



Use of Flexible and Immediate Response Account Funding in 2020

2020 was undoubtedly one of the most challenging years in the history of the World Food Programme (WFP).

As conflict, climate change and economic slumps continued to drive chronic levels of food insecurity across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a crisis multiplier, wrecking yet more lives and livelihoods in its wake.

This presentation looks at the essential role of flexible funding in responding to these unprecedented challenges in 2020.

Flexible funding allows WFP to determine the country programme or the activities where the contribution will be directed, as well as how the funding is used. It allows for a fast response to urgent needs and investment in fragile, potentially volatile situations and emergencies, as well as disaster preparedness.

Back in April 2020, Executive Director David Beasley warned the United Nations Security Council of a looming hunger pandemic threatening three-dozen countries, with 270 million people facing possible acute food insecurity and famine.

Sadly, this prediction proved to be accurate, as by the end of the year we witnessed an 80 percent increase in people facing acute hunger worldwide compared to the pre-COVID period.

Record level of financial support

Partners responded to WFP's call with a record level of financial support of US\$8.47 billion, allowing us to reach 115.5 million people and effectively helping us to avert a humanitarian catastrophe.

Support came from various sources: governments, private sector and International Financial Institutions, and in different shapes and forms. WFP appreciates its partners' responsiveness to WFP requests in many countries, which in itself embodies an open and flexible approach to the partnership. Very importantly, we could count on flexible funding from 32 of our partners to support, augment and complement our efforts, where and when it was most required.

Our effectiveness in using food assistance as a means of building pathways to peace and prosperity was recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020, an award that would have been impossible without the loyal backing of all our donors.

A flexible and dynamic approach



As a voluntary-funded organization, WFP relies on every dollar received to ensure the continuity of its operations and programmes. We highly appreciate the full range of support provided in varying forms by our partners. Out of WFP's total budget of US\$8.47 billion in 2020, unearmarked funding amounted to US\$474 million or 5.6 percent. The top three contributors of flexible funds in 2020 were Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Transport for life-saving staff and supplies.

As the international community fought with the new challenges posed by the pandemic, flexible funding helped WFP coordinate the global logistics response among humanitarian agencies and plug gaps as needed, including transport for life-saving staff and supplies.

Flexible funding helped us save countless lives amidst the 17 emergencies we were addressing in the second half of 2020, the majority of which were fuelled by conflict. And it provided WFP with the means to support governments in laying the foundations to drive their own, self-sufficient sustainable development, and to avert future crises.

Preventing recurring conflicts

To this end, flexible funding was instrumental in sustaining WFP efforts in the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, providing timely assistance to address urgent food and food-related needs, foster stability and contribute to preventing recurring conflicts. It enabled early action, as WFP was able to pre-position stocks and other resources in strategic locations and kick-start operations before circumstances became more challenging. Meanwhile, in neglected crises, flexible funding allowed WFP to avoid gaps in assistance.

A message from WFP's Executive Director David Beasley



Our donors speak about flexible funding

Donors speak: Germany committed to providing WFP with flexible and multi-year contributions

*Germany increased its flexible funding to WFP by 65 percent in 2020. **Dr. Elke Loebel**, Commissioner for Refugee Policy and Director for Displacement and Migration, Crisis Prevention and Management, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and **Dr. Thomas Zahneisen**, Director for Humanitarian Assistance, German Federal Foreign Office, speak jointly about Germany's support to WFP through flexible funding:*

“Germany recognizes the importance of flexible funding for WFP to address humanitarian needs efficiently and effectively, but also to improve the resilience of people to better cope with crises and prioritize prevention wherever possible. This is all the more important as a growing number of people around the world are facing a triple threat of conflict, climate change and COVID-19.

"We are proud of our support to WFP in this regard: Germany was able to almost double its annual core contribution to WFP in 2020 and will keep this level also for 2021. We thereby contribute towards WFP's agility in responding swiftly to rapidly changing contexts, especially in fragile contexts and in those that are currently not in the public spotlight.



1 - Dr. Elke Loebel

"Flexible funding also supports WFP's work across the nexus, which can help create and promote ongoing stability rather than recurring conflict. Moreover, Germany increased its support to the WFP Immediate Response Account (IRA) in 2020, which allowed WFP to respond to increasing humanitarian emergency needs worldwide. The contribution to the IRA has proven crucial in enabling WFP a greater reach, to avert pipeline breaks and to provide food and nutrition assistance more efficiently.

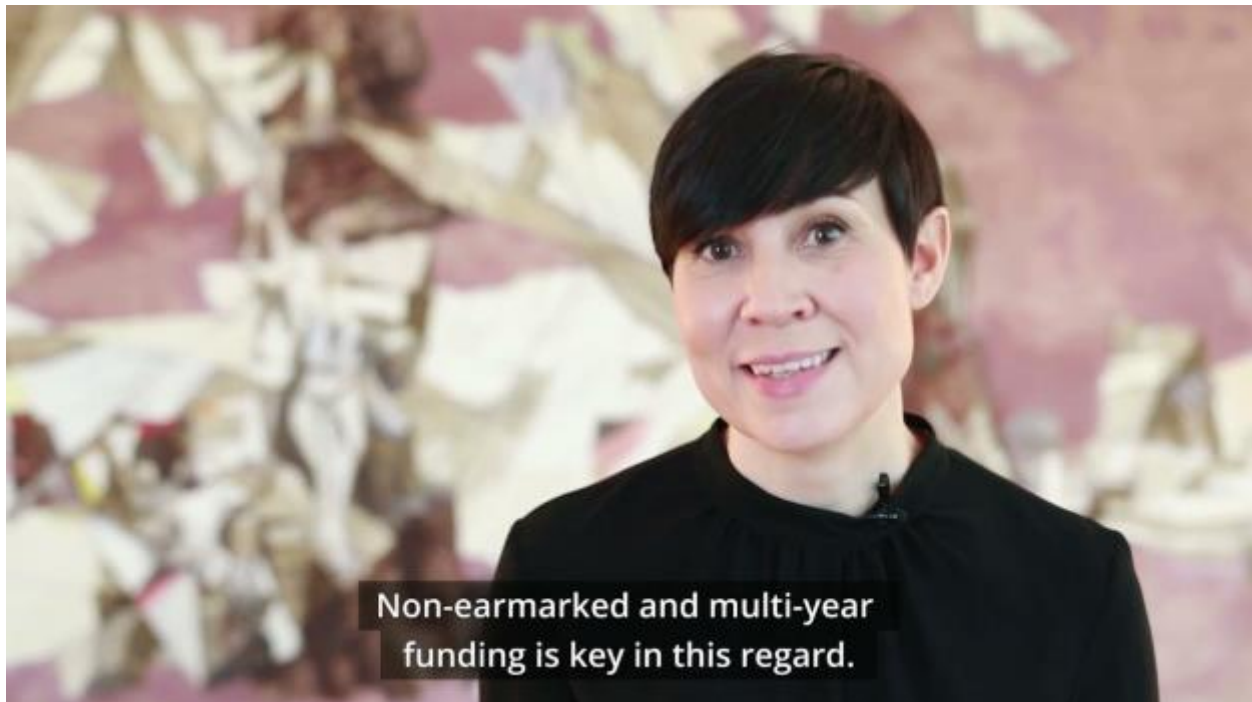
"Overall, in 2020 Germany was one of the top donors of flexible funds and a top donor to the IRA, and we remain committed to providing WFP with flexible and multi-year contributions. We will continue our fruitful strategic dialogue to ensure that our partner can meet the most urgent needs – but also reduce needs over time."



2 - Dr. Thomas Zahneisen

Donors speak: Why Norway is stepping up to assist through increased flexible funds

In response to the worsening humanitarian situation in 2020, Norway decided to triple its flexible funding to WFP for the following year, and is now providing US\$94 million as flexible core support. In this video, **H.E. Ine Eriksen Søreide**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, explains the importance of this type of funding.



Donors speak: Finland wants its assistance to be as effective as possible

H.E. Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, explains why Finland provides flexible funding to WFP:

"Finland provides WFP with flexible funding because we want our humanitarian aid to be as effective as possible.

"By providing a multi-annual €8 million contribution, we provide WFP with predictable funding which it can use according to its own most urgent priorities, such as funding new emerging crises or protracted conflicts that are escalating.

"With the humanitarian needs dramatically increasing in 2020, we decided to respond by providing an additional €2 million of flexible funding towards the end of the year."



Immense challenges lie ahead



With 2021 already shaping up to be as, if not more, challenging, increased flexible funding will be essential to our ability to support those caught in the fallout of multiple crises. For 270 million people, the threat of starvation will loom large without our support.

Flexible funding would put contributions to work where they can do the greatest good, save money in a response by allowing us to scale up our efforts and pre-position resources at the right time, and

promote a common, coordinated approach among the wider humanitarian community that reduces duplication and increases efficiency.

WFP stands ready to play its part as the largest humanitarian organization, a first responder with a global footprint spanning 88 countries. With your further support, we can steer people away from the edge of starvation, rebuild their livelihoods, and support countries in driving their own futures and reducing their reliance on humanitarian assistance.

The following sections of this report will shed light on what flexible funding support meant in practice in 2020.

How we used flexible funds in 2020

In total, US\$409 million was allocated through the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC). A total US\$298.1 million went to Country Strategic Plans, US\$84.6 million to WFP core initiatives and US\$26.6 million to the Immediate Response Account (IRA), in addition to the multilateral funds specifically earmarked to the IRA.

SRAC is responsible for allocation decisions. It bases these on a number of qualitative and quantitative criteria, which were reviewed at the beginning of 2020. These include food security indicators, the corporate alert system highlighting emerging crises and operations of highest concern for leadership attention, specific strategic results, current resourcing and estimated shortfall of the operation. These criteria ensures life-saving support, while allowing for strategic prioritization that could help to reduce need in line with WFP's humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

A total 70 percent of the allocations to the Country Strategic Plans went to crisis response, and 30 percent was allocated to resilience building and root causes. Out of the 53 countries who received multilateral funds, the top 20 represent 78 percent of the whole allocation by SRAC.

Contributions and allocations of flexible funding in 2020

This interactive map illustrates how, where and when flexible funds were used in 2020.

Yellow circles indicate donors of flexible funding for 2020. The size of the circle is proportional to the volume of the total contributions of flexible funding over 2020, SRAC and IRA funding both included. Blue circles indicate allocations of flexible funding to WFP operations by SRAC.

SRAC allocates funding based on food security indicators, urgency, resourcing levels and contribution forecasts. Pink circles indicate advances of funding by the IRA to WFP operations.

The IRA advances funding in emergencies when no contributions are registered or forecasted. Note that donors not indicated as having made direct contributions to the IRA, may still be contributing indirectly to the IRA through internal allocations of flexible funding by the WFP SRAC decisions. Click on the ⓘ icon in the top-left of the map for full guide. The icon below this allows you to filter your search. The data in the map is presented as of 31 January 2021.

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VIDEO: [A message to all our donors of flexible funding](#)



Stepping up to answer the common call amidst COVID-19 pandemic



Flexible funding proved vital when WFP stepped up to fill the seismic hole in global supply chains and transport markets inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It allowed WFP to quickly harness its extensive supply chain network and expertise, built up over nearly six decades of emergency response. We set up Common Services – global passenger and cargo movement services – allowing health and humanitarian staff and supplies to reach vulnerable people around the world, who would otherwise have been cut off from support when they needed it most.

Furthermore, when the UN Secretary-General activated a common COVID-19 Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) System to ensure the wellbeing of health and humanitarian staff and minimize the healthcare burden on host countries, flexible funding allowed WFP to play a key role.

We used our access to a global network of contracted air ambulances to carry out 69 MEDEVACs of health and humanitarian personnel affected by COVID-19.

“With the support of timely and flexible funding, WFP was able to quickly design and implement Common Services to support the global response to COVID-19,” explained Alex Marianelli, Director of Supply Chain.

“Given the unprecedented scale and unpredictable nature of the pandemic, flexibility has been key to allow WFP and the wider humanitarian and health community to make the right interventions at the right time. By having access to funds that weren’t earmarked geographically, WFP has been afforded the ability to shift its operational focus as needed, following the epidemiological curve and partner demand.”

Flexible funds build resilience to climate shocks in El Salvador



Flexible funds helped revitalize the livelihoods of smallholder producers affected by climate change in central and eastern El Salvador.

Recurring drought has ruined crops in this part of the region's Dry Corridor for generations. More recently, communities have further suffered from excessive, erratic rainfall such as Tropical Storm Amanda in May 2020, further damaging crops and production. COVID-19 and its related restrictions have exacerbated the negative impact on their land and market sales.

Building resilience

WFP provided materials, training and ongoing technical support to help build people's resilience to climate effects and improve their production, incomes and ongoing self-reliance. This ranged from poultry to dairy-processing machinery and fishing equipment, along with greenhouses, drip-irrigation plots and water-harvesting systems using renewable energy from solar panels.

More than 1,000 families across 13 municipalities are producing more than 20 different crops, as well as managing poultry, fish and dairy – some for their own consumption and the remainder sold at market. WFP is supporting participants in accessing markets.

Riaz Lodhi, WFP Country Director in El Salvador, said about the project: “This is just one small example of the work we are doing in building resilience to the worsening climate effects and creating the means for communities to sustain themselves and prosper in the long term through improved livelihoods.

“With further, flexible contributions, WFP can continue to direct funding to where it can make the biggest difference in driving sustainable development.”

Yemen: ‘I do everything possible so my kids don’t go to sleep hungry’



“Our children are more important than us. I do not feel hungry when my child had his meal. Believe me, children matter more. If they are full, I feel full, and if they get sick, I get sick, too.”

Safia’s words are born from bitter experience. She watched in agony as her son Sultan slipped into acute malnutrition, before WFP’s nutrition assistance saw him steadily improve.

Now it is WFP’s food distributions – partly funded by flexible donations – that she values beyond measure, while remaining in constant fear of her children going hungry and falling sick.

Keeping malnutrition at bay

“I do everything possible so my kids don’t go to sleep hungry,” says Safia. I will try my best to sacrifice my meal or be hungry in order to provide food [for Sultan], so he does not face malnutrition again.”

War erupted in Yemen in 2015. Three years later, fierce fighting in Safia's home town of Hodeidah, on Yemen's Red Sea coast, forced her family to flee eastwards to the city of Sana'a. The conflict had shut the warehouses where Safia's husband worked as a labourer, and closed the schools where her four children had the chance of an education.

A critical shortage of funds for WFP's operation in Yemen mean Safia and her family now receive food assistance every two months instead of one. However, such is the desperate plight of millions in Yemen, that they are in a better position than countless others. "When I call my family in Hodeida, they tell me about the real suffering of hunger, and they do not find food for some days," she says.

[You can read Safia's full story here.](#)

Yemen facing catastrophe without sufficient support



WFP needs sustained, predictable and flexible funding to deal with the huge challenges it faces in Yemen and to avert a devastating famine. As WFP Executive Director David Beasley told the UN Security Council in March 2021, more than 16 million people now face crisis levels of hunger or worse amidst ongoing conflict. "We are headed straight toward the biggest famine in modern history," he warned.

In 2020, flexible funding of US\$8 million ensured life-saving food assistance could continue for some of the 16.2 million beneficiaries set to face crisis levels of hunger in the first half of 2021.

Millions are on the brink of famine

In the same year, WFP procured 10,000 metric tons of fortified wheat flour and more than 1,500 metric tons of vegetable oil from its Global Commodity Management Facility, the internal financing platform which enables the advanced positioning of food and a resultant cut in delivery times. This supported 1.4 million IDPs, refugees and conflict-affected communities across nine governorates.

Without further support, millions of Yemenis still stand on the brink of starvation. We have prevented catastrophe in the past and we can do it again: in 2019, a famine was averted thanks to the support of the international community. Today, donor support is essential if WFP is to protect the most vulnerable from a looming catastrophe.

Easing the effects of COVID-19 in Iraq



Flexible funding for crisis response in Iraq meant WFP could provide family food rations and cash to more than 155,000 IDPs in Duhok and Kirkuk over four months. This met families' immediate needs while also reducing people's unnecessary movements to buy food or redeem their assistance, thereby lessening the spread of COVID-19.

WFP was also able to cushion the loss of income suffered by workers dependent on day or seasonal employment as a result of the pandemic, thanks to donors' contributions.

We created [Urban Livelihoods projects](#), which provided more than 42,800 people with temporary income and supported and improved community surroundings through planting trees and clearing public parks, cleaning and renovating schools, health centres, a central library, orphanages and a centre for the deaf, mute and blind, and through road cleaning and re-painting.

“Flexible funding in 2020 meant that we could quickly respond to COVID-19 in Iraq. We were able to introduce urgently required livelihoods projects in urban areas of Baghdad, Mosul, Basra and Wassit,” said WFP Representative in Iraq Abdirahman Meygag.

“The initiative meant that thousands of families could earn an income and cover their food needs, while the injection of cash into the local economies supported the wider communities. In a changing environment, and as COVID-19 cases rise in Iraq, we welcome further flexible funding from our donors.”



3 - Cleaning premises so people can return to work safely. Photo: WFP/OROKOM

Supporting families through lean period in Zimbabwe



A monthly WFP food basket means Shamiso and her family in Zimbabwe’s Bikita district are able to eat three meals a day, after their lives were turned upside down within the space of a year.

They struggled to recover after losing their home and possessions to Cyclone Idai in 2019, while Shamiso’s jobs in housekeeping and helping build a local dam were brought to a halt by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The assistance from WFP came at a time when we had nowhere to turn for help. I had exhausted all options, even begging,” says Shamiso, who has five children.

A complex humanitarian crisis

The challenges she faces are reflective of the complex humanitarian crisis unfolding throughout Zimbabwe, where climate shocks, hyperinflation and COVID-19 have crippled communities’ food security.

Flexible funding allowed WFP to provide assistance to families also having to contend with the latest lean season. In total, almost 1.5 million people were assisted with an in-kind food basket consisting of cereal, pulses and vegetable oil.

Shamiso, who is fiercely independent, dreams of the day she can support her family on her own. “My wish is to get some money and start a small project – I want to work with my own hands,” she says.



4 - Shamiso wants to support her family independently. Photo: WFP/Claire Nevill

Donor support means children do not go hungry in Nicaragua



Flexible funding meant thousands of children across Nicaragua in 2020 didn't go hungry while they were at school. The ability to direct funds to this area prevented pipeline breaks and meant the National School Feeding Programme could continue. WFP supports the programme in the departments of Jinotega and RACCN, targeting 182,000 schoolchildren in the two regions in 2020.

Among them were pupils of La Providencia school center, located in a rural community in the northern municipality of San Rafael del Norte, department of Jinotega.

Anxiety without food

“Children often skip breakfast at home and come to school on an empty stomach,” explains teacher Dania Flores Ubeda. “When they get to school, the first thing they do is ask “What time are we going to eat?”. They are anxious because they want to eat. After we serve them their plates with hot food, they get excited and happy.”

These are children of low-income agricultural workers on coffee farms or in basic grains. Work is scarce, made worse when climate shocks damage the harvest and by the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions.

“Some children have nothing to eat at home,” adds Ubeda. “The economic situation is not good, there is no work for their parents. The community would not know what to do if we did not receive the school lunch.”

A buffer against two hurricanes

Flexible funding also provided a vital buffer to communities caught up in hurricanes Eta and Iota in November, with children’s meals again made possible through flexible contributions. WFP procured more than 128 metric tons of food with multilateral funds in the aftermath of the hurricanes, delivering life-saving food assistance to shelters and communities affected by heavy rains, flash flooding, landslides and strong winds. Super Cereal – a fortified, blended food – was also provided.

More than 192,140 people were supported in the aftermath of the hurricanes. In total, flexible funding paid for 207 metric tons of food including rice, beans and vegetable oil.

Support for children

In the northern coastal community of Kamla, in Puerto Cabezas region, the two hurricanes severely damaged infrastructure and crops. In Krabu Tagni school, ceilings, latrines and the kitchen were damaged. But donors’ support meant the children could be fed with WFP-provided rice and beans, as phase two of support.

“There are many mothers and fathers who do not have food at home, so what are they going to feed their children?” says school principal Eufemia Hernández. “Here at school we are now getting enough food to feed the children twice a day.”

Giorgia Testolín, Country Director for WFP Nicaragua, explained: “The SRAC funds have been fundamental for the work of WFP Nicaragua in the immediate response to different emergency situations. They have allowed us to fulfil the mission of saving and changing the lives of the most vulnerable people.”

Cash empowers refugees in Ethiopia

Nino’s priorities are clear. “There’s no choice — food is first,” she says, pointing to the rations on the ground beside her. “I want my kids to grow up strong, so they need good food — that’s science.” Nino

lives on the outskirts of Kebribayah refugee camp in Somali Region, northeastern Ethiopia, which is full to capacity with 15,000 refugees who have fled violence in neighbouring Somalia.

Her words confirm WFP's findings that, when needs assessments and targeting are accurate, beneficiaries overwhelmingly use their cash transfers to buy food – which is its main purpose.

Ethiopia has the second-largest refugee population in Africa, hosting over 900,000 registered refugees from Eritrea, Kenya and South Sudan, as well as Somalia. Flexible funding helped WFP reach almost 711,000 refugees in Ethiopia in 2020, of whom more than 201,500 were Somali refugees in eight camps in Somali Region.

WFP has worked hand-in-hand with Ethiopia's Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to launch a combined cash and food assistance activity in five refugee camps in Somali Region, empowering refugees with greater choice.

Cash can have other important benefits too, including gender empowerment, providing women with control over household resources. Indeed, in refugee camps women are the primary food managers within their households. "I hold the cash. After all, I'm the one coming to collect it," explains Mariam, another refugee receiving WFP assistance. "I keep it and I spend it. Women know what the family needs because the men are out looking for work every day and don't realize how much food costs or which shop has the cheapest rice."



5 - Nimo says food is a priority. Photo: WFP/Ed Johnson



6 - Mariam knows the family's needs. Photo: WFP/Ed Johnson

Food distributions are a lifeline for displaced people in Central African Republic

More than two million people in the Central African Republic are unable to meet their most basic food needs, amidst recurrent cycles of political crisis and insecurity continue.

Flexible funding helped WFP provide general food assistance to vulnerable people, in particular those displaced by violence.

Overall, WFP provides food and nutrition assistance to more than 632,500 people including IDPs, refugees, returnees and vulnerable households, in rural and urban areas, through unconditional in-kind distributions and cash transfers, to meet their immediate food needs.

Direct action for vulnerable and crisis-affected people

Peter Schaller, WFP's Country Director in the Central African Republic said: "We thank all the donors who provided flexible funding in 2020. Among our activities in CAR, this funding helped us to take direct action among vulnerable and crisis-affected people.

"Given the precarious security situation and the risk of sudden-onset emergencies, and as COVID-19 aggravates an already severe food security crisis, this type of funding is also essential in allowing us to react swiftly and to channel funds where they are most needed."

The Immediate Response Account: Flexibility that allows for a fast and effective response



WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA) forms a critical arm of its flexible response, allowing quick and decisive action in the face of a crisis.

The IRA releases funds within 24 hours of the onset of a crisis, allowing us to rapidly reach those people in greatest need and reduce the impact of disasters on them.

Out of US\$474 million flexible funds received in 2020, US\$24.4 million was recorded as direct contributions to the IRA. The top three donors to the Immediate Response Account were Switzerland, Belgium and Germany.

In addition to the direct contributions, the IRA benefited from resources provided by flexible donors via allocations of unearmarked funding through SRAC.

IRA fund meant immediate support after election unrest in Côte d'Ivoire



A contentious presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire in October 2020 triggered protests, localized inter-communal violence, destruction of property, internal population displacement and an influx of over 24,000 refugees to neighbouring countries. Funding from the Immediate Response Account (IRA) allowed WFP to provide prompt assistance to those people affected, ensuring they had sufficient supplies to cover their basic food and nutritional needs during and in the aftermath of this crisis.

Cutting delivery times

More than this, IRA contributions allowed WFP to take pre-emptive actions, such as pre-positioning food closer to sensitive regions in anticipation of road blockages and violence. This cut delivery times and meant immediate relief could be provided to over 17,000 IDPs and host communities.

Ussama Osman, WFP Country Director in Cote d'Ivoire, said: “The pre-emptive, forward-thinking aspect of IRA funding is something that is not always appreciated. With this funding to turn to in a time of urgent need, we were able to pre-position food that may not otherwise have got through to people in need once unrest escalated.

“Beyond this, we need to consider the humanitarian-development-peace nexus around which WFP focuses its work. By providing food to host and IDP communities, we are able to reduce further displacement and loss of productivity on land, any potential tensions within communities and further polarization.”

In close partnerships with the Government, sister UN agencies and other partners, WFP distributed a three-month ration of rice, vegetable oil and beans in conflict-affected villages in the western and southern-central regions. Osman added: “It’s a moral obligation for all of us to support those communities who need WFP most during challenging times such as this. With further flexible funding of this kind, we can react quickly and adapt according to urgent needs as they arise.”

IRA funds + preparedness = reduced response times when hurricane hit Honduras

When Hurricane Eta made landfall in Honduras in November, killing dozens of people, destroying infrastructure and damaging rural livelihoods along its trail through Central America, WFP moved quickly to reach those people most in need of its support.

Thanks to donations to the IRA, WFP had already pre-positioned rice and pulses in several warehouses after its forecasting indicated that an above-average hurricane season in the Atlantic was under way.

This emergency preparedness meant we had 522 metric tons of rice and 150 metric tons of pulses in WFP warehouses ready to move, with additional stocks coming in. Working with the Government, we reached around 113,500 people over 30 days in the departments of Gracias A Dios, Colo, Yoro and Atlántida.

Thanks to this pre-emptive action, WFP was able to save up to three weeks of lead time for standard procurement, ensuring a prompt and effective response.

Multiple advantages of flexible funding

Flexible funding allows WFP to make strategic interventions and act on prioritized operations at speed, based on internal assessments and requirements. It complements and optimizes the response to needs in key areas of WFP’s work. The reporting period coincided with exceptional circumstances whereby the COVID-19 health emergency affected all countries where WFP was operational.

Flexible funds enabled WFP to support its field operations globally through centralized mitigation and response measures, in a fast-unfolding and unpredictable context. WFP was also able to support humanitarian partners by providing critical services and supply chain activities amidst the pandemic.

Besides allocations to Country Strategic Plans and to the IRA, SRAC also allocates directly to WFP core activities that are deemed strategic for greater short or long-term impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. As mentioned earlier in this document, US\$84.6 million was allocated to such activities, which is 17 percent of overall flexible funding.

This funding also supported thematic initiatives, for instance in the areas of anticipatory action, social protection systems, cash-based transfers and geospatial systems to strengthen field activities.

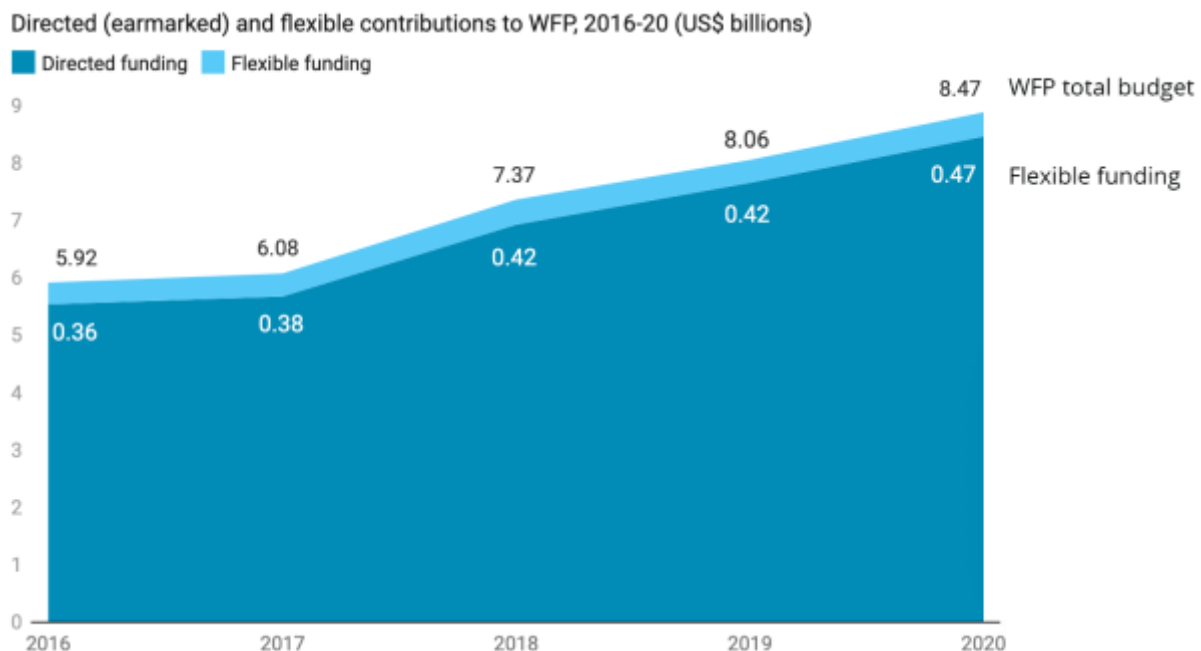
Improving emergency preparedness and safety net systems

Furthermore, investments in WFP's regional bureaux and country office initiatives helped to strengthen their capacity, to improve emergency preparedness and safety net systems, and to develop regional partnership strategies with key UN agencies.

In addition, an allocation to information technology allowed WFP to improve its worldwide satellite connectivity and core infrastructure, in the context of COVID-19. This allowed WFP staff worldwide to work remotely, which was fundamental for the continuity of operations during the pandemic.

From an administrative perspective, flexibility contributed to reducing the burden on partners and WFP alike, and the amount of human and financial resources spent on grant-specific administration, including reporting. It also reduced transaction costs associated with fundraising.

Flexible funding trends: A stable increase over time



Across the UN funds and programmes, the growth in earmarked funding has outpaced the growth in flexible funding. On the other hand, the share between the two types of funding has remained stable at WFP.

In 2016, WFP's overall funding level stood at US\$5.9 billion, whereas in 2020 it reached US\$8.5 billion, representing a 40 percent increase. During the same time, flexible funding increased from US\$364 million in 2016 to US\$474 million in 2020, representing a 30 percent increase (US\$110 million). While the increase in absolute terms is warmly welcomed, the share remained at the modest level of 5-6 percent.

In 2020, 13 out of the 32 donors of flexible funding surpassed the target level of providing 30 percent or more of their funding to WFP as flexible funding. However, collectively the share still falls short of the commitment of 30 percent in unearmarked funding for the humanitarian community, made under the Grand Bargain of 2016 and under the Funding Compact of 2019, which called for a reinvigorated, multilateral response to meet the nature and scale of today's global challenges.

Ensuring visibility for our partners

WFP aims to raise awareness and visibility of flexible funding, including the Immediate Response Account, through a variety of activities.

In addition to this annual report, our activities include high-level advocacy, global news releases and local media outreach, publishing news and features across various WFP channels, and posts across a range of social media channels – including [@WFPGovts](#), a dedicated Twitter account for our government partners.

Moreover, when multilateral funds are allocated, the regional bureaux and concerned country offices are invited to refer to them when communicating with partners and external audiences.

WFP is committed to working with its partners in order to provide further appropriate recognition and visibility.

<http://twitter.com/statuses/1280192234051305479>

<http://twitter.com/statuses/1279005298376814593>

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For more information and to read previous reports, visit wfp.org/flexible-funding

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'Immense challenges lie ahead': Photos: WFP/Jama Hassan

Map: Paola Di Francesco

VIDEO: A message to all our donors of flexible funding: Produced by Giulio D'Adamo

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Yemen: Story and photo: WFP/Mohammed Awadh

'Yemen facing catastrophe without sufficient support': Photo: WFP/Mohammed Awadh

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Zimbabwe: Story: Adrienne Bolen & Claire Nevill; Main photo: WFP/Adrienne Bolen

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