and impact of uncertainty and bias. The Start Fund will use this analysis to revise its anticipation alert templates and to trial the Delphi decision-making method on allocation decisions. It is expected that this will reduce the influence of bias, improving the decision-making process and the outcomes of these decisions.

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MEDIUM-RANGE WEATHER FORECASTS (ECMWF)
ECMWF, which draws upon the world’s largest archive of numerical weather prediction data, has provided the Start Fund with forecasting information for several anticipation alerts with medium-range timescales.

OTHER PARTNERS
The Start Fund Anticipation Window has several other more informal partnerships with forecast information providers who have given technical guidance on pre-alert guidance notes. These include the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Dr Liz Stephens (University of Reading, specialising in forecast-based early warning and anticipatory humanitarian action), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), MapAction, and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre.
Making local, central

CHAPTER 4

Localisation is the process of recognising, respecting, and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses.

Localisation is at the core of both the Start Fund and the World Humanitarian summits Grand Bargain commitments as a key factor in shaping the future of humanitarian action.

By shifting the focus of funding and decision making to local responders, those on the frontline responding to communities affected by crises will be better equipped to deliver more effective, appropriate and fast humanitarian aid, saving lives and alleviating suffering.
Seven dimensions of localisation

In 2017, the Start Network published a report on *The Start Fund, Start Network and Localisation: current situation and future directions*. Building upon the Grand Bargain commitments, this report offers recommendations on how to progress the localisation agenda. Specifically, the review outlines seven key dimensions, each critical to both decentralised and transformative localisation. These seven dimensions are:

- **Funding**: 25% as directly as possible. Better quality.
- **Partnerships**: Less sub contracting. More equitable.
- **Capacity**: Institutional development. Stop undermining.
- **Participation Revolution**: Off crisis affected communities. Gender, age, disabilities.
- **Coordination Mechanisms**: National actors greater presence and influence.
- **Visibility**: Roles, results and innovations by national actors.
- **Policy Influence**: National actors greater presence and influence in international policy debates.

The Start Fund has a high degree of flexibility which has enabled rapid response partnerships with local and national organisations. This year, at least 21% of Start Fund expenditure was made by local and national partners.*

The Start Fund has now revised its reporting requirements to ensure that local and national partner spend is tracked better in the future. This will be further supported by a commitment to IATI reporting (page 41). The Grand Bargain commits donors and aid organisations to providing 25% of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders.

However, localisation is not – and should not – be limited to funding. The quality of partnerships is also critical, helping local and national organisations to grow and international organisations to learn: the benefits are mutual. Eighty-five percent of Start Fund projects involved at least one partner, to varying degrees.** Of the 56 projects this year that involved a non-member partner, 19 (34%) included capacity exchange; of these, 17 projects involved members supporting the capacity development of non-members and 6 projects involved the opposite exchange, enabling members to learn from the local responders’ unique knowledge.

*An additional 5% of expenditure was made by Start Fund consortium members and local partners together, but this data cannot be disaggregated due to reporting limitations.

**Five of the 72 implementing partners in this period were other Start Fund members who partnered with the lead agency.
The Start Fund supports and promotes partnerships, both new and old, but research suggests that its responses are faster and more effective when members work with pre-existing partners than with new ones. Of all Start Fund project partnerships this year, 76% had been established for over a year, 3% for between six and 12 months, and 21% for less than six months. These new partnerships were a result of previous Start Fund projects providing a platform for future collaboration.

The Start Network continues to develop its commitment to the localisation agenda as this evolves. Its strategy is to cultivate a decentralised network of national and regional hubs. This represents a structural shift in how funding is achieved, distributed and – critically – who holds the decision-making responsibility for local humanitarian action. The launch of the Start Fund Bangladesh is a critical step towards this vision.

Over the next three years at the global level, the Start Fund will:

- Build on the work currently being carried out by regional advisors to encourage communication, learning, and continual innovation of the Start Fund at the regional level, while allowing for greater interconnectivity with the wider Network initiatives.
- Develop guidance that members ensure that collaborating non-members are fully briefed about the nature and functioning of the Fund. This will focus on building understanding of the financing conditions and options of the fund, ensuring that project budgets and any funding allocation to non-members is fair and transparent.
- Work with donors to ensure that management fees at all levels enable full cost recovery, so that no organisations lose out. This will include piloting different models in recognition of our diverse membership.
- Include in guidance to members the recommendation that, where needed, non-member local and national NGOs are introduced directly to donors.
- Building on existing research, commission the development of a partnership review tool that can be applied during spot checks, which creates an evidence base against which to evaluate the Start Network’s progress.
- Commission a review of the Start Fund/Network’s progress against the localisation review in 2020.

We have experience working with Catholic Relief Services in development projects, but what we learned with them through the Start Fund response were the technical methods, especially how to involve the community in this process”

Vo Tan Sanh, Thang Binh People’s Committee, alert 195 Vietnam
Sharaful Hossain, Humanity & Inclusion,
affect BO03 Bangladesh
A man affected by flooding shows his voucher after receiving cash assistance.
Partners

This year the Start Fund has supported the work of the following local and national partners to implement crisis response. Their frontline experience and knowledge is invaluable to ensuring quality and timely humanitarian response.*

Aasaman Nepal (alert 181)
Action Africa Help (alert 192)
Aging with a Smile Initiative (alert 189)
Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc (alert 165)
Association Libre pour la Promotion de l’Habitat et du Logement (ALPHALOG) (alert 156)
Anglican Diocesan Development Society, Makurdi (ADDS) (alert 187)
Asociación Fundación para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador (Cordes) (alert 170)
Asociación para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos de la Niñez en El Salvador (APRODEHNI) (alert 170)
Association d'Appui aux Activites de Sante Communautaire (alert 151)
Backward Society Education Nepal (BASE) (alert 181)
Baptist Convention Sierra Leone (alert 179)
Binifu Faef Nome (BIFANO) (alert 158)
Caritas Bunia (alert 219)
Caritas Centrafricaine (alert 163)
Cáritas de Guatemala (alert 188)
Caritas India (alert 172, 180)
Caritas Sierra Leone (alert 179)
Centro Communidade Covalima (CCC) (alert 158)
Code Utile (alert 151)
Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS) (alert 179)
Community Health Department (CHD) (alert 168)
Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres (CONRED) (alert 188)
Development for a Better Being (DEMI-E) (alert 159)
DEC-Nepal (DEC) (alert 181)
Diocese Social Action Center Iligan (alert 165, 202)
Ecumenical Office for Development Support (BOAD) (alert 198)
Enfants Sans Frontières (ESF) (alert 163)
Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (alert 179)
Evangelical Fraternity of Albania (VUSH) (alert 197)
FHRD Nepal (alert 181)
Fini Ensperansa (alert 158)
Forum for Health Research and Development Nepal (FHRD) (alert 181)
Fraterna (alert 158)
Fundación Salvadoreña para la Promoción Social y el Desarrollo Económico (FUNSALPRODESE) (alert 170)
Future for Children Sierra Leone (alert 179)
Gaia (alert 169)

*This list is not exhaustive. Start Fund is improving its reporting process to better capture the work of partners. Start Fund has also supported local partners in Syria who unfortunately cannot be listed for security reasons.
Great Lakes Inkingi Development (GLID) (alert 214)
Humanitarian Response Consortium (HRC) (alert 165, 202)
IDEALS (alert 165)
Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) (alert 172)
Initiative for Promotion of Rural Health and Development (IPROSARUDE) (alert 214)
Innovations and Participation for Development (IPD) (alert 173)
Institute of Peace and Development in Mindanao (alert 165)
Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (alert 158)
Live & Learn Environmental Education (alert 217)
Local Social Development and Economic Solidarity Department (LSDESD) (alert 156)
Mali Local Social Development and Economic Solidarity Department (alert 156)
Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (MORDI) (alert 217)
MANEPO (alert 220)
Maranao People Development Center (MARADECA) (alert 165)
Mexican Civil Protection (alert 169, 212)
National Disaster Management Agency of the Gambia (alert 189)
National Rehabilitation Center (alert 179)
Nav Jagriti (alert 180)
Nepalgunj Medical College (NGMG) (alert 181)
Network of HIV Positives in Sierra Leone (NETHIPS) (alert 179)
Nonviolent Peaceforce (alert 165)
Partner Programme de Promotion des Soins de Santé (PPSSP) (alert 198, 219)
Pastoral Social Diocese of San Marcos (alert 188)
Permakultura Timor-Leste (PERMATIL) (alert 158)
Poorvanchal Gramin Vikas Sansthan (PGVS) (alert 180)
Promotion and Advancement of Justice, Harmony and Rights of Adivasis (PAJHRA) (alert 172)
The Rainbow Initiative (alert 179)
Red Kuchubal' (alert 188)
Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance (RACIDA) (alert 222)
Rural Volunteers Centre (RVC) (alert 172)
Sahakarya Nepal (alert 181)
Save the Saptari (alert 181)
Shohratgarh Environmental Society (alert 180)
Solidarité Coopérative Agricole du Congo (SOCOAC) (alert 198)
Street Child of Sierra Leone (alert 179)
Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) (alert 172)
Thang Binh People's Committee (alert 195)
United Purpose (UP) (alert 189)
United Youth of the Philippines-Women (UnYPhil-Women) (alert 165)
National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (various)
Women's Network for Environmental Sustainability (WoNES) (alert 179)
Yemen Ministry of Public Health (alert 200)
Youth in Action Towards Sustainability (Y-ACTS) (alert 158)
Zambia Ministry of Health (alert 192)
Localisation: hubs framework

The Start Network is launching a new model which will help to decentralise and diversify the network, enabling many more organisations to become part of the network’s future.

Start Network hubs at regional and national level will provide a forum where humanitarians can work together across organisational boundaries to achieve common goals, align around a common vision and develop their collective capability for more predictable and timely response. The Start Fund Bangladesh is the first national Start Fund, with more planned in the coming years. Instead of one centralised network and a single global Start Fund, a family of funds and a ‘network of networks’ will be established.

This new structure will enable power, resources and innovation to be moved closer to communities affected by crises. The expectation is that this framework will enable civil society in those communities to provide better, faster and more predictable responses to crises.

Hubs will be largely self-financing and will use this funding to develop their own innovations and deliver their own programmes. All hubs will be interconnected so that their knowledge, resources and innovations can be shared globally.

In 2017, more than 130 participants from national and international civil society organisations, donors, UN agencies and government officials came together in Pakistan to explore what an ideal future might look like and how they must change to get there. After the conference, Start Network members and national NGOs created a group to look at setting up a Start Network hub in Pakistan. The group plans to visit members in Bangladesh and learn from their experience of establishing a national Start Fund. If both countries become national hubs, this would be the first example of one hub learning directly from another.

In March 2018 the Start Network called for organisations around the world to express their interest in being part of a hub and will use their voice to make this evolution possible and inform how the network moves forward.
Localisation: Bangladesh

Start Fund Bangladesh was launched in 2017 as part of the Start Network’s aim of developing independent national Start Fund mechanisms.

FOUR GOALS FOR THIS NATIONAL START FUND ARE TO:

1. enable an earlier and faster response to crisis-affected people in Bangladesh.
2. attract additional and better donor funding to Bangladesh.
3. devolve the Start Fund to a national level, giving national and local responders direct access to funding; and
4. practise, measure - and showcase the benefits of - collaboration in humanitarian action.

Start Fund Bangladesh has a disbursement pot of around £2.2m per year to directly fund responses throughout the country. The design and build phase ran from February to November 2017, with the aim of establishing the principles and processes that will help Start Fund Bangladesh deliver its localisation promise. It focused on establishing the foundations for a collectively-owned fund.

During this phase, insights from the Start Fund’s independent localisation review in Bangladesh provided a benchmark for the strategic direction of the new fund, recommending a range of partnerships as well as community engagement best practices. Based on this, a 24-member Start Fund Bangladesh committee has been set up to oversee the new fund. It includes members from Start Network member agencies as well as six national and local NGOs. The membership and governance of the fund will be devolved to the national level over the four-year lifetime of the project.

This year, Start Fund Bangladesh was alerted to five disasters and responded to four (cyclone Mora, landslides, flooding, and a slum fire), making available £1,411,065 to Start Network members and partners in Bangladesh to rapidly reach 122,306 people affected by crisis in three responses and a projected 18,230 in the fourth. These people were supported through cash, food security and livelihoods, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, health, and nutrition provisions.

“The localisation of this funding mechanism ... with country-specific funding allocation and local management involving both national and international humanitarian actors, will further enhance its effectiveness.”

A.K.M. Musha, Country Director for Concern Worldwide and Chair of Start Fund Bangladesh Committee
The Chittagong Hill Tracts, unique in Bangladesh for their steep hilly terrain and dense jungles, were particularly hard hit. Close to 160 people died and over 80,000 people were affected across the five districts of the south-eastern region. Communities were completely disconnected from main roads, electricity and food supplies. More than half of the people affected lost their homes and livestock.

In June 2017, incessant torrential rains led to the worst landslides in Bangladesh in a decade. The crisis received little international media attention, with only the Bangladesh government and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society working to respond. This is when Start Fund Bangladesh members decided to act. On 20 June, Caritas Bangladesh and Catholic Relief Services raised an alert to support the most vulnerable households. Two days later, World Vision and ActionAid were awarded close to £200,000, both working with their long-term national partner, Balipara Nari Kalyan Samity (BNKS), to reach the most affected 1,198 households amidst the uphill challenge of collapsed roads and telecommunication. The community was provided with unconditional cash support, cash for shelter reconstruction, water and sanitation support, and household items like buckets and soap.

Chittagong Hill Tracts are not only hilly and remote but is also a highly sensitive area with strict restrictions on travel. Government restrictions and continuous political pressures meant that intensive engagement with communities and local government was needed, involving them in beneficiary selection and validation, and in the distribution of cash and other essential items.

BNKS was involved in assessing damage and the resulting needs as well as planning response activities and preparing the budget. With technical support from World Vision and ActionAid, BNKS facilitated responses that were driven by the community. One such was the ‘Women Led Emergency Response’ which empowered female community leaders to take on leadership roles in the emergency response, such as setting the criteria for selecting beneficiaries. The response process helped to empower communities, especially through recognising the leadership of women and challenging gender stereotyping.
Himaloy Joseph Mree, World Vision, alert 8002 Bangladesh

Frenchi (centre) and her family received cash after the flooding damaged their home.
## Accountability to affected populations

Accountability to affected populations has various definitions, but at its core is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by, the people that humanitarian agencies seek to assist.

It recognises that ‘women, men, girls and boys receiving assistance are the primary stakeholders and have a basic right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, receive the information they need to make decisions and hold agencies to account, and to complain if they feel the help they receive is not adequate, well targeted or has unwelcome consequences.’ (CHS Alliance)

In 2017, the Start Fund commissioned research into accountability to improve the way it supports empowered decision making. The report, *Start Fund: learning from accountability to crisis-affected communities*, made several recommendations around capturing evidence, which have fed into the Start Fund’s reporting process.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Needs Assessments</th>
<th>Project Design</th>
<th>Project Adaptation</th>
<th>Project Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported Involving</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected People</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This year (up to alert 202), Start Fund projects involved people affected by, and at risk of, crisis. Of all projects:

*CARE India, alert 180 India*
People affected by flooding provide feedback on the support they received.

*To find out more about these recommendations, visit https://startnetwork.org/resources*
Almost all Start Fund projects have feedback mechanisms to allow recipients to share their opinion of the assistance that they received. This feedback can serve several purposes. In some cases, it has enabled projects to adapt to better fit people’s needs: in the flooding and landslides response in Sierra Leone (alert 179), feedback led to prioritising water, sanitation and hygiene activities.

In other cases, feedback can be used to rectify mistakes: in the flooding response in Vietnam (alert 195), cash recipients used an agency helpline to express their disapproval with the rate of cash they received. An error was subsequently found and fixed on the same day.

### Feedback mechanisms

97% of projects (up to alert 202) had some sort of feedback mechanism

- **25%** Helpdesk
- **51%** Phone
- **18%** SMS
- **54%** Group meetings
- **28%** Exit survey
- **16%** Suggestion box
- **67%** Talking with staff
- **34%** Other

(Other methods included letters, mobile apps, feedback forms etc.)
After the Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam is the country that has received the most funding this year from the global Start Fund. Save the Children, Care International and Catholic Relief Services each implemented well targeted response projects to these two crises, working closely with the local People’s Committee, the Vietnam Red Cross and community representatives to ensure the most vulnerable were selected for support.

Vietnam was awarded funding from the Start Fund for the first time in October 2017 after flash flooding and landslides in the northern provinces of the country caused great damage and loss of life. Only weeks later, typhoon Damrey – the strongest storm to strike South-Central Vietnam since 2001 – battered the coastline.

Working with communities
FLOODING, LANDSLIDES AND A TYPHOON IN VIETNAM

Vietnam was awarded funding from the Start Fund for the first time in October 2017 after flash flooding and landslides in the northern provinces of the country caused great damage and loss of life. Only weeks later, typhoon Damrey – the strongest storm to strike South-Central Vietnam since 2001 – battered the coastline.

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Both responses highlighted the critical role played by rigorous beneficiary selection and consultation in an effective humanitarian response, especially when it comes to cash distribution. Without a thorough process that involved local people, there was a risk of stoking tensions within already vulnerable communities. Members and their partners spent time with the communities to establish which people were most in need of support and what their most critical needs were, then proposed activities and recipients. These proposals were then shared with the communities for feedback, resulting in extensive validation by the communities themselves.

The commune is next to the river. When the water rose suddenly the community was flooded. We were very grateful for the support of Save the Children and would have been unable to respond this way without the Start Fund.”

Vice President for Quảng Nam Red Cross, partner of Save the Children (alert 195)

The projects also gave Start Network members a chance to learn from local communities directly. Care International took the time to work closely with people affected by the flooding in the north of the country to better understand the conditions they were living in. After hearing about the poor-quality water and lack of water tanks in homes, they decided to change the water filters they had planned to distribute to something far more suitable and sustainable. They also learned that the high quality woollen blankets they planned to provide, which are popular in urban conditions, were not suitable in rural areas without access to washing facilities. They switched to a blanket that was easier to wash and that could be used throughout the year.

Tran Thai Khuong, Catholic Relief Services, alert 195 Vietnam

Bui Van Tam receives a hygiene kit following typhoon Damrey.
Tien’s story

To Thi Kim Tien has a long-term illness in her throat and was in hospital when typhoon Damrey hit. Her four children and her husband – who suffers from severe spinal pain – evacuated to the neighbours’ home as the floodwaters rose. When Tien is strong enough to work, she wakes at 4.00am to do the housework, water her vegetable plot, feed her pigs, and tend to the family’s small paddy field and crop plantation. She described how the flooding from the storm rose above shoulder level.

The village came together to help her repair the roof, half of which was ripped off by the powerful winds. Although her pigs were saved, she lost her ducks and all the rice in her field.

Tien and her family were invited to a village meeting where she found out about Catholic Relief Services’ planned response and everyone agreed that her family should receive cash support. With the money she received, she purchased 50kg of rice, enough to feed the family of six for two months.

Tien is a proud woman and explained that she and her husband work very hard. If it wasn’t for their poor health, she is confident things would be fine. This is their biggest challenge. They now invest in their four children, which gives them hope for the future.

“Had I not received this support, I would have had to buy our food with credit, to be paid back in kind with a very high rate of interest. This would have left our family at a great loss in the next harvest season. I appreciate the help we have been given.”

To Thi Kim Tien, Van Tien village in Quang Nam province of Vietnam

Laura-Louise Fairley, Start Network, alert 195 Vietnam

Tien and her family four months after her home was flooded by typhoon Damrey in November 2017.
Cash assistance

This year, 30% of Start Fund projects delivered cash-based assistance. This enabled Start Network members to reach communities affected by, or at risk of, crisis in 15 countries.*

Cash programming is an increasingly important component of crisis response, estimated to represent 6–7% of humanitarian spending.** It is also among the most well researched of humanitarian interventions. Providing people affected by or at risk of crises with cash, is a better way for the humanitarian system to meet their needs. It has the benefit of increasing accountability, both to recipients and donors, and reducing the cost of delivering assistance. It also supports local economies, markets and incomes, increases the speed and flexibility of humanitarian response and provides people with more choice and control over how the money is spent.

Since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, donors have committed to increase the use and co-ordination of cash-based programming. The Grand Bargain on cash included commitments to develop ways to measure the outcomes of cash-based programming, to build evidence on costs, benefit and risks, and to collaborate and share information. As part of this commitment, the Start Fund commissioned a learning review of the effectiveness and relevance of cash programming.

The report, Start Fund: learning from cash programming,*** made several recommendations for the effective delivery of cash programmes, which are now being implemented in Start Fund responses. This year, the Start Fund supported a variety of cash projects, from voucher-based, conditional cash schemes to, most commonly, unconditional cash transfers.

Given that the Start Fund responses must follow a 45-day timeframe, unconditional cash transfers are one of the fastest ways to reach people affected by crises. It gives them the flexibility and resources to become stable. They can spend the cash on food, non-food items (such as blankets, kitchen items or clothing) or shelter, as well as long-term investments like children’s education or medication.

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*Up to alert 202
***https://start-networkboxcom/v/cashlearningshort

Dorcas Aid, alert 197 Albania
A woman affected by severe flooding thanks Dorcas Aid for the cash support she is provided.
The most common type of cash provided in Start Fund responses this year was unconditional cash (47%), while cash-in-hand was the most commonly used distribution method.

When food is available in your house your dignity is maintained and that is what the cash has done for me.”

Gaye, the Gambia (alert 189)
Financial statement

CHAPTER 5

This is a snapshot of the financial data for the Start Fund projects this year. For full details on the spend for each alert this year, see the alert summary table on page 64. Start Fund Bangladesh is listed below for interest but is independent of the global Start Fund.

### START FUND EXPENDITURE (1 APRIL 2017 - 31 MARCH 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsive alerts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unreported projected spend (maximum)*</td>
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<td>Anticipatory alerts</td>
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<td>Unreported projected spend (maximum)*</td>
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<td>Analysis for Action Grants (AA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1% Learning Grants</td>
<td>£84,853</td>
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**EXPENDITURE AT TIME OF WRITING**: £7,107,422

**PROJECTED TOTAL EXPENDITURE***: £8,938,394

### START FUND BANGLADESH EXPENDITURE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerts</td>
<td>£1,231,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreported projected spend (maximum)*</td>
<td>£161,760</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### FINAL START FUND EXPENDITURE PREVIOUS YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerts and grants</td>
<td>£9,697,352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unreported projected spend is the total awarded amount to projects that fall within this reporting period (i.e. were awarded by 31 March 2018) but were still underway and/or had not yet reported final spend at the time of writing (see the alert summary table on page 64 for a detailed breakdown of alert spend).
Risk management

The Start Network is committed to managing risks seriously to ensure that it can reach people affected by disasters as effectively as possible.

Risk is managed by the Start Network host agency Save the Children UK (SCUK), the Start Network team and donors. The Start Fund Council (made up of donors, the Start Network team and partners) has the mandate to oversee the risk management of the Start Fund. The group meets twice a year and reviews the risk register during these meetings. For the first time, director-level representatives from donors met in 2017. Directors will continue to meet annually. This meeting provides the opportunity for discussion around risks at a network level.

At an operational level, the Start Fund has continued to refine its spot check tool, piloted in 2016. The tool is designed to ensure compliance and accountability, and tests whether Start Fund awards are being implemented in line with the Start Fund Handbook. In 2017–18, spot checks were carried out in Tajikistan, India and Vietnam, as well as a remote spot check being piloted in Nepal, with a more in-depth review of financial documentation.

In Tajikistan, the anticipation team reviewed the July 2017 response of Mercy Corps in anticipation of flooding and landslides (alert 173). In India, the Start Fund carried out a spot check of Oxfam, Care International, Christian Aid and CAFOD’s August 2017 response to flooding (alert 180). The check included site visits to Oxfam and Christian Aid’s projects in Bihar, as well as a tailored review of the Start Fund project selection process in the country. In Vietnam, the Start Fund undertook a spot check of Care International’s response to flooding and landslides in the north of the country (alert 193) and spot checks and site visits to Catholic Relief Services’ response to typhoon Damrey in the central region (alert 195) and Save the Children’s response to both crises.

The Start Network will become a separate entity from SCUK in 2018. While SCUK will remain the host agency for the Start Fund, it will hold joint accountability with the new Start Network Platform for managing the risk for the Start Fund. During the coming year, as part of our risk management process, we will also review the due diligence of all existing members through an external audit firm.
## Alert summary table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALERT NAME</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>ALERT DATE</th>
<th>ACTIVATED</th>
<th>AMOUNT ALLOCATED</th>
<th>TOTAL AWARDED</th>
<th>AGENCIES AWARDED</th>
<th>AMOUNT AWARDED</th>
<th>FINAL SPEND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>151 Togo (Lassa fever)</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Disease outbreak</td>
<td>2 Apr 2017</td>
<td>Activated</td>
<td>£150,000</td>
<td>£128,004</td>
<td>Plan International</td>
<td>£128,004</td>
<td>£127,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152 Colombia (landslide)</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Landslide</td>
<td>2 Apr 2017</td>
<td>Not activated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153 South Sudan (cholera)</td>
<td>South Sudan</td>
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<td>5 Apr 2017</td>
<td>Not activated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>154 Nigeria (meningitis)</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Disease outbreak</td>
<td>10 Apr 2017</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>155 Colombia (landslide)</td>
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<td>Landslide</td>
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<td>Plan International</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Extreme temperature</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>158 Timor-Leste (anticipation of drought)</td>
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<td>Drought</td>
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<td>War Child</td>
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<td>164 DRC (displacement)</td>
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<td>Conflict</td>
<td>24 May 2017</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>165 Philippines (displacement)</td>
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<td>£257,721</td>
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<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
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<td>Oxfam</td>
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<td>£78,729</td>
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<tr>
<td>166 Sri Lanka (flooding)</td>
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<td>167 Burundi (food insecurity)</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Food insecurity</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>168 South Sudan (cholera)</td>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>Disease outbreak</td>
<td>5 June 2017</td>
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<td>£200,000</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
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<td>£142,787</td>
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<tr>
<td>169 Mexico (hurricane)</td>
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<td>Cyclone</td>
<td>12 June 2017</td>
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<td>£94,124</td>
<td>CADENA</td>
<td>£94,124</td>
<td>£94,124</td>
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<tr>
<td>170 El Salvador (flooding)</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>18 June 2017</td>
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<td>£75,000</td>
<td>£75,000</td>
<td>PRO-VIDA</td>
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<td>171 Ethiopia (armyworm)</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Pest infestation</td>
<td>2 July 2017</td>
<td>Activated</td>
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<td>£100,000</td>
<td>Dorcas Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>172 India (flooding)</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>5 July 2017</td>
<td>Activated</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
<td>£292,562</td>
<td>CAFOD</td>
<td>£80,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>173 Tajikistan (anticipation of flooding and landslides)</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>10 July 2017</td>
<td>Activated</td>
<td>£150,000</td>
<td>£147,000</td>
<td>ACTED</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174 Niger (anticipation of flooding)</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>13 July 2017</td>
<td>Not activated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>175 Kenya (anticipation of election-based violence, conflict and displacement)</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>17 July 2017</td>
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<td>176 India (flooding)</td>
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<td>Flooding</td>
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<tr>
<td>177 Cambodia (flooding)</td>
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<tr>
<td>178 Burkina Faso (flooding)</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>2 Aug 2017</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>179 Sierra Leone (flooding and landslide)</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
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<td>180 India (flooding)</td>
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<td>£400,000</td>
<td>CAFOD</td>
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<td>181 Nepal (flooding)</td>
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<td>£297,923</td>
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<td>AMOUNT AWARDED</td>
<td>FINAL SPEND</td>
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<td>182 Mali (flooding)</td>
<td>Mali</td>
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<td>17 Aug 2017</td>
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<td>183 Occupied Palestinian Territories (electricity crisis)</td>
<td>Occupied Palestinian Territories</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
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| TOTAL | £9,935,000 | £9,066,505 | £9,066,505 | £6,982,569 |
## Start Fund Bangladesh

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<td></td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£94,593</td>
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<td>B003 Bangladesh (flooding - north)</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>16 Aug 2017</td>
<td>Activated</td>
<td>£660,000</td>
<td>£659,722</td>
<td>ActionAid</td>
<td>£109,885</td>
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<td>World Vision</td>
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<td>Care International</td>
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<td>Concern Worldwide</td>
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<td>Plan International</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
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<td>B004 Bangladesh (influx of refugees)</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>24 Sep 2017</td>
<td>Not activated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>B005 Bangladesh (fire incident)</td>
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<td>Fire</td>
<td>16 Mar 2018</td>
<td>Activated</td>
<td>£200,000</td>
<td>£161,760</td>
<td>Caritas Bangladesh</td>
<td>£70,490</td>
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<td>Muslim Aid</td>
<td>£31,354</td>
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**TOTAL** | £1,560,000 | £1,411,065 | **£1,411,065** | £1,231,157
Himaloy Joseph Mree, World Vision, BOO2 Bangladesh

Floods ravaged Sharmin’s home in June 2017. Her family was provided with cash to help them in the aftermath.
Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the many people who offered their time and experience to develop this report.

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Heartfelt thanks to our donors and partners for enabling our vision and our wonderful members and their local partners for delivering it with unwavering dedication. Without our member and our host, Save the Children, the Start Fund would not be able to operate at such scale in its early years; we are most grateful for their ongoing support as the Start Network works to achieve its vision.

Most importantly, to those we have supported in times of crisis who have shared their experiences with us so that we can learn and develop, thank you.
The Start Fund is made better through the following partners: