



Multi H Concept

SDC, Humanitarian Aid, Multilateral Division

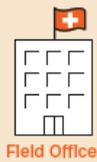
Theory of Change



Our purpose is to ensure that **crisis affected people's** rights and dignity are protected, and that they have access to the kind of support they need and want, thus reinforcing their resilience.

We forge strong and trusting **partnerships** with the largest humanitarian agencies and with small humanitarian change agents. We support the system and its governance. We foster change that is meaningful.

SDC bilateral programmes enrich our understanding of field contexts and we provide them with a **global perspective**.



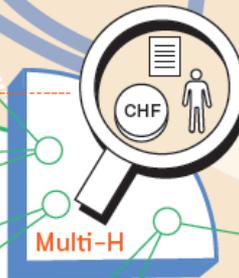
We amplify our impact by working closely with other **donors**, seeking inspiration while promoting our priorities.

We provide **funding, technical expertise and personnel** to our partners.



Federal Government

We hold the overall SDC's thematic responsibility for **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** and its network. We are the technical focal point for **food security and livelihoods** within Swiss Humanitarian Aid. The network makes us a stronger partner, and enhances the technical quality of SDC's work.



We are a **platform** where SDC's multilateral priorities emerge in a dialogue with missions and field offices.

International Geneva Ecosystem

We seek to foster a rich humanitarian ecosystem in **International Geneva** by supporting diverse partners and providing space for debate, analysis and engagement.

SDC

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Context

The global humanitarian system is under great pressure. The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered the biggest global depression since the 1930s. According to the [Global Humanitarian Overview \(GHO\)](#), one in 33 people is in need of humanitarian assistance (HA) in 2021 (compared to one in 45 in 2020 and one in 70 in 2019). The funding gap for humanitarian assistance has been growing steadily, despite the funding mobilisation after the outbreak of the global pandemic in early 2020. In the same period international UN appeals hit a record high, but international humanitarian funding dropped by \$1.6 billion.

Funding gap (2012-2020)

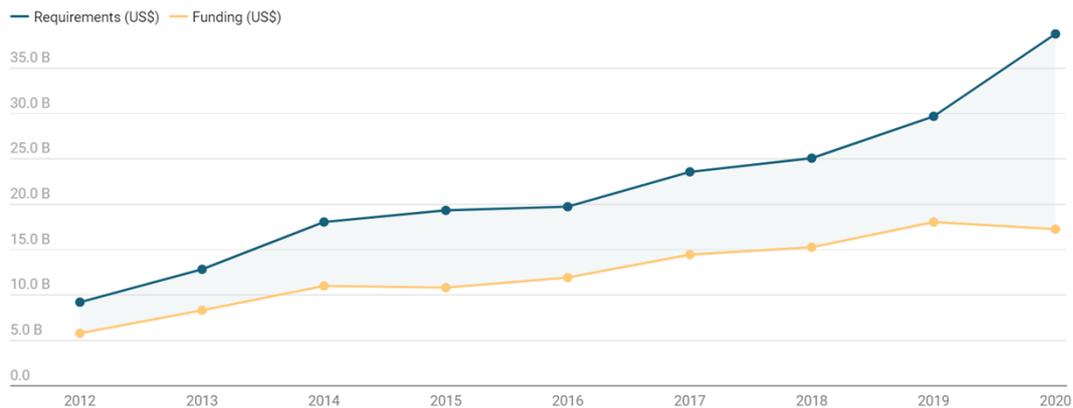


Figure 1: funding gap (Source OCHA¹)

In addition, new crises erupted and ongoing conflicts continued and became more intense. With the consequence that today more than one billion people live in countries affected by **long-term humanitarian crises**. The numbers of forcibly displaced people reached a record level of almost 80 million, more than half of whom had fled to other areas of their own country. The last decade saw the highest ever number of **people internally displaced by conflict and violence**, with many locked in a state of protracted displacement.

This happens in a context in which **humanitarian principles** are under pressure and principled HA is increasingly threatened by its politicisation. State and non-state actors display growing disregard for international humanitarian law (IHL), preventing HA workers from reaching the most vulnerable.

Covid-19 aggravates existing humanitarian challenges. In 2020 it led to the largest single appeal in the UN's history: USD 10 billion for 63 countries. The Covid-19 response also highlights ongoing **efforts to reform** the delivery of HA. There is evidence that the way humanitarian financing is delivered has changed significantly, notably a greater **flexibility of funding**. In many places, Covid-19 gave a push to **local actors** and shone a light on the importance of response delivered by community-based organisations. However, ensuring quality funding that reaches local actors directly remains a challenge. The response to the pandemic has also favoured **cash and voucher assistance (CVA)** with governments expanding their cash-based social assistance programmes and humanitarian organisations increasing cash assistance. It is yet to be seen whether these changes will be sustained beyond the immediate response and whether progress can be accelerated in other areas of reform.

Moreover, addressing **disaster, climate and environmental risks** remains urgent. The pandemic response showed that decisive government measures, once deemed impossible, can in fact be taken and implemented. Climate- and weather-related disasters are causing massive humanitarian impacts across the world, directly affecting 1.7 billion people in the past

¹ <https://gho.unocha.org/inter-agency-appeals/inter-agency-coordinated-appeals-results-2020>

decade alone. The frequency and intensity of climatological events are increasing substantially, with more category 4 and 5 storms, more heatwaves breaking temperature records and more heavy rains, among many other extremes.²

Multi-H

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation’s (SDC) Multilateral division (Multi-H) safeguards Switzerland’s humanitarian priorities and interests within multilateral humanitarian organisations.

Its main partners are the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC, IFRC) and the UN specialised agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, OCHA). The division determines the financial contributions allocated by Switzerland to these organisations. It advises these agencies on strategy and provides experts from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit.

The division is committed to ensuring respect for humanitarian principles, better access to the victims of conflicts, their protection, and improving the quality of humanitarian operations. Multi-H’s Theory of Change (ToC) will illustrate this more clearly. The focus themes are at the centre of the Multi-H’s work.

Focus Themes

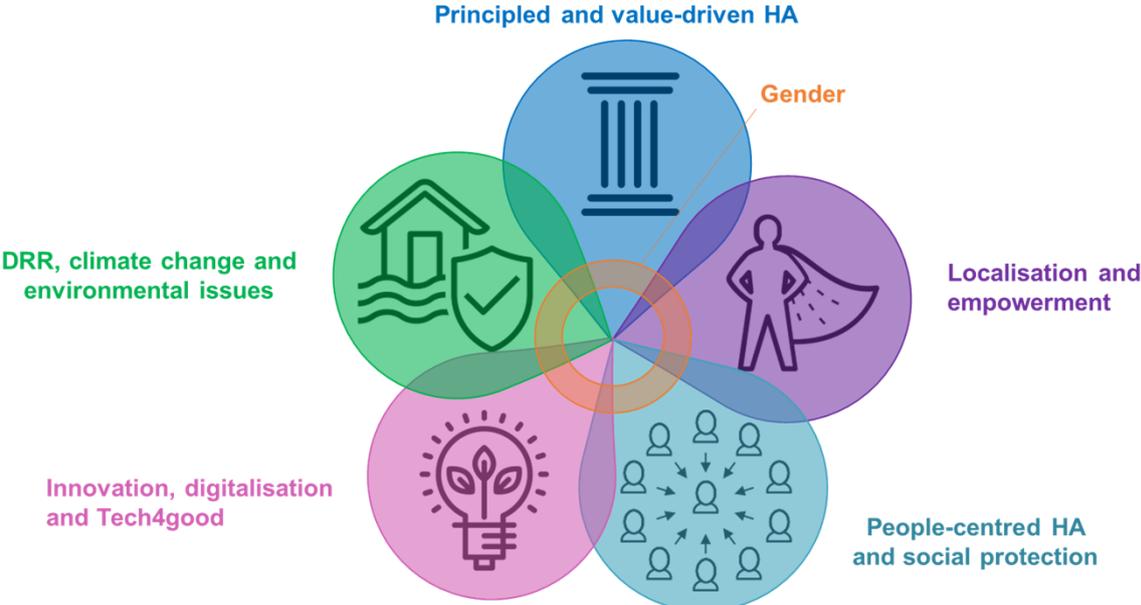


Figure 2: Multi-H Focus Themes

-  Principled and values-driven HA
-  Localisation and empowerment
-  Social protection and people-centred HA
-  Innovation, digitalisation and Tech4Good
-  Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate change and environment

In addition,  gender remains a transversal priority that concerns all Multi-H areas and cooperation with partners.

² [IFRC World Disaster Report 2020](#), p. iv, 3



Principled and value-driven humanitarian aid

A key priority for Multi-H is working to promote and uphold humanitarian principles. Principled HA will remain a priority in the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) with a focus on counter-terrorism measures, IHL violations and access. Even after the handover of the GHD co-chairmanship from Switzerland and ECHO to Finland and Belgium in summer 2021, we will continue to actively use the platform to share information in order to build coalitions to influence partners' policies and practices. The humanitarian community must assume a stronger role in the reform of the UN development system and, in doing so, uphold its principles.

Likewise, the Grand Bargain localisation workstream – or a successor – will keep focusing on upholding principled HA, fighting the negative perception of local actors' abilities and exploring meaningful capacity building structures to enable principled HA by local actors.

We will also maintain open, regular and systematic dialogue on principled HA with partners at all levels, as it is a basic prerequisite for access to civilians and leaving no one behind. By doing so, we will, for example, support the protection cluster at UNHCR as well as UNICEF's work on child protection. We will also sustain our strong engagement with WFP's Protection Unit with regard to the finalisation and implementation plan for their new protection policy. Moreover, we will follow closely how WFP makes progress in improving its workplace culture in the long term.



Localisation and empowerment

Covid-19 has shown once again that local NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) play an important role in HA as frontline responders. However, local actors still struggle to access localisation and empowerment of local actors on the agenda.

As co-conveners, Switzerland and IFRC continue to play an important role in the Grand Bargain localisation workstream, focusing on promoting localisation in the context of Covid-19, funding possibilities for local actors, as well as the strengthening of advocacy and collaboration on localisation. Switzerland is also actively involved in the implementation of the ICRC-IFRC joint venture - the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) - to strengthen NS all over the globe. Furthermore, it is necessary to engage in an honest dialogue with our partners on the future role of the intermediaries. Other initiatives on localisation – such as in the IASC – must be closely followed so as to seize options for policy influencing. Likewise, Switzerland is also committed to advance the localisation of DRR and supports the increased efforts of GNDR³ to empower local CSOs.

The issue of risk sharing remains important in the humanitarian ecosystem, as does the need to achieve better return on investment (efficiency, effectiveness and relevance). To influence partners' policies and practices more effectively, all existing platforms continue to be used strategically such as the IFRC Donor Advisory Group, ICRC Donor Support Group, Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility, UNDRR Donor Support Group, but also the Grand Bargain sub-workstream on cash and local partnerships, which is co-led by Switzerland.

In addition, Switzerland will continue to strengthen its engagement via multi-year core funding and with pooled funds to ensure that the most critical and underfunded areas of the humanitarian community receive support in a rapid and non-bureaucratic way. OCHA plays an important role by ensuring that country based pool funds (CBPFs) act as an agent of change for localisation. In this respect, Multi-H remains supportive of OCHA's efforts towards a sustained localisation and genuine partnership through CBPFs. This is also in line with our commitment as co-chair of the GHD Initiative to apply good funding practices including timely, predictable, un-earmarked and flexible funding.

³ Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction



People-centred humanitarian aid and social protection

Multi-H will continue to advocate for the systematic consideration of CVA as a people-centred response option in all contexts and in all phases of a humanitarian response in line with the new Operational Concept Note on CVA 2021–24 and its three strategic goals (1) Systematic consideration: CVA is systematically considered as a response option; (2) Quality programming: CVA is implemented according to best practice; and (3) Digitalisation and innovation: Innovation increases the quality of CVA and accountability to affected populations. This includes Multi-H's continued engagement in the SDC's Core Learning Partnership on Social Protection and strengthening related nexus discussions. A shared vision will be created, between development cooperation and HA, on how to better connect and strengthen short- and long-term approaches to social protection. In order to develop a more coherent approach, better use will be made of existing platforms to share Switzerland's experience in social protection with other donors and partners. In addition, Multi-H intends to make use of the work of some of our partners (e.g. Ground Truth Solutions, GNDR) in order to raise awareness of people-centred HA internally.



Innovation, digitalisation and Tech4good

CVA is often at the centre of innovative approaches and new technology, linking humanitarian assistance with digitalisation (e.g. mobile money, blockchain), which creates opportunities for more efficient humanitarian programming. At the same time, this brings new challenges and risks, e.g. related to data protection and recipients' right to privacy. Data protection is particularly relevant for CVA, since data is often exchanged with financial service providers, which in turn might be obliged to exchange data with the government.

Multi-H will continue to work closely with IFRC on their initiative for the digitalisation of methods and tools for risk assessment, measurement of community resilience and community-based early warning systems. In this regard, close collaboration on risk analysis has also started between the IFRC and Swiss universities. Additionally, Multi-H will further strengthen its engagement with WFP's DRR Unit on new themes such as forecast-based financing and early action and climate risk financing.

The pilot project Weather4UN started shortly after its approval by the Federal Council in 2020. Weather4UN is Switzerland's contribution to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Coordination Mechanism, which aims to enable the easy access to authoritative weather, water and climate information and the provision of expert advice to humanitarian agencies in anticipation of, during and after emergencies or disasters. Furthermore, UNHCR is setting up a Geneva Technical Hub (GTH) aiming to improve the life of persons of concern by assisting in field operations and by testing innovative solutions in collaboration with Swiss academia.



DRR, climate change and environmental issues

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is one of the division's central themes; the division hosts the theme responsibility for whole SDC. SDC cooperates with a large number of organisations in the context of DRR, especially with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and has the expertise of a network of practitioners and specialists at its disposal.

Achieving coherence between the disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change and sustainable development agendas remains a major challenge, as well as ensuring that enough finance goes to DRR, both from public and private sources. If DRR is not financed, the Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved, since disasters will continue to drive people into poverty, internal displacement and forced migration. Switzerland thus will continue to support UNDRR's coherence approach to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR.

DRR must play a more important role in the UNFCCC⁴ COP26 (Glasgow, 2021) and in other international policy fora, in order to guarantee it attracts enough vital funding especially for the most vulnerable communities in fragile contexts. Multi-H accordingly will reinforce its collaboration with SDC desks on strategic partnerships such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA, the World Bank and other Development Banks, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund for the better integration of DRR into their areas of work. Together with UNHCR, Multi-H worked on a new engagement paper during the past year. As one concrete outcome a technical hub (GTH) with a strong focus on climate change and DRR takes up its work in Geneva in 2021.

Within SDC, working with the DRR network and the Cluster Green to integrate DRR, climate change and the environment into all forthcoming SDC strategies, policies and programmes will remain a key priority. The whole-of-SDC DRR vision and Theory of Change, whose development process is expected to conclude in the first half of 2021, will strengthen Switzerland's position in relation to DRR and facilitate the internal mainstreaming activities. Based on the outcomes of this process, the SDC DRR guidance will be updated. Moreover, we will pursue and advance the priorities of the operational concept DRR for HA 2021-24 and collaborate closely with the three other HA thematic groups (protection, WASH, and food security and livelihoods) to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people and communities at risk.



Gender

Covid-19 demonstrates it clearly, crises especially exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities for women and girls, but also boys. Yet a lack of gender-disaggregated data continues to obscure the extent to which they are affected. Gender is a transversal theme, inherent to all five focus priorities (especially social protection, people-centred HA, localisation and empowerment). In 2020, Switzerland continued to support the Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) and the Protection Standby Capacity (ProCap) Projects. ProCap and GenCap seek to strengthen capacity and leadership to ensure protection and gender equality are central in humanitarian action. Furthermore, Switzerland as a leading member of the Call to Action on Prevention from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies (co-lead of the States and Donor Working Group of Call to Action) has actively participated in the lobbying for a stronger emphasis on GBV response in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan to Covid-19. Protection of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) is now a priority for SDC and the new guidance on how to address PSEAH in partner organisations advises to make PSEAH a standing item in the dialogue with multilateral organisations.

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Theory of Change

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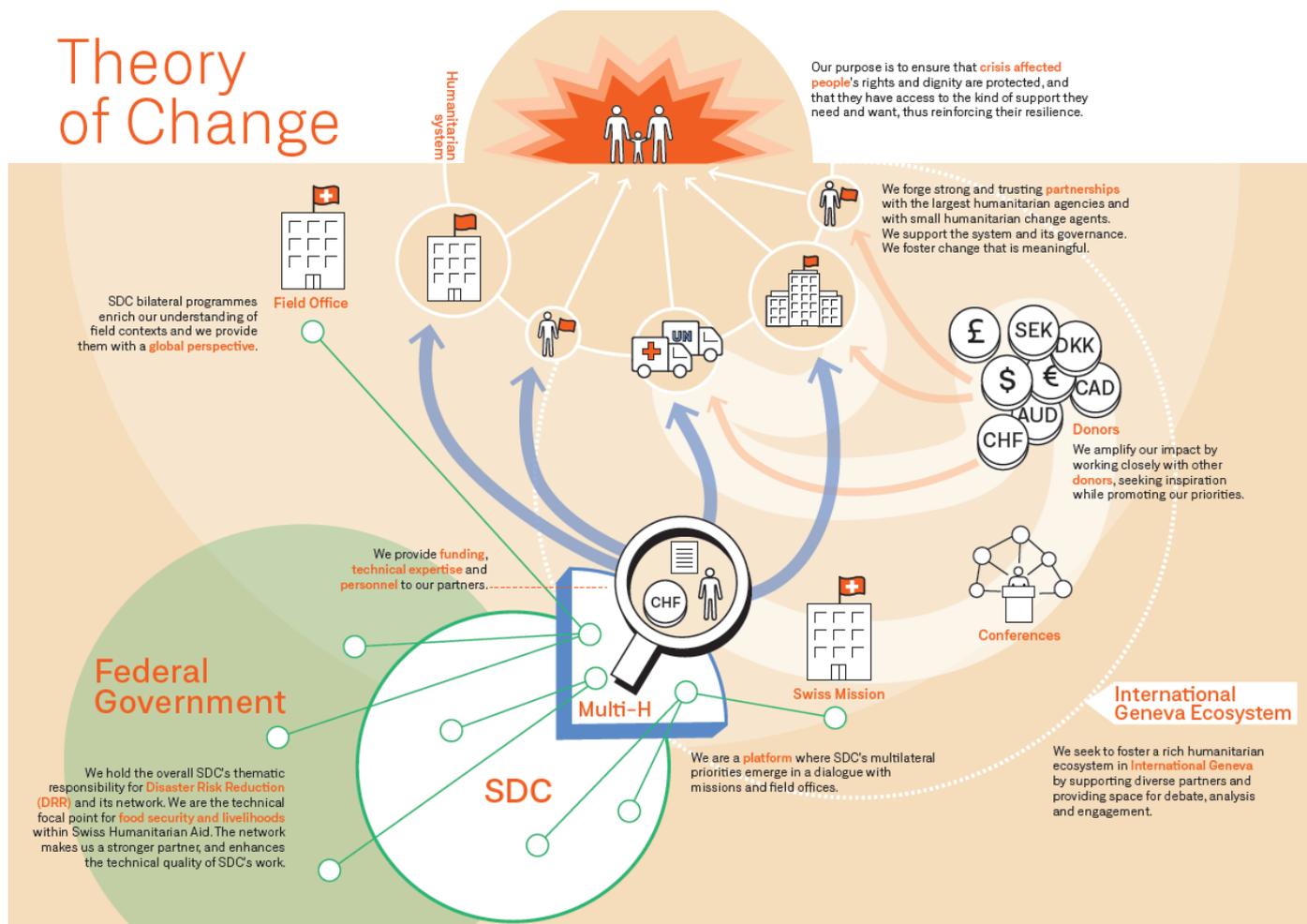


Figure 3: Multi-H ToC (Source : Lars Peter Nissen)

In 2020, Multi-H engaged in a collaborative process with the aim of defining the Multi-H core values and a Theory of Change (ToC). Resulting from a series of division-internal workshops, this ToC was drawn. The key elements of the discussions can be summarised as follows:

If Multi-H builds and maintains conducive collaborative ties, while investing in synergies and mutually reinforcing coalitions with Swiss Government actors, SDC field offices, think tanks and standard setters, as well as like-minded donors,

If it engages in meaningful and conducive partnerships rooted in mutual respect and learning and

If it learns from, and fosters best practices, informed by critical thinkers, analysts and change agents,

then it will positively influence policies and practices within the humanitarian ecosystem towards ensuring that crisis affected people's rights and dignity are protected and that they have access to the kind of support they need and want, thus reinforcing their resilience.

The way to achieve our goals while following the principle of 'do no harm', is by acting according to our shared values. We identified our five main common Multi-H values: **Humanity, honesty, commitment, trust and collaboration.**

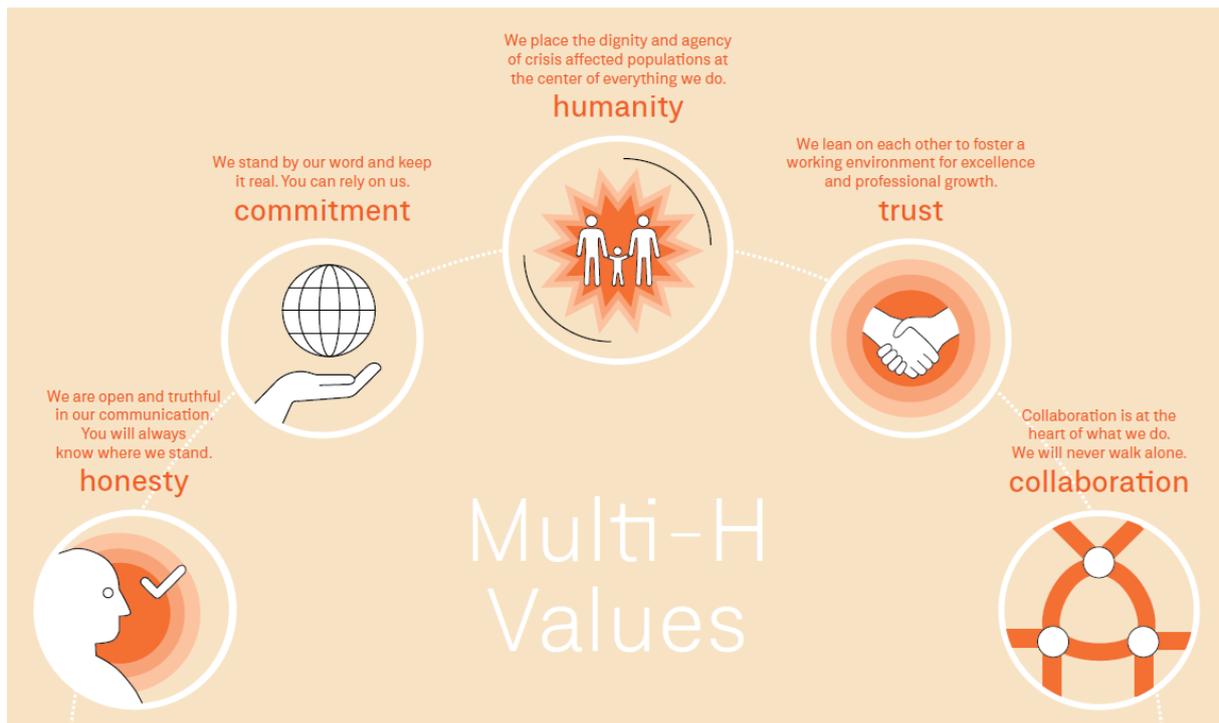


Figure 4: Multi-H Values (Source Lars Peter Nissen)

Where do we go from here? The ToC and the division's values guide us and help us focus on the long-term goals and priorities. UN and Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) multilateral processes and resolutions, the Global Platform for DRR, the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) and the RCRC Conference are milestones leading the Multi-H through the coming years. Specifying the areas in which we want to make a difference enables us to initiate timely discussions with internal and external partners, to use our networks, learn from others and establish links within the SDC and the FDFA.

Annex

List of abbreviations

CBPFs	Country Based Pool Funds
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
GB	Grand Bargain
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GenCap	Gender Standby Capacity
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GNDR	Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
GTH	Geneva Technical Hub
HA	Humanitarian Aid
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
Multi-H	Multilateral Humanitarian Affairs Division's
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSIA	National Society Investment Alliance
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ProCap	Protection Standby Capacity
PSEAH	Protection of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent Movement
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit SHA
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDRR	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	UN development system
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WASH	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation