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1. Introduction

1.1. Context

Two major earthquakes, magnitude 7.7 and 7.6 respectively, hit southeastern Türkiye and northwestern Syria on 6 February 2023. In the subsequent three weeks until 1 March, 14,000 aftershocks were recorded in the area, including a magnitude 6.4 earthquake on 20 February in Defne, in the Hatay province of Türkiye. Thirty days after the initial earthquakes, on 10 March, the total number of affected people was recorded at 13.6 million, with 50,600 deaths, 124,000 persons injured, 2.2 million homes damaged and 2.1 million people displaced within the affected provinces.¹

Pre-existing crises and compounding factors worsened the impact of the earthquakes on the affected population. At the time the earthquakes hit, 4 million people in northwest Syria were already in need of humanitarian assistance, including 2.9 million internally displaced persons of whom 1.8 million were in camps. Communities were also facing a cholera outbreak, harsh winter conditions including heavy rain and snow, and continued insecurity resulting from the ongoing conflict.²

Humanitarian needs resulting from the earthquakes covered all humanitarian sectors, including immediate need for shelter, health care, food and winterization items and cash assistance.³ The protection cluster reported a range of risks and impacts including high numbers of unaccompanied or separated children, trauma and psychosocial distress and increased risk of harassment of women and girls at collective shelters.⁴

The UN launched Flash Appeals on 14 February for Syria (\$397.6 million) and 16 February for Türkiye (\$1 billion).⁵ The response in Türkiye was led by the government and coordinated by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD). In Syria, ongoing conflict between the government and a number of opposition groups were, and still are, battling for territorial control, making humanitarian access and coordination more difficult. Cross-border convoys from Türkiye were re-opened on 9 February, although logistical and safety concerns remain in accessing the border due to the ongoing conflict and geopolitical tensions.

H2H Network's preliminary assessments identified five key areas where H2H Member services could enhance the quality and effectiveness of the response:

- **Providing data collection and analysis** related to the humanitarian consequences of the earthquakes, including disaggregated priority needs, assessments of severity across geographical area, new displacement flows and locations, impact on public services, markets, infrastructures, etc.
- **Supporting communication and engagement with affected communities** in line with global standards and establishing strong accountability mechanisms as the outset of the emergency response

1 Data Friendly Space (2023), 'Syria Earthquake March 2023, Government-Controlled Areas, Bi-weekly highlights – 10/03/2023'. The data cited covers both southeastern Türkiye and northwestern Syria.

2 OCHA (2023) 'North-Western Syria: Situation Report (6 February 2023)'.

3 ACAPS (2023) 'Türkiye/Syria Profiles of earthquake-affected governorates'.

4 Protection Cluster (2023) 'Rapid Protection Assessment Findings: Syria Earthquake, February 2023 Protection Sector Report'.

5 OCHA (2023) 'Flash Appeal: Syrian Arab Republic Earthquake (February - May 2023)'; OCHA (2023) 'Flash Appeal: Türkiye Earthquake (February - May 2023)'.

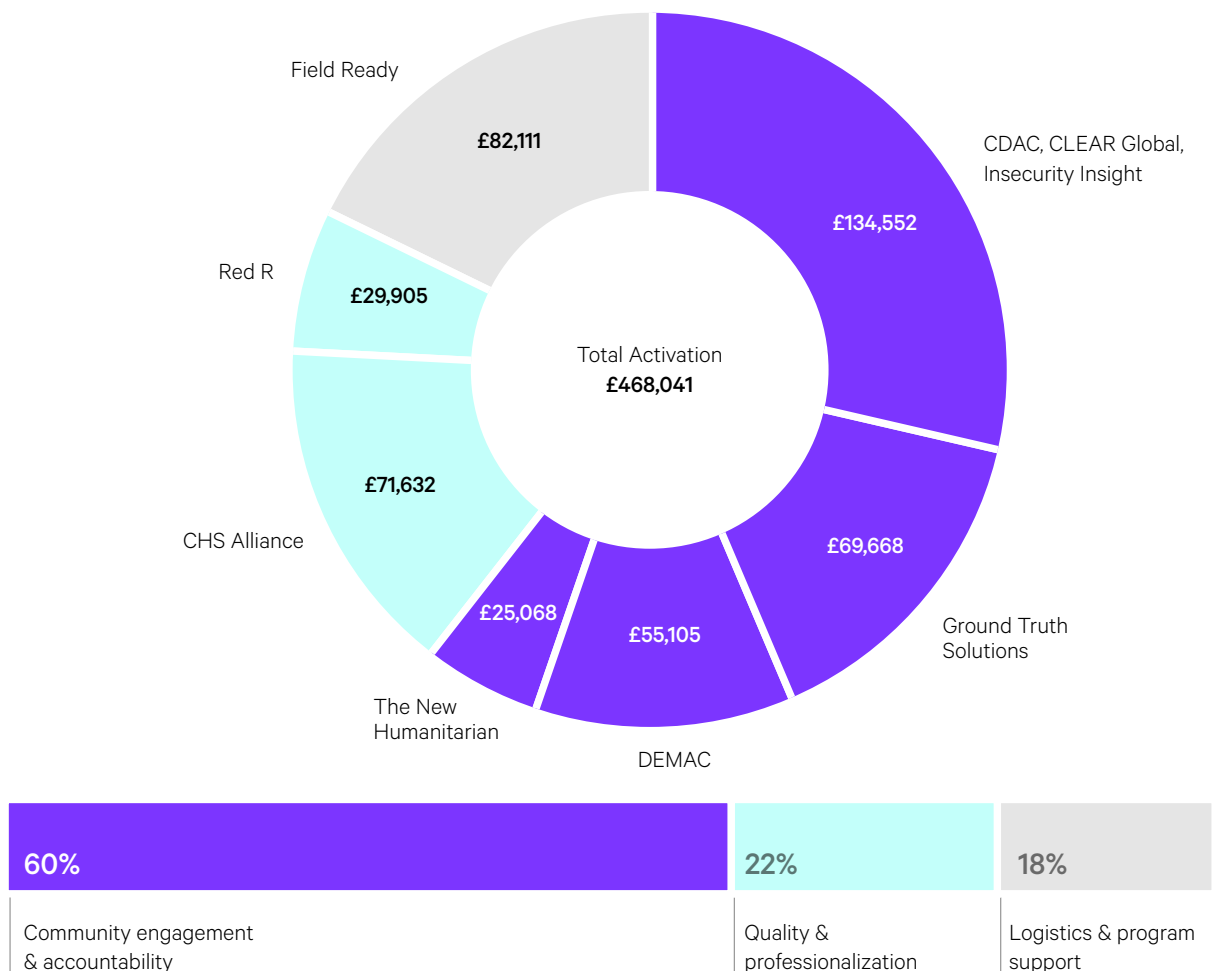
- **Ensuring prioritization** of the most vulnerable and inclusion of marginalized groups
- **Analysing how complex security dynamics**, restrictions on humanitarian access or the politicization of aid could affect the independent and impartial delivery of humanitarian assistance
- **Addressing logistical challenges** associated with the production, transportation or distribution of goods as supply chains were disrupted and infrastructure damaged

1.2. Fund activation

In this context, the H2H Fund launched its Türkiye/Syria activation on 23 February 2023, with the call for proposals issued on 27 February. Seven projects were funded, from a total of ten proposals received, with one project including three separate H2H Member agencies (CDAC, CLEAR Global and Insecurity Insight), meaning nine H2H Members received funding in total.

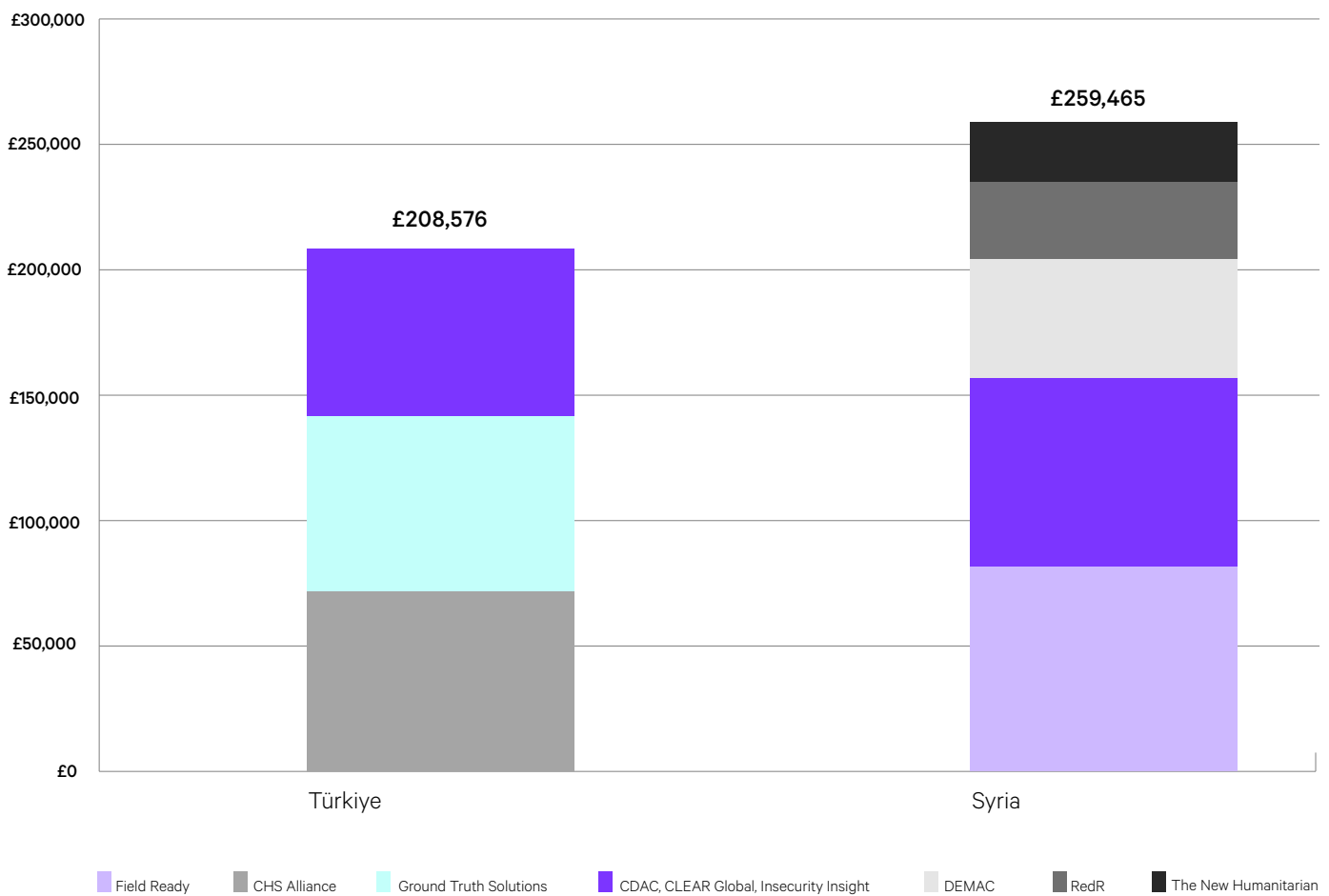
A total of £468,041 was awarded across the seven projects. Implementation took place between 15 March and 15 August 2023, with all seven projects starting and being implemented concurrently, although some were granted no-cost extensions and completed in September. Multiple H2H Service Areas were deployed in this response, with 60% of the funding going to **community engagement & accountability**, 20% to **quality & professionalization**, and 20% to **logistics & program support**.

Figure 1: Fund allocation by service area



The funds were split between activities in southeastern Türkiye (45%) and northwestern Syria (55%). The largest project, implemented by CDAC, CLEAR Global and Insecurity Insight, covered both countries, while the remaining six projects covered either Türkiye or Syria alone. Ground Truth Solutions and CHS Alliance focused only on supporting the response in Türkiye, while Field Ready, DEMAC, RedR and The New Humanitarian focused only on supporting the response in Syria.

Figure 2: Fund allocation by country



2. Case study purpose and method

2.1. Objectives

As part of its monitoring, evaluation and learning activities, the H2H Network aims to measure and document how the services and resources produced by its member organizations contributed to improving the quality, effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian response in the contexts where it activated its Fund.

To this end, this Case study aims to provide evidence on the results, effects and achievements following the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria 2023. It features examples of changes to the humanitarian response which can be reasonably said to have been influenced by both the individual projects, themselves, and the wider fund activation as a whole. In particular, evidence of improvements to the quality, effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian response has been identified, in line with the strategic objectives of the H2H Fund.

2.2. Methodology

The Case study was constructed on the basis of the pre-existing MEAL resources developed by the H2H Fund. These include a MEAL framework outlining the key elements of the Case study data collection with associated information sources, a key informant interview guide, a coding table and a Case study template.

The following information sources were used for this Case Study:

Table 1: Information sources

Project documents		71
Funding documents (8):	Call for proposals	1
	Project proposals	7
Project deliverables (49):	Thematic reports, media reports, briefing notes, sitreps and datasets	49
Fund management documents (12):	Stakeholder engagement plan	1
	Contacts list	1
	Dissemination plan	1
	Project narrative reports	7
	H2H Fund narrative report	1
MEAL documents (2):	Learning workshop meeting minutes	1
	Country visit report	1
Key informant interviews		22
	Staff from H2H Member organizations	7
	End-users and coordination actors	15

All key informants were identified by the consultant in consultation with the H2H Network and its members. H2H Member organization staff were selected on the basis of their involvement in the design and implementation of the H2H-funded activities. End-users were selected on the basis of their use of the products and services developed with the support of the H2H Fund. Coordination actors were selected on the basis of their engagement with H2H Members regarding the gap analyses and dissemination activities associated with the products and services in question.

All information gathered from the above information sources was compiled using a coding table structured against the H2H MEAL framework and Case study reporting structure. The resulting information is presented in the following section, indexed against the H2H Service Areas deployed in this activation.

2.3. Limitations

The Case study invited 30 end-users and coordination partners for interview, in addition to the interviews held with H2H Member organizations. In total, 15 end-users and coordination partners were interviewed. The main reason cited for non-responsivity was saturation and availability, particularly for local responders active inside northwestern Syria at the time of the Case study. This carries the risk of losing the voices of local end-users and coordination actors in the assessment of the effectiveness of the H2H Network's work. As a result, the consultant prioritized end-users from local organizations and civil society networks who were able to report observed effects of H2H Network's activities across their membership.¹

In addition, this Case study relied on secondary data review combined with key informant interviews. This limited the ability to record the effects of H2H Fund's activities design with a wider audience in mind, such as The New Humanitarian's media reports on the impacts of the earthquakes and the issues arising from the response. Likewise, the absence of follow-up surveys for trainees attending RedR's modules on earthquake response make it difficult to move beyond anecdotal examples of changes in knowledge, attitude and practice. Future case studies might be best served by designing and embedding tailored MEAL approaches at the point of project design, to minimise the reliance on ex-post key informant interviews.

1 10 of the 15 end-users interviewed were from local organisations.

3. H2H Services

3.1. Community engagement & accountability

3.1.1. Services and resources produced

IN TÜRKIYE AND SYRIA, three H2H Member organizations (CLEAR Global, CDAC Network and Insecurity Insight) worked together to produce a combination of products and services aimed at improving community engagement and accountability for earthquake affected communities. This included:

- **Two ecosystem mappings** of communication and community engagement across the earthquake response, one in Türkiye and one in Syria
- **A lessons learned briefing document** on communication and community engagement efforts and results, both at onset in February and six months after the earthquakes struck in August
- **A multilingual toolkit** of 127 practical tools for improved accountability, safeguarding and community engagement
- **An expanded Protection and Accountability to Affected People glossary** in Turkish, Kurdish, Kurmanji and Arabic
- **5 social media monitoring reports** covering attitudes of affected populations towards the earthquake response and issues arising from it

Table 2: Community engagement and accountability resources produced by the Türkiye/Syria activation

Resource	Type	H2H member
Protection and Accountability to Affected People Glossary	Toolkit	CLEAR Global
Türkiye – Syria Multilingual Toolkit – CLEAR Global Trello	Toolkit	CLEAR Global
Lessons on communication, community engagement and accountability for the Türkiye–Syria earthquake response	Thematic report	CDAC
The Türkiye–Syria earthquake response six months on: Lessons on communication, community engagement and accountability	Thematic report	CDAC
An analysis of the communication and engagement ecosystem in earthquake-affected northwest Syria	Thematic report	CDAC
An analysis of the communication and engagement ecosystem in earthquake-affected Türkiye	Thematic report	CDAC
The Role of Social Media in the Spreading of the Turkish Red Crescent Tent Sale Story in Türkiye	Social media monitoring report	Insecurity Insight
Attitudes to the Aid Response to the February 2023 Türkiye Earthquake	Social media monitoring report	Insecurity Insight
Earthquake-affected Populations in Syria Weary of Corruption and Favoritism in Aid Distribution	Social media monitoring report	Insecurity Insight
United Nations Targeted by Allegations of Complicity with the Assad Regime	Social media monitoring report	Insecurity Insight
Attitudes Towards Border Crossings Openings in Syria for Aid Convoys	Social media monitoring report	Insecurity Insight

The products were designed through consultation with a number of agencies involved in the earthquake response, and they were guided by a steering committee of key response partners. The steering committee included representatives from OCHA, UNICEF, WHO, IFRC and other CDAC and H2H Member organizations. Key design decisions including the identification of relevant resource for the translation of the toolkit and the scoping of the social media reports, were made through consultation of relevant coordination bodies, including the Protection, Accountability to Affected Population and Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Groups. The ecosystem analysis was likewise informed by a consultative process throughout inception and implementation, including joint mapping, feedback and validation sessions with the relevant coordination bodies, including OCHA Northwest Syria, UNHCR and the Accountability to Affected Populations Task Teams for both Türkiye and northwestern Syria.

Beyond being publicly accessible to all humanitarian actors through websites and various humanitarian digital portals, the products were disseminated to humanitarian actors who had previously been involved in consultation, collaboration and co-design of the project. CDAC's work with the Task Teams and coordination bodies involved in the response in northwestern Syria and Türkiye created specific avenues for dissemination that were leveraged at project-end through tailored mailing lists and engagement approaches. AAP leads, Task Force and Task Team leads and in-country partners who engaged in the ecosystem mapping became core partners in the dissemination efforts. This is reflected in the requests for CDAC to continue working with OCHA and other partners to strengthen communication, community engagement and accountability (CCEA) after project closure, as well as to update the ecosystem analysis as the response evolves. CLEAR Global made the multilingual toolkit publicly available for free download online and shared through local mailing lists to over 420 responding organizations in Türkiye and 250 in Syria, while the Insecurity Insights reports have been made available online and had, at project-end, 6,753 recorded users.

IN TÜRKIYE, Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) produced a qualitative research report on perceptions of affected persons in the earthquake response. The report, titled “‘We constantly worry, we are always on edge’ Perceptions of the earthquake response in Türkiye,” highlighted key issues and experiences of individuals living in different parts of the areas affected by the earthquakes. It was designed to help humanitarian responders understand needs, priorities and expectations, and to design implement and evaluate programs that were responsive to the unfolding needs of affected population groups in Türkiye. The report presented findings and recommendations across six key themes: community priorities; participation and feedback; information; access and safety; fairness and inclusion; localization.

The research report was designed through a structured scoping mission in earthquake affected regions of Türkiye, which included consultation of key response actors and identification of gaps and challenges in the pre-existing needs assessments activities. The scoping mission demonstrated the need for analysis and perceptions data collection, focusing on communities perception of the humanitarian response, alongside the needs assessment activities being conducted by international humanitarian actors. At the time of the H2H Fund's call for proposal, several needs assessment activities were underway, including through AFAD, OCHA and REACH, among others. But the assessment methods being deployed focused primarily on key informant interviews and desk research, without including the types of perception data that can maximize community engagement or help responses to be sensitive to expectations, priorities and unfolding needs of affected people.

Moreover, the scoping exercise recorded NGO concerns of ‘fear and panic’ among communities, which had the potential to undermine humanitarian response efforts if left unaddressed. The size and diversity of the affected communities was noted as a contributory factor, with diverse needs across multiple categories of displacement including, for example: those who had lost homes and were in shelter; those whose homes were still standing but had not yet been declared safe for habitation or repaired;

and Syrian refugees facing discrimination before the earthquakes and increased protection risks since. Addressing the diversity of perceptions regarding needs and priority risks was, therefore, understood as being especially important in this response.

The scoping exercise notably recorded an appetite for ongoing, independent perceptions tracking as the response moves from early-onset response towards longer-term support. Such a service could help to provide nuanced and disaggregated data on how the response is being perceived across communities and locations, as well as identifying emerging needs and risks as they are experienced by affected persons. The use of a local partner for data collection in the initial qualitative research conducted by Ground Truth Solutions has helped to build capacity for such an ongoing perceptions tracking service, but further funding would be required to make this happen. At the point of the Case study data collection, no such funding had yet been identified.

The findings of the research were disseminated through workshops and presentations to key coordination bodies involved in the response. GTS presented the research findings to the Accountability to Affected Populations Task Team, the International NGO forum, National NGO forum and at monthly donor meetings. A workshop was held with OCHA and other response actors in July 2023, to help identify sustainable recommendations for the response following the findings emerging through the research. The research is also publicly available on the GTS website, ReliefWeb, ALNAP and the IASC Accountability and Inclusion resource libraries.

IN SYRIA, DEMAC partnered with the Syrian National Alliance (SNA) to provide human resources in the area of information management and support the collection, management and sharing of information about the activities undertaken by the Alliance's members and how they were contributing to the response. The partnership was unusual in the degree to which the international agency, DEMAC, took a demand-led approach to their partnership with SNA. Building off a pre-existing relationship between the two organizations, DEMAC was able to ask SNA at the outset what they needed help with. DEMAC then sought funding to meet their needs, in this case through the H2H Fund appeal. SNA provides approximately two-thirds of the relief in northwestern Syria, but it struggles to access funding to conduct analysis of the 4Ws (Who is doing What, Where and When). This hampers coordination efforts among the Alliance's network, and reduces the advocacy potential towards the international community.

DEMAC worked with SNA to produce a range of resources that helped to increase coordination and awareness of their activities both internally and internationally. These included:

- 7 Situation Reports (SitReps) covering the 4Ws of SNA member responses to the earthquakes in Syria
- A brief on lessons learned, best practices and challenges from SNA members, in both Arabic and English
- Training workshops and information management platform to provide capacity development support to SNA members that could, with ongoing funding, support longer term coordination and advocacy efforts across SNA
- A real-time review of the Syrian diaspora's response to the earthquake, in both Arabic and English
- A snapshot of the diaspora's response to the earthquakes

In addition, The New Humanitarian (TNH) produced 16 separate multimedia reports, ranging from personal human stories from people affected by the earthquakes to analysis of the challenges hampering aid financing and delivery by experts on the ground. Editorial guidance for the work was led by TNH's Middle East Editor, as well as the Managing and Executive Editors. TNH also utilized a pre-existing network of local journalists in Syria, including reports, photographers, videographers and translators, to help craft multimedia content tailored to international audiences.

Table 3: Multimedia reports produced by The New Humanitarian in the Türkiye/Syria activation

Resource

[Making room for aid workers' own grief in the Türkiye-Syria quake response](#)

[How the earthquakes could spark progress for disaster risk reduction in Syria](#)

[‘It’s because we are Syrians’: Two months on, earthquakes leave refugees in Türkiye exposed and fearful](#)

[Snapshots: Syrian photographers capture life after the quakes](#)

[Who helps the helpers? Earthquakes put spotlight on aid workers' needs](#)

[Hunger crisis in northwest Syria compounded by quakes, inflation, and aid cuts](#)

[Is it too much to ask that Syrians receive the aid they need?](#)

[Northwest Syria aid likely to survive threats, for now](#)

[Syria cross-border aid under threat as Russia, Western powers compete at UN Security Council](#)

[The heavy toll of violence at the Syria-Türkiye border](#)

[Six months on, Syrian photographers capture life after quakes](#)

[Earthquake orphanage: Six months on, Syrian photographers capture life after quakes](#)

[New homes go up: Six months on, Syrian photographers capture life after the quakes](#)

[Life in the camps: Six months on, Syrian photographers capture life after the quakes](#)

[Rehabilitation: Six months on, Syrian photographers capture life after the quakes](#)

[What lessons can be drawn from the international earthquake response in Syria?](#)

Content included video snapshots of life in Idlib, both shortly after the earthquakes in May and six months later in August. Content often featured projects by local NGOs and aid workers, highlighting both the disparate needs arising from the earthquakes and the work being done to respond to them. TNH also published an opinion piece written by the Director of the Syrian Civil Defense “White Helmets” on cross-border assistance from Türkiye, as well as how the disaster had exacerbated pre-existing sources of discrimination among displaced populations and host communities.

Media content was disseminated through TNH’s online and social media channels, and it had notably high readership. Immediate coverage following the earthquakes was among the most read content with 2,800 views, while content produced after that averaged between 1,000 and 3,000 page views per story. Influential individuals who engaged with their content online included the head of OCHA Syria, the Director General Elect of UN Migration, the Senior Crisis Advisor at Amnesty International and two senior independent Middle East analysts.

3.1.2. Effect on the response

IN TURKIYE AND SYRIA, H2H Member activities contributed to improved harmonization and prioritization of CCEA mechanisms, communication with specific linguistic communities and understanding of specific risk patterns arising from communities' perceptions of aid.

CDAC's work on mapping and analyzing the CCEA ecosystem was credited with an improved understanding, harmonization and prioritization of CCEA efforts. Accountability to Affected Population Working Groups in both Türkiye and Syria noted that mapping the pre-existing CCEA efforts of response actors proved challenging, given the number of distinct and sometimes divergent resources, messages and organizational practices involved. CDAC's support provided both additional human resources to conduct this mapping effort, as well as a degree of independence which improved the quality, credibility and comprehensiveness of the work, beyond that which could be achieved by operational agencies themselves. This, in turn, was cited as an important factor in the ability of key coordination bodies to advocate for continued prioritization of CCEA practices across the national and international response mechanisms, particularly as the response moved away from early onset efforts towards longer-term transition planning.

CLEAR Global's toolkit and translated glossary allowed responding agencies to improve their communication channels with affected populations in Arabic, Kurdish and Farsi. The key messages on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment were cited by humanitarian actors as particularly crucial for community engagement and safeguarding efforts with Kurdish and Arabic speaking populations, while Farsi-speaking refugees in urban centers of Türkiye, including Ankara and Istanbul, benefited from the dissemination of the resources through local civil society organizations. CHS Alliance also used the glossary in the development of their own emergency guide.

Insecurity Insight's work was reportedly used as briefing material by security managers working in organizations responding to the earthquakes. The resources identifying attitudes towards the aid response, and criticisms around potential corruption, favoritism or complicity with the Assad regime were all cited for helping security managers brief program teams on possible risks to aid operations. Uptake and use of the information collated was piecemeal, however, with only some security and program teams citing clear consideration of the risks associated with the sentiments covered in the reports. In theory, the use of a project partnership model whereby organizations such as CDAC Network have stronger linkages with the humanitarian architecture, can help mitigate this risk. However, there was no clear evidence that CDAC Network generated more widespread or system-wide appreciation of the work produced by Insecurity Insight in this instance..

IN TÜRKIYE, the data collected and analyzed by GTS provided humanitarian actors with insights into the experiences of affected populations that were not available elsewhere. Quite a wide range of humanitarian organizations engaged with the GTS research in Türkiye. These included UN coordination bodies, such as OCHA and the Resident Coordinator's Office and Area-Based Coordination teams, as well as individual UN agencies involved in delivering response activities such as UNHCR, FAO and IOM. Wider coordination bodies were also engaged, including the Accountability to Affected Populations Task Team members, the Disability and Inclusion Task Team and Key Refugee Population Sub-Working Group members. Donors, international and national NGOs also engaged with the research, whether through participation in dissemination workshops or independently engaging with the products. Feedback from these constituency groups demonstrated an appreciation for the research and an agreement that it provided a unique insight into affected population experiences and perceptions, which wasn't available from any other sources at the time.

Coordination actors involved in the validation of findings and crafting of recommendations considered the research unique and valuable to their ongoing programming and coordination efforts.

Representatives from donor organizations, UN agencies and NGOs all noted that the findings were particularly useful to them as they planned ongoing and forward operations. Feedback included an appreciation for the granularity of the findings and recommendations, clarity and operability of the recommendations, and the pertinence of the major areas of findings for their response planning and decision-making processes.

Several actors expressed surprise at the amount and quality of perceptions data that was collected by GTS and its local partner TK-APS.

The data collection context was particularly challenging in post-earthquake southeastern Türkiye. Some actors had assumed that the GTS research would struggle to collect meaningful critical feedback against a backdrop of severe need and the pre-existing challenges observed within the Turkish system regarding community feedback and accountability. These actors voiced surprise that GTS, with its local partner acting as a data collection agent, managed to collect such honest and granular information regarding perceptions of the ongoing challenges, needs and in some cases critique of the response provided by both international and national actors.

It remains unclear how programming was adapted in response to the recommendations made by GTS.

The Case study team used key informant interviews to speak with three end-users of the GTS products, as well as with coordination actors who were familiar with the products from a distance. No examples were cited of program-level changes or decisions being made on the basis of the research recommendations. This does not mean, however, that the research did not inform decision-making in the wider sense, or that specific examples of decisions made do exist but were not captured during the key informant process. A combination of wider Case study data collection and ongoing, embedded, data collection tools, would likely provide a stronger evidence base for measuring impact in future activations.

IN SYRIA, DEMAC's support to information management provided to the Syrian National Alliance had clear and significant impacts on the capacity of a major network of local responders to deliver coordinated, quality response to the earthquakes.

SNA members were highly appreciative of the resources from DEMAC to build information management capacity within SNA, as well as to directly increase their awareness of the 4Ws across their network during the project implementation period. Members of SNA also noted the value of this work in helping them demonstrate to the international community that the diaspora community was able to provide an effective and high-quality response to the earthquakes in northwestern Syria. Lastly, the information management platform was highly appreciated by SNA members, although follow-up funding for the platform had not yet been secured at the time of the Case study data collection.

The New Humanitarian played a role as a platform for discussion and advocacy on key policy issues related to the earthquake response and the evolving humanitarian needs after the earthquakes occurred.

Local actors such as the NorthWest Syria NGO forum, and international actors such as UN OCHA and the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinate for the Syria Crisis specifically reported using The New Humanitarian as a platform to reach humanitarian practitioners and decision-makers involved in the response. The articles published with H2H Fund's support contributed to the presence of The New Humanitarian in the policy dialogue following the earthquakes, and therefore had a potential – though difficult to evidence – role in building the visibility of this platform and encouraging actors such as these to engage in this way. This is of particular value given the breadth of The New Humanitarian's readership, which enables it to bring together the voices of diverse stakeholders, including UN officials, civil society actors, international donors and local and national governments.

3.2. Quality & professionalization

3.2.1. Services and resources produced

IN TURKIYE, the CHS Alliance provided support to humanitarian organizations in meeting quality and accountability standards in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). The CHS Alliance provided a range of tools and resources for humanitarian organizations to enhance quality and accountability of their activities. This included training on CHS standards for Turkish NGOs, some of which were tailored to WASH and Food, Security and Livelihood (FSL) sectors. In addition, CHS provided a Helpdesk for NGOs to raise questions and request support on quality and accountability during implementation, and they developed a pilot guide with key messages and posters.

The resources were designed primarily by drawing on CHS's pre-existing materials, although consultation with the AAP Working Group, WASH and FSL clusters and the wider CHS Alliance network in Türkiye helped to tailor the products to the local context. This coordination included the targeting and selection of participants. Training content, however, was largely derived from CHS's pre-existing model, although it was tailored to fit the needs of specific sectors in the response, most notably WASH and FSL.

CHS worked with coordination actors to identify training participants while leveraging their pre-existing networks for dissemination of written products and raising awareness of the helpdesk facility. CHS Alliance identified training participants in coordination with WASH and FSL sector clusters. The pilot guide, which was published seven months after the earthquakes hit, has potential value for future preparedness exercises and future earthquakes in the region, and it was made available on the CHS website. The helpdesk support service was made available for local responders through CHS's networks.

IN SYRIA, RedR delivered online and face-to-face training modules for engineers in Syria, covering rapid damage assessments, debris management, protection, communication and community engagement, needs assessment and cash transfers. The training was delivered in partnership with a local NGO, Violet Organization, and was designed in consultation with the Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) cluster. Some aspects of the training, particularly the online modules, were drawn from pre-existing RedR content, with only limited tailoring to local needs or consideration of participant selection. Other aspects, such as the face-to-face training for engineers, were subject to increased co-design and delivery. This included the selection and targeting of participants with the SNFI cluster, and the delivery of training to engineers in Azaz, northwestern Syria, through Violet Organization.

3.2.2. Effect on the response

IN TURKIYE, the training on quality and accountability standards had some positive impacts on local humanitarian organizations' ability to deliver support in line with Core Humanitarian Standards, although the follow-up impacts beyond the training sessions were limited. Training participants gave positive feedback, particularly on the application of the CHS to WASH and FSL sector responses. For many trainees, this was not the first time they had encountered the CHS themselves, but it was the first time they had received in-person training on how to apply them in their organizational and geographic contexts. Some trainees noted that the training had the positive impact of helping them to better understand the implications of the CHS in a live response, and to increase their awareness and attention to the standards as they planned and implemented responses to the earthquakes. Beyond the trainings, however, there was less evidence of tangible effects on the response at the time of writing. This may be partly due to the delayed publication of the pilot guide, which was completed in September 2023. This means that its use is more likely to be evidenced in future preparedness activities rather than response to the earthquakes that occurred in February 2023. Beyond the guide, CHS provided a helpdesk function for local actors. Anecdotal evidence suggests that not many local organizations were aware of this facility or its potential value to them.

IN SYRIA, the training delivered to engineers on structural damage assessments was highly rated by participants, with positive implications for the capacity of local actors to support recovery and the response to the needs of people whose homes were either destroyed or damaged in the earthquakes. Training participants noted that the training on structural damage assessments improved their knowledge and capacity to conduct damage assessments following an earthquake. This is knowledge and capacity that remains in the local communities and has the potential to be leveraged again in any future earthquake response. But the training provided on needs assessments, which occurred several months after the earthquakes occurred, the wider project management and train-the-trainer training, was less positively received, due to a perceived lack of relevance for the participating engineers. Lastly, participant selection was, belatedly, done in coordination with the SNFI cluster, but some representatives argued that earlier consultation of the cluster would have helped facilitate the tailoring of content and selection of participants to a greater extent.

3.3. Logistics, security & program support

3.3.1. Services and resources produced

IN SYRIA, Field Ready provided urgent healthcare facility support following the devastation caused by the earthquake. This helped to overcome supply chain difficulties in getting new medical devices into Syria, while simultaneously improving local capacity and availability of medical spare parts, software fixes and specialized training for healthcare and technical support staff.

Field Ready conducted a Rapid Needs Assessment through on-site visits, and it identified the need to swiftly restore critical services and improve healthcare access in the earthquake affected regions of northwestern Syria. The resulting project focused on supporting the restoration of medical equipment and capacity across nine healthcare facilities in the region. Activities included:

- Hiring and onboarding engineering and technical staff to support the medical device repair and maintenance in the field hospitals identified in northwestern Syria
- Collecting, repairing and returning broken devices from the healthcare facilities
- Training healthcare and technical staff on how to operate and maintain the repaired devices
- Conducting follow-up checks on the devices six weeks after their return

The project was designed in consultation with Field Ready's pre-existing network of partners and agencies in the region. Field Ready has been operating in northwestern Syria for a number of years, and has built up a network of humanitarian organizations with whom it consulted for the design of this project. In total, the Rapid Needs Assessment identified eight different organizations, including both local and international actors, who were engaged in support via the nine healthcare facilities. Consultation with these organizations helped Field Ready to identify healthcare needs and entry points for their team to operate.

Furthermore, Field Ready's needs assessments actually fed into the response strategy of clusters operating in northwest Syria. After completing a successful first phase, Field Ready went on to conduct a second needs assessment, as part of a successful request for a cost extension, to increase the number of medical devices repaired. This second assessment was then disseminated to a range of humanitarian organizations working in northwest Syria and helped inform the response strategy of both the health and early recovery clusters.

3.3.2. Effect on the response

IN SYRIA, Field Ready had clear and demonstrable results on the capacity of local healthcare facilities to provide healthcare to the earthquake-affected population. This included:

- Restoring 67 critical medical devices that had been broken, and were used to provide medical services to earthquake-affected population groups
- Locally manufacturing 27 essential spare parts for the broken devices
- Training over 50 healthcare staff in the capacity to operate medical devices, thereby improving their safe and proper use
- Training over 35 technical staff at healthcare facilities in how to diagnose and fix issues arising with the devices in the future.

In total, it is estimated by Field Ready that over 33,000 individuals benefitted from the improved healthcare capacity generated through the repaired devices and associated technical support capacity. Staff at the healthcare facilities supported these claims, arguing that the support of Field Ready was the only factor in restoring service to these individuals at this time. It was noted that importing such devices through cross-border delivery was not an effective or efficient approach, and that without Field Ready's support, healthcare centers would not have been able to request replacement devices on a case-by-case basis, as is offered by Field Ready.

In addition, Field Ready's work helped healthcare facilities to focus budget expenditure on life-saving supplies. Local healthcare organizations noted that Field Ready's support allowed them avoid spending money on new and costly equipment where repair by Field Ready was an option instead. This was then translated into increased expenditure on life-saving supplies that increased their capacity to serve people in need of medical assistance.

4. H2H Fund

The scope of the products and services offered by members of the H2H Network in the Türkiye/Syria earthquake response was broad, and met a variety of needs demonstrated by the international and local response communities. The specificities of the response across two distinct environments, with divergent coordination challenges observed between Türkiye and Syria, called for a wide-ranging response that prioritized local capacity where possible.

The approach to local partnerships demonstrated by DEMAC, the Syrian National Alliance, Field Ready and its network of local partner healthcare centers, was a clear value-add for the ability of the greater H2H Network to respond to local needs on a demand-led basis. For the Syrian National Alliance, this meant they were able to request specific support to an area of critical need for them and their member organizations; while for Field Ready's network of healthcare facilities, it enabled them to request support in fixing specific medical devices on a case-by-case basis, rather than seeking delivery of replacement devices at higher cost while being subject to longer delivery timeframes.

More broadly, the support provided to local organizations inside Syria by H2H Members in this response has the potential to mitigate some of the damage caused by the instability of cross-border aid from Türkiye into Syria, and the unclear role that the UN will play in this process into the future. The role of diaspora organizations, such as the members of the Syrian National Alliance, has been strengthened through the information management support provided by DEMAC. The potential for funding of the information management platform designed in this project could have clear beneficial impact on the local capacity to coordinate and deliver high quality humanitarian support into the future. Likewise, the increased knowledge and capacity of technical staff to operate critical medical devices provided by Field Ready's work, as well as the capacity of engineers to conduct damage risk assessment of earthquake-hit shelters and municipal structures, all provide the potential for increased local capacity in response to future crises.

The timeliness of the fund was generally understood to have been good, which opened the opportunity for H2H Members to embed approaches to CCEA, quality and effectiveness early on in the response. The fund activation was made within three weeks of the first earthquakes and just over one week after the UN's Flash Appeals were launched. This allowed H2H Members to influence the CCEA mapping, harmonization and prioritization of humanitarian organizations, improve communication with minority linguistic communities, and respond to the perceptions of affected persons to the response efforts. In the case of Ground Truth Solutions, the early-phase activation gave them space to fill a critical information gap regarding community feedback and perceptions on the response - something rarely achieved in the Turkish context before the H2H Fund activation was launched. Further, almost all H2H Members mirrored the timeliness of the fund activation with the delivery of their products and services, which helped to increase take-up and use by the wider humanitarian response in the months following the earthquakes.

5. Conclusion

The H2H Fund activation following the Türkiye/Syria earthquakes provided a comprehensive set of products and services to foster improved communication, community engagement and accountability among international actors involved in the response, while improving quality and supporting gaps in logistics and program implementation. This included an ecosystem mapping that provided clear value to international actors seeking to foster a response rooted in communication and community engagement.

In the case of DEMAC and Field Ready, the products were designed using unique approaches to local partnership, which were then associated with demonstrably high levels of local ownership, engagement and uptake. Gaps in the international response were filled effectively, most clearly regarding the analysis of community perceptions of the response provided by Ground Truth Solutions, but also regarding the translation of key response tools into a number of relevant languages for the affected populations by CLEAR Global.

Notably, the benefits of the H2H Fund activation were registered equally by local partners in both the Turkish and northwest Syrian contexts. As noted above, this is particularly important given the instability of cross-border aid programs from Türkiye into northwest Syria. The roughly 50-50 split in funding allocations contributed to this fact, as did the inclusion of a large multi-member project spanning the response in both contexts. But it also speaks to the high degree of local contextualisation seen in the project designs in both countries, where the needs and constraints of Syrian diaspora organizations and healthcare facilities were given a central place in the program designs; as were the specific challenges of community feedback in Türkiye.

A clear potential for follow-on activities was observed in some instances, particularly regarding the information management platform created by DEMAC for the Syrian National Alliance and the ongoing needs of healthcare facilities operating in northwest Syria. The community perceptions data collected by Ground Truth Solutions also demonstrated strong potential for longer-term rollout, and several actors suggested interest in using such data in the longer term in the Turkish context. To date, however, these remain opportunities to be filled rather than examples of successful follow-up programming established.

Lastly, the timeliness of the H2H Fund activation was a demonstrable added-value for the quality of the response. By launching the activation early, H2H Network created the space for members to embed communication, community engagement and accountability processes at the outset of the response, as well as to provide vital logistical support to response teams inside northwest Syria at the earliest possible opportunity.

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To learn more about the H2H Network and its fund, please visit our website:

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