



FINN CHURCH AID

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

2024 ONWARDS

FCA

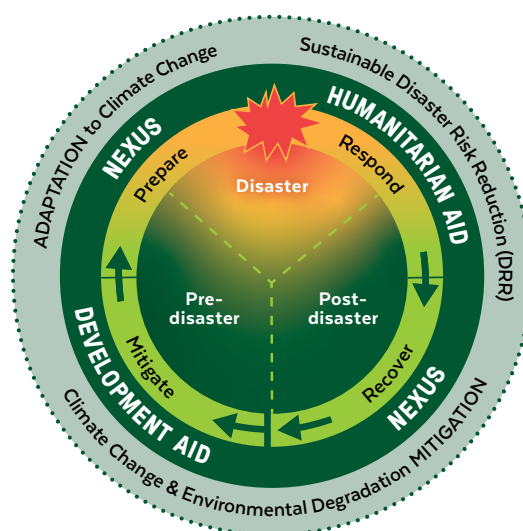
Finn Church Aid

Empowering Humanity and
the Planet: FCA's Rapid, Flexible,
Localized, and Rights-Driven
Humanitarian Response

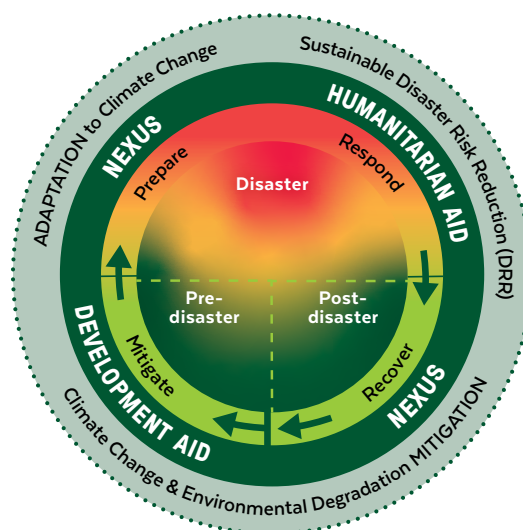
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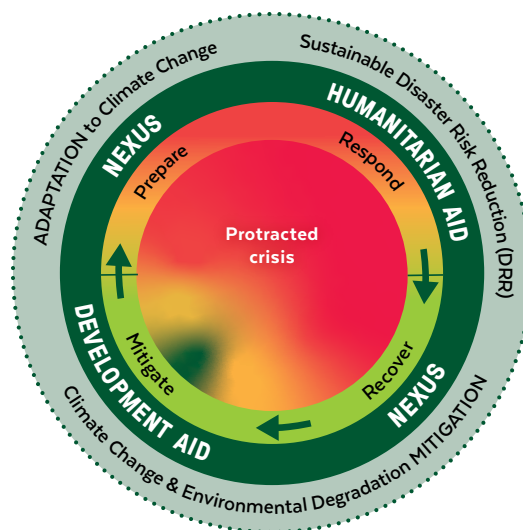
Sudden Onset Disaster



Slow Onset Disaster



Protracted Crisis



1. INTRODUCTION

THIS FCA HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY outlines FCA's strategic direction for its humanitarian efforts. Aligned with FCA's Global Strategy (2022), Global Programme, Localisation Framework (2023), and Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs), it endorses the Humanitarian Principles, Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Humanitarian Climate and Environment Charter, and INEE and sector-specific benchmarks from Sphere standards. FCA Humanitarian Strategy guides FCA's humanitarian responses worldwide, reflecting FCA's commitment to high standards and adaptability in the face of evolving challenges.

FCA provides humanitarian aid to crises-affected people during sudden disasters (Sudden Onset), those that develop gradually (Slow Onset), and those that last for an extended period (Protracted Crises). During Rapid or Emergency Response, FCA engages in prompt action in providing aid following a sudden and significant crisis.

AS PART OF its humanitarian programming, FCA is dedicated to addressing the rights and needs of crisis-affected individuals, including refugees and internally displaced populations, while meeting the specific needs of those in areas impacted by complex humanitarian emergencies. Recognising the interconnected challenges faced by many communities, we emphasise the necessity for a transformative, holistic approach to humanitarian assistance that embraces system thinking. This approach not only underscores the strong link between humanity and the planet, but also advocates for active engagement in planetary well-being.

FCA places particular emphasis on incorporating the whole spectrum from Mitigation through Adaptation to Compensation within its humanitarian efforts to effectively navigate and respond to the broader climate and environmental context.

2. FCA'S VISION AND VALUES

FCA IS A RIGHTS-BASED and faith-based organisation. We work against the root causes of poverty and injustice. FCA's actions are guided by international human rights standards and the PANEL principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and link to human rights standards).

FCA's vision is a world comprising resilient and just societies where everyone's right to peace, quality education and sustainable livelihood has been fulfilled.

FCA's values of unconditional love, unyielding hope, courage and respect guide our humanitarian efforts.

Recognising the interconnected challenges faced by many communities, we emphasise the necessity for a transformative, holistic approach to humanitarian assistance that embraces system thinking.

3. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF FCA HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

FCA'S HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE is about immediate emergency response to save lives and alleviate suffering, combined with preparing for eventual recovery and reconstruction, also when situations are protracted. This includes implementing measures to prepare for future crises before they happen and strengthening the resilience of affected communities. Our comprehensive approach contributes to reducing the negative impacts of both immediate and long-lasting humanitarian crises.

The goal of FCA humanitarian aid is to support crises-affected people through effective, efficient, ethical, and well-coordinated humanitarian response when crises erupt.

The objectives of FCA's humanitarian aid are to save lives, alleviate suffering and restore human dignity, while concurrently strengthening the resilience of those who are most vulnerable and at-risk, and laying the foundation for sustainable development.

FCA's humanitarian assistance incorporates the dimensions of environment and climate change, acknowledging that the unsustainable use of natural resources and negative effects of climate change directly impact quality of life, human rights, and sustainable development.





On February 28th, 2023, in Aleppo, Finn Church Aid offers vital aid to Syrian families displaced by an earthquake, providing essential items like warm clothing and hygiene kits in emergency shelters.

PHOTO: WARD NASSAN AGHA

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES, APPROACHES, AND WAYS OF WORK

Humanitarian Principles and International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

FCA IS COMMITTED to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. FCA's humanitarian efforts contribute to promoting compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL). By promoting adherence to IHL, FCA aims to ensure the protection, human rights, and dignity of those impacted by conflicts.

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

THE HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED Approach (HRBA) is the foundation of all FCA's actions, guided by international human rights standards and principles. FCA's rights-based logic allows us to move from a standardised needs-based approach during life-saving activities to building resilience and towards a more systematic rights-based response.



In November 2022, Marsabit, Kenya, faced severe drought following five consecutive failed rainy seasons. FCA restored the borehole and water storage near a nomad settlement and local school to ensure vital access to water.
PHOTO: BJÖRN UDD

Triple Nexus Approach

FCA PROMOTES the Triple Nexus Approach, which aims to meet people's short term and long term needs by providing humanitarian assistance and planning for or supporting development and peacebuilding initiatives at the same time. Already in the early stages of an emergency response, we evaluate the context-specific conflict dynamics and aim to promote actions for peace.

Depending on the context, planning and implementing

the Triple Nexus Approach may include strengthening the capacity of actors and public authorities to provide services, reducing and mitigating against the risks of future disasters, strengthening the collective capacity of people to work together, increasing community awareness to prevent and reduce violence, supporting psychosocial well-being, and incorporating advocacy efforts into humanitarian actions.

Effective, ethical, efficient, and well-coordinated humanitarian response

IN LINE WITH IHL, the Humanitarian Principles and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), FCA promotes humanitarian assistance that is effective, ethical, efficient, and directed to where it is needed most. In our humanitarian assistance, we prioritise need-based interventions by tailoring our response to the unique circumstances of each crisis. This approach involves identifying vulnerabilities and capacities within different groups in the affected community, coupled with systematic efforts aimed at reducing protection risks. Conflict sensitivity is part of humanitarian programming to ensure that our operations do not risk exacerbating conflicts or causing increased tensions within or between groups. FCA's humanitarian programmes are well-equipped to adapt their approach as situations develop, and we learn from past experiences to improve our actions.

Working in humanitarian crises and fragile contexts requires diverse partnership and implementation modalities, aiming at meeting evolving needs, while ensuring a Do No Harm approach and maximum impact. FCA prioritises the needs of crisis-affected people, simultaneously supporting local humanitarian responders where relevant, and strengthening the voice of affected populations as much as possible. By working closely with local communities and partners, including local faith actors, who often have a strong established presence in the

local communities, FCA promotes accountability and meaningful participation by the affected communities.

FCA works with different organisations and local partners, addressing urgent needs as they arise. We raise awareness of the particularities of fragile situations and ensure that humanitarian needs that cannot be addressed by FCA are brought to the attention of relevant actors. FCA's participation in different fora for coordination supports sharing information about needs, good practices, and standards, planning joint advocacy and ensuring well-coordinated humanitarian responses.

Both on a global and local level, FCA collaborates with the ACT Alliance. FCA also works closely with academia. Our humanitarian approach and assistance are based on proven, evidence-based methods, studies, and research.

FCA recognises that its efforts to help people in crises are also crucial for getting support from people and parishes in Finland. This connects with those who want to donate to causes that are ethical and wish to quickly respond to humanitarian needs.

In our humanitarian assistance, we prioritise need-based interventions by tailoring our response to the unique circumstances of each crisis.

5. FOCUS AREAS FOR IMPROVED FCA HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

1. Capacity to respond first and being prepared for emergencies

GIVEN THE availability of funding, FCA is dedicated to being a first responder in emergency situations. In response to the growing demands for humanitarian assistance and protection, FCA aims to enhance its response and operational capacity at all levels during both natural disasters and human-made emergencies, with a specific focus on Level 3 emergencies. We aim at being among the first ones to respond, especially in the countries where we have presence. In other locations we prioritise working with/through partners such as ACT Alliance agencies. Strengthening organisational emergency preparedness includes ensuring that our staff and emergency teams are prepared and available. FCA adheres to pre-established entry and exit criteria for its rapid response activities, subject to the financial resources allocated.

From the very beginning of an emergency response, FCA prioritises a multi-sectoral approach. This involves the deployment of cash, food, and non-food item (NFI) distributions, recognising their importance in meeting the diverse and pressing needs of crises-affected people.

2. Education in Emergencies (EiE) as FCA's core emergency response focus

THE LARGEST portion of FCA humanitarian responses and programmes focus on FCA's thematic specialisation areas - Education in Emergencies (EiE) and emergency livelihoods. Most of our EiE programmes are implemented in protracted crises. Child Protection (CP) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) are integrated into EiE work. In conflict-affected contexts, FCA employs a conflict-sensitive education approach, while the peace education efforts contribute to non-violent conflict transformation, respect for human rights, and active participation of all in community development.

The well-being of both teachers and learners is essential for ensuring comprehensive and high-quality education. FCA programmes are designed to cater to the unique needs of learners at all educational levels. They provide important physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives.

FCA actively promotes close cooperation between different education actors. This involves local collaboration with education ministries at different levels and teaming up with groups focused on health, food, clean water, protection and more.



On December 13th 2023, Sahra Ahmad Ismail stands in her home shop, set up after a devastating fire razed the Waheen market in Hargeisa, Somaliland. With financial support from FCA, she successfully launched her business despite the challenges. PHOTO: BJÖRN UDD

3. Increasing humanitarian livelihoods

FCA'S EMERGENCY livelihood responses address needs starting from the life-saving provision of essentials to actions that support the transition to early recovery and development. The key objectives are to reduce food insecurity and improve livelihood resilience. This includes provision of cash-based assistance during acute emergencies to those most in need: often women; people with disabilities; or those from marginalised groups. Cash is also used for leveraging incentives for educational purposes and reducing the risk of negative coping mechanisms.

Furthermore, livelihood-related skills training and agri-livelihoods are strong elements in FCA's emergency programming. They provide support during prolonged

crises by combining addressing immediate needs and contributing to building a more secure and dignified future. This includes equipping refugees with job skills and ensuring they receive certifications.

When working with communities hit by conflicts and/or affected by the negative impacts of climate change, our actions aim to strengthen their capacities to prevent new, and reduce existing disaster risk, while building resilience. FCA will also develop Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) following the guidelines from UNDRR and the humanitarian Sphere standards. The approach highlights the link between disaster resilience, sustainable practices, and livelihoods.

4. Key actions for FCA humanitarian response

FCA IS CONTINUALLY enhancing its humanitarian response capabilities and strengthening its ability to respond effectively, placing a strong emphasis on developing and utilising humanitarian skills and abilities to enhance its response efforts. FCA is committed to promoting the rights of people affected by crises, especially refugees and those who have been forced to leave their homes. Our projects and programmes aim to support their access to quality education, sustainable livelihoods, and opportunities for integration. Advocacy for people in need is an integral part of FCA's humanitarian response in sudden and slow onset, as well as protracted, crises. The advocacy initiatives are context-specific and guided by FCA's advocacy strategy.

Stronger humanitarian responses can also be supported by new and innovative solutions and joint actions with private actors. Innovations can contribute

to increasing effectiveness of humanitarian efforts and ensuring that humanitarian assistance is better tailored to the needs of crises-affected people.

The expansion in the number and diversity of different actors highlights the need to ensure good collaboration, coordination, and localisation of humanitarian actions. Complementary partnerships can address the broad range of needs faced by individuals and communities more effectively by taking advantage of available resources, specific skills, expertise, and experience of both national and international actors.

The two specific key actions for enhanced FCA humanitarian assistance are:

1. Building new partnerships and collaborating across different areas

FCA aims to broaden its network by establishing new partnerships with private sector actors. These collaborations aim to bring in additional resources and expertise, enhancing our ability to respond effectively to crises and amplifying the impact of our actions. Simultaneously, FCA is committed to collaborating across various sectors, joining forces with diverse groups, academic institutions, and environmental organisations. By fostering complementary partnerships and leveraging diverse expertise, we strive to create new opportunities that maximise our impact in humanitarian response efforts.

2. Using new ideas and technology

FCA is committed to using the latest ideas and technology to enhance our emergency response. This includes using Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems to predict disasters, assess needs, and communicate with people through virtual avatars and more. These forward-looking approaches and innovations reflect FCA's aim to lead the way in humanitarian response efforts through innovative technology integration.

In July 2023, students at Para Primary School in Yumbe, Uganda, make use of textbooks provided by the FCA Mobile School Bus in the Bidibidi refugee settlement.

PHOTO: ESTHER RUTH MBABAZI





Finn Church Aid

Eteläranta 8,
FI-00130 Helsinki, Finland
Tel. +358 20 787 1201
fca@kua.fi
finnchurchaid.fi

Kateryna Tkachenko, a
9th grader at Lyceum
Number 25 in Zhytomyr,
Ukraine, stands amidst
the ruins of her school,
destroyed by a missile
strike on March 4, 2022.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN

