

Executive Summary

2019 at a glance

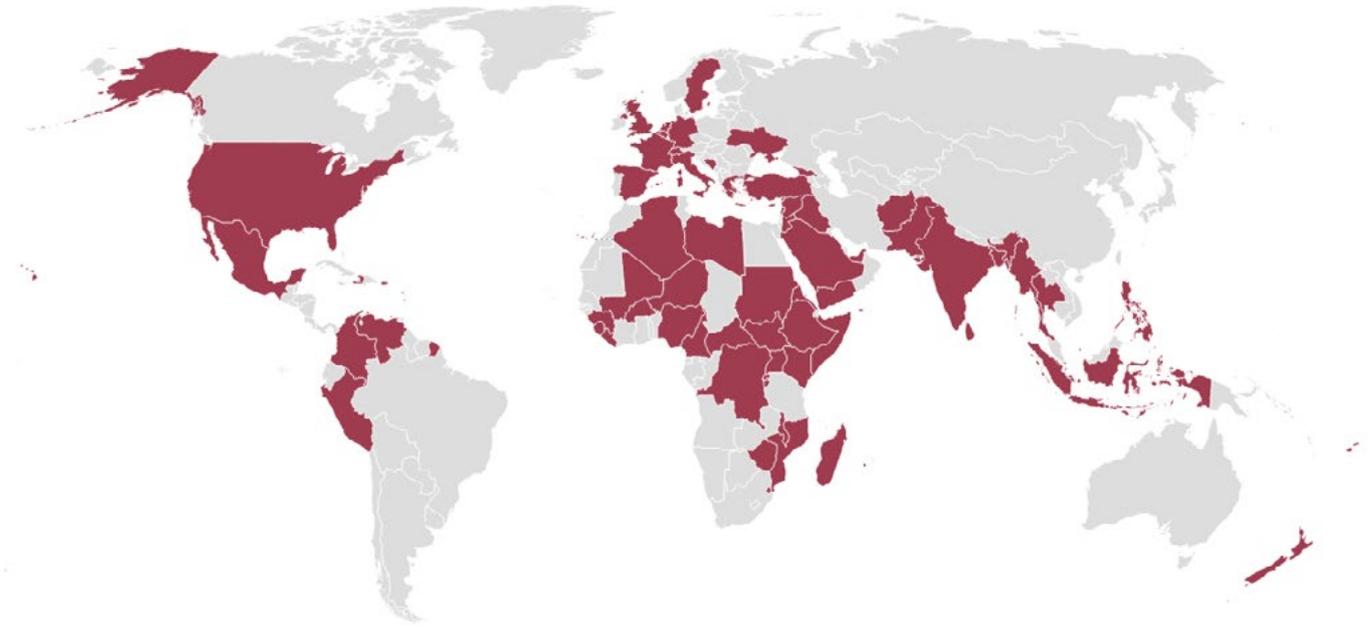


Our impact

In 2019, our coverage of humanitarian crises informed high-level decision-making in the interest of those most affected – from the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, where TNH reporting inspired a better focus on palliative care in the response, to the emerging crisis in the Sahel, where our journalism prompted one philanthropic foundation to give a large multi-country grant.

We provided greater accountability and transparency in the aid sector: our reporting on the neglected displacement crisis in Gedeo, Ethiopia, was soon followed by a visit from the Prime Minister and additional material support from the government. After we revealed that children were dying at al-Hol camp in Syria, weakened by their journeys fleeing so-called Islamic State, the Syrian Democratic Forces allowed the UN to open a transit centre.

By making humanitarian issues more accessible to a wider audience, we raised awareness and inspired further support: one reader, for example, donated money towards the work of a Bangladeshi doctor, while our reports appeared to prompt further media coverage on a scandal at the aid agency GOAL.



Places we reported from in 2019

Our journalism in 2019

The New Humanitarian's journalism seeks to do three things:

Provide in-depth, field-based perspectives on humanitarian crises:

We mapped the spread of infectious diseases (even before COVID-19), with a focus on Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo and measles, HIV, and diphtheria worldwide.

While many people continued to see climate change as a distant threat, we documented the humanitarian impacts it was already having on many communities, including displacement from Bangladesh to Somalia.

We highlighted abuses against displaced people, from Syrians in Europe to Central Americans on the US-Mexico border.

Shine a spotlight on forgotten stories and emerging trends:

We flagged the rise of militancy, particularly in the Sahel, but also in other emerging hotspots such as Mozambique.

We kept an eye on places like Colombia that continue to be plagued by violence and economic hardship despite supposed peace deals.

Cast a critical eye over the emergency aid sector

Our investigations team exposed neglect and abuses of power by aid agencies, from a bungled UN investigation into sexual abuse by peacekeepers to a questionable deal between the World Food Programme and CIA-linked data mining firm Palantir.

We provided a platform for debate on aid policy, from the negative effects of counter-terror legislation to the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding nexus.

Becoming The New Humanitarian

On 21 March, we officially changed our name and brand from IRIN News to The New Humanitarian, marking our move from a UN project to an independent newsroom. Our mission remains the same, but our new name reflects the renewed importance of our role in chronicling the changing nature of – and response to – humanitarian crises.

It also speaks to our audience: from high school students marching for climate change to local communities leading their own responses, a new generation of humanitarians is redefining the way the world is tackling crises.

Our new brand reflects our commitment to examining what humanitarianism means in the modern era and speaking to a wider audience of new humanitarians.

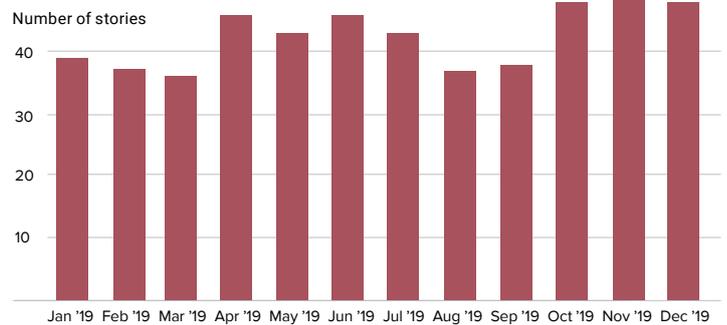
Developing our reader experience

We sought to enhance our reader experience in 2019 with a number of improvements to our web platform and online presence. These efforts were rewarded in the final quarter of the year, when unique visitors to our website increased to an average of 209,000 per month, up from 157,000 in previous months.

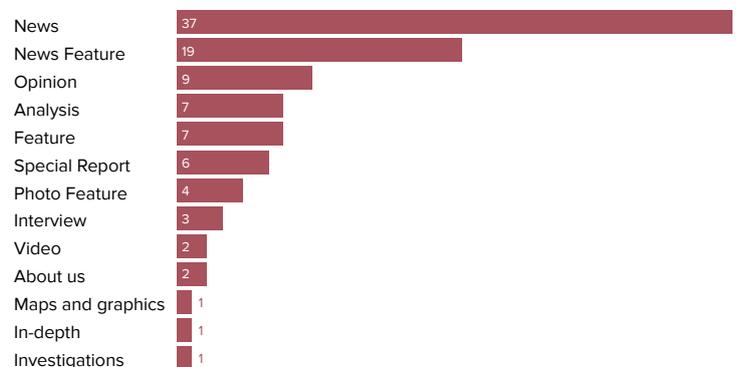
Newsletter sign-ups were boosted with banner messaging on the website, in-person outreach at events, and a social media campaign, resulting in a 37 percent increase in registrations compared to 2018. Our content also reached new users through platforms like Apple News, Medium, and Instagram, where we continued to grow our output, including with bespoke content.

Our work on social media outreach and engagement throughout 2019 was recognised by the Geneva Engage Awards: The New Humanitarian won first place in the Non-profit Organisations and Associations category.

Editorial Production



Production by format (%)

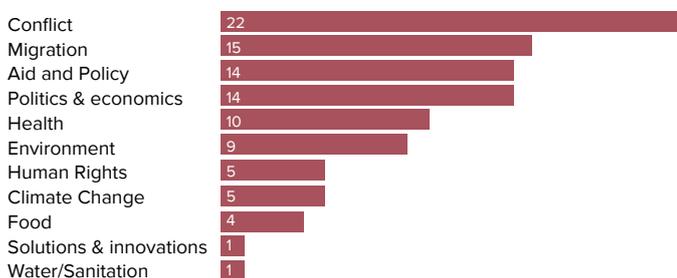


Thought leadership

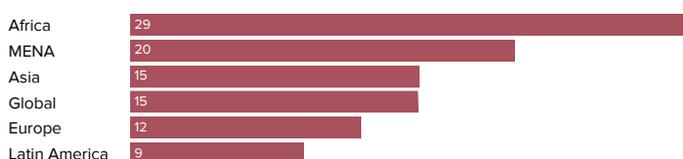
We were recognised as an authoritative voice in the humanitarian and media sectors, with invitations to speak at high-level events around the world. We gave keynote speeches at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and Constructive Journalism Conference; we chaired discussions at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Humanitarian Congress in Berlin, and the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid & Development Conference; and we briefed private foundations, governments and university classes alike.

TNH also hosted our own well-attended events: in June, our frank conversation on the Grand Bargain aid reform package was lauded as the “best event at ECOSOC”, the UN’s Economic and Social Council. In January, our breakfast conversation at the World Economic Forum in Davos redefined what it means to be a humanitarian in today’s changing world, featuring a range of voices, from the CEO of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to YouTube star Jérôme Jarre, and attracting a full house. Other TNH events deepened debate on locally led humanitarian response and launched the Fragile States Index. .1

Production by theme (%)



Production by region (%)



Finding our place in the media sector

We raised our profile in media circles in 2019, joining well-respected bodies like the **Global Investigative Journalism Network** and the International Press Institute. We struck a deal with the **Associated Press** to co-publish our investigation into the sexual abuse of women and girls by peacekeepers in Central African Republic; we were invited to write an **op-ed** for the UK’s Prospect Magazine; and we were featured in the **Nieman Journalism Lab**, which covers the news industry.

Our editors and freelancers were interviewed by the BBC World Service, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and Switzerland’s national broadcaster, among others, and regularly solicited for behind-the-scenes advice on covering specific crises. We spoke at the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Hamburg and the African Investigative Journalism Conference in Johannesburg, and attended the invitation-only NewsGeist, a gathering of leading media organisations throughout Europe organised by Google. The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, Al Jazeera, Politico, BuzzFeed, Le Monde, and Deutsche Welle were among those who republished, cited and/or linked to our reporting throughout the year.

Our funding

We made great strides with our funding and sustainability in 2019, increasing our funding portfolio to 18 partners, up from 13 in 2018, bringing on board five new donors – the Canadian government, the Danish government, Humanity United, the IKEA Foundation, and the Wallace Global Fund. Multi-year funding agreements now account for 75 percent of our funding. Our overall income grew by 15 percent over 2019 to CHF 1.95 million. In addition, we conducted market research that identified an appetite among our readers to participate in a voluntary paid membership model, as we seek to engage with our audience and diversify our income. All of these achievements enabled us to step into 2020 with growing confidence and a much stronger financial footing.

Our organisation and governance

In 2019, our founding president, Pulitzer-Prize nominated journalist Howard French, handed over the presidency of our Board of Directors to award-winning South African journalist, editor, trainer and media manager, Paula Fray. Later in the year, we also recruited HR specialist Dominique Ben Dhaou to our board.

Six new staff members joined our team, bringing skills in investigations, reporting from Africa, audience engagement, marketing, and administration and finance.

We continued improving our governance procedures, to increase transparency and trust from our donors, our audience, our staff, and those on whom we report. This included the introduction of a Freelancer Services Agreement to govern our relationship with our correspondents, improvements to our data security practices, and a Risk Management Framework.