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RRN newsletter

All RRN materials are published in French and English.

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Since the launch of the RRN in 1994, there has been a slight shift in the focus of RRN material in response to some of the major changes that have taken place in the work of relief agencies over the last five years – in particular the rapid and striking expansion of the extent and scope of their involvement in complex political emergencies. The change in emphasis has to some extent been mirrored by the decline in the use of the term 'relief' to describe emergency assistance and greater scope implied by the term 'humanitarian'. This shift in focus and *de facto* extension of agency mandates in unstable situations, and more often than not, absence of a clear, coherent political line from donor governments and the UN security council has meant that aid workers cannot operate responsibly in ignorance of the sorts of abuses to which humanitarian assistance is subject and its role in the prolonging of conflict.

Information providers and those seeking to influence the performance of aid agencies in the field therefore have a responsibility to keep pace with these changes and ensure that aid workers have the information and support they need to carry out their tasks responsibly and with an awareness of the longer term impact of their actions. In the early 1990's the demand was principally for information which concentrated on improving the technical, more sector-specific

aspects of aid agency performance in the field – water provision, shelter, food distribution etc. While it is important to ground analysis in practical experience and there is considerable room for improvement in these more technical spheres (an area where progress is currently being made by the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, reported on in the November 1996 edition of the RRN Newsletter), there is also a need to go further and improve aid workers' understanding of the context in which their work is carried out and long term impact of their actions.

The RRN's February mailing carried *RRN Network Paper 19*, providing a synopsis of the key human rights and international legal standards increasingly invoked in the context of humanitarian emergencies; and *RRN Network Paper 20*, the People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and

All existing members:
this is your **LAST CHANCE** to re-subscribe to the **RRN!**

To continue to receive RRN publications **all existing and new members** must register using the form on page 35.

In February, *Philippa Atkinson*, writing in this issue, became the first part-time RRN Representative for the West Africa region. Her work with humanitarian agencies in the region – including her involvement in the 1996 WFP Evaluation of Liberia Regional Operation – and her own PhD study, have contributed to the RRN team's greater understanding of the dynamics of the conflict. Over the coming months she will facilitate the dissemination of RRN publications to aid workers and local organisations in the region and act as a 'pipeline' for information on regional developments to the RRN team. Individuals working in the region who wish to receive RRN materials or have an interest in contributing regional or other information to the Network can contact Philippa by email on: p-atkinson@msn.com or via the RRN in London. A second RRN representative in the field, based in Nairobi and in close contact with the Horn and Great Lakes regions will shortly be joining the team.

Support of Aid Workers. It is our belief that such practical information will help aid workers and policy makers in what now amounts to a dramatic reappraisal of their role in complex emergencies.

Dilemmas such as whether to withdraw assistance in the face of blatant diversion of aid to rearm warring factions, a grim feature of the Hutu camps along the Rwanda-Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), border in 1995-6, or to scale down operations dramatically, as occurred in Liberia in April 1996, following the massive looting of agency property by warring factions, are tackled in the latest *RRN Network Papers*, 21 and 22.

RRN Network Paper 21, 'Promoting Humanitarian Principles: the southern Sudan experience', offers a practical, first-hand account of applying the humanitarian principles, enshrined in Operation Lifeline Sudan, on the ground. The author, Iain Levine, currently employed by UNICEF New York, explains the challenge to operational agencies and aid workers faced daily with ethical dilemmas, as less one of defining legal and ethical standards and more one of implementation and enforcement. The OLS experience is used to highlight the challenges confronting the humanitarian community, including the lack of coherent political leadership, sovereignty issues and the trade off between

protection and assistance mandates. This theme is taken up in the Regional Focus on Burundi, where an increasingly familiar dilemma faces aid agencies: to provide assistance in the 'regroupement' centres, set up by the Government to 'relocate populations to ensure their safety' and avert a potential humanitarian crisis, or to refuse to collude with what is now widely accepted to be a military strategy, in contravention of the Geneva Conventions. *RRN Network Paper 22*, by Philippa Atkinson, part time RRN 'regional representative' in West Africa, examines the role of international economic links, of questionable legal status to the conflict in the region. She looks at the importance for NGOs of understanding the dynamics of the war economy as both the motivation and the means of perpetuating the conflict, and considers the responses of the humanitarian community, forced to consider alternatives to traditional relief provision.

Two of the articles featured in this edition of the *RRN Newsletter* look at another dimension affecting and affected by the provision of humanitarian assistance – that of the long term impact of international assistance programmes on and responsibility towards local organisations and capacity building. Philippa Howell of ActionAid describes a successful participatory response programme, carried out by her agency in close collaboration

with local organisations, following serious crop failure in Dalocha, Ethiopia. Paul Stubbs, Leeds Metropolitan University, considers the often negative impact of international NGOs on the growth of civil society in post-Yugoslav countries.

The third article by Jennifer Klot, director of Graça Machel's secretariat for the UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, reports on the two year

FEEDBACK

Your experiences/lessons learned in humanitarian assistance programmes may be of relevance and interest to a wider audience.

While it is not possible to publish all material received from members, if you are interested in contributing a Newsletter article or Network Paper on a particular issue, or offering to act as a peer reviewer for GPRs, please contact the RRN team.

We are also interested in receiving information and contact details of conferences/training programmes/publications which the RRN might usefully publicise in the Newsletter.

Comments, constructive criticism and Letters to the Editor should be addressed to the RRN Coordinator.

process of research, consultation and mobilisation which resulted in the most comprehensive human rights appraisal of children in armed conflicts yet debated at the UN General Assembly and reviews the steps being taken to turn the recommendations for action into reality.

The News section of this May edition highlights quite radical changes in the structure of the British mechanism for joint

emergency appeals, known as the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC); progress by European NGOs in advocating and mobilising support for an EU Code of Conduct on Arms Control; a report on NOHA – the first full-time Europe-wide, post-graduate course specialising in ‘humanitarian assistance’ – ‘three years on’; and a review of a recent meeting convened by ECHO to reflect on increased risk for aid workers working in conflict situations.

Finally, from a UK perspective, it is encouraging to note the new Labour Government’s placing of human rights squarely at the heart of its foreign policy, as well as its pronouncements on the need for firmer arms control policies, although it remains to be seen to what extent these objectives can be realised once wider trade, foreign policy considerations and lobby groups make their positions known. ♦

Abstracts of recent RRN publications

RRN Network Paper 21 ISBN: 0-85003-361-6

‘Promoting humanitarian principles: the southern Sudan experience’ by Iain Levine

Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) seeks to integrate humanitarian principles and the protection of civilians within its mandate and operations. This paper details the ways in which these laws and principles were promoted through negotiation, advocacy, dissemination and training and the monitoring and follow-up of violations and abuses. It seeks to distil specific lessons from working with armed opposition movements, as distinct from sovereign governments, in particular the concern of humanitarian agencies that they may provide or be seen to provide legitimacy to those who mistreat their populations.

Aid agencies working in south Sudan have sought to place the protection of civilians and the integrity of humanitarian assistance at the centre of their mandate. This approach sees complex emergencies as social and political phenomena, as much crises of human rights as of humanitarian need. In such situations, the victims of conflict require not only material assistance but also protection of their safety, dignity and basic human rights. A fundamental assumption of the paper is that, as pointed out by the detailed Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (1996), lack of coherent political and policy leadership amongst aid agencies has led to many of their programmes failing those whom they seek to help.

Protection of civilians is achieved through the application of international law and principles such as the primacy of the humanitarian imperative, neutrality, impartiality, accountability, transparency and the protection of victims. The challenge lies not simply with the definition of the legal and ethical standards but in their implementation and enforcement.

The OLS experience is used to highlight broader dilemmas confronting the international humanitarian community. These include the lack of coherent political leadership in most humanitarian programmes, sovereignty issues, the trade-offs between protection and assistance, the role of coordination in defining and protecting mandates, and the conditions under which the withdrawal of assistance might be considered morally acceptable.

Underpinning this paper is the assertion that humanitarian principles and standards should lie at the centre of such programmes. While recognising that political authorities are ultimately responsible for protecting civilians and the integrity of humanitarian assistance, implementing agencies and those who fund them also need to address these issues more effectively.

RRN Network Paper 22 ISBN: 0-85003-366-7

'The war economy in Liberia: a political analysis' by Philippa Atkinson

In the light of recent research in Liberia and elsewhere on the role of economic factors in supporting and fuelling conflict, it appears increasingly important for the humanitarian community to attempt to understand the dynamics of the political economy of war. In Liberia the NGO community has been assessing and developing its current policies, and exploring alternatives to traditional relief provision. It is crucial for such policy development to consider the implications of the way in which illegal economic activities provide the motivation and the means for the continuation of the conflict.

This paper aims to provide an analysis of the mechanisms of the war economy in Liberia, examining the linkages between factional activity and the political process at government level, as well as the ways in which micro-level survival strategies feed into the illegal economy. Through such analysis it is possible to highlight the various policy strategies that may help to limit or counter the effects of the political economy that has developed. These may challenge the orthodox role of humanitarian relief, but radical solutions are necessary because of the nature of the prolonged crisis in Liberia.

The study is divided into two parts with an introductory background section. The first offers a descriptive analysis of the workings of the war economy, its effects and implications, while the second focuses on the experience of NGOs in Liberia and the possibilities that exist for them to respond to the realities of the conflict using advocacy and other non-traditional policies. Recommendations for further action include the need for more detailed research on particular aspects of the war economy, as well as the need for the humanitarian community to lobby donors and other actors to increase their understanding of its mechanisms.

Articles



Crop failure in Dalocha, Ethiopia: ActionAid's participatory emergency response

by Philippa Howell, ActionAid Emergencies Unit

policy emphasises the use of the Employment Generation Scheme (food-for-work or cash-for-work programmes). National relief planning is being devolved to local rather than central government structures. The involvement of local communities in planning and implementation of relief interventions is encouraged more than before, but is still rare. This article demonstrates how NGOs can support the participation of local people in relief projects, and asks to what extent this approach is replicable in other situations and by other agencies.

The national context

Since the early 1990's, having been a major food aid recipient for a decade, the Ethiopian government has sought to decentralise disaster management. This approach aims to link relief work with development objectives, restricting the distribution of free relief items to 'unproductive' members of the community. The new

ActionAid's relief project in Dalocha

Dalocha is situated in the lowlands of the Rift Valley, 180 km south of Addis Ababa. Livelihoods depend mainly on rain-fed mixed farming. Most households experience an annual food gap of 3 - 4 months. The major food crops are maize and sorghum, with wheat and teff also grown mainly for cash. ActionAid-

Ethiopia (AA-E) has worked since 1989 with communities in 34 rural Peasant Associations (PAs) of Dalocha *woreda* (government district administration, to which PAs report), with a focus on group formation as a basis for development activities.

In 1993, the harvest in Dalocha largely failed, due to excessive *meher* rains which then curtailed early. With continuing erratic rainfall and pest infestation, 1994 brought widespread food shortages. By June, 63 percent of households were reduced to one meal per day and community reciprocity was breaking down. The severe famine of 1985 had caused long-term damage to livelihoods, through the adoption of coping strategies such as migration and the sale of productive assets. The AA-E response in 1994 aimed to avert further asset erosion, protecting livelihoods as well as alleviating hunger, by providing affordable food as well as supporting farm production. Since it also aimed to reinforce, rather than undermine, ongoing development activities, it was crucial to encourage the participation of the beneficiary communities at each stage of the project.

Problem identification and community consultation

Community members were involved firstly in the information-gathering process. In order to assess the extent and severity of the problem, field staff divided into four teams, each covering one 'block' of the project area. As well as sample household surveys, a total of 168 focus group discussions took place during one week with a selection of local people. These individuals represented various groups, including: leaders from local *iddirs* (important social institutions which organise funerals), elders, religious leaders, PA executives, groups of women from poor households, and savings and credit groups. As a preliminary targeting exercise, each group listed poor households affected by acute food shortage. The lists were then cross-checked with existing data gathered through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). These activities ensured the early involvement of different social groups in identifying needs and possible solutions. They also allowed comprehensive and balanced data to be collected very quickly. The continued involvement of community members in the design of the response ensured that the information-gathering was not purely extractive, but the beginning of a participatory process.

Designing the response

An all-day workshop was held with the group leaders from AA-E's 102 community development groups, to verify the situation from the community's perspective

and consider response options. Discussion in groups was followed by a plenary session where each group presented their findings.

The farmers confirmed widespread hunger and related health problems; they described the increased cost of food grains and falling livestock prices, people trying to rent out farmland and eating weeds to eke out food supply. Lack of seed was also noted as a problem. They then suggested the following solutions:

- Soft loan for food, at zero interest, to be repaid over 2-3 years
- Wheat seed and fertiliser on credit to those who had lost their maize crop
- More/cheaper drugs available through health posts
- Blankets on credit
- Training/advice on savings and grain storage.

The participants suggested that assistance for group members should be channelled through the groups, and that for non-group members it should be organised through a respected local institution such as the *iddir*.

The value of this workshop lay not only in providing a clear outline of the problem and perceived needs from a community perspective, but also in allowing the community 'ownership' of the relief response. In discussions with the community today, especially those who were group members, they clearly believe the design and decisions were theirs.

**"We spoke to the field workers and told them that unless we eat, it is useless to talk about development. There was cold weather and no food, so we asked for blankets and grain. We discussed it amongst ourselves and the leader went to a meeting."
*Afran group, Koro Gale PA***

The community's request for credit is interesting. AA-E shares the government's concern that free relief can encourage 'dependency syndrome' and undermine development objectives. During discussions with community groups, AA-E field workers had already aired this dilemma with the community. At the beginning of the workshop it was again suggested that solutions should not be based on free handouts, and it seems likely that this informed the decision of the farmers to ask for credit. The communities still defend

the credit approach as being appropriate, although in some cases there were repayment difficulties. (More recently, AA-E has chosen to use cash-for-work as an emergency response rather than credit, due to overburdening with credit.)

Targeting – using local knowledge and community institutions

There were some differences in the percentages of people in need as suggested by the workshop groups. With variations in land holdings and family size across the area this was logical. For planning purposes, staff agreed to assume targeting of 65 percent of the overall population. This took into account farmers' recommendations but also pre-existing PRA-generated data.

To target community members not already involved in AA-E groups, new committees, known as Disaster Prevention Committees (DPCs), were set up in each of the 34 PAs. Each comprised 7 members selected from respected local institutions: *iddir*, elders and religious leaders and one PA executive. Their primary responsibilities were selecting beneficiaries, organising grain distribution and collecting credit repayments. Formal terms of reference for the DPCs were drawn up, and workshops held to ensure clarity of roles and procedures.

The DPCs were new structures with a clear purpose, built on existing respected institutions. They created a balance, avoiding domination by one group or another, thus minimising bias. The community today acknowledge the importance of the role played by the DPCs.

“Without the DPCs it would have been impossible to select and distribute. It was well organised. These people know us, especially the *iddir*, and the PA has influence and knowledge. It helped to make the process fair.”
Elder (non-DPC), Inkat Lola PA

Targeting the poorest?

A question which AA-E had to address was whether or not to include the very poorest members of the community: those who are ‘unproductive’ and rely on others for their livelihood. In AA-E, it was decided that to support the very old or disabled would require a very

different type of intervention: not one based on credit and aiming to support farm production. It was also feared that direct support to such individuals would undermine traditional community support mechanisms, and might transfer dependency to AA-E. However, another ActionAid programme, in north-east Ghana, designed an emergency response in 1994 consisting of grants for the poorest as well as credit for the creditworthy, based on suggestions by the community. As agencies seek to respond to emergencies in a more ‘developmental’ way, this issue may become a more common dilemma.

Involving all the community?

Although many different sections of the community were involved in needs assessment, targeting and project design, it was mainly group leaders and DPC members who took responsibility for implementation, management and monitoring. They organised distribution, and took difficult decisions on borderline cases during beneficiary selection and the final allocations of grain per household in each PA.

Whilst there is a need to gain the cooperation of local decision-makers in this way, it can be more difficult to engage some less empowered community members. For instance, in Dalocha, the respected members of community institutions are almost invariably men; thus few women were actively involved beyond the stage of information-gathering. At the time, only four groups out of the 102 were female-headed (although many group members were women). Whilst many have stated that their views and needs were adequately represented, it seems clear that to play a more influential role in an emergency project, they must already be doing so in the daily life of the community. This can be encouraged in development programmes.

A participatory approach: achievements and challenges

Community participation in the Dalocha project produced a swift, locally relevant response, with clear agency/beneficiary communications and effective, transparent targeting. It highlighted the utility of working through multiple community structures, and contributed to longer term objectives such as community empowerment. All these achievements, however, were supported greatly by the prior existence of AA-E's programme in the area, established relationships with the communities, and a large, committed team of local field staff.

To what extent is this approach replicable by

government agencies or local NGOs with fewer resources? Could it still be useful in more unstable communities, in conflict-related emergencies or where an agency has no prior local involvement? Consultation with local people in needs assessment exercises is already widely practised. In most situations, information-gathering can be made less extractive by allowing the community to define response options, encouraging community 'ownership' and ensuring a more appropriate response. However, the community's perception of the agency may influence their suggestions. It should also be possible to listen to all groups, not only local leaders. The extent to which local knowledge can be used for targeting will vary, but would be more open to bias and inaccuracy in less cohesive communities, or where the agency/community relationship is new. Devolution of decision-making, implementation and monitoring can be perceived as positive development but also involves a loss of control. It can be challenging to develop joint monitoring and reporting systems which are workable but also geared deliver information required by management and donors. In ActionAid's experience, the benefits outweigh the difficulties, but this might be more problematic in a local NGO with fewer staff.

Different facets of the participatory approach will be appropriate in different situations. More projects experimenting with this approach need to be studied in order to determine all the possibilities. We must also acknowledge that for community participation in relief to work at all, agencies and governments must truly want to recognise beneficiaries' resources and capacities as well as their needs. This article demonstrates one such attempt and we encourage others to report on their own experiences. ♦

The role of NGOs in social reconstruction in Post-Yugoslav countries

by Paul Stubbs, Associate Research Fellow, Leeds Metropolitan University, International Social Policy Research Unit

The potential role of NGOs in social reconstruction in conflict and post-conflict societies, often expressed in terms of the importance of building local capacity and civil society,

is increasingly central to international debates on linking relief and development in what have been termed 'complex emergencies'. Research undertaken since late 1993 by Leeds Metropolitan University's International Social Policy Research Unit, in Post-Yugoslav countries, particularly Croatia, Slovenia and latterly Bosnia-Herzegovina, question some of the central arguments in this debate and have begun to outline alternative policy and practice options for donor agencies and international NGOs (INGOs).

Adopting an 'action research' approach to the work explicitly distanced it from both technical and pure academic approaches. The work is based on a long-term engagement with local social processes, and support for specific local NGO initiatives, in the context of concern over the role of global agencies and institutions in the making of national social policy. The research has highlighted pertinent differences between the countries studied in terms of social development, (although it is important to note that the use of 'Former Yugoslavia' as an all encompassing framework somewhat clouds an understanding of the 'uneven development' of the Former Yugoslav republics – the different impact of war and destruction, forced migration and post-socialist transition on those countries).

A key finding from the research is that the nature of emergency intervention by INGOs influences the development of a sustainable local NGO sector. The existence of large numbers of INGOs, directly providing 'own brand' services, aggravates problems of communication and mistrust, contributes to the erosion of the professional middle-class and to the suspension of local civil society activities. In Slovenia for example, few foreign organisations have been directly involved in service provision outside specific refugee programmes and only a small number have engaged in developmental work with the indigenous NGO sector. The latter has its origins in social movement and grassroots activities in the 1980s, introducing considerable innovation in methods of working with marginalised and oppressed groups and there is evidence that such national NGOs are beginning to influence broader social welfare policy and practice. A case study from the research illustrates how Save the Children Fund (UK) was able to recognise the positive elements of this legacy of civil society, and build a longer term partnership conducive to the development of the sector as a whole.

Croatia by contrast has been much more actively involved in the war. In Croatia, civil society movements were more divided and the role of grassroots nationalism in this context should not be

underestimated. In addition, a significant number of foreign organisations began programmes, on the basis of predominantly emergency-based funding, yet often without a clear exit strategy. Many set up parallel services not connecting with or building on existing social welfare provision, notably in the psycho-social field aimed at combating trauma. Only recently have agencies started to recognise the need to take on a more developmental role with more emphasis on self-help and community-based approaches. And even this change has been criticised by some as driven by decreased funding as part of ‘just another trend’.

In light of these findings, a key recommendation must be for clearer assessment of local civil society and its capacity prior to intervention by donors and INGOs. Too often, in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, a crude reading of Former Yugoslav republics as ‘communist’ and therefore ‘lacking a developed civil society’ meant that opportunities for conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction were missed. In addition, donor and INGOs’ implicit or explicit understandings of what constitutes an NGO, together with their criteria for funding, have tended to inhibit diversity within the sector and, indeed, have turned many grassroots initiatives into large bureaucracies. Exceptions to this rule, in particular in Croatia, include the Anti War Campaign and its member groups, including the Osijek Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights, which have maintained their independence, often through partnership with donors who are tend to support programmes with a more ‘solidaristic’ than ‘service-delivery’ role.

The research also points to the relative absence of clear evaluations of NGO work, or even of agreed criteria and working methodologies, much less a commitment to involve beneficiaries centrally in this process. This has tended to reinforce a situation noted elsewhere, namely that “providing resources can be mobilised, it is an almost anything goes type situation” (Duffield, M. *The Globalisation of Public Policy*, University of Birmingham, 1996). For this reason, the research has sought to work with local NGOs to increase the confidence of staff in developing their own approach to evaluation and promoting participatory evaluation as an indispensable component of community-based work.

The research further questions the emergence of parallel welfare systems in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina with INGOs on the one hand working mainly with

refugees and displaced persons, and local and central governmental services on the other, working with the local poor. Where donor agencies and INGOs tend to work either through governmental institutions or through local partner NGOs, this can lead to competition with independent local NGO initiatives for scarce resources and results in a drain on the local skilled workers (INGOs are often in a position to offer higher salaries and benefits). Although there may be relevant questions about the legitimacy and

Too often, in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, a crude reading of Former Yugoslav republics as ‘communist’ and therefore ‘lacking a developed civil society’ meant that opportunities for conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction were missed.

accountability of national government institutions and agencies, the need for sustainable linkages between local NGOs and government is not addressed by setting up and maintaining parallel services. By undertaking a clear social policy assessment, by rendering

their own implicit social visions explicit and open to debate, and by building on existing welfare infrastructure wherever possible, donor agencies and INGOs can promote social welfare for all, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society. As an example Prijatelj (meaning ‘Friend’), a local NGO formed when an INGO left, which works with Roma (gypsies), refugees and others in a particularly deprived part of Zagreb, has begun to prioritise joint work with the local Health Centre and Centre for Social Care, with the encouragement of international donors.

Specific case studies show that it is often grassroots initiatives, including volunteer projects, such as Pakrac (Croatia) and Gornji Vakuf (Bosnia-Herzegovina) which may offer opportunities for the development of new social meanings and hence, of ‘peace from below’ through the identification of alternative community leaders. An ‘integrated’ approach to peace-building as social development is seen as far more valuable than recent attempts to promote more discrete, project-type, approaches based on micro-sociological understandings.

Issues of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion not only on the basis of ethnicity, but also of age, class, gender, ability and sexuality need to be examined. NGO development and infrastructural rehabilitation, should not be promoted as an end in itself, but seen in the context of overall social welfare and peace building.

Thus the Centre for Peace Studies, a local NGO based in Croatia, combines training in peace-building for activists from post-Yugoslav countries with an attempt to ensure that lessons learned from grassroots initiatives are taken on board by UN agencies, donors and INGOs.

Rather than seeing NGO work in conflict-affected areas as inexorably divided between cheap service delivery and an only vague concern to rebuild civil society, the research has worked closely with local activists seeking to break down these divisions through, for example, local community development programmes, legal advice centres etc. In the process, new relationships between politics and development are born, questioning crude notions of NGO work as 'non political'. In Croatia in particular, the process has been adversely affected by new legislation which reflects a suspicion of NGOs by dominant political groups (This is discussed at more length in my chapter 'Croatia : NGO development, globalism and conflict' in Bennett, J. (ed.) *NGOs and Governments*, ICVA, forthcoming.)

Generally then, the research suggests the need to combine the core concerns of social policy with those of development studies, underpinned by a concern with social visions at the supranational, state, regional and community levels. Questions of entitlement, capacity and sustainability, and their converse, of need, vulnerability, and distortion, are of immense importance in ongoing debates about social integration. Case studies of post-Yugoslav countries demonstrate the shortcomings of global and international agencies in a European context, in terms not unknown to commentators on the African situation, raising acute questions about how to address causes rather than symptoms, build capacity rather than parallel provision, promote genuine civil society rather than mirror images of opportunistic INGOs, and above all, contribute to sustainable peace rather than a balance of ethnic terror. Action research can help to identify constraints which hinder progress in these areas, and highlight good practice and alternative conceptualisations which can offer ways forward. ◆

For copies of the original research report, subsequent summary and dissemination papers, or more details about the research and other publications, please contact: Paul Stubbs at University of Zagreb, School of Social Work, Nadorova 51, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia. Fax: +385 1 48 21 206 or Email: PAUL.STUBBS@ZAMIR-ZG.ztn.apc.org.

The impact of armed conflict on children

by Jennifer F. Klot who directed Graça Machel's secretariat for the UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children. She has worked with international nongovernmental organisations, private foundations and multilateral agencies in the area of human rights, youth development, women's rights, and development planning in both the United States and in Africa.

"The report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children is testimony to the millions of children who have been killed, injured and permanently disabled as a result of armed conflicts. It is testimony to countless others who have been forced to witness and take part in horrifying atrocities. More so, it is testimony to the fundamental crisis of our civilisation. Contemporary conflicts force communities into a moral vacuum in which all restraints have been eroded and discarded – a world in which children are no longer considered precious. This demonstrates the failure of the international community to protect and cherish its children."
Graça Machel, Expert of the Secretary-General on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children

"I set out to listen to children," Graça Machel said about her appointment as the UN Secretary-General's Expert on Children and Armed Conflict. "The mothers and children I met and talked with, they all taught me lessons I will remember for the rest of my life." With support from UNICEF and the UN Centre for Human Rights, Ms. Machel led an unusual two year process of research, consultation and mobilisation. It resulted in the most comprehensive human rights appraisal of children and armed conflicts yet debated at the UN General Assembly. Machel's final Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children documents the two million children killed in armed conflicts in the past 10 years, the 6 million children that have been seriously injured or permanently disabled, and the situation of more than 250,000 child soldiers around the world.

With the cooperation of inter-governmental and non governmental organisations, independent experts, all elements of civil society, UN agencies and governments, Graça Machel established a potentially replicable model of cooperation and mobilisation. Together with these partners, consultations were held in eastern and southern Africa, the Arab region, west and central Africa, the Asia Pacific region, Latin America and Europe to determine regional priorities relating to children in armed conflicts. Field visits were undertaken to more than eight affected areas around the world, and twenty five thematic papers and field-based case studies were prepared.

The report and its ten point call for urgent action (see box on facing page) recommend strategies to protect children from the catastrophic conditions to which they are and continue to be exposed. These include the call to implement and monitor international humanitarian and human rights standards, and in particular the near-universally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child; to prevent the sexual exploitation and gender violence against children and women; to demobilise all children under the age of 18 from militaries and all armed groups; to end the scourge of landmines; and to ensure that children's health, nutrition, psycho-social well being and education are the pillars of all humanitarian assistance policy and programmes.

After the Machel report was launched in November 1996, 129 Member States at the General Assembly co-sponsored a child rights resolution that was adopted by consensus and acclamation. It contains an extraordinary number of new recommendations for action – more than 35 – which for the first time, address human rights and humanitarian concerns as well as the peacemaking and peacekeeping policies of the United Nations. The most significant among these is the call for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

As a result of the Report's findings, the United Nations ordered an internal investigation into the controversy surrounding the sexual exploitation of children by U.N. peacekeeping troops. In six out of twelve country studies prepared for the Machel report, the arrival of peacekeeping troops was associated with a rapid rise in child victims of prostitution. In armed conflicts, rape and other forms of gender-based violence are increasingly used as tactical weapons of war. The report asserts that these violations – murder, rape, sexual exploitation and forced pregnancy – must be prosecuted as breaches of international law. Consequently, the report recommends that effective monitoring, reporting, and disciplinary mechanisms are established nationally

and within peacekeeping operations. It also calls for mandatory training on children's rights and human rights for military, peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.

Children have increasingly become targets and not incidental victims in contemporary armed conflicts, because of conscious and deliberate decisions made by adults. The cynical exploitation of children as soldiers prompted the Report's call for a global campaign to eradicate the use of children under the age of 18 from the armed forces. This campaign has been promoted vigorously by Save the Children Sweden (Rädda Barnen), the Quakers, the ICRC/IFRC, UNICEF and other partners. It seeks to prevent the recruitment of children under the age of 18, the immediate demobilisation of all children in armed forces, and the incorporation of their needs into peacekeeping operations, peace agreements and demobilisation programmes.

Since the Report was launched, much progress has been made to negotiate a comprehensive international treaty to ban the use, production, trade and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines. The International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, which is working in part to declare southern Africa a regional mine-free zone, received a boost in February when the Government of South Africa pledged to destroy its stockpile of 160,000 anti-personnel mines. But even if an immediate ban treaty were enforced, children still need protection from the estimated 110 million mines polluting the earth today. Consequently, the Machel report recommends a three-pronged programme covering (1) humanitarian mine clearance, including the creation of safe learning, living and play areas certified as 99.9 per cent free of mines; (2) mine awareness aimed at children and women, and (3) child-centered rehabilitation.

To ensure a follow-up to the Report, the General Assembly called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. The Special Representative will be the second of its kind ever established with a thematic human rights mandate of global concern. The vision of the Special Representative is that of a focal point – not an operational institution. Hence close cooperation with NGOs, UN bodies and Governments will be essential. The Special Representative will continue to raise awareness and promote the collection of information about the plight of children affected by armed conflict, and encourage the development of networking.

Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children

A TEN POINT CALL FOR URGENT ACTION

1. Implementing International Standards

International human rights and humanitarian standards relating to children in situations of armed conflict must be widely disseminated and vigorously enforced. Broad awareness of the rights of the child must be promoted and education and training activities developed.

2. Monitoring and Reporting Violations of Child Rights

Children in armed conflict must be treated as a distinct and priority concern in all human rights, humanitarian and development activities. Effective mechanisms for monitoring and reporting violations of children's rights must be established.

3. Promoting Physical and Psychological Recovery and Social Reintegration

To ensure respect for children's fundamental rights, measures to promote their health, nutrition, psychosocial well-being and education must be the pillars of all humanitarian assistance policy and programs.

4. Increasing Commitment for Refugee and Internally Displaced Children

The care and protection of refugee and internally displaced children requires increased international commitment and cooperation, particularly in relation to family reunification, the equitable delivery of humanitarian assistance and children's right to education. In each conflict situation, UNICEF is urged to provide leadership to ensure assistance and protection of internally displaced children.

5. Demobilising Child Soldiers

Governments and all armed groups should prevent the recruitment of children under the age of 18, immediately demobilise all children in armed forces, and incorporate their needs into peacekeeping, peace agreements and demobilisation programmes.

6. Ending the Scourge of Landmines

States are urged to support a comprehensive international treaty to ban, as soon as possible, on the use, production, trade and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines. An integrated programme of humanitarian mine clearance, gender and age appropriate mine awareness and child centred rehabilitation should be accelerated.

7. Preventing Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation

Violations of the rights of girls and women in armed conflicts, including murder, rape, sexual exploitation and forced pregnancy, must be prosecuted, and appropriate legal and rehabilitative remedies made available.

8. Protecting Children from Sanctions

Whenever sanctions are imposed, their impact on children should be assessed and monitored. Humanitarian exemptions should be child-focused and formulated with clear application guidelines.

9. Prevention

The international community must shatter the political inertia that allows armed conflicts to escalate. Priority must be given to promoting sustainable and equitable patterns of human development and measures such as early warning, preventive diplomacy and education for peace. The protection of children and women must be central to all actions to promote peace, implement peace agreements and resolve conflicts.

10. Special Representative

A Special Representative on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children should be named to keep the issues of children and armed conflict high on international human rights, humanitarian, peace, security and development agendas, and to ensure a follow-up to the Report of the Expert of the Secretary-General on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children.

Plans are also underway to hold a Year 2000 Conference to evaluate the progress of the international community in bringing about the report's recommendations. The conference will mark the 10th anniversary of the World Summit for Children and the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Leading up to the Year 2000 meeting, it is anticipated that a series of smaller, strategic meetings could take place at the national and regional levels to develop plans of action for implementation and follow-up. ♦

Copies of the report may be obtained from: UNICEF, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York NY 10017 or the UNICEF Website which can be located at:

gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/docs/51/plenary/A51-306.EN

gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/docs/51/plenary/A51-306.EN1

The resolution can be found at:

<http://193.135.156.15/HTML/menu4/gares/res77>

News

A 'New' Disasters Emergency Committee in the UK

by John Borton, Humanitarian Policy Programme, ODI

On June 10th the UK Disasters Emergency Committee will commence a new phase in its 35 year history by relaunching itself as the 'New' DEC. The event, which represents the culmination of a process of review and reform begun in January 1995, will see the number of member agencies increase from 7 to 15, set new standards of transparency and accountability for UK NGOs providing humanitarian assistance and potentially provide a model for the coordination of relief agencies in other countries.

A brief history of the DEC

The DEC was established in 1963 as a mechanism for coordinating public appeals and the relief responses of the principal UK NGOs involved in the provision of disaster relief assistance, through TV, radio and print media, at times of major international disasters. The principal elements of the DEC for its first 35 years were:

- the agreement by the two main national TV organisations (the BBC and the IBA) to provide free air time to the DEC following the main evening news programmes on the agreed Appeal launch date;
- the undertaking by member agencies to refrain from running competing media advertising during a 'Period of Joint Action' which generally ran for 4 weeks after the launch of the Appeal;
- the active participation of the Post Office, British Telecom and the principal High Street banks in receiving and processing donations;
- agreement by the agencies to distribute the 'pooled' funds raised during the Period of Joint Action between them – the mechanism being an equal share basis between full members and a half share basis between Associate Members. [Thus, over the period 1986-1992, the 6 full members – Oxfam, the British Red Cross Society, SCF, War on Want, Christian Aid and CAFOD – received a 1/7 share, while the two Associate Members – Action Aid and Help the Aged – received a 1/14 share.]
- The then ODA supported the DEC by meeting part of the running costs of the small Secretariat and on two occasions by large donations to DEC Appeals.

The first DEC Appeal was made in 1966 in response to an earthquake in Turkey. Since then there have been 39 Appeals which have raised and allocated £94 million of 'pooled' funds.

Throughout this period the DEC had no legal or charitable status, being simply a joint mechanism of the membership and the supporting organisations – broadcasters, Post Office, British Telecom, and the Banks. Appeals were managed by a small Secretariat (housed in one of the member agencies) and by the 'Operating Agency' – a role which was rotated among member agencies for each appeal.

Changing context

These arrangements operated satisfactorily (though with limited transparency) until around the late 1980s when three important trends fundamentally changed the environment in which the DEC operated. First, the nature of emergencies changed from being predominantly those caused by ‘natural’ hazards to those predominantly caused by armed conflicts. Second, the number of NGOs involved in relief operations began to grow dramatically, and the competitive pressures between them increased. Third, at the start of a technological and organisational revolution in the broadcasting field introduced additional channels and increased commercial pressures.

The DEC failed to respond effectively to these changes, with member agencies sometimes perceived as placing their own interests above those of the DEC as a whole. This perception was reinforced by the DEC’s failure to admit new members who were variously perceived as being ‘not sufficiently British’, or whose capacity to provide effective disaster relief was questioned. In addition, some member agencies began to liberally interpret the ‘rules’ relating to the acceptable period for utilising funds from DEC Appeals, with the result that funds were still being used on rehabilitation activities for a prolonged period after an Appeal.

NGOs outside the DEC began to call for it to be made less exclusive – a call heard by the broadcasters and the ODA – and matters came to a head in 1994 with the DEC Appeal for Rwanda. The Appeal raised £10 million of ‘pooled’ funds, for use in an area where few DEC member agencies had an established capacity or particular comparative advantage, in contrast to others who were outside the DEC but who played an important role in the overall relief efforts. Articles critical of the DEC began to appear in the British press.

A process of review and reform commenced in January 1995 and, in December of the same year, radical changes were proposed: membership should be inclusive; a DEC Council should be established to provide independent oversight; different categories of membership should be introduced; and an Executive Committee should be elected by the membership. These changes were supported by the membership, the broadcasters, and the Banks, and resulted in advisers (including the ODI) being commissioned to give substance to the proposed reforms, in a way that would be acceptable to the prospective member agencies as well as to existing members.

The key ‘structural’ changes agreed were:

- the creation of a DEC Council
- the adoption of the principle of inclusive membership. This was achieved by setting the admission criteria at a level which would make most UK relief agencies eligible, though being a signatory of the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct was made a requirement for eligibility.
- the ‘New’ DEC should have its own legal status – that of a non-profit company limited by guarantee with full charitable status. The need for such a formal status stemmed from the requirements for transparency and accountability and the need to separate DEC funds from those of its member agencies.

In addition, mechanisms were required to decide which of the member agencies should be allowed to participate in an Appeal and the criteria to be employed in allocating ‘pooled’ funds among the participating agencies.

Reaching a consensus on mechanisms

Reaching consensus on these mechanisms proved difficult and led to the development of novel approaches. Early in the process a distinction between so-called ‘front-loading’ and ‘back-loading’ models was drawn: A ‘front-loading’ model would require DEC assessment missions to visit crisis-affected regions to gather information to determine the capacity of DEC agencies in the area and thus their eligibility for funding and the level of funds they should receive. This approach was not favoured by the researchers as it implied delays in the process of allocating funds, the duplication of assessment procedures undertaken by DHA and other organisations, and the likelihood of disputes between agencies.

The principal feature of the ‘back-loading’ model, ultimately adopted by the majority of existing and prospective agencies, was to impose minimal barriers to the initial ‘opt-in’ to an Appeal but **require that the programmes of all agencies participating in an Appeal would be independently evaluated and, once finalised, the evaluation placed in the public domain.** Using this system, the onus would be on the agencies to make an assessment of need and of their ability to respond effectively, in the knowledge that their programmes would be the subject of a future independent evaluation. All ‘pooled’ funds would have to be spent within six months of the Appeal or returned for reallocation among agencies able to make more effective use of the funds.

The evaluation process would then commence 8-11 months after the launch of the Appeal, the broadcasters undertaking to inform the public of the existence and availability of the evaluation reports. The use and type of sanctions to be deployed in the event of poor or unacceptable performance by a member agency would be determined by the Executive Committee. Thus, independent evaluation constitutes an integral part of the 'New' DEC, an innovation which is expected to have a significant impact upon the transparency and accountability of UK relief NGOs, not only to the UK donor public but also to the beneficiaries of the assistance provided – evaluators will be required to interview a sample of the beneficiaries of each member agency participating in an Appeal.

To maintain the 'back-loading' model and keep initial barriers and judgements about an agency's 'capacity' to a minimum, a pre-agreed, mechanistic formula was required to determine an agency's 'capacity' and thus its share of 'pooled' funds. In the absence of a consistent definition of 'relief expenditure' and comparable expenditure data by all agencies, the following second-best system came to be accepted:

- use of the terms 'relief', 'rehabilitation' and 'development', defined differently not only between agencies but also within agencies, would be avoided;
- geographical area and type of target group should be used as alternative ways of classifying expenditure rather than searching for perfect definitions which proved elusive;
- a weighting system would be introduced giving greater weight to those activities which were closer to the objectives of the DEC and less weight to those activities which were relevant but less significant from the DEC's perspective.

Thus, all agencies wishing to join the 'New' DEC are now required to classify all their expenditures (from UK sources) over the previous three years into two categories. Category 1 includes all expenditures in countries experiencing complex political emergencies and on refugee and IDP populations. Category 2 is a residual of all those expenditures which do not conform to the Category 1 criteria.

In calculating the share of 'pooled' funds to which a member agency is entitled, the total of Category 1 is accorded a weighting of 1.0 whereas the total of Category 2 is accorded a weighting of 0.2. In this way the estimation of response capacity within the 'New' DEC is weighted towards those agencies with substantial programmes in countries experiencing

complex emergencies and working with displaced populations. However, it is also recognised that agencies with substantial 'development' activities in other countries have a capacity to respond effectively in emergencies as a result of the knowledge and networks that accompany such an involvement, though such 'capacity' is accorded a lower weighting.

A 'typical' appeal involving 9 agencies ranging from the largest to the smallest would result in the largest receiving 29% of the total 'pooled' funds and the smallest receiving 1%. This spread compares with the previous equal shares basis which resulted in 6 member agencies receiving 14.2% and two 7.1%.

The package of measures comprising the 'New' DEC is proving acceptable to UK NGOs: in addition to the original 7 members (British Red Cross Society, Oxfam, SCF, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Help the Aged and ActionAid) there are 8 new member agencies (CARE, Concern Worldwide, Merlin, World Vision, MSF-UK, Tear Fund, Children's Aid Direct, and the Christian Children's Fund). ♦

For further information, please contact: DEC Secretariat, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8ED. Tel: +44 171 703 5400 Fax: +44 171 252 4805 Email: 100676.105@compuserve.com

Security and protection: 'beyond technology'

The Policy Planning and Strategic Analysis division of the European Community's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) on 22 May organised a one day reflection seminar on security and protection. Representatives of the European and US NGO world were complemented by a representative from the ICRC, from NATO's CIMIC office (Civilian-Military Cooperation) and from the office of the UN Security Coordinator. Exploratory in nature, the meeting highlighted several important points:

A distinction needs to be made between types of risk: war, crime and banditry, which require different responses. Risk is not necessarily reduced by more security 'technology'. On the contrary, this in itself may attract violence. Insofar as threats are rooted in politics and perceptions, the development of broad-based

relationships and cultivating a positive image may be more appropriate. There is no automatic correlation therefore between the protection of humanitarian aid and aid workers and the deployment of UN troops. If relationships are important, the question of protecting aid workers and protecting civilian populations needs to be raised. It was felt unlikely that one group in the aid system, such as the UN, the ICRC or NGOs could take over responsibility for the overall security and protection. A number of proposals were made for donors to support improved security and to facilitate the learning of lessons related to security. Thus security could be included in the terms of reference of an evaluation or impact analysis. Importantly donor governments as political actors can help create a more secure environment by exercising legal, political and economic pressure on violent and organised groups. The possible repercussions of public steps and statements however need to be discussed in advance with agencies with staff on the ground.

ECHO will produce a draft report for discussion with EU member states in advance of the ICRC 'Humanitarian Forum' to be held in Wolfsberg, Switzerland 8-10 June. This seminar will consider the issue of security within the wider debates to be held under the title of 'Threats to Humanitarian Aid'. The seminar bring together senior ministerial, ICRC, UN, and NGO representatives and a report of the proceedings will be available in our next Newsletter.

Those interested in current UN policy on security could consult the UN Field Security Handbook, the April 1997 document 'The UN Security Management System' and 'Security Directive SD/1996/2' of January 1996. ♦

Towards an EU code of conduct on arms control

In recent years, European NGOs have been advocating and mobilising support for an EU Code of Conduct on Arms Control. The focus is very much on controlling small arms, which are not included in the UN Register of Conventional Arms, but proliferate in conflicts around the world and which contribute to the use of child soldiers. The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (1990) set in motion the demobilisation and restructuring of the European

defence machinery. The surplus weapons which have resulted from such demobilisation, together with those of the former Communist bloc, have now created a buyer's market with weapons available at low prices from multiple suppliers. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, in which European soldiers were fired at by weapons supplied to Iraq by their own governments, eight common EU criteria on the export of conventional weapons were drawn up. The problem is that these criteria are not binding and that they allow the member states very different perceptions and interpretations of the same situation, thus leading to contrasting positions and decisions on arms exports. The 1996 'Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies', signed by a large number of other non-EU countries, also lacks stringent and binding controls. Further, it gives light weapons a continued 'low priority' status.

The main advocacy points around an EU Code of Conduct are the following:

- a common and restrictive interpretation of the eight criteria, greater convergence of EU member states' guidelines and procedures, stricter implementation of already existing national controls
- greater transparency and accountability of EU member state governments on arms sales
- a compulsory rule of prior consultation between EU member states to avoid bypassing another country's restrictions for own commercial benefit
- a closing down of the 'grey market' by requiring all individuals and companies involved in arms sales to register
- tagging and registration of all weapons and ammunition to increase their traceability;
- harmonisation of 'end-use' and 're-export' certification procedures
- closer monitoring of adherence and support for the efforts of recipient countries limiting and controlling light weapons stocks and transfers.

In the UK, the Pergau 'aid for arms' deal with Malaysia, the sale of dual-use machine tools to Iraq by Matrix Churchill and the previous UK government's reluctance to support a total ban on anti-personnel mines made arms exports a controversial political issue. It is interesting to note that the 'Mission Statement' of the new UK Labour Foreign and Commonwealth Office of May 1997 put security and international stability as a top priority of its foreign policy; international security here including the active promotion of arms control through multilateral regulation and support for a European Code of Conduct. ♦

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NOHA

‘Three years on’

The Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA) is a one year Masters Degree course offered by a network of European academic institutions (see Newsletter no. 1 March 1994). Conceived in 1993 it started in 1994 and is now in its 3rd academic year, with some 100 students enrolled every year. The participating institutions have been located within Ruhr University, at Bochum (Germany), Deusto University at Bilbao (Spain), Université Catholique de Louvain at Leuven-Brussels (Belgium), and Aix-Marseille University at Aix-en-Provence (France). As of 1997-1998 another three institutes will collaborate in the initiative: Stockholm (Sweden), Dublin (Ireland) and Rome (Italy). The Refugee Studies Programme (RSP), Oxford University (UK) was involved in the development of the NOHA degree and was responsible for preparing some of the teaching materials. The regulations governing its new one-year Masters of Studies in Forced Migration, (due to begin in 1998), will not, however, be compatible with those of the NOHA degree and it will therefore not be possible for the RSP to register students for the European degree.

The NOHA course has so far received limited financial support from ECHO and a more substantial input from DG XXII – responsible for education – under its

‘Socrates’ European exchange programme. To a significant degree the costs have been born by the universities to which the participating institutes belong. A recent ECHO commissioned evaluation recommends more EU financial input.

The study programme consists of a 10-14 day intensive course that brings together in one place all students of the participating institutions, followed by two semesters of study. Students have the possibility of attending the second semester at another of the participating institutions. A 6-8 weeks apprenticeship with a humanitarian organisation is recommended although students are expected to take initiatives to find a hosting organisation, with support from their institute. The key modules of about 30 hours each cover international humanitarian law, management and logistics, international relations, medicine and anthropology. The NOHA course is not skill training but situates itself at an academic level, providing essential information and a broad framework for understanding humanitarian issues. The body of students brings together individuals with and without prior field experience. ♦

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Regional update



BURUNDI

Despite the recent ceasefire, aid agencies operating in Burundi face a difficult but increasingly familiar moral dilemma as they seek to strike a balance between responding to acute humanitarian need, manipulation by the authorities, a political vacuum at the international level and upholding human rights.

During the last year, between 250,000 and 500,000 people have been regrouped into camps by the Government of Burundi (GOB) – a policy which, according to the Government, seeks to relocate populations out of conflict areas as a security measure. Since a GOB statement in March, NGOs have come under intense pressure to support populations in these regroupment camps. The statement said that the Government will “coordinate [NGO] activities...and ensure that whole regions are not neglected in favour of others”, adding that “if the work asked of them by the Government does not meet their expectations” then “NGOs are at liberty to withdraw”.

This has brought many of the debates about humanitarianism into sharp focus. On the one hand, in many of the camps a humanitarian crisis is being born: malnutrition and the incidence of disease are on the increase and there is little access to basic social services. On the other hand, the regroupment of populations has taken place amid widespread violence and substantiated human rights abuses. Such evidence suggests that the policy does not fall within the two possible exceptions to article 17 of the Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions, (to which Burundi is a party), which prohibits the forced movement of civilians in internal armed conflicts. In light of such an analysis, the international humanitarian community has had little choice but to conclude that this policy is primarily a ‘military strategy’.

Further supporting such a conclusion is the absence of any indication that the regroupment policy is

temporary, as claimed by the GOB. There is no evidence to date that any of the regroupment centres have been closed, and one, Karuzi was set up over one year ago, belying Government reassurances that this is a short term security measure. Moreover, GOB assurances that the rebel footholds have been weakened by events in Zaire where they had been receiving support have also been questioned by suggestions that they have now moved their operations to Tanzania.

In addition to the human rights questions this analysis raises for operational agencies, the longer term impact of providing assistance to the camp populations also features in the balance sheet for NGOs deciding whether to comply or not: if they provide short-term assistance and then pull out, what effect will this have on vulnerable populations’ dependence on assistance in the longer term? And if people do not have access to their farms, what impact will this have on their own coping mechanisms – recent WFP reports suggest that the last month’s harvests were considerably below levels hoped for. And what of the difficulties for agencies openly campaigning against such ‘military strategies’ and human rights abuses to be found to be working inside the regroupment centres? These are fundamental policy questions which cannot be addressed solely by those on the ground.

Finally, questions of NGO coordination, security and donor/UN responsibility are again high on the agenda. There is a need for NGOs to adopt a unified approach to the situation to prevent the GOB from playing them off against one another. But equally, whatever NGOs do or seek to do in the situation, even a joint stance will have little effect on the GOB policy unless the respective donors/UN officials/national embassies in discussion with the Government of Burundi are also seen to ‘sing from the same hymn sheet’ and support NGO positions – perhaps going so far as to refuse funding if the GOB is seen to diverge from its stated ‘temporary and voluntary’ regroupment policy. And at what point do agencies decide to withdraw staff facing considerable threats to their security and an uncomfortable choice – risk attacks from the rebels if they comply with the Government’s demands to provide assistance within the camps or refuse, and be forced to leave the country.

Such dilemmas are becoming increasingly familiar for

NGOs working in complex emergencies, yet there is no evidence that political solutions are being found any more than they were for Rwanda in 1994 or Zaire in 1996. Agencies are being forced to choose whether they work in the camps, assisting a strategy of military coercion and as virtual accomplices to human rights abuses or abandon the vulnerable, in the hope that other agencies do respond, and leave the country. ♦



LIBERIA

Major progress has been made in the Liberian peace process in the last few months. Implementation of the Abuja II accord, signed in August last year, has proceeded, with over 20,000 fighters disarmed, relative security throughout the country, and preparations under way for elections. The elections were initially planned for 30 May, but have been postponed due to delays in seating the Electoral Commission, and to allow enough time to ensure that preparations are completed. In spite of the new optimistic climate, many observers remain cautious. Thirteen peace agreements have so far failed in Liberia. Caches of hidden arms have been periodically discovered by ECOMOG, the West African peace keeping force, and factional command structures upcountry have in many places been transformed into civilian entities, enabling factions to retain control over their previous areas of influence. The most powerful faction leader, Charles Taylor, remains one of the strongest candidates in the elections, giving rise to fears about his course of action whether he wins or loses.

The postponement has been called for by various sections of society in Liberia, including the Electoral Commission itself, to gain time for logistical organisation as well as for voter education and campaigning. Many have been worried that Taylor's high profile and command of public relations techniques may give him an advantage over civilian candidates including Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who only declared her candidacy in late April. She appears as one of the more credible candidates, having had only a spectator's involvement in the civil war, and having served in many top administrative posts in Liberia and internationally over her long career. Although postponement will help ensure that the elections are held in as free and fair a manner as possible, it is likely to be a destabilising factor, and allows the status quo of factional control over the government and economy to continue.

The issue of whether democratic elections can in themselves solve the deeper conflicts in Liberian society that led to the current war, has been little discussed. If Charles Taylor wins a majority mandate, the pattern of illegal use of economic resources and political impunity may remain in place. The political economy has developed during the war with violence used as a direct means of expropriation by the elite, both politicians and fighters. Even if the terroristic violence perpetrated by fighters against civilians is reduced, the structures of illegally-based patronage systems may not disappear. Until the transparency and accountability of the government and its institutions can be assured, the basis for conflict will remain. These areas have so far not been a priority among donor governments or ECOWAS countries, led by Nigeria, who are overseeing the peace process.

These issues are particularly relevant for the aid community as it moves towards planning rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. In Liberia this will involve the resettlement of over a million refugees and internally displaced, and assisting with the rebuilding of the vast economic and social infrastructure that has been destroyed in the war. The UN agencies and NGOs are making tentative plans, with UNHCR having decided to encourage 'voluntary' repatriation, and relief work becoming more oriented towards rehabilitation activities. Good co-ordination on operational issues continues within the aid community, with consultation on policy at all levels. However, the pressure from donors to expand activities has to be juggled with the commitment by the NGO community in particular to minimising any negative effects of aid including contributing to the legitimisation of factional authority. Many agencies are currently able to work relatively independently of the government, but if larger-scale rehabilitation is to take place, the issue of the role of the Liberian state structures in welfare provision etc. will have to be faced.

The strong commitment at diplomatic and donor levels to the current peace process, which has led to improvements in the funding and structures of both ECOMOG and UNOMIL, has contributed to the real progress in the implementation so far of Abuja II. Many observers believe however that the threat of sanctions against faction leaders and politicians was the key factor in bringing them to the current position. The emphasis that has since been put on 'normalisation' has led to a more pragmatic approach of appeasement towards the warring factions. The release of former ULIMO-K faction leader Alhaji Kromah by ECOMOG, following his arrest for possession of large amounts of arms in March, demonstrated this approach.

It is crucial that political pressure is maintained during the coming months until the elections are held. The factions have shown on numerous occasions their willingness to diverge from agreed arrangements, as the Liberians say, “the leopard does not change its spots”. The coming months will present, as ever, a difficult and dangerous policy environment in Liberia. Unless political pressure is stepped up, fighters and factions may resort to violence again, to maintain their access to resources and power. Unless efforts are made to support accountability and transparency within state institutions, the elections themselves may achieve little for Liberia’s search for peace. The recent fighting in neighbouring Sierra Leone highlights the failure of democracy there to resolve the conflict, and underlines the importance of addressing the deeper issues, which in this region are centred around the distribution of resources within the political economy. ♦



ALBANIA

The collapse of several ‘pyramid’ investment schemes and the loss of some US\$1.5 billion in private savings triggered a crisis that rapidly escalated in February 1997. Mass protests, supported by the political opposition, degenerated into widespread looting of military and police arms depots, government institutions and private businesses, and in the arming of civilians and criminal groups. Particularly in the south, government authority and institutions collapsed. Banditry and organised crime are now widespread. Notwithstanding President Berisha’s agreement to a government of unity with the Socialist Party, a political solution to the crisis remains elusive.

A 1994 report published by the World Bank *Albania and the World Bank: Building the future*, advocated ongoing privatisation and restructuring of the banking sector amongst others, an increased tax basis for the government and the creation of frameworks to regulate the newly developing market. There is no reference to the ‘pyramid’ schemes and their potential collapse, and no anticipation of the institutional emergency that has followed.

Following the collapse of the state structure and authority, an estimated 20,000 Albanians fled to Greece, while another 13,000 crossed the Adriatic Sea to seek refuge in Italy. The collision of a boat carrying refugees

with an Italian Navy craft caused 89 deaths, prompting the international community to action. The event elicited an expression of concern from UNHCR and contributed to Italy’s decision to lead an international task force. Security Council Resolution 1101 was then passed, agreeing to the establishment of a multinational force of 6,000 soldiers under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Its mandate, initially for a 3 month period starting in mid-April, is defined as safeguarding the delivery of humanitarian assistance and helping to create a secure environment for international organisations in the country. However, it specifically excludes peacekeeping or peacemaking activities.

A UN Interagency Mission in late March identified urgent humanitarian needs especially for food and medical supplies, although on a relatively modest scale. The looting of food stores and the drop in commercial imports have led to a rise in food prices by 40 percent. Food requirements were calculated at 15,000 Mt of wheat flour to be targeted at 140,000 destitute rural families and to vulnerable people in social welfare institutions. Distribution to the institutions is planned through the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and Health, with the ICRC and NGOs helping to reach households. Aid is being brought in through the ports of Vlora in the troubled south, and Dures in the north, as well as through the airport of Tirana, although it is realised that large scale food assistance could provide a disincentive to domestic production and disrupt market mechanisms.

In addition to food shortages, the increase in war-wounded and the looting of hospitals and pharmaceutical supplies generates urgent need for drugs and medical equipment. Laboratory equipment to maintain water and food quality control monitoring is also required, while the disease surveillance system needs to be strengthened.

UNICEF plans to focus on short term financial support to child institutions and extend the institutional reach to street children. The total estimated requirements are costed at US\$10,850,000. This include some expenses to strengthen the capacity of the UNDP Resident Coordinator to act as the coordinating office, with DHA in a support role.

On the political front, the OSCE is deploying a team of 50 to arrange elections. Initially planned for June these have now been postponed to July. The Albanian crisis has all the characteristics of an ‘institutional emergency’, with the financial collapse of the ‘pyramid’ schemes pushing the crisis of legitimate and effective

governance over the brink. Albania came into existence after it split off from Cassava in 1912. There remain 2 million ethnic Albanians in Cassava, which is a tense part of the Serb Republic, to add to the population of 3.5 million in the country itself.

This gives Albania an uncomfortable position in Balkan politics. Decades of isolationist Communist rule did not easily translate into a credible democracy five years ago. Corruption remains widespread while Albania's tradition of feuding has merged with new forms of organised crime which had protected links with the state during the communist period. The state institutions have thus been hollowed out and it seems extremely optimistic to believe that elections by themselves can revitalise the state. Most problematic is the wide availability of arms with no effective mechanism to collect them. The provision of humanitarian assistance, protected by an armed force, cannot be the main response of the international community. ◆



IRAQ

In November 1996 the oil-for-aid deal drawn up under UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 986, was signed. At the heart of the deal is the use of proceeds from oil sales for humanitarian assistance to alleviate the hardship caused by economic sanctions against Iraq. Some months before the signature, twenty international NGOs presented the UNDHA with a critique of the aid plan for northern Iraq. Under the terms of the '986' plan, some US\$260 million was to be spent in a rapid, multi-sectoral rehabilitation programme.

The plan has been greeted with some hesitation by NGOs, critical of the haste with which it has been drawn up, with insufficient consultation of local authorities and international aid agencies. It consequently fails to identify, and respond appropriately, to the distinct needs in the north which are different from the south. It is also felt that the plan overestimates the administrative and logistical implementation capacity, and has an unrealistic time-frame. The emphasis of the plan is on the input of commodities, without consideration of their impact. In southern Iraq, where there are shortages of medicine and food, the distribution of imported food aid is likely to damage

fragile attempts to re-establish an agricultural base. An alternative would be to purchase locally produced foodstuffs, to invest in irrigation systems and multiplication of locally adapted seeds, pest control and farmer training. Although there are vulnerable groups in northern Iraq, there is no evidence of widespread malnutrition and consequently no need for a *general* food distribution. The overall allocation of food is deemed excessive and part of it could be urgently redirected to investment in the energy sector.

The health plan again centres on inputs: this time of drugs and medical equipment. The NGO critique advocates a focus on preventive health care, the integration of health with the water and sanitation, food and nutrition sectors, and more investment in health education and the training of personnel.

The provisions for shelter and resettlement lack a clear policy with regard to the internally displaced, large numbers of whom are concentrated in 'collective' towns. The allocation for dealing with mines is seen as inadequate in relation to the magnitude of the problem. For as long as it remains impossible to bring specialised demining and unexploded ordnance destruction equipment into northern Iraq, investment should focus on education and prevention, and ongoing capacity for the treatment and rehabilitation of mine victims.

In their comments, NGOs stress the general lack of capacity to monitor the large scale input of commodities and their targeting, and their unwillingness to get involved now while not having been fully involved at the planning phase. A second six-month agreement may be forthcoming, and international NGOs are therefore continuing to lobby for a more developmental approach, to preserve the still limited recovery of the Kurdish economy and to kickstart the local economy in the south.

Aid plans that prioritise imports do not put much needed cash into the local economy, and essentially sustain aid dependency, not recovery. There is also a risk of existing donors withdrawing or redirecting their funding, which, under the provisions of the in the '986' proposal, would make the recovery work very vulnerable.

Peace talks continue between the rival Kurdish factions of the PUK and the KDP, and a peace monitoring force is in place with members of neighbouring countries including Turkey. International NGOs do not express worry that the input of aid commodities would heighten tensions between the factions. ◆



In Brief...

In May

...The rebel Alliance forces of Laurent Kabila, supported by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Angola, entered Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, forcing President Mobutu to flee the country. Kabila subsequently formed a government excluding opposition leader Tshichekedi and proclaimed himself President. International aid officials have publicly criticised the Alliance for human rights abuses towards Rwandan refugees in east and central Zaire and for obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The country has now been renamed the *Democratic Republic of the Congo*.

...A military coup in *Sierra Leone* reversed the peace process, overturning the civilian government and causing the suspension of committed rehabilitation and reconstruction funds. Nigeria, under the ECOMOG charter, is sending troops in support of the overthrown government.

...*In Cambodia*, in anticipation of forthcoming elections, tensions are rising between the parties of Prince Ranaridd and Hun Sun who have shared the role of prime minister in a coalition government since the UN-sponsored election of 1993. There is an increase in violence and human rights abuses, not least by the police and army, seldom investigated and punished.

...Government forces launched a full-scale offensive in northern *Sri Lanka*. The main advance has been northwards from Vavuniya, to establish a land route through the LTTE-held Vanni region, to the government-controlled Jaffna peninsula. Thousands of people internally displaced during earlier escalations in fighting in 1991-2 and 1995 are again forced to flee. LTTE ambushes and guerrilla attacks continue in the East.

...The commander of Faryab province northern *Afghanistan* apparently defected to the Taliban, taking over Mazar-i-Sharif into which the Taliban marched a few days later. Attempts to disarm the population and impose religious restrictions led to a popular uprising, forcing them to leave the city again. New forces are now mobilising in the south but developments remain uncertain. Despite no evidence of a major humanitarian crisis, aid agencies which evacuated their international staff are now considering returning. ♦

Training courses

Training Workshop on Humanitarian Relief, Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation, The Hague, the Netherlands 26-31 May

The workshop took place at the Netherlands Institute for International Affairs, and was co-organised with the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam. Targeted at coordinating staff, policy makers and field workers, the course covers knowledge and skills on analysing conflict and the interrelationships among various interest groups; managing logistics, staff and stress; criteria for humanitarian intervention, rapid appraisal, coordination and interpersonal skills in multicultural environments. The cost was Dfl 3,000 (approx. US \$ 1,600) excluding accommodation.

For further information, please contact: Royal Tropical Institute P Box 95001, 1090 HA Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Fax: +31 20 56 88 434 Email: CMO@kit.support.nl, or "Clingendael" Institute, Department of Training and Education, PO Box 93080, 2509 AB The Hague. Fax: + 31 70 328 20 02.

The International Human Rights Training Programme (IHRTP), Québec, Canada, 22 June - 11 July 1997

This three-week course is run by the Canadian Human Rights Foundation (CHRF) which, through its educational activities, seeks to "contribute to the creation of a vibrant community of human rights workers, dedicated to advancing democracy, human development and social justice, in Canada and around the world".

The activities of the Foundation include: an annual *International Human Rights Training Programme* (IHRTP); Regional Training Programmes in Eastern and Central Europe, Asia and Africa; conferences on universal human rights (HR) issues; and publications (thematic essays; conference proceedings; educational materials; newsletter: Speaking About Rights).

The IHRTP is the central activity through which the CHRF fulfills its mission and goals. The IHRTP is an

intermediate level programme which provides an overview of legal, political and administrative aspects of the application of civil, social and economic rights. The course, addressed to “*active staff or volunteer members of human rights organisations*”, brings together 100-130 human rights workers from 35 to 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern and Central Europe, South America, the Caribbean and other regions, as well as from Canada and the United States.

Entry qualifications: applicants will need to:

- be in a position to influence the work of their organisation, at an intermediate level
- have a university degree or equivalent experience
- be proficient in English or French (oral and written)

The IHRTTP curriculum is composed of eight ‘Streams’, combining theory and practical applications:

- (1) Introduction;
- (2) Seeking Common Ground;
- (3) The Global Economy and HR;
- (4) International HR Protection Philosophy, Standards & Tools;
- (5) Institution and Capacity Building for NGOs;
- (6) Popular Education;
- (7) Regional Workshops;
- (8) HR and Sustainable Human Development

For further information, please contact: Yolande Amzalleg, IHRTTP, Canadian Human Rights Foundation, 1425, René-Lévesque Blvd. West, Suite 307, Montreal (Québec) H3G 1T7. Tel: +1 514 954 0382 Fax: +1 514 954 0659 Email: chrhf@vir.com

Towards Peacebuilding: developing new policy and practice in areas of instability and conflict, Birmingham, UK, 7-11 July 1997

For staff of international agencies with advisory or direct responsibility for programme policy and implementation. This residential workshop, organised by *Responding to Conflict* will provide practical models and methods to assist aid agency staff to analyse social and political conflicts, and to integrate effective conflict-handling strategies into their programmes.

Working with Conflict, South Africa, September - December 1997

Also organised by *Responding to Conflict* this is claimed to be a “highly practical, experience-based course for people working in areas of instability and conflict”. Especially suitable for NGO staff, aid workers, those concerned with rights, relief, reconstruction and development the course includes

conflict analysis, group dynamics, negotiation, mediation, trauma, confidence-building, conflict prevention and much else.

A 10 week course, 2 week modules can be taken individually if required. Some scholarships available. Places limited.

Responding to Conflict also offer, on request, local workshops and consultancies in English, French or Spanish and provides opportunities for individuals and organisations to develop new ways of working on conflict.

For more information on both of the above, please contact: Responding to Conflict Programme, Selly Oak Colleges (RRN), 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK. Tel: +44 121 415 5641 Fax: +44 121 415 4119 Email: conflict@waverider.co.uk

The International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance, Dublin, June 29 - July 26 1997

Under the direction of the Centre for International Health and Cooperation, in partnership with the Department of International Health of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the University of Liverpool, and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

Objectives:

1. To establish an internationally recognised basic minimum standard of training which will enable humanitarian workers to function effectively both as individuals and as members of a team in acute and chronic situations of conflict and disaster.
 2. To foster a better understanding of the complex issues involved in humanitarian crises and to enable those who intend to provide help to do so with respect for the human rights and dignity of those affected by such crises.
 3. To promote cooperation and dialogue between international, governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in humanitarian assistance.
 4. To develop an academic framework which will establish and maintain standards, support research, evaluate interventions and identify examples of good practice.
 5. To examine ways in which humanitarian crises may be anticipated and prevented.
 6. To develop an institutional memory that will allow agencies to better learn from the experiences and errors of humanitarian assistance programmes.
- Participants: Individuals, UN and associated organisations, EU, OSCE, OAU, ASEAN, OAS,

Governments, NGOs, voluntary and missionary organisations, military, non-military observers and others who are working or plan to work in humanitarian assistance.

Entry qualifications: University degree, suitable professional qualification or equivalent experience. Fee: IR £3,000 (includes tuition, lecture notes, exam and diploma fee, use of library, computer and sports facilities, and accommodation).

For further information, please contact: Tim O'Dempsey, Department of International Health and Tropical Medicine, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, St Stephen's Close, Dublin 2, Ireland. Tel: +353 1 402 2186 Fax: +353 1 402 2462, or Lucy Hollingworth Tel/fax: +44 1722 337699

Security Training of Trainers, (planned)

InterAction, a US NGO umbrella organisation is preparing a series of five day training workshops on security. The objective is to provide basic security training to 2500 humanitarian aid workers in two years through a training of trainers approach. Curriculum development is underway and the first pilot workshop is planned for December 1997.

For further information, please contact: InterAction, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC, USA. Tel: +1 202 667 8227 Fax: +1 202 6678236 or 667 4131 Email: j.bishop@interaction.org, or Randy Martin at randy@intrescom.org

RedR Training Programme, 1997

Ref: 9710

- a) **Refugees, Agencies And Relief Workers**
Birmingham, 28 June - 3 July
- b) **Security, Communications & Logistics**
Birmingham, 3-6 July
- c) **Managing People and Projects**
Birmingham, 6-9 July

Re: 9711 **Field Construction & Improvised Bridging**, Newmarket, 24-27 July

Ref: 9712 **Hygiene Promotion & Community Mobilisation**, Rutland, 11-14 Sept (with IHE)

Ref: 9714 **Refugees, Agencies and Relief Workers**, Netherlands, 9-14 Oct (with Disaster Relief Agency (DRA), Netherlands)

Ref: 9715 **Mechanical Plant**, Kent, 17-19 Oct

Ref: 9716 **Water Sources**, Bedford, 23-25 Oct

Ref: 9717 **Disease Prevention, Vector Control & Sanitation**, Alfriston, E Sussex, 6-9 Nov

Ref: 9718 **Refugees, Agencies and Relief Workers**, Dublin, Ireland, 24-28 Nov

COSTS: £100/person/day all included. Subsidised places at varying rates available to those without institutional support. Minimum fee £25/person/day. Further details on charging policy available on request. Dates, venues or other details of courses may change.

For further information and an application form, please contact: Caroline Mitchell, Administration Officer-Training RedR, 1 Gt George St, London SW1P 3AA, UK. Tel: (44) 171 233 3116 fx 222 0564;

Conferences

Conference reports

Conference on the Training and Preparation of Military and Civilian Peacekeepers, INCORE (Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity), University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, 13-15 June 1996

A conference hosted by INCORE to coincide with the launch of its report on the Training and Preparation of

Military and Civilian Peacekeepers. An occasional paper, summarising the conference discussion, and the papers presented to the conference are available from the address below. The papers and the conference focused on the strategic implications of changes in the nature of Post-Cold War conflicts and threats to international security for peacekeepers. Peacekeeping organisations (PKOs) increasingly need pre-conflict preventive and post-conflict peace-building elements. However, those actually charged with implementing UN mandates on the ground, and who risk their lives for the mandates, often express the view that their voices are

unheard. At the request of the UN University, INCORE drew up a series of recommendations for improvements in peacekeeper training, based on the opinions and experiences of peacekeepers themselves. The research which fed into these conference papers was therefore based on the vast body of experience which has been accumulated by peacekeepers.

Key recommendations which emerged include:

- Comprehensive and standardised training programmes that take into account the requirements of modern multi-dimensional PKOs.
- Coordination between concerned training institutions – possibly by way of a global database – to build up a pool of trained civilian personnel.
- More sophisticated selection procedures to emphasise the quality of the personnel and their suitability for a particular mission.
- Training programmes that pay increasing attention to the substantive functions to be carried out in the field; normal professional training and experience is insufficient and should be complemented by mission- and function-specific training.

The following conference report and papers are available from INCORE (see below for details):

Summary of Proceedings, edited by Roger MacGinty, ISBN: 1-85923-053-9

Conflict Resolution for Military Peacekeepers, by Gregory Tillett, ISBN: 1-85923-064-4

The Training and Preparation of Peacekeepers: The Military View, by Colm Doyle, Satsh Nambiar, Lars-Eric Wahlgren, ISBN: 1-85923-067-9

Peacekeeping and conflict resolution in contemporary conflict: some relationships considered, by Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham, ISBN: 1-85923-054-7

All are priced £3.50 and may be obtained from INCORE, Aberfoyle House, Northland Road, Londonderry, BT48 7JA, Northern Ireland. Tel: +44 1404 375500 Fax: +44 1504 375510 Email: lyn@incore.ulst.ac.uk Website: <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk>

APRODEV-ECHO Seminar on Gender and Emergencies, Brussels, 4-5 November 1996

The seminar aimed to share experiences of integrating gender perspectives into aid programmes and to produce recommendations to the European Union on practical ways to obtain more gender sensitive emergency aid.

Some of the **key issues** discussed at the seminar focused on gender in the context of:

- **Linkages** between relief, rehabilitation and development.
- **Impact** of humanitarian aid operations and the need for flexibility in dealing with victims: refugee populations are not homogenous communities.
- Aid organisations should plan their responses with a sensitivity to the **differences** in the ways men and women will be affected by external events, and the power imbalances between men and women.
- A gender approach means ensuring participation of **both men and women**.
- Aid agencies may not be able to achieve optimal gender relations, as gender concepts are culturally charged. But aid workers have a role to play to influence mechanisms and **conceptions** that maintain power imbalances or perpetuate sex-stereotypes.
- It may be difficult to combine the logic of emergency aid and gender approaches. **No golden rules** exist, but humanitarian organisations can lay the foundations (attitudes, tools and procedures) for a more gender-aware response. For that, it is important that they go through their own process of gender policy formulation, although existing experience and policies can help.
- The problem is not primarily the lack of guidelines, but of their **implementation** and the importance of sensitising staff and donors and linking gender issues with issues of accountability and efficiency.

Summary of the **recommendations** to ECHO:

1. Need to **work out a strategy and gender policy**, drawing on existing resources and indicating a clear time frame. NGOs are willing to cooperate with ECHO to this end.
2. Need to **monitor activities in a gender-aware way**. This has consequences for ECHO's evaluation activities, and staffing policies.
3. **Expect partners to take gender seriously**:

integrate gender-relevant questions into the Partnership Framework Agreement and its annexes, contracts, reporting requirements, and ECHO's evaluations of humanitarian aid operations. Such questions include: "What gender issues are being dealt with?" "Who has been consulted?" "How has the affected population been involved?" "Which indicators are being used?"

European conference on conflict prevention, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 27-28 February 1997

Organised by the Dutch umbrella-NGO 'National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development' (NCDO), the conference fitted into a longer series of advocacy and public awareness-raising events to promote conflict prevention in European foreign policy. The aim is to make conflict prevention the key of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), (one of the principal pillars of the Maastricht Treaty being reviewed by the EU Intergovernmental Conference). 'Structural stability' and a 'security first' conditionality, are suggested as the encompassing framework to evaluate and weigh up aid, trade and external relationships of the European Union. Uneven development and a loss of legitimacy and good governance risk escalating conflicts of interest into organised violence. Hence, also Europe's development assistance should become subject to considerations of its impact on existing power relationships and the allocation of resources and opportunities within the receiving country.

The conference lasted 2 days. In the first 1.5 days some 300 participants attended joint sessions and thematic workshops. The last half day was a public event in which the Development Ministers of Sweden, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and the EU participated, and which attracted some 1000 members of the public at large. The 'Background Paper' and most of the discussion concentrated on conflict in Africa. The conference concluded with the adoption of an Action Programme.

Despite considerable interest, the conference discussions as well as the background papers and recommendations, appear insufficiently underpinned by sound analysis and are vague on how to operationalise a conflict prevention policy in practice. A number of key issues remained largely unaddressed, such as the dominant role of the US in global conflict management, the relationship between conflict-prevention and the promotion of global free trade and structural adjustment, a balanced role between the international community and more local actors, consistent criteria for international

intervention or how in practice to help restore a legitimate and effective state. Moreover, the relationship between an EU CFSP and the foreign policies of the member states remains open. Most problematic was the partial collapse of a conference on conflict prevention in Africa into a soul-searching over the failure to prevent conflict escalation in the Great Lakes. Questions should be raised whether we should learn conflict prevention only from the failures or also from the relative successes? Equally worrying is the neglect of areas of obvious tension, such as Kenya, Nigeria and Northern Africa? Early warning and early action are unlikely to be forthcoming if all resources and attention are concentrated on 'hot' conflicts only.

The final report "From early warning to early action" (129pp), costs USD 10 (postage included).

For further information, please contact: NCDO at PO Box 18184, 1001 ZB Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Fax: +31 20 550 35 90 or Email: NCDO@knoware.nl

Understanding the Great Lakes Crisis, London, 30 November - 2 December 1996

The report from this international conference held in Nairobi can be obtained from ActionAid, Hamlyn House, Macdonald Road, Archway, London N19 5PG, UK. Tel: +44 171 281 4101 Fax: +44 171 272 0899 Email: mail@actionaid.org.uk Website: www.oneworld.org/actionaid

Forthcoming

Conflict Management and Social Transformation, Bonn, Germany, 15-18 June 1997

The 10th Annual Conference of the International Association for Conflict Management (IACM). Conference fees for non-IACM members range from DM 435 to DM 835 depending on single or shared room accommodation.

For further information and a registration form, please contact: Renate Christaller, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Altensteinstrasse 48 a, D-14195 Berlin, Germany. Fax: +49 30 831 59 85 or Email: renate.christaller@berghof.bshuttle.de

Publications



A time of hope and transformation: Sierra Leone Peace Process reports and reflections, edited by Ed Garcia, *InternationalAlert*, 1 Glyn Street, London, 1997, ISBN: 1-898702-04-7, pp138, Paperback £6.50

In light of recent events in Sierra Leone and the military coup which took place shortly before going to press, effectively putting an end to hopes for the democratic peace process, the title of this report seems sadly misplaced. The report, published just after the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Government and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone on 30 November last year, brings together a number of documents related to the peace process and reflections by International Alert on some of the efforts which eventually led to the signing of the Accord. The report also documents the specific role of International Alert in that process, as a 'non-governmental organisation, 'given the singular opportunity to participate in the peace process from the very start'. Despite the unfortunate timing of this report, it is a comprehensive document and incorporates a useful summary of the background and history to the conflict (appendix 9).

European Community Court of Auditors: Humanitarian Aid from the European Union 1992-1995, Luxembourg, 1997, special report no. 2/97

Between 1992 and 1995, the European Commission's expenditure on humanitarian aid doubled; over the four year period it spent a total of over US\$2 billion making it the world's largest single donor of relief. The effectiveness of this aid is therefore of more than passing interest to relief agencies and more importantly, to its intended beneficiaries.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) was established in late 1991 and the duration of its mandate restricted, in principle, to a period of seven years, after which an in-depth assessment of its performance was planned. The Court of Auditors report, together with the Commission/member state evaluation of ECHO to begin this year, will provide important findings to inform the in-depth assessment.

The auditors started work in mid-1994, and in addition to their usual work of reviewing files and financial statements in Brussels, undertook field work in Angola and the Former Yugoslavia. They also sent a questionnaire to ECHO's partner organisations, 29 of whom replied, many in detail.

The key findings of the Court are that:

- The Commission has disbursed very considerable sums of money under difficult circumstances; many of the difficulties encountered in implementation of Commission-funded projects have been inherent in the complex environments in which aid is delivered and are therefore to some extent beyond its control.
- *The definition of humanitarian aid and therefore of ECHO's mandate remains unclear.* While the regulation on humanitarian aid adopted by the Council of Ministers in June 1996 was felt to provide some clarity in this respect, the lack of coherence in the policies of Member States in terms of defining the scope of humanitarian action means that the Commission continues to use a proliferation of instruments and budget lines to respond to complex emergencies. This was felt to have resulted in a lack of coherence in its response, and complicated coordination both within the Commission and between it and its partners. For example, considerable overlap was found to exist between 'relief' (run largely by ECHO) and 'rehabilitation' assistance, located in DGVIII.
- *The Commission's response to crises was seen to be driven more by financial and administrative criteria than by actual needs on the ground.* Mobilisation of funds to respond to major crises, such as that in Rwanda and Zaire in 1994 was reported to have been hampered by inflexible procedures, while responsibility for the management of food aid has been governed by different rules in different emergencies. In the Former Yugoslavia and Angola, no less than six different budget lines were used to disburse food aid to the different countries.
- *Lack of coherence of Member States' humanitarian response;* in particular, there was found to be a lack of effective coordination on the ground and at headquarters between the Commission and Member States in responding to particular crises. The Court concludes that: "...unless there is a radical change in behaviour, there can be no extension of coordinated action between the European Union and the Member

States because of the lack of adequate commitment on the part of the authorities in the latter”(p24).

- *Lack of consistent definition of coordination between the Commission and the UN.* This was of particular concern in relation to UNHCR and DHA. The Court recommended that a global agreement be concluded with the Secretariat General of the United Nations in order to define concretely the basis for EU-UN coordination on humanitarian issues; this would provide a framework for subsequent agreements with the specialised agencies of the UN.
- *A reactive rather than strategic approach.* The Court found that it was difficult to link funding decisions with a clear process of strategy formulation: rather the Commission was seen to be reactive to the requests of its partner agencies for funds. Global plans, such as that prepared for Azerbaijan were reportedly little more than “a compilation of the requests of NGOs and other organisations” working in the country; however, ECHO subsequently worked to develop a strategy for its involvement in the Transcaucas region and recently produced a draft strategy paper.
- *The lack of strategy within the Commission was seen to be reinforced by the fact that partner organisations were asked to provide primarily quantitative information – such as numbers of beneficiaries, tonnages of food and seeds – to support their requests for funds, rather than having to prove a firm analytical grasp of the context in which they were working and a clear series of objectives. This meant that there was insufficient information available upon which a sound process of appraisal could be built. Lack of staff at headquarters and in the field was seen to be exacerbating the problem; many of ECHO’s key functions were found to be performed by temporary and auxiliary personnel, not by permanent members of staff.*
- *Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs).* The Court welcomed the introduction of FPAs, but said that these off-the shelf agreements between the Commission and its partners, outlining reporting and procurement procedures needed improvement. In particular, they highlighted the consistent focus on administrative procedures rather than clear measures which articulate standards of performance. Developing consistent systems for the definition and monitoring of these standards was seen to be a priority by the Court.

Overall, the report concludes that because of poor monitoring and evaluation procedures it is difficult to measure the impact and effectiveness of the Commission’s humanitarian aid operations. While the spirit of the Commission’s work in this field is acclaimed, in that it supports the Union’s goal of international solidarity, the report makes clear that much needs to be done to improve future performance. The

Court’s work coincided with a number of important initiatives from the Commission and the Council of Ministers designed to strengthen procedures and to facilitate cooperation. These measures are welcomed by the Court, but cautiously so.

The auditors rightly identify a number of key structural issues which pervade the humanitarian system and which block effective humanitarian action. These include major conceptual and philosophical issues regarding the definition of relief and development assistance and the definition of highly complex situations which demand multiple responses. Included too are political issues such as the lack of coherence in the position of Member States as they seek to respond to complex emergencies, often without defining clearly their expectations of different bodies – UN, EC and NGO. Finally, practical issues such as poor management and recruitment of staff, and the operational impact of restrictive financial and administrative procedures are raised. Many, if not most, of these criticisms could equally be levelled at other bilateral and multilateral organisations and even NGOs. Reading the auditors report, one is left with the question: if the European Union, with its collective political muscle and money, can’t confront these issues systematically, who can? If the Court’s recommendations are implemented by the Commission and by Member States, some major steps will have been taken towards increasing the effectiveness of the humanitarian system.

Global IDP Survey: An independent report on Internally Displaced Persons worldwide, Norwegian Refugee Council, Chemin Moïse-Duboile 59, CH-1209 Geneva, Switzerland, Email: idpsurvey@swissonline.ch, 1997

The Global IDP Survey is a major new project of the Norwegian Refugee Council and funded to date by five government donors and several international NGOs. It comprises three main elements: the production of an annual book which analyses, country-by-country, the numbers, context and trends associated with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) worldwide; the production of two interim Newsletters per year designed as briefing documents for donors and aid agencies; and the maintenance of a database and website associated with the project.

The increasing trend toward conflict management and containment has meant that the sanctuary previously offered to those fleeing internal strife and human rights abuses is no longer guaranteed. The result is a drop in

the number of refugees to about 12.5 million worldwide and a corresponding increase in the estimated figure for IDPs, now 25-30 million. As the first independent annual survey on IDPs, the Global IDP Survey will highlight gaps in assistance and protection and offer an in-depth analysis of the institutional and human rights issues that are of increasing concern to the international community. Data will be collected from NGO, UN and academic analysts in 15 regions of the world comprising 64 countries. Although writers will follow a standard format and apply a similar definition of IDP, the research will depend for the most part on secondary sources – academic, aid agency and government reports. As the programme develops, a more precise methodology for the collection of field data will be developed. This is not, however, primarily a statistical exercise; the Survey will also be a tool for advocacy and a discussion forum highlighting the particular problems facing IDPs and the inadequate international response to date.

The first edition of the Global IDP Survey will be published in April 1998. Many of the regional and country specialists have already been identified for the first edition. However, the project aims to build a contact list and the organisers would be pleased to hear from potential writers or agencies willing to contribute to this or future editions of the Survey. The website can be found on <http://web.sol.no:80/nrc-no/idp-survey.htm>

For further information, please contact the Director, Jon Bennett, Global IDP Survey, Fax: +44 1865 769206 Email: jon.bennett@dial.pipex.com

Food and power in Sudan: a critique of humanitarianism, *African Rights*, 11 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1EP, 1997, ISBN: 1-899-477-13-6, pp370, Paperback £14.95 (excl. p&p)

Over the past 15 years, Sudan has suffered a series of famines which have cost thousands of lives. At the root of these famines has been war and extensive violations of human rights. The country has attracted millions of dollars of relief aid and been the subject of numerous humanitarian ‘experiments’, including Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the development of Islamic relief organisations and illicit cross-border operations.

This book analyses the politics of war, famine and aid in the country over the past decades. It places firmly an analysis of relief within a broader framework of human rights and humanitarian law, identifying points where violations of basic humanitarian principles have served to implicate international relief actors in the deepening crisis in the country.

It highlights the lack of mechanisms to ensure accountability of national political and military actors to their populations, cautioning that any peace settlement which fails to bring those guilty of war crimes to account is likely to prove unsustainable. The book argues that a priority in the country is to build a national political framework which maximises the participation of those denied a voice by government and rebel-leaders alike. It calls for a ‘national politics of famine’ as fundamental in building a strategy for famine-prevention.

Like the Rwanda evaluation, this book highlights the lack of accountability of international aid agencies. In keeping with Alex de Waal’s much-publicised criticism of NGO interventions, the authors express dismay that even the most basic information about the impact of extensive relief operations remains unknown. For example, it documents the failure to assess whether mortality and morbidity have improved or deteriorated over the past decade. This lack of information and analysis is both a cause and a consequence of the international system’s incapacity to create effective and neutral humanitarian space in which to work. In this context, major questions are raised about the legitimacy of organisations charged with spending millions of dollars nominally on behalf of war-affected populations.

This book is an important contribution to the literature on human rights, war and relief in Sudan. It complements the OLS Review, published last year, adding to it more detailed analysis of other organisations’ work, and in particular a detailed history of the increasingly important Islamic agencies. It also adds to the growing pile of research and writing on the ethical and political dimensions of relief in war time, and should therefore be of interest to the wider reader.

Prevention and Management of Conflicts. An international directory, *Dutch Centre for Conflict Prevention/National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development*, P.O. Box 18184, 1001 ZB Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Email: NCDO@knoware.nl, 1996, US\$15 or Dfl.25 (excl. p&p)

The first comprehensive worldwide directory of organisations and institutions working in the field of conflict prevention and management. Contains 170 profiles of organisations and institutions including UN and regional ones, but with an emphasis on NGOs and academic institutions worldwide. Has guidelines on how to obtain additional information through networks, directories and the Internet and some general introductory articles. The next update is planned for 1998.

NGOs, States and Donors: too close for comfort?

edited by David Hulme and Michael Edwards, Save the Children Fund, International Political Economy Series, Macmillan Press Ltd., Hampshire, 1997, ISBN: 0-333-66582-1, pp300, Paperback £9.95 (excl. p&p)

A compilation of papers presented to the 1994 international workshop 'NGOs and Development: Performance and Accountability in the New World Order', jointly convened by the Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM) and SCF (UK) in Manchester. Issues of NGO accountability and performance and how these processes have been shaped by changing roles and funding arrangements were covered in 'NGO Performance and Accountability: Beyond the Magic Bullet' (1994). This second publication focuses on the other major theme which emerged from the Manchester workshop – the relationships between NGOs, governments and official donor agencies, and how they in turn affect state-society relations, the future of development cooperation and the interests of poor people. The book draws on presentations and papers of an impressive range and quality of contributors, including academic and NGO perspectives, supported by a range of government funders.

Issues raised include: the danger of NGOs becoming too close to northern donors and implied diminishing responsibility towards developing country states; whether or not NGOs are now increasingly valued by northern donors *because* they no longer ask difficult or radical questions on how to overcome poverty; and the implications of such changes for rebuilding civil society and ensuring the sustainability of assistance programmes.

On the whole, the book focuses on NGO-donor-state relations in countries where the state is an entity to be reckoned with. It is less applicable to NGOs working in more unstable situations, for example where aid may often be delivered in a vacuum of state authority, where the state does not respect obligations in terms of alleviating poverty or hunger or where it is directly implicated in the aggravation of poverty and human rights abuse. It is therefore not written with the humanitarian community specifically in mind, although many of its criticisms are also applicable to the delivery of such assistance.

Conflits en Afrique – analyse des crises et pistes pour une prévention. La communauté internationale: quelles responsabilités?

Report commissioned by 'African regions in crisis', Fondation Roi Baudouin – Médecins sans Frontières, with GRIP, Brussels, 1997, ISBN: 2-87027-657-5, pp292, 155 FF (895FB or approx. £19.50) (English version out soon)

A compilation of chapters brought together by a joint initiative of the Belgian 'Roi Baudouin Foundation' (which seeks to improve peoples' living conditions), and MSF - Belgium, with, as the title indicates, a clear focus on conflict.

The book explores the increasing confusion evident within the international community as to what course of action to follow as many of the 'certainties' of humanitarian assistance are questioned. There is increasing recognition that the end of the Cold War did not signal an end to conflict in Africa and that the Continent's populations face alarming developments increasingly characteristic of today's African conflicts such as the targeting of civilian populations, collapse of national structures, and child conscription – evidence which points to the failure not only of democracy, but also of aid. Yet this contrasts with the knowledge that many long-term projects have been successfully undertaken with INGO support to local populations.

In an effort to address such confusion and on the basis that the best way to improve solidarity with populations in distress is to improve understanding of the root causes of conflict, an independent commission was set up under the aegis of the 'Roi Baudouin Foundation' including academics, NGO personnel, military, media and government representatives. The commission's objective was to pit the more academic interpretations of conflicts 'on the ground' against the views of field personnel, with the aim of drawing up a more practically-oriented, realistic set of recommendations. This book is the result of such a coming together of views and the authors hope the recommendations for action which stem from the analysis will break through much of the rhetoric and enable practical action to be taken.

The book offers a number of useful field perspectives, drawing on case study material from Namibia, Angola, Rwanda and Kenya, as well as being well illustrated by use of a number of imaginative diagrams.

Oxford Development Studies. Special issue on War, Economy and Society, (Volume 25, Number 1), February 1997, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, 21 St Giles, Oxford, pp144, ISSN: 1360-0818

Since 1994, a team at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford has been researching the working of economies during conflict. This special issue contains some of their findings. The work is motivated by the belief that appropriate policy decisions can reduce the human and economic costs of war, and even contribute to the ending of conflict.

Experiences of conflict around the world are drawn upon to explore the economic and social consequences of war. A paper by Frances Stewart *et al* finds divergent behaviour among conflict-affected countries in many areas, with some countries better able to protect themselves from economic and social costs than others. A paper by FitzGerald suggests that the problems of war are often exacerbated by misguided policies on the part of both national governments and aid agencies, based on the concepts of structural adjustment and humanitarian relief designed for use in peacetime. David Keen examines the rational nature of warfare, while David Turton looks at the relationship between ethnicity and war. Meghan O'Sullivan considers policy options open to some governments during times of strife and concludes that the opportunities for constructive policy making during wartime are greater than is commonly thought. The final paper by DiAddario examines and proposes improvements to the model used by the UN to measure the GDP loss from war in the case of Nicaragua.

Afghanistan: Coordination in a Fragmented State, Donini, A., Dudley, E., and Ockwell, R., 1996, *Lessons Learned Unit, DHA, UN, Room S - 3600, New York, NY 10017, Fax (212) 963-1313, pp69, Paperback, no charge*

This critical review of UN coordination in Afghanistan between 1988-1996, focuses on UNOCA (UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance) subsequently renamed, and given a reduced mandate, as UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance) in 1993. The change in mandate introduced an artificial and practically untenable distinction between humanitarian and rehabilitation/development programmes, and led to the double track coordination of DHA and its Consolidated Appeal and UNDP with its Rehabilitation Steering Committee. One of the recommendations of the report is for an integrated

UN leadership at national and regional level. The study reflects on managed versus consensual coordination, and the roles of information exchange, reflected analysis and leadership in the coordination process, and presents a formal modelling of coordination mechanisms of wider relevance. The report also pursues an important reflection on implementation strategies in a country experiencing an 'institutional emergency' where state institutions are weak or have collapsed. In such a setting, the UN, by default, takes on some functions of government, or a 'Ministry of Planning in waiting'. It argues that the strategy of bypassing government, promoting Afghan NGOs to counterbalance INGOs which are stated to have been very 'politicised', and seeking local counterparts such as commanders or issue-specific 'shura' councils should be reflected on much more thoroughly, and in a long term perspective. The social visions that inform the 'social engineering' of international agencies should be more articulated. The alleged failure to analyse and understand the finer power relationships, and the roles and potential of the commercial sector, means that the socio-economic impact of programmes cannot be properly assessed. The failure also to establish basic humanitarian ground rules early on, makes it all the harder to take a credible stance towards ethical issues such as opium poppy cultivation and the suppression of women's rights under Taliban rule. The report finally makes a number of specific recommendations to build up institutional memory within the UN and across country experiences.

Although the report does not attempt to discuss the quality and effectiveness of programmes, there is a slight tendency to highlight achievements of UNOCA/UNOCHA. Rather surprisingly, no reference is made to the (well documented) NGO coordination efforts and mechanisms such as ACBAR (Peshawar) and SWABAC (Quetta) which seems relevant to the topic, or to ICRC's strategy of impartiality and 'humanitarian consensus' prior to and following the arrival of UNOCA.

Rich in reflection however, this report is a valuable contribution to a growing literature on UN and NGO coordination which includes:

- Bennett, J. (1994) *NGO coordination at field level*, ICVA Geneva
- Bennett, J. (1995) *Meeting needs*, ICVA-Earthscan, Geneva/London
- Borton, J. (1996) *An account of coordination mechanisms for humanitarian assistance during the international response to the 1994 crisis in Rwanda*, Sophia Univ./ODI, Tokyo-London
- Donini, A. (1996) *The Policies of Mercy, UN Coordination in Afghanistan, Mozambique and Rwanda*,

Occasional Paper no. 22, Watson Institute, Brown Univ. Providence

Whitman, J. and Pocock, D. (1996) *After Rwanda: Coordination of UN humanitarian assistance*, Macmillan, London.

NGO Handbook '97. Practical information for development and emergency aid NGOs in the European Union, *Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union, contact Mrs. D. Thiebout, NGO Liaison Committee, 10 Square Ambiorix, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, Fax : +32 (0) 2-732 19 34 or 735 09 51 Email: sec@clong.be, 1997, pp283, Paperback Bfr. 780 (approx. 20 ECU or £14), available in English or French*

The latest update of this valuable reference book contains a detailed presentation of the Liaison Committee (set up in 1976) with a summary of its evaluation. VOICE (Voluntary Agencies in Cooperation in Emergencies, set up in 1992) as a subgroup within the LCDN, is dealt with in a separate section, while a brief note is provided on 38 other European NGO networks. The publication further covers the European Institutions (Commission and Parliament), with organisational charts, contact offices and information on the Internet, EU cooperation policies, EU funds accessible to NGOs and sectoral and geographical budget lines. It concludes with the list and contact references of all LCDN member organisations.

Crisis and Hope in Africa, *John Prendergast, Inter-Agency Group, Center of Concern (may be obtained from CAFOD), London, 1996, pp135, Paperback £5.99 (excl. p&p)*

Frontline Diplomacy: Humanitarian aid and conflict in Africa, *John Prendergast, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1996, ISBN 1-55587-696-X, pp164, Paperback £10.95*

Crisis Response: Humanitarian Band-Aids in Sudan and Somalia, *John Prendergast, Pluto Press, London-Chicago, 1997, ISBN: 0-7453-1155-5, pp172, Paperback £12.99*

The three publications underline once again the extraordinary impact Africa has on thinking on development and humanitarian assistance. *Crisis and Hope in Africa* offers a fairly standard overview of current trends and issues in aid organisations' engagement with Africa, and is written for a broader audience. Jointly produced by a number of Catholic aid agencies, its aim is to counter the negative portrayal of Africa in a media focusing on

crises. The first chapters provide a brief but more structural overview of complex emergencies that affect the continent, followed by the crisis of development, the environment and demography and of governance. The second part of the book looks at the myriad positive events and developments, and emphasises the importance of people-centred policies in the context of: the environment, gender, food security, social safety nets, small scale agriculture, local capacity building, debt, and internal regional markets. Although valuable for development education, the book does not escape the generalising approach to Africa that is not the practice for Asia or Latin America and would not hold for e.g. Europe. It has a certain bias towards Anglophone Africa and does not, for example, address the role and presence of Islam in the developmental and crisis situations in that continent. Somewhat disappointingly the author does not address the questions of an 'African' culture and democracy with more insight than is usually heard in rhetorical statements at international conferences. Stating that 'communalism' was a key element of pre-colonial African culture (p.11) reflects more a rather Western 'imagined Africa' than a detailed historical understanding. It also begs the question of the demise of communalism in e.g. Europe? Finally, whereas the first chapters on crisis paint a macro-picture of failure and destruction, the subsequent ones essentially highlight constructive work at local level. One is left wondering whether the balance of these efforts is 'marginally positive at local level but structurally irrelevant'?

By contrast, the other publications emanate from the Horn of Africa Project at the Centre of Concern in Washington, and implicitly relate to the wider US initiative on the 'Greater Horn' that includes the Great Lakes region. *Frontline Diplomacy* is an excellent and up-to-date discussion of the problems of humanitarian aid in conflict situations. Based on field research and many interviews with field workers, and illustrated with many specific cases, it refreshingly discusses the dilemmas from an operational point of view. Even though the examples do not cover complex emergencies outside Africa, or even in North- and West-Africa, its presentation of the ways in which aid becomes part of the dynamics of conflict, ways of reducing its harmful effects, the question of humanitarian principles and codes of conduct, and the relationships between human rights work and humanitarianism, should make it standard reading for professionals and newcomers to the field alike. The concluding chapters discuss principles and examples of how aid can positively contribute to longer term conflict-prevention and peace building.

Crisis Response offers a series of more in-depth essays on Sudan and Somalia. Particular attention is paid to the

way the 'humanitarian band-aid' paradigm, as epitomised by Operation Lifeline Sudan and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia for a long time ignored or misunderstood the local level political dynamics. As a consequence well meant humanitarianism manipulated in military and political strategies and eventually exacerbated existing tensions and conflicts. A plea is made for more attention to rehabilitative approaches to aid, a strengthening of local capacity and an emphasis on human rights, together with more purposeful concerted action at international level. This requires a longer term strategy that is informed by an in-depth understanding of the local context. Contextualised and looked at from within, the meaning of culture and democracy in two African societies here is dealt with much more authentically and convincingly than in *Crisis and Hope*. A concluding chapter looks at lessons learned and inquires into the relationship between public welfare provision and mass mobilisation. The very different approaches of the EPLF in Eritrea and the TPLF in Tigray are highlighted as an alternative paradigm. A valuable examination of ground breaking experiences with crisis response for which the Horn has often been the arena.

War and Humanitarian Action in Chechnya,

Hansen, G. and Seely, R., 1996, Thomas Watson Jr. Inst., Box 1970 Brown University, Providence, USA, Tel: +1 401 863 2809 Fax: +1 401 863 1270, RI 02912 Occasional Paper no. 26, pp106, Paperback

The report provides an analysis of the background to the conflict in Chechnya, and the major developments during the war from 1994 till the summer of 1996. This conflict is characterised as a war 'without humanitarian pretensions' in which civilians were used in the civilian strategies of both sides and often targeted esp. by the various Russian forces. Lack of understanding of humanitarian principles and suspicion of political partiality, combined with banditry and organised crime typically impeded access and created a very insecure environment for humanitarian agencies to work in. Consequently the humanitarian effort has concentrated on the periphery, among the refugees in Ingushetia and Dagestan, rather than in Grozny and Chechnya itself, where need was greatest. Striking in the Chechnya conflict has been the muted response of the international community whose interest in securing Russian cooperation on wider political issues prevented it from exercising pressure on Russia to honour the human

rights and humanitarian treaties to which it is a signatory. As a result, the OSCE observer mission had little hope of achieving its mandate, while the UN issued appeals for assistance in the periphery, omitting Chechnya until January 1997 (when the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for January-December 1997 was published), thereby failing decisively in its humanitarian and protection mandate. NGOs in turn are advised to devote more effort to disseminating humanitarian principles and strengthening local capacity.

Minefields in their Hearts: The Mental Health of Children in War and Communal Violence,

edited by Roberta Apfel and Bennett Simon, Yale University Press, London, 1996, ISBN: 0-300-06570-1, pp244, Hardback £22.50

In this book, 20 mental health professionals – including psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers – contribute their knowledge and experience of working with children exposed to war and violence. 12 chapters address the ethics involved in working with children in war zones, children's development under circumstances of war or violence, post-traumatic stress disorder and other stress reactions, refugee children, "survivor guilt", interventions and treatments, and the emotional health of the 'caretakers'. The contributors draw upon case studies of war in Kuwait, of a programme involving children of Holocaust survivors and children of Nazi perpetrators, and of the Child Development-Community Policing Programme in New Haven, US.

The book is quite technical in tone, and is not immediately accessible to a non-specialist audience; however, the authors' findings are the result of extensive research and consultation with individuals and children living and working in situations of conflict and there is considerable case study material. However, the book does raise the issue, which over the past few years has become a point of contention in the field, of whether western psychiatric and psychological training and therefore the symptoms it uses to diagnose trauma in populations affected by conflict, are applicable. A number of commentators from within the field, such as Derek Summerfield in his contribution to the *RRN Network Paper* series (NP 14 on the Impact of War and Atrocity on Psycho Social etc) reject such an approach in favour of a more social-development, community based ones in treating victims of conflict and atrocity.

Letters



Please send us your comments on our publications: omissions, corrections, additions, views or just encouragement!

Letter to James Darcy regarding his recent *RRN Network Paper*, '**Human rights and international legal standards: what relief workers need to know**' (February 1997):

Dear Sir,

I read with interest your publication on Human Rights and International Legal Standards. I was surprised however not see a mention in the table of contents (and elsewhere) of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The treatment of women and how legal standards do or do not ensure that measures are taken to ensure equitable treatment and outcome, is important. This is especially so in periods during and after conflict.

Faithfully,

Francesco Cook
Aid Management Division
Development Cooperation Directorate
O.E.C.D.

Dear Francesco,

Thank you for your letter and comment in respect of the omission of CEDAW from the discussion of human rights and international legal standards in my recent contribution to the RRN Network Paper series (*RRN Network Paper 19*, February 1997). Due to time and space limitations, it was not possible to do justice to the many provisions that make up the legal framework of human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law. Within Oxfam however, I am undertaking a more detailed study of these provisions and how to relate them to the work of humanitarian agencies in conflict situations and will be taking a more comprehensive look at the range of provisions available. This said however, it is my belief that CEDAW does not offer *extra* protection to women in conflict situations, over and above that which is more specifically spelled out in other instruments.

Sincerely,

James Darcy
Emergencies Coordinator for Asia
Oxfam UK/I

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WorldWideWeb: the RRN Home Page can currently be accessed on <http://www.oneworld.org/odi/index.html>, featuring a directory offering direct access to over 300 sites relating to complex political emergencies and natural disasters. This RRN site will shortly be updated to include a copy of each Newsletter, abstracts of all RRN publications and a publications list and order form.

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(as of May 1997)

RRN Network Papers

(£5.00 per copy excluding postage and packing)

1 *MSF-CIS (Celula Inter-Secções), Mozambique: A Data Collecting System Focused on Food Security and Population Movements* by Tine Dusauchoit (March 1994)

2 *Responding to the 1991/92 Drought in Zambia: The Programme to Prevent Malnutrition (PPM)* by Derrina Mukupo (March 1994)

3 *An Account of Relief Operations in Bosnia* by Mark Duffield (March 1994)

4 *Bad Borders Make Bad Neighbours - The Political Economy of Relief and Rehabilitation in the Somali Region 5, Eastern Ethiopia* by Koenraad Van Brabant (September 1994)

5 *Advancing Preventive Diplomacy in a Post-Cold War Era: Suggested Roles for Governments and NGOs* by Kumar Rupesinghe (September 1994)

6 *The Rwandan Refugee Crisis in Tanzania: Initial Successes and Failures in Food Assistance* by Susanne Jaspars (September 1994)

7 *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* (September 1994)

9 *Development in Conflict: The Experience of ACORD in Uganda, Sudan, Mali and Angola* by ACORD (April 1995)

10 *Room for Improvement: the Management and Support of Relief Workers* by Rebecca Macnair (September 1995)

11 *Cash-for-Work and Food Insecurity in Koisha, Southern Ethiopia* by Penny Jenden (September 1995)

12 *Dilemmas of 'Post'-Conflict Transition: Lessons from the Health Sector* by Joanna Macrae (September 1995)

13 *Getting On-Line in Emergencies: A Guide and Directory to the Internet for Agencies involved in Relief and Rehabilitation* by Luke Aris, Peter Gee and Mark Perkins (February 1996)

14 *The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations: Basic Principles for NGO Interventions*

and a Critique of Psychosocial Trauma Projects by Derek Summerfield (April 1996)

15 *Cost-effectiveness Analysis: A Useful Tool for the Assessment and Evaluation of Relief Operations?* by Alistair Hallam (April 1996)

16 *The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda: Study III Main Findings and Recommendations* (June 1996)

17 *Monetisation: Linkages to Food Security?* by Jindra Cekan, Amy MacNeil and Steve Loegering (November 1996)

18 *Beyond Working in Conflict: Understanding Conflict and Building Peace (The CODEP Workshop Report)* by Jon Bennett and Mary Kayitesi Blewitt (November 1996)

19 *Human Rights and International Legal Standards: What Do Relief Workers Need to Know?* by James Darcy (February 1997)

20 *People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel* (February 1997)

21 *Promoting Humanitarian Principles: the Southern Sudan Experience* by Iain Levine (May 1997)

22 *The War Economy in Liberia: a Political Analysis* by Philippa Atkinson (May 1997)

RRN Good Practice Reviews

(£10.00 per copy excluding postage and packing)

1. *Water and Sanitation in Emergencies* by Andrew Chalinder (June 1994)

2. *Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programmes* by Jeremy Shoham (December 1994)

3. *General Food Distribution in Emergencies: from Nutritional Needs to Political Priorities* by Susanne Jaspars and Helen Young (January 1996)

4. *Seed Provision During and After Emergencies* by the ODI Seeds and Biodiversity Programme (December 1996)

5. *Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations in Emergency Operations: Registration and its Alternatives* by John Telford (forthcoming 1997)

And Finally...

The RRN Team

The RRN forms part of a wider group within ODI focusing on research into and evaluation of humanitarian policy – the **HUMANITARIAN POLICY PROGRAMME**.

Laura Gibbons, **RRN Coordinator**.

Koenraad Van Brabant, **RRN Policy and Development Officer**.

Nathalie Shellard, **RRN Administrator**. Sadly for the RRN, but no doubt very happily for Marc and Andrew Shellard, Nathalie has decided not to return to the post of RRN Administrator after her maternity leave. She will leave a big gap and her loyalty to the RRN and unique and colourful use of her native ‘Toulousain’ French will be hard to replace.

Sophie Peace, acting **RRN Administrator**. Sophie, who mastered several months of considerable change in the work of the RRN, not to mention a fundamental redesign of our publications, will complete her 9 months maternity replacement for Nathalie at the beginning of September, to begin a year of post-graduate study at theological college, and will be greatly missed.

John Borton, **Head of the Humanitarian Policy Programme**.

Joanna Macrae, **Research Fellow**.

Philippa Atkinson, **RRN Regional Representative**, West Africa.



Vacancy:
RRN Administrator, ODI

We are now looking to fill the post of RRN Administrator, based at the ODI in London, starting at the beginning of September.

The RRN Administrator is often the first point of contact for the RRN and is responsible for the design, production and dissemination of RRN publications. Principal tasks of the Administrator include:

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- overall support to the RRN team
- office systems maintenance

Expressions of interest in the post and requests for a detailed job description and application form should be directed to *Sheila Field, Senior Executive Assistant* at the address below:

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RRN

Background

The Relief and Rehabilitation Network was conceived in 1992 and launched in 1994 as a mechanism for professional information exchange in the expanding field of humanitarian aid. The need for such a mechanism was identified in the course of research undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on the changing role of NGOs in relief and rehabilitation operations, and was developed in consultation with other Networks operated within ODI. Since April 1994, the RRN has produced publications in three different formats, in French and English: Good Practice Reviews, Network Papers and Newsletters. The RRN is now in its second three-year phase (1996-1999), supported by four new donors – DANIDA, ECHO, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland and the Department for International Development, UK. Over the three year phase, the RRN will seek to expand its reach and relevance amongst humanitarian agency personnel and to further promote good practice.

Objective

To improve aid policy and practice as it is applied in complex political emergencies.

Purpose

To contribute to individual and institutional learning by encouraging the exchange and dissemination of information relevant to the professional development of those engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Activities

To commission, publish and disseminate analysis and reflection on issues of good practice in policy and programming in humanitarian operations, primarily in the form of written publications, in both French and English.

Target audience

Individuals and organisations actively engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance at national and international, field-based and head office level in the 'North' and 'South'.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Network is supported by:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DANIDA

ECHO

Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland

Department for International
Development (NEW LOGO!)