



High-Impact Solutions in Humanitarian Response



Proven Interventions That Deliver Maximum Results Per Dollar

Humanitarian needs have reached record levels over the past decade, while the resources to meet them are shrinking. Seventeen countries at the intersection of extreme poverty, conflict and climate vulnerability are home to 70% of people in humanitarian need but receive a fraction of the required funding. **Every dollar must work harder.**

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) plays a critical role alongside governments: reaching populations that national systems cannot, testing innovations before they scale and building local capacity that keeps services running when crises hit. After years of rigorous research, we have identified a set of **interventions that deliver outsized impact for every dollar invested**. Each has been refined through testing and real-world implementation. Each is delivered through local systems and with government partners to ensure results endure.

Health and Survival

Childhood Vaccines: \$2 Per Dose

Through our REACH program with Gavi, we have delivered over 24 million vaccine doses in conflict zones, with delivery costs falling to ~\$2 per dose at scale. Mobile teams and pop-up clinics reach children that static facilities cannot. Children reached gain a lifetime of immunity.

Safer Births: 80% Reduction in Hemorrhage Risk

Community-based distribution of misoprostol prevents postpartum hemorrhaging, the leading cause of maternal death. Local health workers extend coverage to communities that facility-based care cannot reach.

Women's Empowerment

Reproductive Choice: Every \$1 Saves \$2.50

Self-injection innovations and community health workers are bringing contraception directly to women in crisis settings. Every \$1 spent on contraceptive services saves \$2.50 in health care costs. The result: fewer complications from unintended pregnancies and more women in education and income-generating activities.

Malnutrition Treatment: 21% Lower Cost

Our simplified malnutrition treatment protocol matches standard care outcomes while costing one-fifth less, enabling treatment for more children with the same resources. Local health workers and caregivers deliver the care, building lasting community capacity.

Infection Prevention: \$1 Invested Saves \$16.50

In crisis settings, over a third of health facilities lack basic water and nearly half lack hand hygiene facilities, exposing health workers and patients to preventable infections. Effective prevention and control halves infection-related deaths and saves over US\$16 in treatment costs for every dollar invested.

77% Reduction in Intimate Partner Violence

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, with our innovative approach, we saw 77% decrease in IPV and 42% reduction in child abuse with a cost saving of 27% compared to stand-alone programs that address partner violence or child mistreatment.

Education

One Year of Learning in 11 Weeks

Our teacher-led Remote Early Learning Program (RELP) delivers curricula and caregiver support via WhatsApp when preschools are closed or inaccessible. Rigorous trials show gains in language, numeracy and socioemotional skills comparable to a year of in-person preschool—costing 20% less according to an analysis in Lebanon—making RELP a highly cost-effective way to reach children with no access to early learning.

Cash and Resilience

Cash Transfers: 18% Greater Reach, 2x the Value

Evidence shows that direct cash reaches more people effectively and faster than in-kind aid by eliminating some supply chain costs and by providing clients with the choice to purchase exactly what they need. When families spend the cash on what is most important for their household (food, medicine, school fees, etc.), money circulates locally, generating \$2 in economic activity for every \$1 of cash transferred.

Crisis-Responsive Foundational Learning

When emergencies disrupt schooling, children lose access to basic literacy, mathematics and social-emotional learning opportunities, which are key for their future stability and dignity. In FY24, we trained over 20,000 teachers and enrolled 1.14 million children in flexible, evidence-based foundational learning programs, preventing the compounding effects of lost learning, child labor and early marriage.

Anticipatory Action: Preventing Loss Before Disasters

Early warning systems paired with pre-shock cash transfers enable families to stock food, reinforce homes and move livestock to safety before floods or droughts hit—preserving assets, meeting basic needs during a climate shock and preventing damage that could worsen recovery efforts and economic stability.

Acting Before Disaster Strikes

Anticipatory action is a growing, proactive model in humanitarian programming: instead of waiting for disasters to strike, we use climate forecasts to get cash and digital alerts to families before a shock hits.

Evidence from the IRC's pilot in **Nigeria** shows pre-shock assistance is more effective than post-crisis aid, helping prepare for floods and prevent costly damage repairs. In **Guatemala**, 90% of families who received early cash and alerts used them to prepare, reducing losses and strengthening resilience.

Powered by **open-source climate data and streamlined planning**, this model now operates in five countries and is designed for rapid replication to make emergency response more predictive, efficient and equitable in an era of increasing climate volatility.



The Bottom Line

As the gap between humanitarian need and available funding widens, these highest-return investments offer the clearest path to reaching more people with fewer resources.

The evidence is clear. What's needed now are **partnerships to bring these solutions to scale**, delivering lasting change for millions of people living in crisis.