CAF

WORLD GIVING REPORT

2025

Charity Insights

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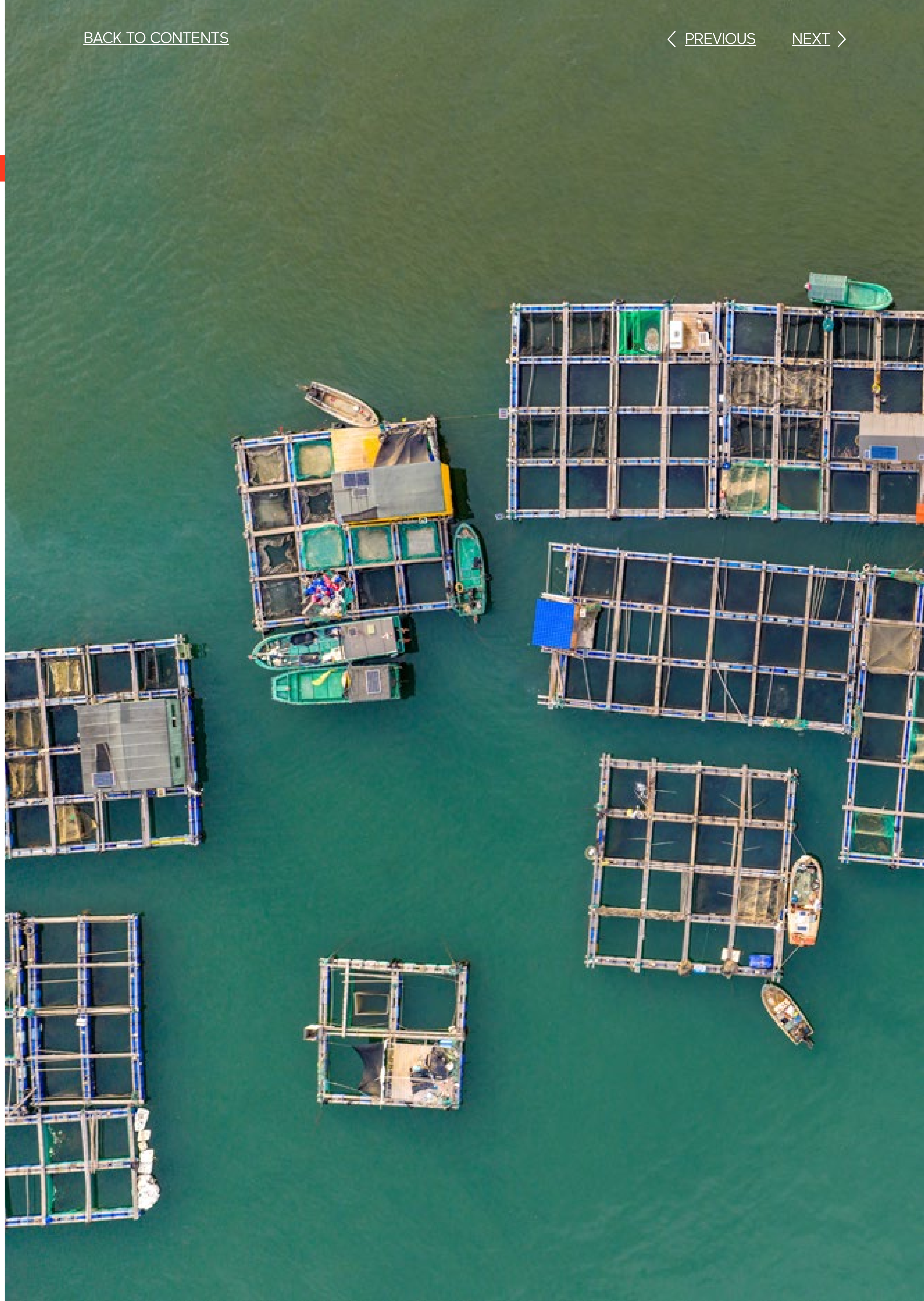


A note on 'Charity'

Across the report, we use the words 'charity' and 'charities' to represent any organisation that works to try and improve issues that are affecting individuals, communities, animals or the natural environment, and society as a whole.

In doing so, we recognise that these terms and their definitions differ around the world, with this type of organisation also described as: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), community organisations, social purpose organisations, associations and other names.

About the research

Welcome to the second part of the World Giving Report, which sets out global trends and challenges for the social sector in our first-ever look at Charity Insights.

Earlier this year, we dug deeper than ever before into the attitudes and behaviours of the general public in 101 countries around the world.

Now, the World Giving Report brings you the other side of the story — how charities around the world are faring.

We look at how funding differs across countries, how trusted and valued charity workers feel and how resilient charities around the world are in tackling whatever the future brings, among many other insights.

These insights have only been possible as a result of our partnerships with a group of diverse and talented organisations from around the world.

We worked with 20 organisations that share CAF's goal of stronger civil society in their regions, covering 27 countries around the world.

As the research continues, our goal is to expand that number, year-on-year, so we can understand as much as possible about civil society and push towards change for the better.

We believe that 'Together, we give more' but in this case 'Together, we understand more' is perhaps more appropriate.

We hope you enjoy the report.

Alex Plumb
Head of Research
Charities Aid Foundation

Marijana Sevic
Head of International
Charities Aid Foundation

About CAF

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) exists to accelerate progress in society towards a fair and sustainable future for all. Over the last 100 years, we have led the way in developing innovative approaches to giving. Annually, we distribute over £1 billion to social purpose organisations around the globe.

As a leading charity operating from the UK, US and Canada, alongside an international network of partners, CAF works at the centre of the giving world. We collaborate with corporate and individual donors to enable them to give more effectively, strategically and impactfully. This includes connecting them to charities globally and providing access to our in-depth sector knowledge, governance expertise and innovative giving solutions.

We help social purpose organisations to strengthen their resilience and do more of their life changing work, through strategic advisory services from our Impact Accelerator, tools to support charities' fundraising activities, and charity financial services from CAF Bank Limited and CAF Financial Solutions Limited. Using our research, policy and campaigns work, we understand and influence the wider environment for charities and donors.

What is the World Giving Report — Charity Insights?

- A survey that captures information and opinions from charities in 27 countries.
- The second part of the World Giving Report, following the Donor Insights released earlier in 2025 (covering 101 countries).
- See worldgivingreport.org for all the insights from the general public and charities.
- You can also find country-level Donor Insights reports from our partner countries.
- Towards the end of 2025, country-level Charity Insights reports from some countries will follow.

Our methodology

The results described in this report were collected between March and June 2025. During this time, CAF's partners invited charities in their countries to complete an online survey.

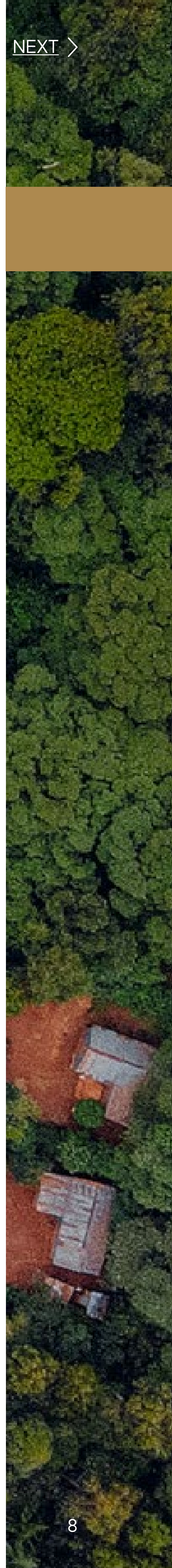
The sample collected is an indicative snapshot of charity in each country as, in most cases, there is no data on the sample universe with which to guide any sampling or post-hoc weighting of the data. The headline figures from all charities combined weights each participating country equally and, while this gives us a 'world view', CAF does not claim that this is representative of all the world's charitable organisations. The total number of charities who took part was 3,115.

(For the full method statement, visit worldgivingreport.org/about).

Global collaboration for giving

We are privileged to lead a global collaboration of partners across 27 countries, united in the aim of increasing understanding on giving and charity through this project.

Be part of the World Giving Report 2026. If you lead a civil society organisation that could facilitate access to charitable organisations in your country, please email the Research Team to discuss becoming a partner (research@cafonline.org).



Foreword

As part of our new World Giving Report series, we wanted to gather and share insights from charities making an impact in communities around the world. This research complements the Donor Insights shared in our July 2025 report, with the aim of improving understanding about the landscape in which charities are operating.

Providing a meaningful and rich international overview is no easy feat given the diversity of the charity sector — not just in geography and cause, but in structure, resources, and outlook. Yet, what stands out to me in what we learn from this work is the striking commonality among these diverse organisations, both in terms of the issues charities are facing and the factors that support them to deliver. Unsurprisingly, funding is the most pervasive challenge. While there is a thriving culture of giving in many places, we clearly need to think differently about how to support non-profits, particularly given the ongoing reductions in government aid and development spending.

Charities report that levels of demand increased significantly over the last year, especially for those in lower-income countries. With ongoing and escalating conflicts, climate change impacts and huge numbers of people displaced, charities that are relied on to offer relief are particularly affected — such as those working in health, poverty alleviation and humanitarian aid.

However, it is evident that we can learn from the places where charities are most optimistic, feel the most valued and community engagement is strong — particularly in Africa and Asia. Furthering collaboration is increasingly of critical importance: between charities, with government, businesses, and communities.

I would like to thank our international partners for their dedication and expertise, and the charities who have shared their experiences with us for their insight and commitment. It is our hope that this portrait of their work and views serves as both a reflection and a catalyst: inspiring conversations and informing strategy so that we can build a stronger, more resilient civil society in a changing world.

Neil Heslop, OBE
Chief Executive
Charities Aid Foundation

Overall sector health

1.

Funding is the key challenge for charities everywhere.

When asked about their top three challenges, eight in ten charity leaders surveyed mentioned at least one finance-related challenge (achieving financial sustainability, increased competition for funding, and the balance of restricted vs. unrestricted funding). Secondary challenges centred around operational concerns, such as increasing costs, putting together a strong team, keeping up with demand for services, and making the most of technology.

More than half of charities also mentioned challenges related to how they engage with the external environment, particularly in terms of raising awareness of their organisation and its work.

FIGURE 1.

KEY CHALLENGES FACING CHARITIES GLOBALLY.

Finances (80% mentioned at least one)

62%	Financial sustainability
32%	Increased competition for funding
16%	Balance of restricted and unrestricted funding

Operations (66% mentioned at least one)

29%	Increasing costs
24%	Hiring and maintaining a strong team
19%	Meeting the demand for services
12%	Making the most of technology

External awareness and networks (53% mentioned at least one)

24%	Raising awareness of our charity
19%	Government intervention
9%	Persuading people we can be trusted
9%	Volunteer engagement

Impact (29% mentioned at least one)

23%	Measuring and demonstrating impact
7%	Making an impact

Base: All charities surveyed, N=2302.

Charity leaders in lower-income countries are much more likely to say their sector is healthy.

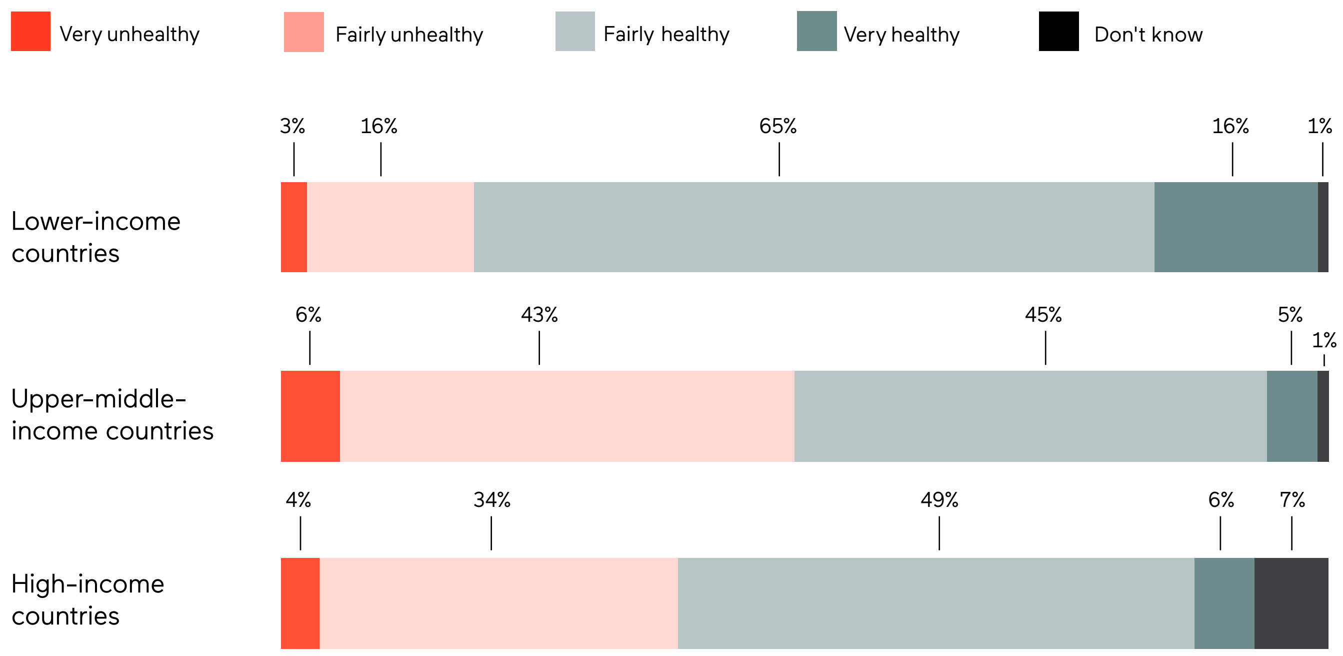
Charities surveyed in lower-income countries are significantly more confident about the health of their sector.[1]

Looking at specific types of charities — educational charities, religious charities, and those with 100 or more employees, are more likely than average to say their sector is healthy.

Attitudinally, charity leaders who believe that the Government has a positive impact on the sector are more likely to say that it is healthy (86% vs. 60% average), as are those who agree that charities are well regulated (69% vs. 60% average).

FIGURE 2.

CHARITY LEADERS' PERCEPTION OF THE HEALTH OF THE SECTOR IN THEIR COUNTRY.



Base: All charities surveyed. Lower-income countries, N=800; Upper-middle-income countries, N=612; High-income countries, N=1,476.

1 Economy type classifications are based on World Bank income groupings. Only one low-income country was included in our research (Uganda). Charity responses collected in Uganda have been added to those collected in lower-middle-income countries in a group we have called 'lower-income countries' throughout the report.

Why is the sector healthy?

Impact and community engagement.

"We're seeing increased community engagement, more innovative funding models, and a growing number of grassroots initiatives that are actually making an impact."

Human rights charity in Ghana

"The charity sector is experiencing a period of notable vitality. Donors are more engaged and informed than ever before. Organisations are using digital platforms to provide real-time updates and visual storytelling, demonstrating the impact of contributions. This builds trust and encourages continued support."

Poverty relief charity in India

"Many organisations are increasingly professionalised, with better governance, transparency and use of technologies for management, fundraising and impact measurement."

Homelessness charity in Brazil

42%
of charities
that said their sector is healthy attribute this to successful community engagement and its impact (the most common reason cited).

Base: All charities who say they think the sector is healthy and gave a reason why, N=1,253.

Why is the sector unhealthy?

Funding challenges and resource constraints.

"Many charities operate on short-term, project-based funding, which creates instability. There's limited access to multi-year funding, and very few funders support long-term growth or sustainability, making planning and innovation nearly impossible."

Homelessness charity in Canada

"It (the sector) is overwhelmed with demands and with meagre funding that does not support the possibility of providing answers."

Poverty relief charity in Argentina

"Decrease in all sources of funding while the demand for support from those affected remains significant and the public service does not provide it."

Disability charity in France

41%
of charities
that said that the sector is unhealthy told us this was because of ongoing funding challenges or limited resources (the most common reason cited).

Base: All charities who say they think the sector is unhealthy and gave a reason why, N=1,064.

Demand is up for charities everywhere, particularly in lower-income countries.

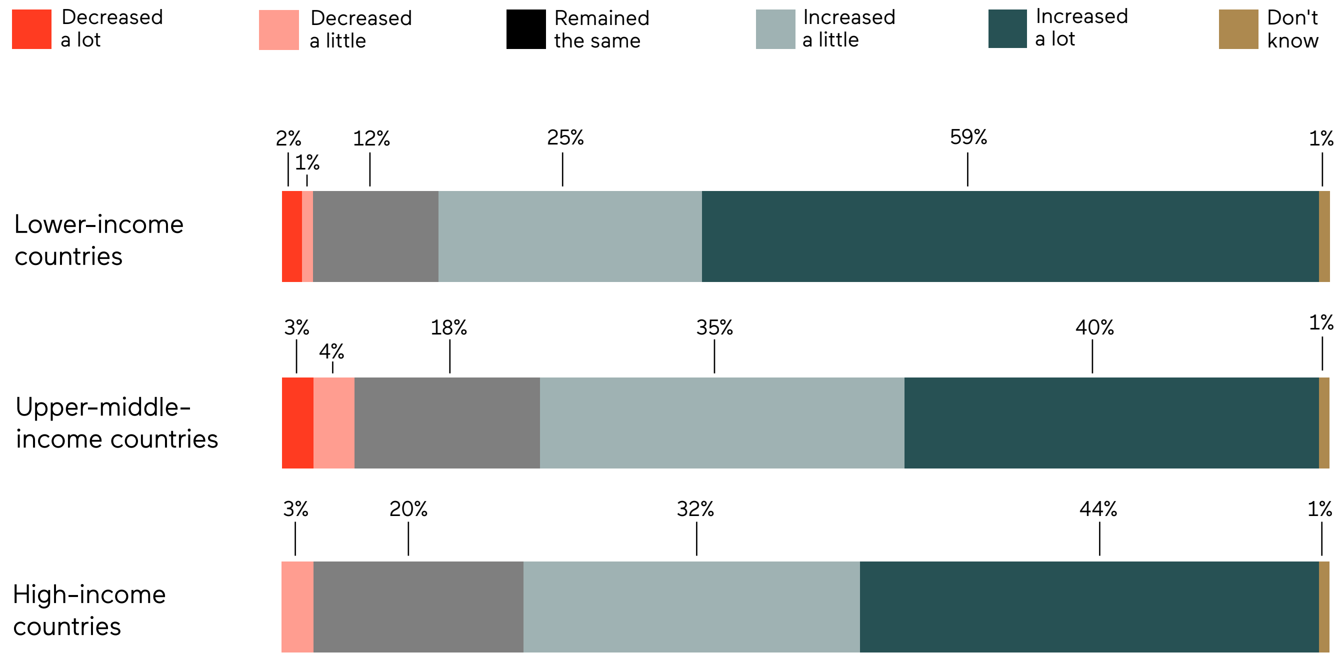
In the past 12 months, levels of demand have increased for most of the charities surveyed, but it was highest in lower-income countries. This was particularly the case for frontline charities, such as those working in health, poverty relief and humanitarian aid.

In lower-income countries, there is also the greatest expectation that demand will continue to increase over the next 12 months (90%), although charities everywhere are expecting this (84% average among all charities surveyed). Humanitarian aid organisations, in particular, are expecting a rise in demand for their services.

Charities that say they have diverse income streams are three times more confident that they can manage fluctuating demand while keeping operations running smoothly (66% vs. 22% average).

FIGURE 3.

DEMAND LEVELS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS.



Base: All charities giving grants, carrying out projects, or providing services. Lower-income countries, N=911; Upper-middle-income countries, N=651; High-income countries, N=1,525.

22% of charities

feel very confident they can manage demand smoothly.

Beyond the numbers: Analysing qualitative responses

The burden of constant demand poses a threat to the sector.

Charities report facing increasing demand for their services due to economic hardship, social crises, and withdrawal of public services. However, this greater need has not always been matched by more resources.

Charities report longer waitlists, reduced programme quality, and employee exhaustion. The gap between community needs and charities' ability to respond could threaten the sustainability and impact of the sector.

Charity leaders are more optimistic for their own organisations than they are for the sector as a whole.

Optimism is highest among charities surveyed in lower-income countries, particularly in Africa, where 55% of charity leaders are 'very optimistic' for the future of their organisation.

They are generally less optimistic in high-income countries and those with well-developed civil society infrastructure, particularly in Europe (15% very optimistic). This is despite the fact that, according to the Global Philanthropy Environment Index, countries in western and northern Europe receive the highest index scores for 'ease of operating a philanthropic organisation'.[2] This relates to the laws and regulations governing the formation and operation of philanthropic organisations.

When asked about the sector overall, leaders across all countries report lower optimism. Just 2% of European charity leaders and 35% of African ones are very optimistic (vs. 15% and 55% as seen on Figure 4), with all other continents showing a similar drop.

FIGURE 4.
OPTIMISM FOR THEIR OWN ORGANISATION.

15%
of charities in Europe are very optimistic

55%
of charities in Africa are very optimistic

Base: All charities surveyed. Europe, N=980; Africa, N=435.

2 Global Philanthropy Environment Index 2025, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Introducing CAF's six characteristics of a resilient charity.

Through our extensive research and advisory work with charities, we have identified six characteristics that show an organisation has the potential to be resilient. These characteristics provide a framework for charities to work on their resilience and can be mutually reinforcing. The areas also reflect some of the main challenges that charities cite, as shown earlier in the report (page 14).

In the rest of the report, we dig into the areas that charities highlight the most — Financial fitness, People and culture, and External awareness and networks. While charities feel more confident in their purpose and evidencing their impact, we know that these areas can often be overlooked.

Charities that regularly assess whether they are staying true to their purpose and effectively measuring their impact, tend to be more focused on their priorities and can tell a compelling story to funders.

Purpose

Understanding what the organisational purpose is — and just as importantly, what it is not.

Financially and operationally fit

Being financially and operationally fit with sufficient income from a diverse range of sources.

Evidencing impact

The ability to identify and communicate the needs being met and the impact this is having.

People and culture

Having the right employees and prioritising their development and wellbeing, supported by effective leadership.

Well networked

Being well connected and able to get support by working in partnership with others.

External awareness

Awareness of the political, economic, local and national context. Scanning the horizon for threats and opportunities.

Most charities believe they are clear on their purpose but find networking and finances more challenging.

Previous research on charity resilience has allowed us to establish key indicators for each of CAF's six characteristics. From here, we assigned charities with a score for each characteristic. Figure 5 shows the distribution of scores, shedding light on the strengths and weaknesses of charities around the world.

Charities scored highest for Purpose, with a median average of 87.5/100, followed by Evidencing impact and External awareness. The other three aspects of resilience present greater challenges to charities: when it comes to networking, finances and operations, and people, scores are generally lower.

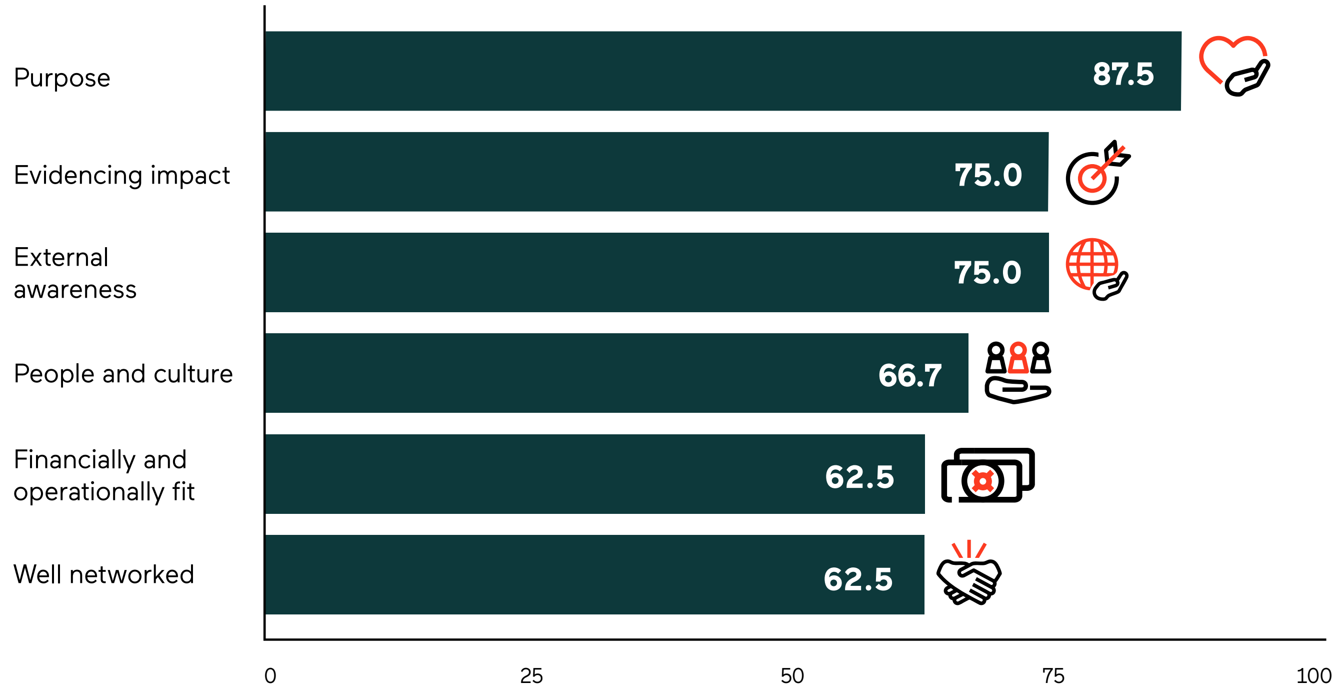
The fact that Evidencing impact is one of the areas where charities feel most confident, raises some questions. In the Donor Insights part of the World Giving Report, 'Knowing more about the results and impact that a charity has' was rated as the third most effective way for people to give more in the future — this suggests that charities may see themselves as evidencing impact effectively, but this is not translating completely to the general public, given they are citing it as a gap.

Further analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between strength of the internal team (one facet of People and culture) and a charity's ability to evidence impact. These two elements come together to form a key component of overall resilience. Meanwhile, having good external networks is closely linked to financial diversification.

All six characteristics contribute to overall resilience. While each presents its own opportunities and challenges, they are interlinked and equally important.

To read more about resilience, visit https://www.cafonline.org/services-for-charities/resources

FIGURE 5.
MEDIAN AVERAGE SCORES ON RESILIENCE CHARACTERISTICS. SCORES SHOWN OUT OF 100.



Base: All charities surveyed. N=3,021.

Beyond the numbers: Analysing qualitative responses

Positivity and higher standards from collaboration and co-operation.

Despite economic, political, and operational challenges — including funding cuts, increased demand, and government constraints — charities report feeling a sense of resilience and the ability to adapt. Organisations report innovations with their service delivery, leveraging digital tools, and responding to various crises.

Charities say that the sector is increasingly characterised by collaboration between charities, government, the private sector, and international partners.

Networks, alliances, and consortiums are seen as essential for resource sharing, capacity building, and scaling impact. There is also a trend towards greater professionalisation, transparency, and use of technology for governance, reporting, and impact measurement.

Characteristics of more and less resilient charities.

Further analysis has drawn out several major differences between the most resilient charities (top quartile of the overall resilience score) and the least resilient (bottom quartile of the overall resilience score).

The most resilient charities:

- Are more likely than average to receive income from partnerships with businesses, endowments, public donations, or earned income.
- Are the only group whose senior team spends around half of their time (49%) on strategic thinking and planning/networking (others spend far less).
- Almost all say that their board is diverse in terms of experience and background (95%), including two-thirds (67%) who say that it is very diverse.
- Are nearly five times as optimistic about the future of their organisation compared to low resilience charities (67% vs. 14% of low resilience charities).

Base: Charities in the top 25% most resilient organsiations, N=684-762.

The least resilient charities:

- Are twice as likely to have a mix of restricted and unrestricted funding that makes it difficult for them to achieve their goals (33% vs 15% of high-resilience charities).
- Have senior teams who spend two-thirds (67%) of their time problem-solving, on average.
- Compared to the most resilient charities, are significantly more likely to find it challenging to recruit the right employees, retain them, and manage their well-being.
- Are twice as likely to say that measuring and demonstrating impact is a significant challenge (30% vs. 16% of high-resilience charities).

Base: Charities in the bottom 25% least resilient organisations, N=520-725.

Financial fitness

2.

Charities in high-income countries enjoy a broader funding base than organisations elsewhere.

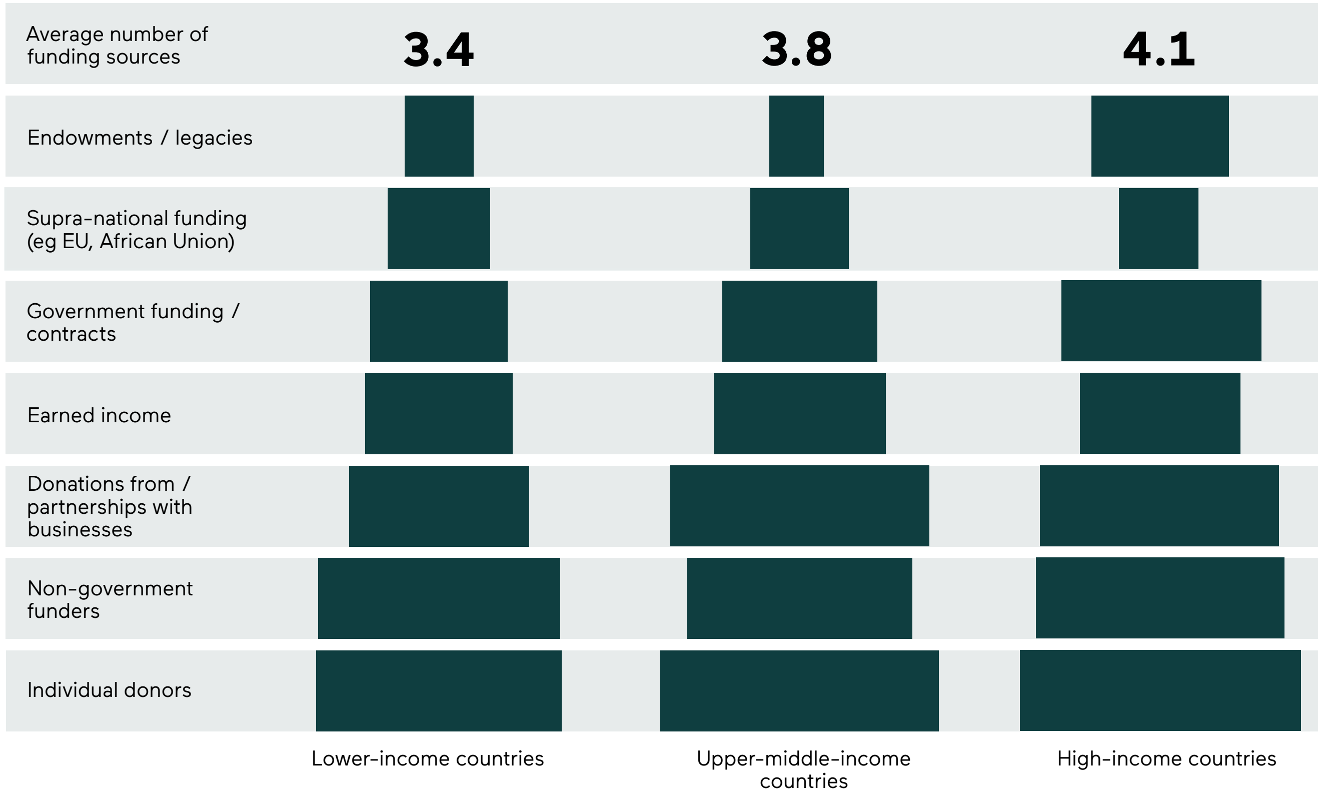
Individual donors, non-government funders and corporates are the three main funding sources for charities around the world. Charities in high-income countries enjoy the broadest funding base, receiving 4.1 sources of income on average, compared to 3.8 sources in upper-middle-income countries and 3.4 in lower-income countries.

The primary difference between lower and higher-income countries is in more common corporate donations and government funding — charities in high-income countries are around 50% more likely to receive these types of funding.

Funding through legacies, while less common than the two sources mentioned, is also far more prevalent in high-income countries.

FIGURE 6.

FUNDING SOURCES RECEIVED BY ECONOMY TYPE (ALL WHO RECEIVE THIS TYPE OF INCOME).



Base: All charities surveyed. Lower income countries, N=999; Upper-middle income countries, N=711; High-income countries, N=1,643.

Beyond the numbers: Analysing qualitative responses

Sustainable, longer-term funding is the rarely found ideal.

In qualitative feedback, charities reported a lack of sustainable funding, citing shrinking government grants, reduced donations, and increased competition for limited resources.

Some charities, particularly smaller organisations, are struggling due to short-term, project-based funding (known as *restricted funding*), which makes it difficult to plan for the long term.

High inflation and shifting donor priorities have added to funding insecurities.

CASE STUDY

The Nkoilale Community Development Foundation runs a women's craft centre in Kenya.

Building resilience and empowering a community.

How Nkoilale's vision took root.

The Nkoilale Community Development Foundation (NCDF), based in Narok County near the Maasai Mara (Kenya), demonstrates how community-led initiatives can thrive through strategic support and a clear vision. Initially a grassroots group, NCDF has grown into a fully registered non-governmental organisation.

A major driver of NCDF's success has been its deliberate diversification of income streams. The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), a CAF partner, supported NCDF to establish the Naboisho Women Craft Centre, where 85 women receive training in beadwork, leatherwork, and financial management.

This initiative, organised under a structured community-based organisation model, has generated KES 2.6 million in sales, boosting women's incomes and local enterprise. Additionally, NCDF manages a cattle dip to enhance livestock health and local livelihoods.

The organisation also launched the Maji Milele project, a 24-hour prepaid water ATM, implemented through a matching grant with KCDF. By leveraging mobile money for payments, the initiative offers reliable, affordable access to clean water at KES 10 per jerrycan — drastically reducing the burden of water collection for local households.

NCDF's 22-acre property has become a training hub, hosting soap-making programmes for women and showcasing permaculture farming for environmental sustainability. A percentage of profits from these enterprises is then ploughed back into the NCDF, for community development work.

Looking ahead, NCDF plans to establish a technology hub to equip young people with digital skills and launch a waste management project.

NCDF's journey — from dependency to self-reliance — demonstrates the transformative power of capacity-building, strategic partnerships, and community ownership. Their story stands as a model of how local organisations can scale impact, diversify income, and build systems that endure.

Charities in lower-income countries receive much less unrestricted funding, especially when it comes from abroad.

Organisations in high-income countries enjoy around 50% more unrestricted funding than those in lower-income countries. On average, unrestricted funding makes up just 28% of charities' income in low-income countries, compared to 40% for charities operating in high-income countries.

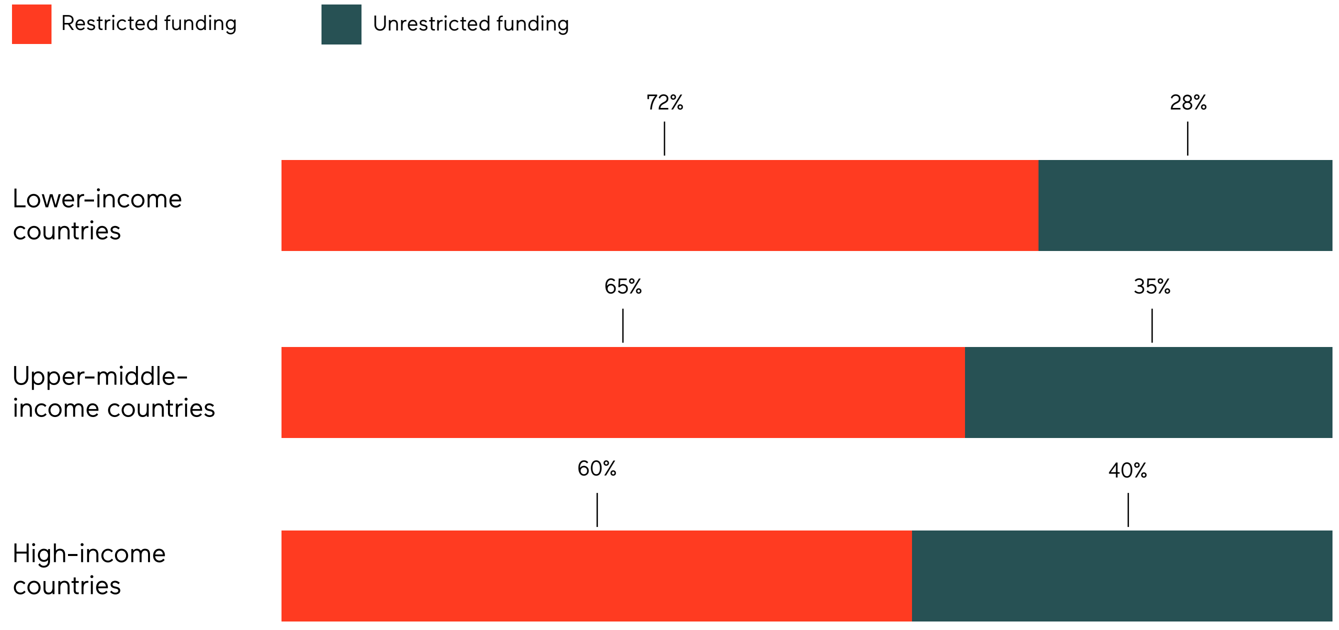
The difference is most stark for charities that receive all or most of their funding from abroad: they report that around four-fifths (79%) of their income is restricted. This may be the product of regulatory requirements that different countries have for cross-border giving, or the appetite of grantmakers and donors to give restricted funding overseas.

As many as two in five (40%) charities surveyed in Africa say that this funding makes it difficult to achieve their goals, with 17% describing it as 'very difficult'.

Certain types of charity seem to enjoy more unrestricted funding than others, including religious organisations and health charities. Charities that receive significantly less unrestricted funding include humanitarian aid and human rights organisations.

FIGURE 7.

BALANCE OF FUNDING RECEIVED BY CHARITIES, BY ECONOMY TYPE.



Base: All charities surveyed. Lower income countries, N=699; Upper-middle income countries, N=582; High-income countries, N=1,503.

79%

of funding is restricted

for charities whose income comes mainly or soley from overseas.

Trust-based philanthropy delivers impact for marginalised women and girls.

The gift of flexible funding.

Every year, across the world, reproductive choice helps girls and women to complete their education, pursue careers and achieve independence. Women's equal participation in the economy has the potential to boost global GDP by US$28 trillion — benefiting everyone.

A family foundation working with CAF was drawn to UK charity, MSI Reproductive Choices' work and its impact in this area. MSI provides sexual and reproductive healthcare in 36 countries, supporting 200 million women and girls to decide their own futures, through access to reproductive healthcare including contraception and abortion.

Committed to trust-based philanthropy, the client provided MSI with US$15 million of flexible funding in total over three years. This gave MSI the autonomy to invest in global outreach teams, and pivot services to areas of greatest need.

The funding enabled MSI to deliver more than 2.6 million reproductive healthcare services across 10 countries in Africa and Asia. MSI estimates that these services led to over £177.6 million in direct healthcare savings, in countries with limited resources.

The funding also allowed MSI to advocate for the removal of laws and policies that restrict women's access to healthcare. In 2023, MSI contributed to 13 high-impact changes in policy, law, regulation, or financing.

CASE STUDY

"By giving flexible funding to well-led charities with strong track records of work, we know that the funds will be used where and when they are most needed. This ensures the best outcomes for the girls, women and families MSI Reproductive Choices supports — and the best value for money. Charities can do more when they can both plan ahead and react to changing circumstances."

MSI funder

MSI Zambia delivers reproductive healthcare in villages with no other access.

People and culture

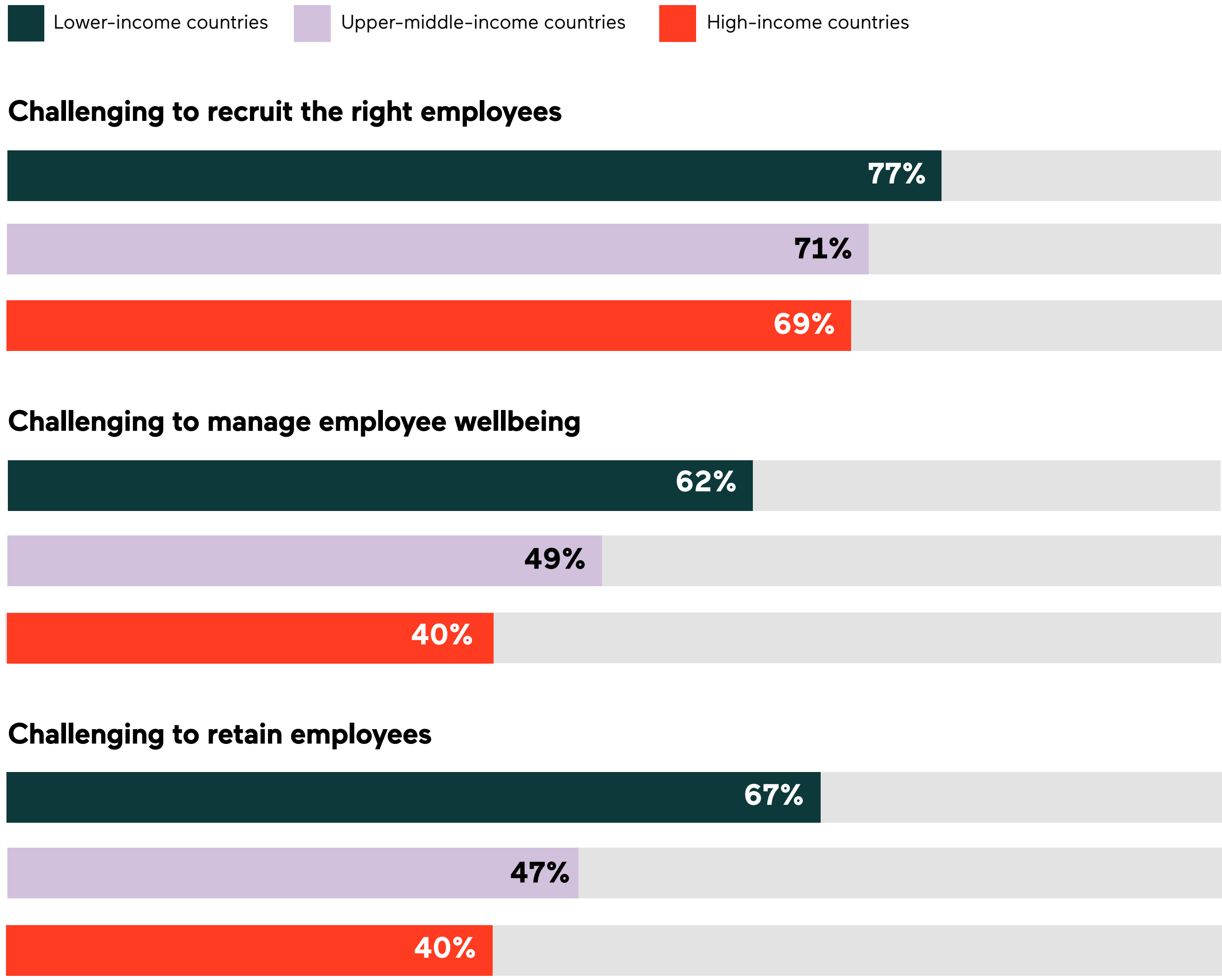
3.

Charities everywhere are finding it challenging to recruit the right people.

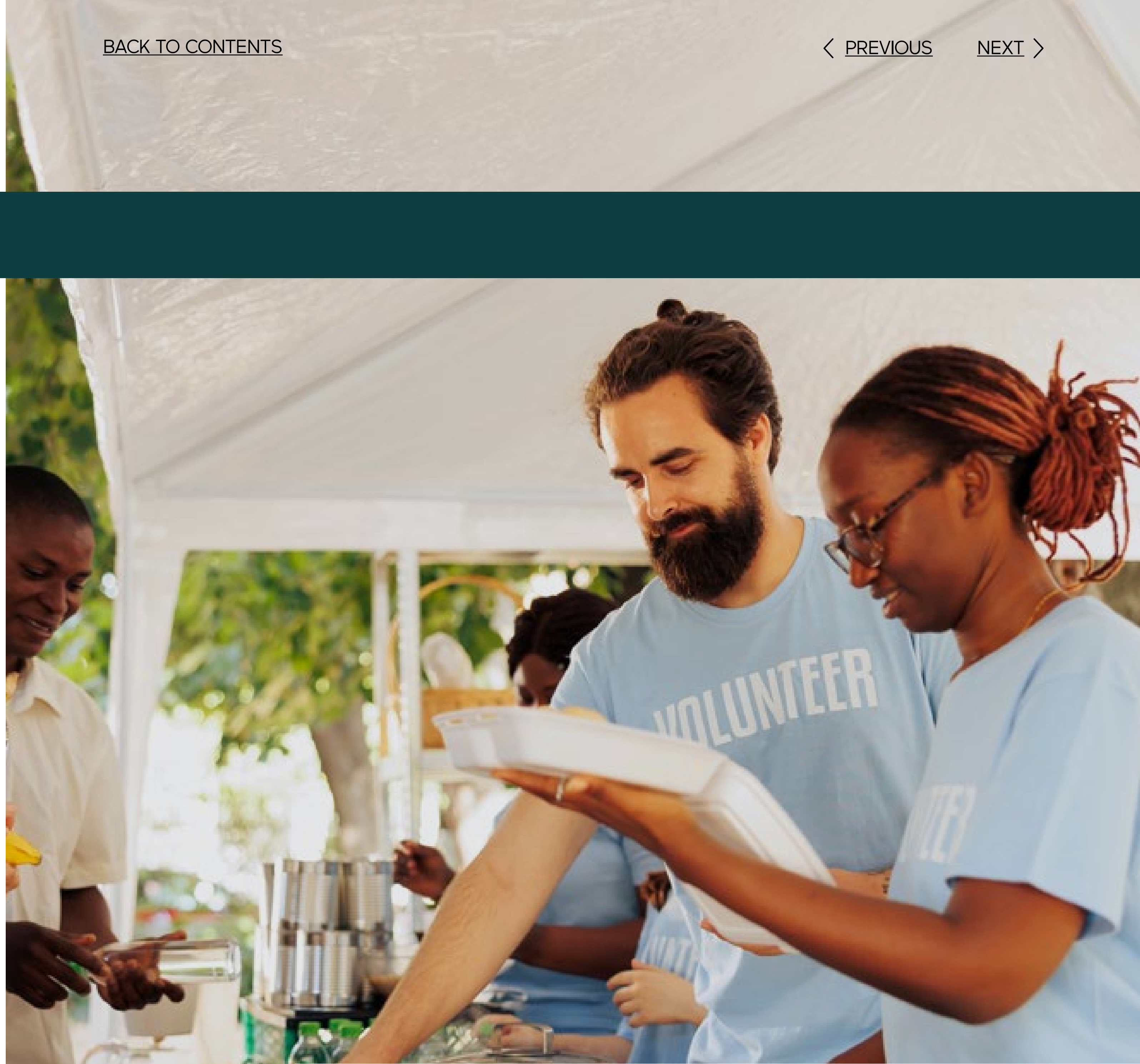
Overall, more than seven in ten (72%) charities surveyed across 27 countries reported finding it challenging to recruit the right people. Retaining employees and managing their well-being was also a challenge for many charities, particularly those in lower-income parts of the world.

FIGURE 8.

PERCENTAGE OF CHARITIES FINDING THE FOLLOWING AREAS CHALLENGING.



Base: All charities surveyed. Lower-income countries, N=812; Upper-middle-income countries, N=615; High-income countries, N=1502.



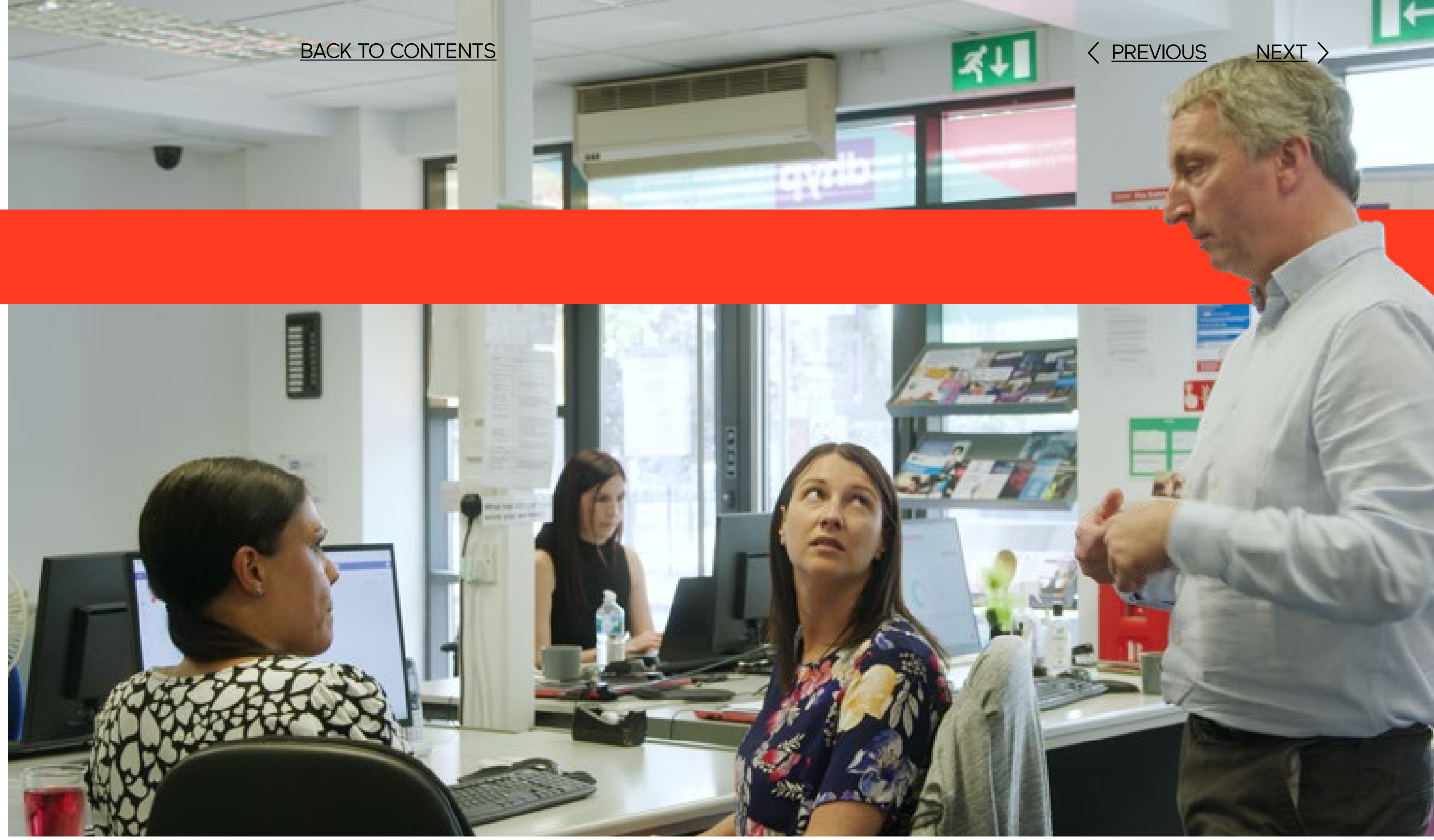
Beyond the numbers: Analysing qualitative responses

A growing recruitment and retention challenge.

According to the charity leaders we surveyed, employees often feel underpaid, overworked, and face significant emotional demands.

High turnover is common, with employees often leaving for other opportunities, resulting in the challenge of retaining institutional knowledge. Looking to the future, the sector could struggle to attract and retain new talent, especially among younger generations.

A strong senior team with a broad range of backgrounds provides a number of positive outcomes.



Charity leaders spend on average, 60% of their time fire-fighting problems.

Charity leaders are spending on average 60% of their time dealing with day-to-day operational problems, and 40% of their time on strategic thinking, planning and making connections for the longer term — with a quarter (24%) spending at least three quarters of their time fire-fighting problems.

Charity leaders who report having a strong team spend significantly more time on strategic thinking and less time on fire-fighting than those that do not (43% vs. 34% of time planning).

Extra time spent on planning is linked to other positive aspects, such as stronger partnerships outside of the charity sector. Those who spend over 75% of their time planning are more likely to have very strong networks (24% vs. 15% of other charities).

THE AVERAGE CHARITY LEADER'S TIME IS SPLIT:

Diverse leadership teams are less bogged down in day-to-day matters.

A quarter (24%) of charities say their leadership is not bogged down in day-to-day matters. These organisations are more likely to be confident that they learn from mistakes (47% very confident vs. 39% overall), and that they have a senior team that brings a very broad range of skills and experience from different backgrounds (54%).

Overall, just over two in five (43%) charity leaders are confident that their senior team has a very broad range of skills and experience.

Charities working in the arts, culture, heritage or science are least likely to indicate their leadership is diverse in terms of skills and experience (32%), while education charities (49%) are the most likely to do so.

39%
of charities
are very confident their organisation learns from mistakes.

43%
of charities
say their leadership team has a very broad range of skills and experience.

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PREVIOUS

NEXT

CASE STUDY

Paradigm Initiative hosts the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum 2025.

From one cybercafe to a presence across 27 countries...

The power of inclusive and diverse leadership.

Paradigm Initiative (PIN) is a pan-African non-profit working to ensure digital inclusion and digital rights for underserved communities in Africa. What started as a small cybercafe in Ajegunle, Nigeria, has grown to having presence in Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and ground-level impact across 27 countries.

From equipping young people with life-changing digital skills to shaping policies that protect online freedoms, PIN's work spans capacity building, regional advocacy, research, strategic litigation, coalition building and global engagement.

At the heart of this impact is a leadership team that exemplifies diversity in thought, lived experience, and expertise. The leaders of PIN come from across the continent — Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and the Gambia — and represent a powerful mix of sectors, including civil society, law, media, technology, finance, and governance. They have risen through the ranks in their careers, bringing deep community ties and operational knowledge into leadership.

For example, the LIFE Legacy programme was co-designed by team members with lived experience of digital exclusion, leading to a model that is locally relevant and globally scalable.

The Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum, Africa's largest convening on digital policy, has grown under inclusive leadership into a multi-stakeholder platform, reflecting diversity of language, gender, ability, region, and sector.

A cancer hospital with complex challenges.

How intentional diversity sets them up for success.

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) offers advanced cancer treatment. At the heart of this institution is a diverse leadership team comprising medical professionals, healthcare administrators, researchers, financial experts, technologists, and social sector leaders, each bringing a unique set of skills and perspectives to the table.

This diversity is not incidental, it is intentional and strategic. By fostering a leadership culture rooted in multidisciplinary expertise, SKMCH&RC has been able to navigate complex challenges with agility.

Moreover, the diversity of thought has driven innovation. With researchers, clinicians, and data scientists working in tandem, the cancer hospital and research centre has advanced its research capacity, contributing to global cancer research while tailoring treatments for Pakistani patients.

In essence, SKMCH&RC's prioritisation of diverse leadership has not only enhanced operational excellence but also reinforced its mission of equitable, high-quality cancer care. It is a compelling reminder that when diverse minds lead together, institutions thrive with purpose, innovation, and resilience.

CASE STUDY

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre delivers healthcare in Pakistan.

Volunteer engagement is strongest in Africa.

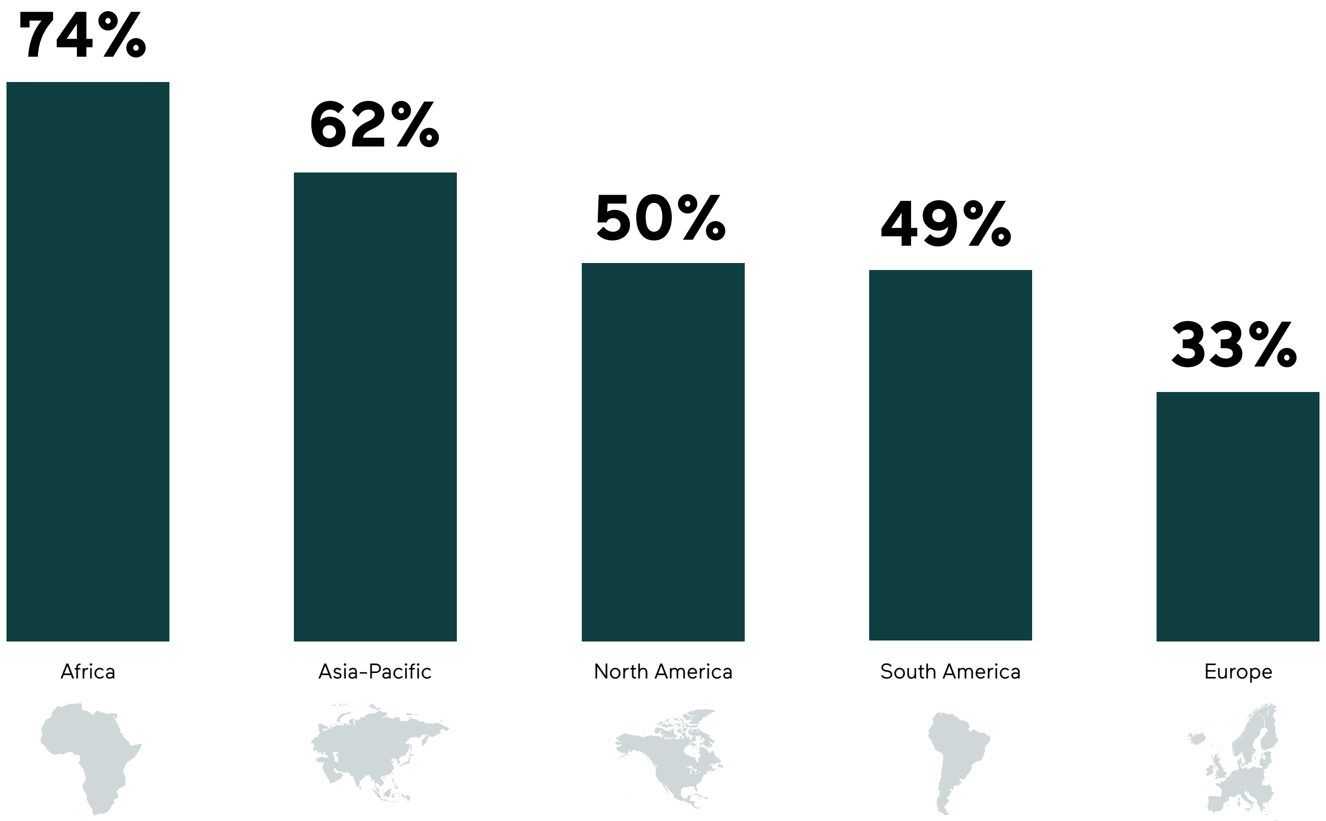
Charities in Africa find it easiest to recruit and retain volunteers (74% and 66% found it easy, respectively). This supports findings from our World Giving Report that people in Africa are more likely to volunteer (39% vs. 26% global average), and give the most hours (14.5 hours vs. 9 hours global average).

Conversely, only a third (33%) of charities in Europe find it easy to recruit volunteers to help out on projects, reflected in the low volunteering rate seen across the continent (18%). For one in eight (13%) European charities, securing and maintaining volunteer engagement is one of their top three challenges.

Local charities find it easiest to recruit and retain volunteers compared to national or international charities, with a quarter finding it 'very easy' (25% vs. 20% average).

FIGURE 9.

PERCENTAGE OF CHARITIES FINDING IT EASY TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS (FAIRLY OR VERY EASY), AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS VOLUNTEERED PER PERSON.



Base: All charities with volunteers. Africa, N=449; Asia-Pacific, N=477; North America, N=465; South America, N=330; Europe, N=592. Public volunteer figures taken from the World Giving Report 2025.

External awareness and networks

4.

Charities in Europe and North America are the most downbeat about public perceptions of the sector.

Charity leaders surveyed in upper-middle and high-income countries, particularly in Europe and North America, are relatively downbeat about public perceptions of the sector. They were also most confident that their countries would not be able to function without the sector and that their governments rely on charities to deliver services they cannot or will not fund.

The most optimistic charities are found in Africa, where around two-thirds of organisations said that their role is celebrated in their country (64% vs. a low of 33% among charities surveyed in Europe) and three-quarters think the public has a very positive view of people who work in the sector (74% vs. 38% in Europe).

Charities surveyed in upper-middle-income countries are much more likely than those in either high-income or low-income countries to say that the public is not very aware of the sector in those countries.

Beyond the numbers: Analysing qualitative responses

How the few can make things difficult for the many.

Charities report that they believe public trust in the sector has been undermined by a number of high-profile scandals and perceived or real corruption.

Where there have been cases of mismanagement or misuse of funds by a small minority of organisations, these are felt to have tainted the reputation of the whole sector.

Inadequate communication about impact may worsen the trust deficit.

International charities could be underestimating public trust in them.

Charity leaders everywhere assume that the public trusts local charities more than causes further from home. Although this is often true, in some cases international charities seem to be underestimating the trust that people place in their organisations — only 19% of international charity leaders believe the public finds them very trustworthy, when in fact 28% of people globally say they do.

International charities are most trusted in Africa, where 44% of all people surveyed on the continent said that they think these organisations are 'very trustworthy'.

They are least trusted in Europe. However, international charities based there still underestimate public trust, which is about double what charity leaders predicted (8% of European international charity leaders assume the public has high degree of trust vs. 16% of the European public who say the same).

At the other end of the scale, local and regional charities in Europe are the most likely to overestimate the level of public trust they have (32% of local charities assume the public has high trust, when only 23% of Europeans feel this way).

Charities in Europe report being the least connected to a range of different stakeholders.

Charities in Europe are the least confident in three important measures of stakeholder relations especially compared to Africa.

FIGURE 10.

CONNECTIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS.

Base: International charities, N=298; National charities, N=1,035; Local/regional charities, N=1,806.

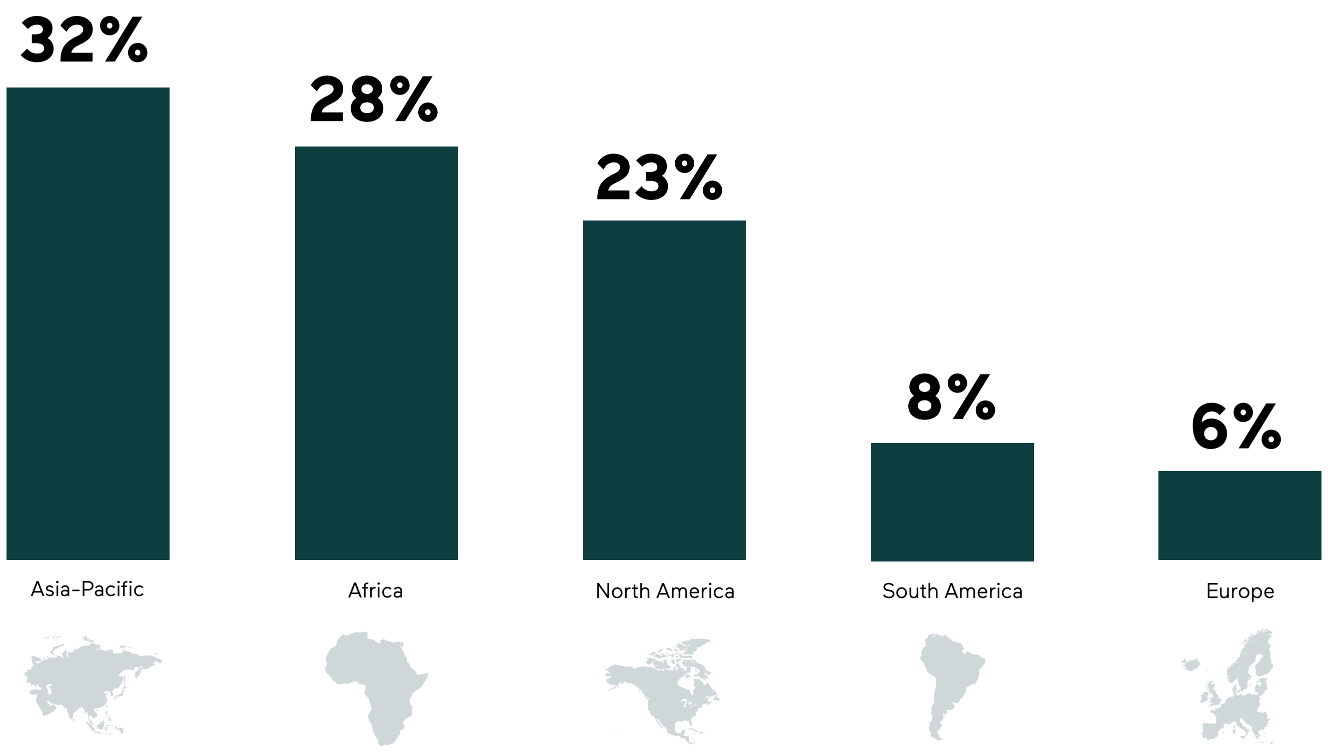
Charities in Africa and Asia-Pacific are most positive about government influence.

In Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, government influence is seen as most positive, while the reverse is true in Europe and particularly in South America.

In fact, almost two-thirds (62%) of charities surveyed in South America think their respective governments make life difficult for charities, with just 8% seeing their government as a positive influence on the sector overall.

While, overall, most charities surveyed across the 27 countries think that charities are well regulated (67%), few feel strongly that government champions the sector. This is particularly true for those surveyed in South America (3%), North America (2%) and Europe (1%).

FIGURE 11.
PERCEIVED POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT ON THE SECTOR (% AGREEING).



Base: All charities. Asia Pacific, N=540; Africa, N=431; North America, N=482; South America, N=352; Europe, N=972.

"They [charities in Ghana] have a free environment to operate without government interference or intimidation — unlike what I have seen in other countries."

| Children's charity, Ghana

"There is increasing collaboration with government bodies and private sector players, which can help improve funding and operational capacity."

| Poverty relief charity, Nigeria

Beyond the numbers: Analysing qualitative responses

What would recognition mean?

Charities report significant impacts from governments, including funding cuts, restrictive regulations, excessive bureaucracy, and shifting political priorities.

Many highlighted a lack of recognition and support from governments, with some administrations perceived as actively undermining or discrediting the sector.

Charities are looking for straightforward regulation, simple compliance requirements and political support to maximise their impact and continue to advocate and innovate.

Implications

5.

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What do the results mean?

Implications for the philanthropy sector

This Charity Insights report is important not only because of the snapshot it gives us into the overall health of the international charity sector, but also thanks to its insights into how funders and policymakers can support social purpose organisations all over the world.

Over the past year, charities have faced disruption from many angles, in no small part due to policy changes in the United States. As the role of governments everywhere evolves, now more than ever, providing flexible, long-term funding is vital to ensuring the strength and resilience of individual organisations and the social sector as a whole.

Those engaging with policymakers should support regulations that enable cross-border giving and make international philanthropy easier. We hope that the insights from charities, about how governments have and could support them, inspires those looking to create a more enabling environment for all social purpose organisations to thrive.

And as demand for the services that charities provide — and the funding that enables that work — continues to increase, this report also underlines the critical importance of making space for connection and collective action. It is a powerful argument for funders, governments, and infrastructure organisations like CAF to invest in supporting, convening, and protecting those spaces.

Jessie Krafft
President and CEO
Charities Aid Foundation in North America

What do the results mean?

Implications for charities

This report underscores why it is crucial for charities around the world to put time and effort into considering how to build their resilience. This can feel tough for organisations whose leadership is focused on surviving from month to month. Through our resilience framework, resources and dedicated advisory support, we aim to help organisations better understand and strengthen their resilience, wherever they are in the world.

Funding is a perennial challenge for the sector and this issue has become particularly pronounced globally following the recent radical reductions in overseas development assistance. Charities that demonstrate greater resilience often have a diverse range of funding, in some cases income-generating activities. As illustrated by Kenya's NCDF, there are ways to turn your specialised skills or services into a proposition.

This research emphasises what we advocate with donors: that unrestricted funding supports charities to be strategic, flexible and innovative. Although cross-border giving can present challenges, charities can still make the case for how unrestricted or resilience funding — even as a supplement to project funding — can advance their purpose and produce long-term impact.

We know from our experience working with charities that the six characteristics of resilience are intrinsically linked, so funding challenges can stem from other areas. Not being able to clearly articulate its purpose or capture and communicate the impact it is achieving affects an organisation's ability to fundraise and thus its financial resilience. Using the six resilience characteristics as a holistic framework can help to identify and address areas for improvement.

For me, it's particularly promising to see that charities are recognising the value of building coalitions and partnerships to share ideas, knowledge and capacity. Encouraging collaboration can help to promote a more positive, inclusive and resilient civil society with better outcomes for communities on the ground.

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