

UNRWA IN FOCUS

Briefing Papers

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Comparing UNRWA to INGOs

This paper provides a statistical comparison between UNRWA and three international non-governmental organisations: Oxfam, World Vision, and Save The Children.

Operation areas and responsibilities

The **United Nations Relief and Works Agency** for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reports directly to the General Assembly. UNRWA currently operates in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and it delivers essential services to Palestinian refugees including education, health, protection, relief and social services, microfinance, and camp improvement.

Oxfam is a confederation of 20 independent charitable organizations focusing on the alleviation of global poverty, founded in 1942 and led by Oxfam International. Its main purpose is to help create lasting solutions to reduce poverty and ultimately create a world without poverty. Based on the values of empowerment, accountability, and inclusiveness, Oxfam has operations across the world focusing on disaster relief, gender justice, sustainable food, and health.¹

Save the Children is a global organisation operating in over 117 countries. The charity focuses on delivering programmes to children and responding to emergencies across the world. Their aim is to achieve sustainable shifts in the way the world treats children: ensuring that all children survive (that no child dies before their 5th birthday of a preventable cause), that all children receive a basic education, and that all children are protected, whether in conflict or not.²

World Vision is an international charity based on a partnership of Christians whose mission is to work with 'the poor and oppressed to promote human

transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.'³ World vision pursues this mission through: community based development programmes, emergency relief, promoting justice, partnering with Churches, increasing public awareness and encouraging people to respond to Christianity.

HEALTH PROGRAMMES COMPARISON

UNRWA, Save the Children and Oxfam all list health-related programmes as a key responsibility.

1: Oxfam in Bangladesh. After the sudden arrival of over 700,000 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar in 2017, refugee camps in Bangladesh were struggling from poor sanitation and infrastructure. Oxfam ran a large programme across all camps focusing on public health:

- A sewage facility that will serve 100,000 people,
- Installing water points to provide 385,000L of clean water daily,
- Solar powered lights,
- 24,000 households have received food vouchers.

This helped 260,000 people in the refugee camps.⁴ There was also a strong emphasis on education and mobilisation, informing communities about various public health issues and how to deal with them. Of the programmes budget, 23.5% of expenditure was on

UNRWA in Focus Project

The UNRWA in Focus project is an Exeter University student-centred activity, led by Professor Mick Dumper, designed to provide a platform for the publication of the students' research on one of the UN's largest institutions. UNRWA in Focus Briefing Papers are short and concise and aim to provide useful overviews on a range of issues relating to UNRWA, with the aim of exploring the notion of UNRWA as a significant political actor in the Middle East. Other Papers in the series can be found here:

<http://sites.exeter.ac.uk/unwraifocus/briefing-papers/>

¹ <https://www.oxfam.org/en>

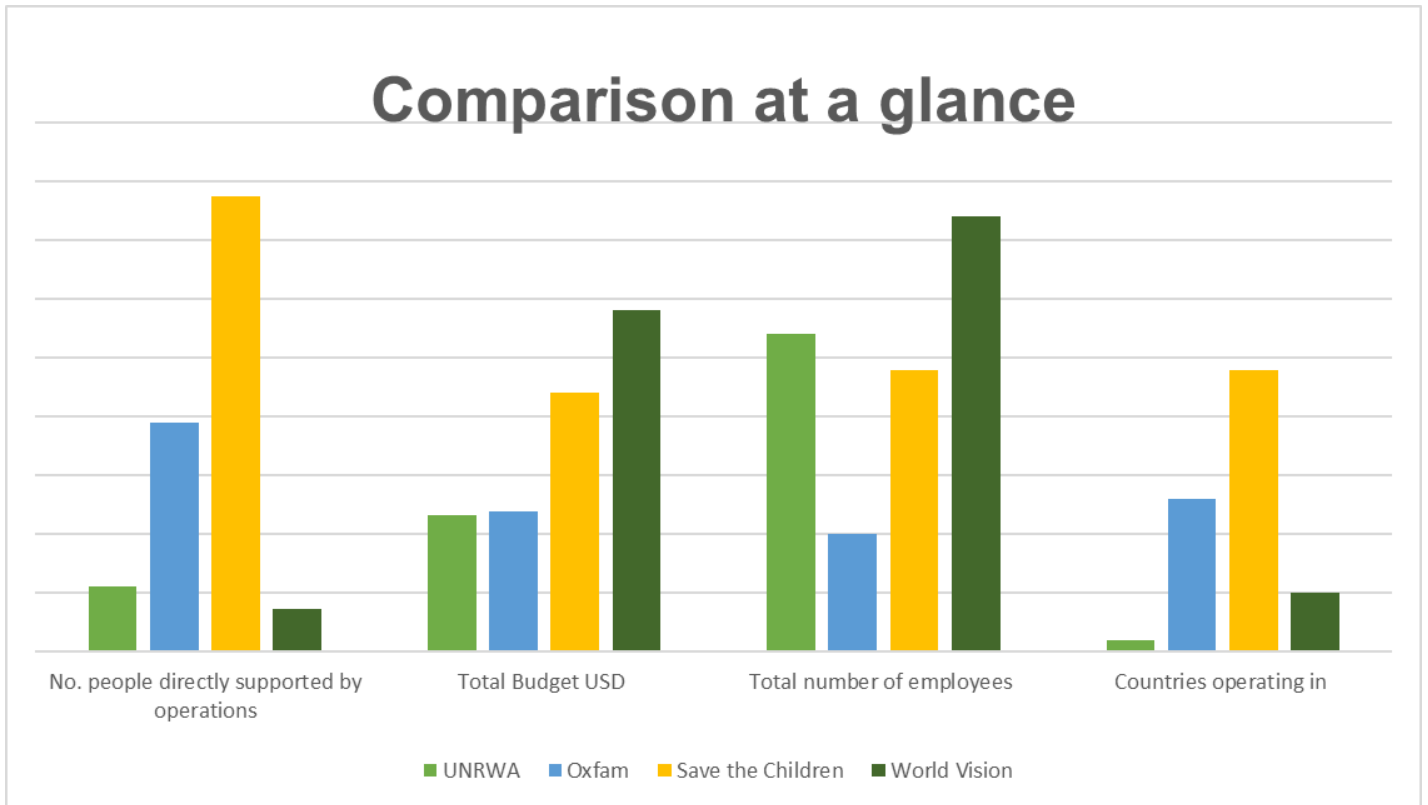
² <https://www.savethechildren.net/what-we-do>

³ <https://www.wvi.org/about-us>

⁴ Oxfam report on Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh

programmes in Bangladesh, this equvalates to USD 857 million.

- delivered hygiene workshops to 1.6m people,
- provided child-friendly spaces for 223,000 children.⁵



2: Save the Children in Yemen: Yemen is currently suffering from a number of crises: humanitarian, economic and environmental. 20 million people are at risk of extreme hunger, Save the Children has been operating in the area since 2015 and so far has:

- treated 232,000 under-fives for acute malnutrition,
- provided reproductive health services to 282,000 women,
- enabled 1.1m children to access food,

6.3 million patients
\$18 per patient
1:2094 (staff: patient)

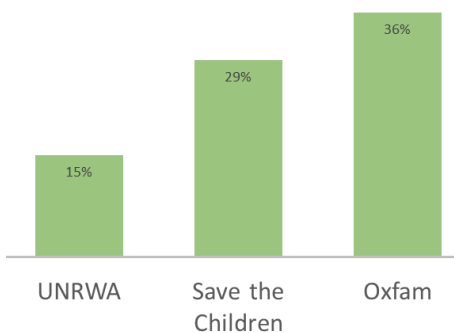
In 2019, Save the Children helped 1.7 million children, and supported 88 health facilities and 23 hospitals⁶.

3: UNRWA Health department:

UNRWA has 3008 members of staff and around 445 doctors serving 6.3 million registered patients in its 5 operation areas.

A total of USD 111 million was spent providing all programmes. This includes hospital services and Primary health care programmes (communicable diseases, disabilities, mental health, school health), in addition to the costs of programme management.⁷

% Expenditure on health



Comparing size and impacts

UNRWA currently has over 5.6 million people registered as Palestinian refugees. However, UNRWA work extends those classified as refugees and more people benefit from UNRWA provisions. UNRWA runs 709 schools across the five areas it operates, this covers approximately 533,000 students. UNRWA also runs healthcare facilities, to which in 2019 there were 8.4 million annual patient visits. There are currently 58 official Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip which are also maintained by UNRWA and since 1991 USD 531

⁵ Save the Children report: Five Years of Fear and Loss (Report on Yemen).

⁶ Save the Children: Universal Health Coverage Accountability Index.

⁷ UNRWA Health Department Annual Report 2019.

million in microfinance loans have been given to Palestinian refugees.

Oxfam has over 3624 partners across the globe, and their programmes and funding have directly impacted over 19 million people. Of their main objectives in 2019/2020, Oxfam ran 378 projects with 592 partners to help provide healthcare (saving lives goal) impacting 12.4 million people. For finance for development, Oxfam ran 261 projects working with 571 partners to impact 2.9 million people.⁸

Save the Children reached 38.7 million children in 2019/2020. Of those, 26.8 million were supported with healthcare or nutritional aid. 7.7 million children were impacted by education programmes and 10.6 million received aid after an emergency or natural disaster.⁹

World Vision states that it directly supported 3.6 million people, however, it has impacted the lives of over 200 million vulnerable children.¹⁰ This includes 20 million people assisted through emergency responses and relief, 5 million children fed through food programmes, and 3.4 million children gaining access to water.¹¹

Comparing employees and structure

UNRWA has over 30,000 staff members, of whom 21,175 work in education. There are nearly 2000 staff supporting projects in administration, and 259 staff members are part of executive direction.

Oxfam International has less than 300 members of staff globally. However, Oxfam affiliates have around 10,000 staff members.¹²

Save the Children has a total of 24 000 staff employed across the globe, 16,000 of which are directly employed by Save the Children International and 8,000 who are employed by members of Save the Children.¹³

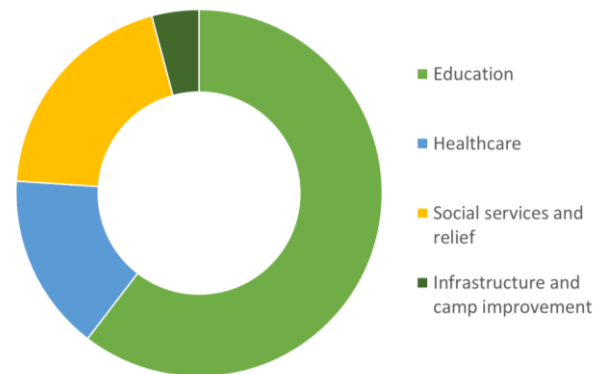
World Vision has 37,668 employees worldwide, but also benefits from a large volunteer base.¹⁴

Comparing Budget

UNRWA differs from the three INGOs and relies entirely on voluntary funding from donors; the timings and volume of these contributions are unclear and fluctuating¹⁵. The Agency has, therefore, focused on providing its most critical services, because the

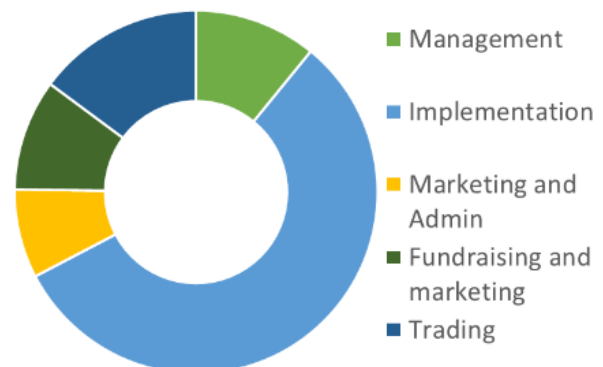
financial support has not kept pace with the growing demand for services caused by increasing numbers of registered refugees. As a result, the Agency's core fund, which supports essential services and most staffing costs, operates with a large deficit. In the 2020 fiscal year, the total expenditure of UNRWA was USD 1.16 billion, USD 181 million of which was spent on ensuring effective and efficient governance and support to the Agency.¹⁶

UNRWA Programme Expenditure



In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, **Oxfam** spent USD 1.19 billion, 41.7% of this funding was from Institutions including the United Nations, the European Union and other home government institutions.¹⁷ 57% of expenditure went towards programme implementation, the remainder was spent on running costs (including fundraising, marketing, and management) and trading.¹⁸

Oxfam Expenditure



In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, **Save the Children** had a combined revenue of US\$2.2 billion. 80% of this was spent on global programmes, compared to 14% on fundraising, marketing and 6% on administration and

⁸ Oxfam Annual report 2018-2019.

⁹ Save the Children Accountability report 2019.

¹⁰ World Vision Impact Summary 2019.

¹¹ World Vision International Annual Report.

¹² Oxfam Annual report 2018-2019.

¹³ Save the Children Annual Review 2019.

¹⁴ World Vision International Annual Report.

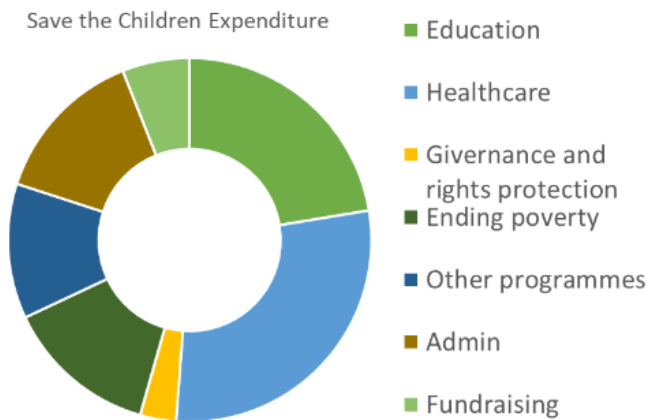
¹⁵ UNRWA Financial Report 2019.

¹⁶ UNRWA Annual Report 2019.

¹⁷ Oxfam Finances and Accountability Report 2019.

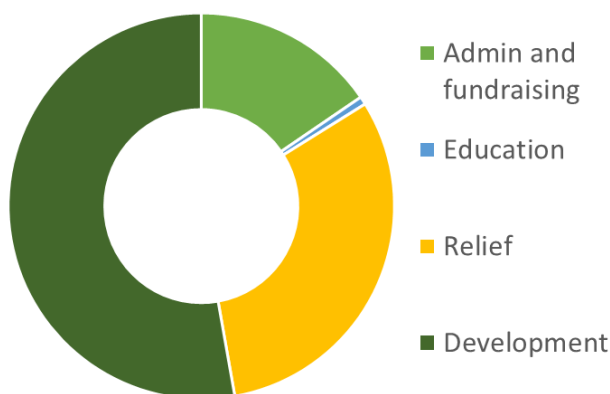
¹⁸ Oxfam Annual report 2018-2019.

governance. 52% of Save the Children income is from Institutions and 31% from individuals.¹⁹



In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, **World Vision** had a combined expenditure of USD 2.94 billion. Nearly 50% of expenditure was on development programmes (USD 1.56 billion), this does not include advocacy, education, and relief programmes. USD 356 million was spent on administrative costs and fundraising.²⁰

World Vision Expenditure



By Alex Westlake

Useful Links:

World Vision information bank:

<https://www.worldvision.org.uk/our-work/reports-papers-and-briefings/>

Save the Children Reports:

<https://www.savethechildren.net/research-reports>

Oxfam Annual reports:

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/what-we-do/about/our-finances-and-accountability/annual-reports-and-financial-statements>

UNRWA Reports:

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources>

Further Reading:

Farah, R., "UNRWA: Through the Eyes of its Refugee Employees in Jordan." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, No. 2-3 (2009): 389-411, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdp046>.

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Carapico, C., "NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs: Making Sense of Non-Governmental Organizations." *Middle East Report* 214 31, No. 1 (2000): 12-15.

¹⁹ Save the Children Accountability Report 2019.

²⁰ World Vision Impact Summary 2019. ; World Vision International Accountability Update 2019.