

HUMSET: Dataset of Multilingual Information Extraction and Classification for Humanitarian Crisis Response

Selim Fekih¹ Nicolò Tamagnone¹ Benjamin Minixhofer³ Ranjan Shrestha²

Ximena Contla¹ Ewan Oglethorpe¹ Navid Rekabsaz³

¹Data Friendly Space ²ToggleCorp Solutions

³Johannes Kepler University Linz, LIT AI Lab, Austria

{selim, nico, ximena, ewan}@datafriendlyspace.org

ranjan.shrestha@togglecorp.com

{benjamin.minixhofer, navid.rekabsaz}@jku.at

Abstract

Timely and effective response to humanitarian crises requires quick and accurate analysis of large amounts of text data – a process that can highly benefit from expert-assisted NLP systems trained on validated and annotated data in the humanitarian response domain. To enable creation of such NLP systems, we introduce and release HUMSET, a novel and rich multilingual dataset of humanitarian response documents annotated by experts in the humanitarian response community. The dataset provides documents in three languages (English, French, Spanish) and covers a variety of humanitarian crises from 2018 to 2021 across the globe. For each document, HUMSET provides selected snippets (entries) as well as assigned classes to each entry annotated using common humanitarian information analysis frameworks. HUMSET also provides novel and challenging entry extraction and multi-label entry classification tasks. In this paper, we take a first step towards approaching these tasks and conduct a set of experiments on Pre-trained Language Models (PLM) to establish strong baselines for future research in this domain. The dataset is available at <https://blog.thedeep.io/humset/>.

1 Introduction

During humanitarian crises caused by reasons ranging from natural disasters, wars, or epidemics such as COVID-19, a timely and effective humanitarian response highly depends on fast and accurate analysis of relevant data to yield key information. Early in the response phase, namely in the first 72 hours after a disaster strikes, the humanitarian response analysts in international organizations¹ review large amounts of data loosely or strongly relevant to the crisis to gain situational awareness.

¹Such as the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

A large portion of this data appears in the form of secondary data sources i. e. reports, news, and other forms of text data, and is integral in revealing which type of relief activities to undertake. Analysis in this phase involves extracting key information and organizing it according to sets of pre-defined domain-specific structures and guidelines, referred to as *humanitarian analysis frameworks*.

While typically only small workforces are available to analyze such information, an automatic document processing system can significantly help analysts save time in the overall humanitarian response cycle. To facilitate such systems, we introduce and release HUMSET, a unique and rich dataset of document analysis in the humanitarian response domain. HUMSET is curated by humanitarian analysts and covers various disasters around the globe that occurred from 2018 to 2021 in 46 humanitarian response projects. The dataset consists of approximately 17K annotated documents in three languages of English, French, and Spanish, originally taken from publicly-available resources.² For each document, analysts have identified informative snippets (entries) with respect to common humanitarian frameworks and assigned one or many classes to each entry (details in §2).

HUMSET provides a large dataset for the training and evaluation of entry extraction and classification models, enabling the research and development of further NLP systems in the humanitarian response domain. We take the first step in this direction, by studying the performance of a set of strong baseline models (details in §3). Our released dataset expands the previously provided collection by Yela-Bello et al. (2021) with a more recent and comprehensive set of projects, as well as additional classification labels. Other similar datasets in the humanitarian domain, Imran et al. (2016) present human-annotated Twitter corpora collected during 19 dif-

²<https://app.thedeep.io/terms-and-privacy/>

ferent crises between 2013 and 2015, Alam et al. (2021) provide a combination of various social-media crisis-related existing datasets, and Adel and Wang (2020) and later Alharbi and Lee (2021) publish Arabic Twitter classification datasets for crisis events. HUMSET, in contrast to the current resources which mostly originated from social media, is created by humanitarian experts through an annotation process on official documents and news from the most recognized humanitarian agencies, conferring high reliability, continuous updating, and accurate geolocation information.

2 HUMSET Dataset

The collection originated from a multi-organizational platform called *the Data Entry and Exploration Platform* (DEEP),³ developed and maintained by Data Friendly Space (DFS)⁴ The platform facilitates classifying primarily qualitative information with respect to analysis frameworks and allows for collaborative classification and annotation of secondary data. The dataset is available at <https://blog.thedeep.io/humset/>.

2.1 Dataset Overview

HUMSET consists of data used to inform 46 humanitarian response operations across the globe. 24 responses were in Central/South America, 14 in Africa, and 8 in Asia (detailed countries can be found in Table 6 in Appendix).

For each project, documents, referred to as *leads*, related to a particular humanitarian crisis are collected, analyzed, and annotated. The annotated documents in the dataset mostly consist of recently released information, with 79% of the documents being released in 2020 and 2021 (Table 5 in Appendix), and 90% of all documents being sourced from websites (see Table 4 in Appendix for the most commonly used platforms). Documents are selected from different sources, ranging from official reports by humanitarian organizations to international and national media articles. Overall, documents consist of files in PDF format (70.4%) and HTML pages (29.6%) with an average length of $\sim 2K$ words. The number of documents analyzed per project varies, ranging from 2 to 2,266.

The relevant snippets of texts, referred to as *entries*, in each document are annotated by humani-

³<https://thedeep.io/>

⁴Data Friendly Space is a U.S. based international non-governmental organization (INGO) <https://datafriendlyspace.org/>

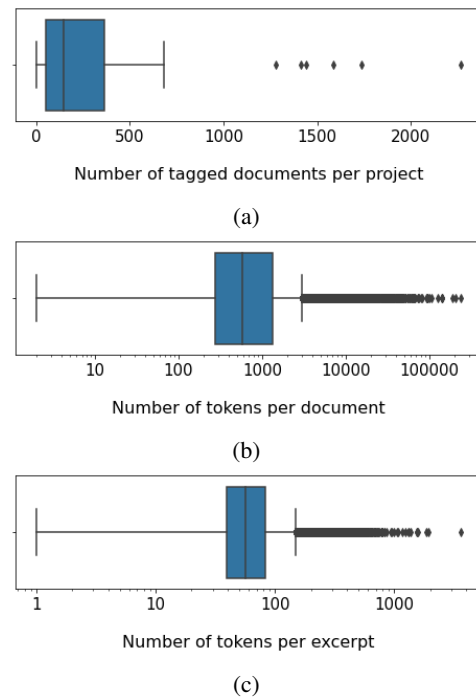


Figure 1: (a) Distribution of documents per project. (b) Log-scale distribution of tokens⁵ per document. (c) Log-scale distribution of tokens per entry.

tarian experts. The dataset provides an average of ~ 10 entries per document, and an average length of ~ 65 words per entry. Overall, HUMSET is composed of 148,621 tagged entries, selected from 16,857 documents, and in three languages: English (61.3%), French (20.4%) and Spanish (18.3%). The list of projects as well as the number of documents and annotated entries per project is reported in Table 7 in Appendix. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the number of tagged documents per project, as well as the number of tokens per document and entry.

2.2 Humanitarian Analysis Frameworks and Data Annotation Process

The concept of *analytical frameworks* originated in the social sciences (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011), but can be considered foundational and indispensable in numerous research fields. An analytical framework is a set of methodologies and guidelines to facilitate data collection, collation, and analysis, helping to understand what information will be useful and what can be discarded.

In the humanitarian domain, an analytical framework (or analysis framework) not only assists decision-makers to speed up humanitarian response

⁵Tokenized using `word_tokenize` in NLTK v3.7 library (Bird and Loper, 2004).

Categories	#	Tags
Sectors	11	Agriculture, Cross-sector, Education, Food Security, Health, Livelihoods, Logistics, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter, WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene)
Pillars 1D	7	Context, COVID-19, Displacement, Humanitarian Access, Information & Communication, Casualties, Shock/Event
Subpillars 1D	33	Details in Table 8 in Appendix
Pillars 2D	6	Capacities & Response, Humanitarian Conditions, Impact, At Risk, Priority Needs, Priority Interventions
Subpillars 2D	18	Details in Table 9 in Appendix

Table 1: Overview of humanitarian analysis framework.

and disaster relief but also enables various groups to share resources (Zhang et al., 2002). When starting a response or project, humanitarian organizations create or more often use an existing analysis framework, which covers the generic but also specific needs of the work. Our data originally contained 11 different frameworks. As there are high similarities across frameworks, we created a common framework, which we refer to as *humanitarian analysis framework*. This framework covers the framework dimensions of all projects. We build our custom set of tags by mapping the original tags in other frameworks to ours. More specifically, our analysis framework consists of three categories: Sectors (11 tags), Subpillars 1D (33 tags), and Subpillars 2D (18 tags). Pillars/Subpillars 1D, and 2D have a hierarchical structure, consisting of a two-leveled tree hierarchy (Pillars to Subpillars). The list and the number of tags present for each category are reported in Table 1.

For each project, documents relevant to understanding the situation, unmet needs, and underlying factors are captured and uploaded to the DEEP platform. From these sources, entries of text are selected and categorized into an analysis framework. Humanitarian annotators are trained in specific projects to follow analytical standards and thinking to review secondary data.

This process eventually results in annotating and organizing the data according to the humanitarian analysis framework. As the HUMSET dataset is created in a real-world scenario, the distribution of annotated entries is skewed, with 33 tags be-

ing present in less than 2% of data. Tables 10, 11, and 12 in Appendix show the detailed number and proportions of the annotated entries in Sectors, Subpillars 1D, and 2D, respectively. Figure 2 in Appendix reports the distribution of tags in dataset.

2.3 NLP Tasks

Entry Extraction Task. The first step for humanitarian taggers in analyzing a document is finding entries containing relevant information. A piece of text or information is considered relevant if it meaningfully contains at least one tag present in the given humanitarian analytical framework. Since documents often contain a large amount of information (Figure 1), it is extremely beneficial to automate the process of entry identification, and this is the first task of this research. This can be seen as an extractive summarization task i. e. selecting a subset of passages that contain relevant information from the given document. However, the entries do not necessarily follow the common units of text such as sentence and paragraph and can appear in various lengths. In fact, only 38.8% of entries consist of full sentences, and the rest are snippets that are shorter or longer than sentences. This limits the direct applicability of prior approaches to extractive summarization (Liu and Lapata, 2019; Zhou et al., 2018), and makes the task particularly challenging for NLP research.

Multi-label Entry Classification Task. After selecting the most relevant entries within a document, the next step is to categorize them according to the humanitarian analysis framework (Table 1). An automatic suggestion on which tag to choose from a large number of possibilities can be decisive in speeding up the annotation process. For each category, more than one tag can be assigned to an entry. Hence, we can view this task as multi-label classification.

3 Experiments and Results

To conduct a set of baseline experiments on HUMSET according to the mentioned tasks, we split the data into training, validation, and test sets for all our experiments (80%, 10%, and 10%, respectively). We apply stratified splitting (Szymanski and Kajdanowicz, 2017) to maintain the same distribution of labels for each set. Implementation details of Entry Extraction (Section 3.1) and Entry Classification (Section 3.2) are available at <https://github.com/the-deep/humset>.

Model	Sectors		Pillars 1D		Subpillars 1D		Pillars 2D		Subpillars 2D	
	Prec.	F1	Prec.	F1	Prec.	F1	Prec.	F1	Prec.	F1
Random Baseline	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.13	0.13	0.05	0.05
FastText	0.71	0.61	0.56	0.38	0.58	0.33	0.59	0.45	0.48	0.33
XtremeDistil _{l6-h256}	0.56	0.58	0.35	0.36	0.20	0.20	0.51	0.55	0.28	0.29
XLM-R _{Base}	0.71	0.73	0.49	0.53	0.45	0.38	0.63	0.63	0.51	0.40

Table 2: Entry classification results.

Model	R-1	R-2	R-L
LEAD4	0.32	0.24	0.31
XtremeDistil _{l6-h256}	0.33	0.25	0.33
XLM-R _{Base}	0.42	0.35	0.41

Table 3: Entry extraction results for ROUGE F1 (R).

3.1 Entry Extraction

We evaluate the performance of the entry extraction task using ROUGE-1, ROUGE-2, and ROUGE-L F1 score (Lin, 2004). The target text (ground truth) is a concatenation of all relevant entries, and the predicted text is a concatenation of all entries predicted as relevant. We consider a simple heuristic method (LEAD4), as well as Transformer-based (Vaswani et al., 2017) pre-trained language models (PLM) with a multilingual backbone as our baselines as explained in the following:

LEAD4: LEAD- n is a simple baseline where the first n sentences are predicted as being relevant entries. Consistent with prior work (Yela-Bello et al., 2021), we choose $n = 4$. **Transformers:** to approach the task using Transformer-based PLM, we formulate the task as a token classification problem. The objective is to distinguish between tokens that are part of relevant entries and tokens which are not. For simplicity, we fine-tune the entire model and do binary classification using a two-layer prediction head on top of the contextualized representation of each token. We conduct our experiments on XtremeDistil_{l6-h256} (Mukherjee and Hassan Awadallah, 2020) and XLM-R_{Base} (Conneau et al., 2019) as the underlying PLM.

The evaluation results of the mentioned methods are reported in Table 3. Among our baselines, the model with XLM-R_{Base} shows the best overall performance. However, we should consider these experiments as starting points, and improvements on this task are expected by increasing model capacity and architectural variations.

3.2 Entry Classification

We test different multi-label sequence classification models applied to our five categories. We use the Precision and F1-score metrics to assess the performance of the models on each subcategory. We report macro-averages of the metrics, as the tags are unbalanced (see Table 2) and macro-averaging can provide a more nuanced view of the performance especially by supporting the more sparse classes. Finally, we perform threshold tuning of the classification decision boundary with respect to macro-average F1-scores for each label of each category (Pillai et al., 2013). Tuning the threshold is done by finding the optimal results on the validation set, used to make classifications on the test set. We conduct experiments using fastText (Joulin et al., 2016), as well as Transformer-based PLMs as explained below.

fastText: is an Open Source library for text representation and classification that consists of a bag of n -grams representation and a linear classifier. fastText classification is language-agnostic and does not need language-specific pre-trained word vectors, allowing us to train a multilingual classifier as a simple baseline. To handle multiple labels, we trained independent binary classifiers for each label. **Transformers:** For consistency with the previous task, we fine-tune the same multilingual PLMs and add a dense layer on top for multi-label classification.

Table 2 reports the evaluation results on the mentioned baseline models. For comparison, a random baseline is also reported. The random baseline is a stratified random classification, created based on the distribution of the classes in the training set. Similar to the entry extraction task, the XLM-R_{Base} outperforms other baselines. Although overall promising results are obtained, we highlight the shortcoming of the models on the categories with many tags (Subpillars 1D and Subpillars 2D), suggesting future research directions for addressing these challenges.

4 Conclusion

We presented HUMSET, a new dataset of annotated humanitarian data, containing 148,621 entries with a total of 62 different tags. We have shown two NLP-based tasks that can be applied to it, providing initial experiments of its applications. HUMSET is a multilingual human-annotated humanitarian text dataset not composed of social network data, providing a valuable and highly reliable resource for the development of automation tools regarding crisis response and humanitarian aid activities.

5 Limitations

HUMSET is composed of an aggregation of 46 different projects, each with a different contribution in terms of data quantity and topics (Table 7). This can introduce an implicit bias due to the different goals and themes of each project and on respective analysis framework understanding and interpretation by humanitarian annotators. (Röttger et al., 2021) refer to it as *persistent subjectivity*. This is a complex and challenging limitation and, for example, (Geva et al., 2019) show how this kind of bias can be monitored using annotator identifiers as features in NLP models training when data is produced by crowdsourcing project (Sheng and Zhang, 2019). Since HUMSET is an extension of a real-case application and not the result of crowdsourcing, a more structured analysis on these aspects is needed.

Another complexity lies in the raw data sources. Lead text is the result of a text extraction process from PDF and HTML files (c.f. Section 2.1). In both cases, converting visually-rich graphical text representation into plain text involves errors and limitations. There are several works proposing solutions for digital documents layout-aware text extraction (Ramakrishnan et al., 2012; Zhu and Cole, 2022) but they are often domain-specific, applying only to specific types of documents. (Xu et al., 2020) propose a Transformer-based multi-modal architecture for documents understanding using text, layout, and image data as features. Improvement in document processing could produce better data quality and subsequently improve performance on the entry extraction task (Section 3.1).

Finally, we should point out that HUMSET might contain societal biases and stereotypes and/or over-

represent particular demographics or entities. This case is observed and studied in several other data resources and scenarios (Bolukbasi et al., 2016; Krieg et al., 2022a; Rekabsaz et al., 2021b), which can lead to reflecting or even exaggerating societal biases in the system’s output (Melchiorre et al., 2021; Rekabsaz and Schedl, 2020), and may negatively affect users’ perception and interaction behavior (Krieg et al., 2022b). Hence, when using the dataset (particularly for real-world applications), we strongly recommend first defining and monitoring such potential biases (De-Arteaga et al., 2019; Rekabsaz et al., 2021c), and then mitigating them using the proposed methods in literature (Elazar and Goldberg, 2018; Zmigrod et al., 2019; Rekabsaz et al., 2021a; Zerveas et al., 2022; Ganhör et al., 2022).

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A Additional Statistics

Website	Number	Prop. (%)
reliefweb.int	5,669	33.6
dhakatribune.com	834	4.9
redhum.org	635	3.8
humanitarianresponse.info	612	3.6
unb.com.bd	380	2.3
Sum	8,130	48.2

Table 4: The most frequently sourced websites by number and proportion of documents.

Year	Number	Proportion (%)
Before 2018	68	0.4
2018	834	4.9
2019	2,639	15.7
2020	6,087	36.1
2021	7,229	42.9
Sum	16,857	100.0

Table 5: Publishing year of documents.

Region	Countries
Africa	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan
Asia & Middle East	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen
Central/South America	Argentina, Aruba, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela

Table 6: Countries of projects per region.

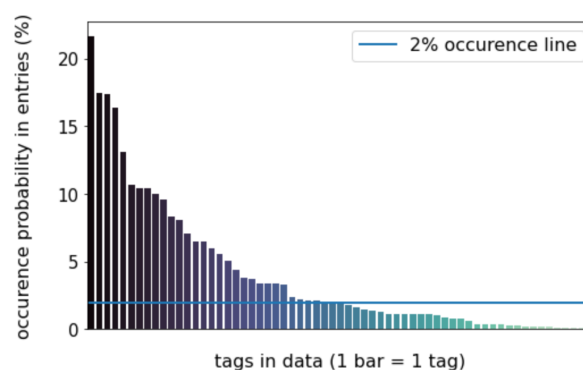


Figure 2: Proportion of tags in dataset. This figure shows the unbalanced nature of the dataset. Each bar represents a different tag. The y-axis shows the proportion of entries that contain each tag. The horizontal line added is the 2% occurrence line. It is used to visualize the relatively high number of tags with occurrence inferior to 2%.

Project	# Leads	# Entries
2020 DFS Libya	354	1,581
2020 DFS Nigeria	496	2,238
COVID-19 Americas Region Multi-Sectorial Assessment	76	607
Central America - Dengue Outbreak 2019	38	218
Central America: Hurricanes Eta and Iota	48	363
GIMAC Afghanistan	248	7,617
GIMAC Cameroon	134	5,253
GIMAC Chad	269	4,945
GIMAC Niger	125	3,180
GIMAC Somalia	157	5,720
GIMAC South Sudan	208	7,212
GIMAC Sudan	99	3,169
IMMAP/DFS Bangladesh	2,266	14,342
IMMAP/DFS Burkina Faso	1,279	13,443
IMMAP/DFS Colombia	1,411	10,760
IMMAP/DFS Nigeria	1,443	9,620
IMMAP/DFS RDC	1,586	13,065
IMMAP/DFS Syria	1,736	12,043
Lebanon Situation Analysis	22	268
Libya Situation Analysis (OA)	681	2,868
Nigeria Situation Analysis (OA)	651	3,496
Situation Analysis Generic Libya	437	2,355
Situation Analysis Generic Yemen	371	2,256
The Bahamas - Hurricane Dorian - Early Recovery Assessment	17	191
UNHCR Argentina	160	1430
UNHCR Aruba	23	106
UNHCR Bolivia	9	101
UNHCR Chile	341	2,415
UNHCR Colombia	649	6,349
UNHCR Costa Rica	85	603
UNHCR Curacao	20	111
UNHCR Dominican Republic	66	411
UNHCR Ecuador	190	1,648
UNHCR El Salvador	64	349
UNHCR Guatemala	65	348
UNHCR Guyana	28	352
UNHCR Honduras	57	469
UNHCR Mexico	16	96
UNHCR Panama	35	295
UNHCR Paraguay	2	27
UNHCR Peru	247	2,936
UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago	67	574
UNHCR Uruguay	29	272
UNHCR Venezuela	293	1,805
Venezuela crisis 2019	176	714
Yemen Situation Analysis (OA)	83	381
Total	16,857	148,602

Table 7: Key statistics per project.

Pillar 1D	#	Subpillars 1D Label
Context	7	Economy, Environment, Demography, Legal & Policy, Politics, Security & Stability, Sociocultural
COVID-19	7	Cases, Contact Tracing, Deaths, Hospitalization & Care, Restriction Measures, Testing, Vaccination
Displacement	5	Intentions, Local Integration, Pull Factors, Push Factors, Type / Numbers / Movements
Humanitarian Access	4	Physical Constraints, Population to Relief, Relief to Population, Number of People Facing Humanitarian Access Constraints / Humanitarian Access Gaps
Information and Communication	4	Communication Means and Preferences, Information Challenges and Barriers, Knowledge and Information Gaps (Hum), Knowledge And Info Gaps (Pop)
Casualties	3	Dead, Injured, Missing
Shock / Event	3	Hazard & Threats, Type and Characteristics Underlying/Aggravating Factors

Table 8: Pillars and subpillars 1D in humanitarian framework.

Pillar 2D	#	Subpillars 2D Label
Capacities & Response	4	International Response, Local Response, National Response, Number of People Reached / Response Gaps
Humanitarian Conditions	4	Coping Mechanisms, Living Standards, Physical And Mental Well Being, Number of People In Need
Impact	4	Driver/Aggravating Factors, Impact on People, Impact on Systems, Services and Networks, Number of People Affected
At Risk	2	Risk And Vulnerabilities, Number of People at Risk
Priority Needs	2	Expressed by Humanitarian Staff, Expressed by Population
Priority Interventions	2	Expressed by Humanitarian Staff, Expressed by Population

Table 9: Pillars and subpillars 2D in humanitarian framework.

Sectors	Data Points	
	Number	Proportion (%)
Agriculture	2,816	1.9
Cross	24,447	16.4
Education	9,630	6.5
Food Security	14,898	10.0
Health	32,284	21.7
Livelihoods	15,494	10.4
Logistics	2,422	1.6
Nutrition	5,011	3.4
Protection	25,986	17.5
Shelter	8,975	6.0
WASH	10,588	7.1
Count:	115,176	77.5

Table 10: Proportion of sectors in the dataset.

Pillar 1D	Subpillar 1D	Data Points	
		Number	Prop. (%)
Context	Demography	3,041	2.0
	Economy	4,969	3.3
	Environment	1,124	0.8
	Legal & Policy	2,637	1.8
	Politics	1,871	1.3
	Security & Stability	7,615	5.1
	Sociocultural	1,610	1.1
	Pillar 1D Count:	21,070	14.2
COVID-19	Cases	5,501	3.7
	Contact Tracing	627	0.4
	Deaths	3,095	2.1
	Hospitalization & Care	510	0.3
	Restriction Measures	5,006	3.4
	Testing	1,621	1.1
	Vaccination	2,764	1.9
Pillar 1D Count:	14,964	10.1	
Displacement	Intentions	454	0.3
	Local Integration	1,657	1.1
	Pull Factors	342	0.2
	Push Factors	2,047	1.4
	Type / Numbers / Movements	8,280	5.6
Pillar 1D Count:	10,678	7.2	
Humanitarian Access	Number Of People Facing Humanitarian Access Constraints/Humanitarian Access Gaps	658	0.4
	Physical Constraints	1,483	1.0
	Population to Relief	204	0.1
	Relief to Population	863	0.6
	Pillar 1D Count:	2,922	2.0
Information and Communication	Communication Means and Preferences	150	0.1
	Information Challenges and Barriers	100	0.1
	Knowledge and Info Gaps (Hum)	573	0.4
	Knowledge and Info Gaps (Pop)	218	0.1
	Pillar 1D Count:	993	0.7
Casualties	Dead	3,147	2.1
	Injured	649	0.4
	Missing	269	0.4
	Pillar 1D Count:	3,497	2.4
Shock/Event	Hazard & Threats	3,616	2.4
	Type and Characteristics	1,241	0.8
	Underlying/Aggravating Factors	1,589	1.1
	Pillar 1D Count:	6,072	4.1
Overall Count:	53,575	36.0	

Table 11: Proportion of each pillar and subpillar 1D in the dataset.

Pillar 2D	Subpillars 2D	Data Points	
		Number	Prop. (%)
Capacities & Response	International Response	15,422	10.4
	Local Response	211	0.1
	National Response	6,596	4.4
	Number Of People Reached / Response Gaps	3,316	2.2
	Pillar 2D Count:	20,272	13.6
Humanitarian Conditions	Coping Mechanisms	4,994	3.4
	Living Standards	25,922	17.4
	Number of People In Need	1,315	0.9
	Physical and Mental Well Being	15,845	10.7
	Pillar 2D Count:	43,301	29.1
Impact	Driver/Aggravating Factors	12,029	8.1
	Impact on People	12,319	8.3
	Impact on Systems, Services And Networks	14,335	9.6
	Number of People Affected	2,293	1.5
	Pillar 2D Count:	33,699	22.7
At Risk	Risk and Vulnerabilities	9,625	6.5
	Number of People Aa Risk	261	0.2
	Pillar 2D Count:	9,625	6.5
Priority Needs	Expressed by Humanitarian Staff	1,664	1.1
	Expressed by Population	1,669	1.1
	Pillar 2D Count:	3,272	2.2
Priority Interventions	Expressed by Humanitarian Staff	5,575	3.8
	Expressed by Population	287	0.2
	Pillar 2D Count:	5,844	3.9
Overall Count:		94,429	63.5

Table 12: Proportion of each pillar and subpillar 2D in the dataset.