

GWU has published report surveying damage to aid organizations. *Devex*,
18 May 2026

Finding their footing

Whether trade can truly replace aid remains an open question — but for the organizations actually delivering it, much of the damage is already done.

In a [new analysis](#) from [The George Washington University](#), the reality of last year's aid cuts is laid bare — but this time, through a slightly different lens.

“A lot of important attention has focused on the people directly harmed by lost services and rising hunger,” says **Caitlin Grady**, one of the study's authors and the director of research and policy at GW's Global Food Institute. “We wanted to complement that by studying the delivery system itself. The organizations, partnerships, trust, and expertise that make aid delivery possible.”

Nearly 80% of the over 130 respondents from the aid sector reported a **worsening ability to maintain programs**, on top of declining coverage and reach. Eighty-three percent reported worsening staff morale. And across the board, **trust between local partners, recipient communities, and local governments had fractured.**

But even amid the rubble, there is a bright spot. Researchers found that 75% of local and national NGOs **reported that their relationships with new partners were improving**, a figure 50 percentage points higher than that of international aid agencies.

The team will be publishing a [second report](#) in the months to come.