RELIEF AND REHABILITATION NETWORK

RRN
newsletter

Improving aid policy and practice in complex political emergencies

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Editorial

Many events are currently announced as being the last of this millennium, and it is no different for the RRN Newsletter. The 20th century has brought immense change to everyone's lives everywhere, and of course it has also been very important for the evolution of the sense of 'humanity' which underpins humanitarian action. Awarding the last Nobel Prize of the century to MSF may be seen as a conscious homage not only to MSF but to all those who have worked immensely hard, and sometimes sacrificed their lives, to preserve humanity in what has been a very violent century.

The decade of the 1990s has also been of great significance for humanitarian action. The International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction has ended with a seemingly unstoppable wave of earthquakes, cyclones and floods that has put natural disasters high on the agenda once again. The initial hopes for a better 'new world order' after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 have given way to frustration as a number of scenarios have unfolded. These have included: the proliferation of unstructured civil wars; the decline in funding of humanitarian responses in the mid-90s; out of control proliferation of NGOs, followed by new actors on the humanitarian scene (notably the military and private sector companies); the tensions created as the uncritical and uncriticised 'white knight' image of aid workers has given way to accusations that humanitarian action is doing more harm than good, and may be prolonging war; the fact that relief workers have been told to act more 'developmentally' whereas development agencies have been told to be more 'conflict-sensitive'; the challenge to long-held principles of neutrality and non-political positioning as humanitarian action has come to be seen as a necessary tool of conflict management.

At the same time NGOs have organised globally and successfully to obtain an international ban on landmines. They are increasingly working together on small arms control, and are beginning to build alliances to look critically at the role of international business in sustaining war economies.

The RRN has reported on these and other topics, and intends to continue doing so in ever better and more relevant ways. This last Newsletter of the millennium has contributions grouped around a number of major themes: coordination; protection; self-determination, notably through 'autonomy'; the boundaries of 'humanitarian action'; and evaluation as a learning tool.

This year has seen the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, and new momentum is being generated around practical protection for non-combatants. In February 1999, for example, an Inter-Agency Expert Consultation on Protected Areas was organised by OCHA with the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies; in March, UNHCR convened a meeting with key international humanitarian assistance

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and human rights agencies to discuss measures to strengthen field protection; in September an ICRC-commissioned global consultation on the rules to limit violence in warfare was concluded and reached over 20,000 people; in that same month the UN Secretary General presented a report to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Welcome as this is, the challenge remains to translate intent into effective practice pro-actively and preventively, and not only reactively after people have been abused and displaced. Indeed, Kofi Annan rightly stresses that 'physical security often needs to be assured before legal protection'.

The assertive international interventions over Kosovo and East Timor give the impression that the shameful passivity displayed at the time of the Rwandan genocide has been overcome. This hope, however, is dampened by feet-dragging over the growing humanitarian and protection crisis in Chechnya as well as the lack of international interest in the tragedy that once again engulfs Angola, where over two million people are in danger. The UN operation in Kosovo also raises deeper political problems because identity based conflicts and related protection challenges cannot escape the question of self-determination and what political shape that takes. The UNMIK operation deals with Kosovo as a 'protectorate' in all but name – a situation not unfamiliar for the earlier League of Nations, but unprecedented for the UN. Strictly speaking, the UN recognises Kosovo as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but in Serbia, Sri Lanka and China alike, central governments see greater 'autonomy' as a step towards secession.

The 1990s has been a decade of creation of new states, which recalls the decolonisation era of the 1950s and 1960s. Some new states, such as Slovakia, Macedonia and Eritrea, came into being peacefully.

The creation of others like Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine and East Timor generated violence. Still others, like Chechnya and Somaliland, declared independence but are not internationally recognised. The people of Aceh, on the tip of Sumatra in Indonesia, now also clamour for independence, whereas Tibetans who only want substantive autonomy through peaceful means get no political support. Can 'realpolitik' alone explain why one group of people gets greater scope for self-determination than others? If humanitarianism has to become more principled, what about international politics?

Conflict is inevitably political, and international intervention to provide assistance and protection and to try and create a sustainable peace inevitably gets entangled with these politics. As conflict management and peace-building become more urgent, more and more has been loaded onto the humanitarian agenda. Some see this as a positive and necessary development, others – conscious of the gap between rhetorical ambition and practical achievement – see it as problematic and call for a return to basics. The news section and a series of book reviews capture some of this debate, with special reference to the Netherlands and the UK.

Finally, the humanitarian sector continues to be criticised and to criticise itself – not in the least over the Kosovo crisis – for repeating the same mistakes and for failing to learn. Recent years have brought a renewed interest in evaluation, not only as a tool for accountability but also for organisational and institutional learning. This is a positive development, but the proliferation of uncoordinated evaluation exercises, such as those planned for Kosovo, go against the admitted value of a system-wide and multi-donor evaluation as carried out in 1995 for the Rwandan crisis. Why is it so difficult to learn?

RRN Network Paper 31 **The Impact of Economic Sanctions on Health and Well-being** by Richard Garfield

This paper reviews the impact of trade embargoes on health, health services and food security drawing on data available from Cuba, Haiti and Iraq. The argument is made that the impact of trade embargoes encompasses much more than restrictions on the availability of medicine. The case studies also suggest that mothers and children are not necessarily the only vulnerable group, and that studying changes in the health and mortality of under fives is more indicative than those of infants under one year old. The examples of Cuba and Iraq also highlight the importance of strengthening health monitoring systems, and of reforming health policy towards focused public health measures to maximise the use of scarce resources and stimulate preventive measures. However, trade embargoes cause macroeconomic shocks and economic and social disruption on a scale that cannot be mitigated by humanitarian aid, and which affects the well-being of a population beyond their state of health.

Three prerequisites for effective humanitarian advocacy are, therefore, reliability of data, integrity of the source and a credible link between the observed outcomes and the existing sanctions regime. The last section of the paper critically examines the current practice of measuring health impacts of sanctions, with particular emphasis on the case of Iraq. It identifies persistent weaknesses and suggests steps for improvement in future humanitarian assessments. Improved practice will require:
1. A better assessment of vulnerabilities but also of existing strengths.
2. More valid indicators and appropriate methods to measure the impact of sanctions on vulnerable groups.
3. More potent advocacy that clearly shows how vulnerable populations have been affected and what needs to be done to achieve better outcomes rather than more inputs (underpinned by points 1 and 2).

Kosovo: Drawing Lessons from a Disaster

Francois Grunewald and Veronique de Geoffroy, Groupe URD, Lyons, France

The earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan and the crisis in East Timor should not distract from evaluating how the latest Balkan crisis has been managed. Two issues stand out: the weakness of the international aid community's early warning system, which was prepared neither for the flight nor rapid return of the Kosovars, and the changes taking place in the humanitarian landscape. Indeed new actors, notably the army and the business community (sometimes acting in symbiosis) are filling in the gaps in relief and reconstruction left by the traditional aid providers. This raises ethical questions and creates new practical problems in the already complex institutional equations at field level.

The military option and its 'no NATO casualties' approach is itself a major subject that cannot be treated here. But the post-mortem of the international response to Kosovo raises other questions. For example, the confusion of roles between civilian and military actors. This is brought about by the desire of NATO member states to legitimise their action in the eye of public opinion. Their armies need images of a 'clean', technological war and of positive action: what better than the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. The argument used has been that of the superior logistical capacity of the military which therefore was better placed to respond. An evaluation of this must consider questions of principle as much as of operational effectiveness and efficiency.

The Impact on Albania

In this type of operation, coordination between actors is essential. But when the intervention of civil and military, national and international actors is driven, in reality, by a predominantly bilateral approach there are bound to be contradictions. An intervention that on the surface is multilateral but that in fact promotes national interests through the massive deployment of national army units (visibility of national action; a hoped for return-on-investment through business contracts) undermines the nature and character itself of a 'united nations' response. UNHCR has been strongly criticised for its weak management at the beginning of the crisis. But establishing a 'French camp' here, an 'American camp' there and a 'German' one further up the road renders all coordination impossible. It also generated an at times absurd competition of which the Albanian countryside still shows traces. UNHCR could legitimately throw the ball back to the major donors thus: why did you not respond to our urgent appeal of December 1998 which would have allowed for better preparation in case of an emergency?

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In Albania, over 60 per cent of refugees were hosted by Albanian families, yet many camps were constructed by the military or by expensive private business companies in anticipation of a larger influx that never took place. And what further bad luck for the camp constructors when the Kosovar refugees returned more quickly than anticipated! Between April and June 1999 the real humanitarian priorities could better have been addressed by supporting the Kosovars and their Albanian host families rather than by the construction of camps. But this would have required a more complex and refined response, less visible and less 'media-friendly', which would have been difficult to conceive. Such an approach would demand creativity and flexibility rather than heavy transport facilities and grand logistics.

As with the multi-donor Rwanda evaluation of 1996, it is once again necessary to question critically the proclaimed logistical efficiency of the army. What is its real cost? For every soldier that digs a latrine, for example, the number of additional personnel to uphold the chain of command and provide security is considerable. Contrary to the actions of NGOs, which have learned to work with limited resources, military logistics consumes resources with great appetite. In addition, humanitarian aid agencies have operated with much greater financial transparency for some years now, but when will we be told the cost of the allied shelter operation – essential information for any evaluation? This is not a cynical question given that there are increasing humanitarian needs to diminishing resources.

There is also the aberration of international NGOs pushing aside local NGOs, only to be pushed aside themselves by the so-called international military contingents. In Albania, the international community's rush to the refugees resulted in little consultation with local actors who were keen to collaborate and who had started to mobilise before the failure of the Rambouillet talks. In such a fragile society, where free association is still very much in its infancy after decades of authoritarian rule by Henver Hoxja, there was a major opportunity to build capacity in civil society; a missed opportunity. In addition, most humanitarian agencies very quickly left Albania for Kosovo; the NGOs, too, still have a lot to learn.

Added Tragedy in Kosovo

The need to accelerate preparedness for the autumn and winter in Kosovo was apparent last April (1999). Months later the international community is still far from providing its target of adequate winter shelter, and the

Kosovan intervention is marred by similar difficulties to those experienced in Albania. First of all, non-fulfilled promises of aid have delayed the dynamics of reconstruction. Many returnees reported in September that if international actors had been forthcoming in their promises they would already have rebuilt their winter shelter – relying on the extraordinary inventiveness that has aided their survival since 1989. Under present circumstances the first autumn rain has found them taking cover under plastic sheeting. Here, too, the carving up of Kosovo into a 'German',

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'French', 'Italian', 'American' and 'British' zone has facilitated the creation of 'bilateral zones of concentration' which visibly affect the deployment of the military, of NGOs, of private enterprise and of bilateral donor field representatives. Under such a set up, maintaining coherent international action and a spirit of 'multilateralism' – so vital for a divided and bruised Kosovo – has proved a lost cause from the beginning.

The structure set up by the UN is itself badly affected by lack of internal coherence between its 'four pillars' (emergency aid, civil administration, justice and elections, and reconstruction), and by the competition between UN agencies and different departments of the European Commission. In addition, the emergency agencies, many of which are aware of the importance of positioning themselves in the rehabilitation market, wonder whether it is most opportune to seek funding from ECHO or from the European Reconstruction agency. Surprisingly, the latter has established itself in Saloniki, in Greece, and not in or near Kosovo (a strange gift to the Greeks from the European taxpayers). One cannot but wonder whether its programmes will be affected by the same distortions and prejudices that have so often characterised the EC's technical assistance programmes for Ethiopia and the former Soviet republics.

The armies, on their side, have learned the lessons from Bosnia (we are told). Presumably this also refers to the practice of private profit enterprises which have positioned themselves for a share of the reconstruction pie through the placement of reservist troops, often without appropriate experience for this type of context, in various administrations including the UN and EC. Are we moving toward a totally distorted game of 'getting marketshare' wherein national economic interests take precedence over the real reconstruction needs of a country? The spirit of true humanitarianism feels very distant.

In Summary

Waging a war without NATO casualties because bombs are dropped from high altitude, undefeated troops because the enemy is targeted through monitors, and by the picture of a soldier distributing humanitarian aid or of a brigade rebuilding houses, make better marketing images for the military than any other action. But is this what taxpayers are asked to maintain an army for? Or is it that Western armies are lost in a world without classical wars and clashes of ideology, looking for a new justification for their existence and new training grounds safely removed from the dangers of the front?

On the other hand we should not naively be against the military. The evaluation of the response to Hurricane Mitch in Central America demonstrated the crucial role that military experts and civil defence units played in providing relief at the moment of most acute emergency. Similarly, police people have shown their usefulness in the creation of new justice and law and order institutions in other countries and regions. From the Balkans to East Timor, maintaining law and order and providing security and protection for

Are we moving toward a totally distorted game of 'getting marketshare' wherein national economic interests take precedence over the real reconstruction needs of a country? The spirit of true humanitarianism feels very distant.

civilian populations are fundamental services that are way out of the competency of humanitarian agencies. It is there that the military have a role to play.

NGOs feel threatened by these developments. So too do other humanitarian actors like the Red Cross and UNHCR. These organisations too are setting out to evaluate the international management of the Kosovo crisis. They too are concerned about the eroding effect these national games, with armies and private business companies, have had on one of the positive attributes of humanity: non-politically motivated help to those in need. Responses to Afghanistan, East Timor, Sierra Leone and Kosovo have been selective and unequal. Should we, confronted by these geo-strategic and economic considerations, dismiss our ethical imperatives – those that are the long-term guarantors of the purpose and acceptability of humanitarian action. Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross, certainly turns in his grave.

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NATO's Strategic Concept

NATO's 50th anniversary in April would have gone largely unnoticed had it not been for the fact that, at the time, NATO was involved in Operation Allied Force, a bombing campaign against Serbia to stop the repression in Kosovo that had generated fierce public debate, including in NATO member states. Those supporting NATO action pointed to a decade of aggressive Serb nationalism, the intransigency of Milosevic's regime, and the need to protect the rights of the Albanian Kosovars. Those criticising it did so on the grounds that NATO's action had not been authorised by the UN Security Council, that it was an 'aggressive' act against a sovereign state, and that the bombing did not limit itself to military targets but destroyed Serbia's economic infrastructure, causing serious civilian casualties in the process. Simmering under the surface were other issues: had all diplomatic means been truly exhausted before the bombing started. Did the Kosovar's not suffer greater repression and loss than if the Kosovo Verification Mission had been reinforced. Was the use of force justified and effective in obtaining compliance with international norms of good behaviour?

There are no easy answers, but one thing is clear: conflict prevention and management have always been the justification for NATO's existence, but with its more prominent involvement in the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts NATO is appearing as a new player on the humanitarian scene, and bringing with it a new dimension to 'peace-support operations'.

The end of the cold war has changed the global strategic landscape, and these changes have been reflected in NATO's strategic concepts of 1991 and 1999. Key components of the 1999 Strategic Concept (www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm) are: a broad security concept; a Euro-Atlantic focus; collaboration with other like-minded international organisations; dialogue and 'partnership' with states that can affect the security of NATO members; and arms control.

For NATO, security is not only a matter of defence capability but also of political, economic, social and environmental stability, development and prosperity (article 25). As west and east Europe are seeking to re-establish ties, the North Atlantic focus is evolving to an ever broader 'Euro-Atlantic focus'. The primary aim of NATO is to maintain the security, freedom and stability of its members in this geographical zone. But instability at the periphery can affect its members, for example, through the spill-over of war, large scale refugee flows, the disruption of vital resource flows, terrorism or organised crime (article 24). NATO feels this justifies deployment outside NATO territory as part of a crisis prevention or crisis response operation, or to support other international organisations – notably the UN and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – with operations to preserve international peace and security (article 48).

NATO recognises the 'primary' but not the exclusive role of the UN Security Council in maintaining international peace and security (article 15). The UN, the OSCE and the Western European Union (a military association) are privileged partners for NATO to achieve its aim. But NATO, through 'dialogue' and 'partnership' arrangements, is also engaged with Russia, the Ukraine and a number of non-NATO Mediterranean states (article 36-38). NATO is open to enlargement under two conditions: that prospective new members are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and that their inclusion serves the overall political and strategic interests of the alliance (article 39). Finally, NATO is committed to arms control, although it discusses its efforts in this regard with reference to nuclear non-proliferation and the destruction of chemical and biological weapons (articles 40, 56, 57) and not with reference to light weapon proliferation. Such a justification skates on thin ice: the US, UK and France are among the world's largest arms exporters; Belgium (NATO member), the Czech Republic and the Ukraine (partners and aspiring members) are crossroads for the international semi-legal and illegal arms trade, and the US has not signed the Ottawa Convention banning landmines.

NATO and key members have claimed that Operation Allied Force over Kosovo achieved all of its objectives (http://files.fco.gov.uk/kosovo/faq/). For the humanitarian community there remain, however, four main areas of debate:

i. *humanitarian militarism*: can a military crisis response be argued on 'humanitarian' grounds?
ii. *military humanitarianism*: should military troops get involved in humanitarian assistance?
iii. *civil-military cooperation*: how do civilian and military organisations relate to each other and collaborate?
iv. *international humanitarian law*: does the end justifies the means?

Operation Allied Force did not do as much damage to Serbia's military capability as NATO claimed, but it did destroy much of Serbia's economic infrastructure. This mainly impacts on civilians. Moreover, NATO used cluster munitions that are untargetted and are now causing casualties in the very Albanian Kosovar community it was supposed to protect. Finally, there have been strong allegations that US forces at least fired depleted uranium ammunition. This is an armour piercing, but also chemically toxic and radio-active heavy metal.

See, from the US, The National Gulf War Resource Centre at <ngwrc@vva.org> and, in the UK, the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium at <gmdcnd@gn.apc.org> or <http://gulfwarvets.com/du.htm> and <www.globaldialog.com>

The Current Situation in Kosovo

Koenraad Van Brabant, RRN Coordinator, ODI, London, UK

The Military Technical Agreement of the Security Council on 10 June ended NATO's bombing campaign, initiated the withdrawal of Belgrade's security forces, opened the way for a return of the Albanian Kosovars who had fled or been expelled from Kosovo, as well as for an international military (KFOR) and civilian contingent (UNMIK or UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) to enter the province.

Major developments have taken place since then. For example, KFOR has reorganised international troop deployments away from national sectors – with all the political sensitivities this implied – to geographical multinational brigade sectors, each with several troop contingents. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) has not only officially 'demilitarised' but also been disarmed. The UNMIK international police is beginning to deploy in Kosovo and a first batch of 173 recruits for a new Kosovo police service has finished training. As early as July, UNMIK also appointed regional governors to take over local administration. It is worth noting that the UNMIK mandate and authority differ significantly from the set-up in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH): rather than repeating the 'helping hand' approach to existing local administrations with a 'mediatory' approach with limited authority, Kosovo in all but name is administered as a protectorate. This means that the UN has assumed legislative and executive authority.

Most of the approximately 850,000 Albanian Kosovar refugees have returned spontaneously in one of the quickest repatriation flows in recent history. This hasn't, however, solved the problem of refugees and IDPs in the region. Montenegro reports hosting some 28,000 refugees from Bosnia and Croatia and 61,000 internally displaced from Kosovo. Serbia and Montenegro together now have the largest refugee (some 510,000) and IDP (some 222,000) population in Europe. The return of the Albanian Kosovars has also initiated revenge and politically motivated violence against Serb and Roma (Gypsy) Kosovars, many of whom have fled Kosovo spontaneously or under threat. Others have become displaced internally, in Serb-dominated enclaves or in shelters and zones protected by the international community. Sadly, Stankovic II camp in Macedonia, so recently full of Albanian Kosovars, now houses several thousand Roma refugees, forced to flee the wrath of the Albanian Kosovars who hold them collectively responsible for the collaboration of some Rome with the Serb security forces. The destruction of houses and livelihoods by the Serb security forces, especially in central and west Kosovo, also means that significant numbers of Albanian Kosovas found no home to return to and remain internally displaced.

The Humanitarian Challenge

A large scale humanitarian assistance programme is now being implemented by a plethora of governmental, multilateral, NGO and private sector actors. The initial emphasis has been on emergency assistance, but various programmes are well into reconstruction and democratisation. Emergency food distribution policy has shifted from general to targeted distribution. It is clear, however, that vulnerable individuals and groups will continue to need food aid for quite a while. Major support for agricultural production cannot start until next spring. Schooling has started in most places; health services remain in need of strengthening but surveys are underway to obtain a comprehensive picture and decide priorities.

The main problem remains emergency shelter. It is now clear that the target of one winter-proof room per house will not be reached. Maybe as many as 200,000 people will have to live in winter tents or are being moved into 'collective centres'. The problem is a supply crisis, especially for cured timber and to a lesser degree for roofing tiles. Delays are further incurred because the border crossings have become 'choking' points.

Emergency rehabilitation is also hampered by damaged or failing public infrastructure. The overstretched electricity supply system often breaks down. This affects micro-activities but also the municipal heating and water supply and treatment systems. Mines and unexploded ordnance continue to pose a major threat. A recent EU study costed the reconstruction bill at US$2.1bn. Reconstruction will not be helped by the economic depression. Kosovo has mineral and agricultural resources, but its trade links were mostly with Serbia-Montenegro and these have now been largely cut. Already two economic zones are developing, a dinar one in north Kosovo with a stronger Serb presence, and a Deutsch Mark one in the rest of the province. Perhaps the biggest economic opportunity at the moment is employment with international organisations as well as catering for the needs of some 45,000 KFOR troops and an additional several thousand aid workers. But this international presence also stimulates inflation which will hurt those not benefitting from it. Kosovo has probably the youngest population in Europe, and many of them will experience continued unemployment.

The Political Challenge

The economic challenges are compounded by political ones. These are internal and external. Internally, UNMIK is increasingly confronted by tensions and violence within the Albanian Kosovar body politic. Political parties emerge and fade and there are shifting alliances, but in essence there are two blocs around the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), which existed prior to the escallation of 1998–1999 and whose base is more among urban intellectuals, and the new party of Hashim Thaci, the leader of the disbanded KLA which has a stronger base

in the countryside, and in the past two years put up an armed resistance. Also, internally, UNMIK and KFOR have difficulty assuring effective protection especially for the Serb and Roma populations in Kosovo, and it is clear that some Albanian Kosovars see ethnic cleansing of these groups as a solution to historical ethnic tensions, and as a step towards independence. Local elections are planned for May 2000. Under the current circumstances many belonging to minority groups in Kosovo will not be able to vote. As in BiH, early elections are also likely to give democratic credibility to ethnically based and ethnically driven parties. This is not desirable.

Externally, the international community, being 'interim', will have to find a long term solution for Kosovo. The Security Council Resolution of 10 June affirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In practice, Belgrade has no say whatsoever in how Kosovo is currently administered, and many foreigners in Kosovo talk as if they are in a separate country or at least one on the way to independence.

Belgrade has expressed grave reservations about the creation of a Kosovo Protection Force, in which a number of former KLA fighters have been absorbed. Whereas the international community sees this as a lightly armed civil defence force to help with emergencies and humanitarian assistance, Albanian Kosovar nationalists see it as the first step towards a fully capable national army. The problem of Kosovo's political future – advanced autonomy within the FRY, full 'republic' status within the FRY, newly independent state, or merger with Albania – also concerns regional neighbours. Montenegro and Macedonia both have ethnic Albanian minorities, and recent events in Kosovo as well as NATO's action have greatly increased tensions in Macedonia. The drive for a 'greater Albania' can be no less destabilising for the southern Balkans than the one for a 'greater Serbia' has been.

A more detailed update, also useful as a briefing note and called 'Peacemaking through Protectorate', can be found on the RRN Website.

Coordination in Kosovo: the challenge for the NGO sector

By Nick Scott-Flynn, Regional Director, ICVA,Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

The task facing the international non-governmental (INGO) community in Kosovo is both daunting and complex. It symbolises many of the dilemmas facing the humanitarian sector at this moment. Indeed Martin Griffiths, formerly the United Nations deputy humanitarian coordinator in the Balkans and currently director of the Henry Dunant Centre, recently highlighted some of these concerns when he called for NGOs to redefine and reclaim the 'heartland' of humanitarianism in the face of increasing political interference and their own occasional lack of professionalism. Griffiths sees a crisis of confidence in the INGO community arising from a 'crisis of clarity', as well as the result of an increasingly critical media which is constantly looking for someone to blame in a humanitarian crisis. The actions of NGOs in Kosovo will show to what extent these key players have redefined this heartland, and coordination among NGOs in the province will be one of the litmus tests in gauging the extent of this success.

The same principles of coordination apply in Kosovo as elsewhere in the humanitarian world. Coordination is generally a good thing: it maximises the utilisation of resources and helps all players involved better achieve their goals. It is not about control but about information sharing and the recognition and clarification of the different agendas of the different agencies. From an NGO perspective it can also result in common advocacy positions towards donors and governments – something which is increasingly important in the current crisis of confidence. This need is compounded by aid flowing away from development to the humanitarian sector – accompanied by the concerns of transparency and accountability – as well as the increasing politicisation of aid.

The Situation in Kosovo

The challenge for the international community in Kosovo is enormous. Apart from the physical reconstruction of the province there is also the more delicate task of establishing a true 'civil society' where the rule of law is respected and human rights observed, not least of all in the protection of minorities such as the Roma and Serbian population. As with other parts of the region the international community must perform a balancing act between external imposition and local ownership. In this regard the experience of the Kosovo Albanians in establishing their own parallel civil society over the last 10 years must be built upon and not disregarded by the international community. INGOs in both Kosovo and other parts of the region are an extremely valuable resource in this process. Many have been operating in Kosovo for a number of years, long before the bulk of the international community arrived. They are sensitive to the needs of the local community in a way that is often difficult for policy-makers in foreign capitals, and have had time to make links with local organisations and build up trust. This must be utilised, but can only be done so with adequate coordination and sufficient professionalism of the INGOs themselves.

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The Coordination Problematic

The overall coordination of the international effort through the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is organised under the four pillars of humanitarian, economic, institution building and governance, and civil administration action. The question is how do NGOs fit into this model of organisation in Kosovo? Working within current structures, the first step must be to better coordinate among themselves. This is not an easy task given the number involved: there are currently over 300 INGOs in the province. This has grown from about a dozen two years ago and around 60 just before NATO action.

Coordination among such a number is very difficult, and made all the more so by the different agendas and cultures within the INGO community. It is also not helped by the behaviour of some of the NGOs. Under pressure from donors and their own constituents some have shown a marked reluctance to share information, seeing themselves as competitors for the huge amounts of donor money available. Another manifestation of this has been the competition for beneficiaries. There are accounts of some beneficiaries being courted by these NGOs on the basis that some offer 'better deals' than others. In the worst instances this has lead to falsely raising the expectations of local communities to a point that can not be realised as the INGO has been far too optimistic about its capacity to provide.

Given the number of organisations involved it would be unrealistic to think there could be perfect coordination at operational level. However, there is great need for some common policy positions from the INGOs on issues such as the use of donor money and the role of the military. On the former, many agencies are concerned at the pressure exerted by some key donors to spend large amounts of money very quickly. This pressure has been largely political as NATO countries have felt the need to offset any negative impressions of military action by spending huge sums of money on humanitarian activities. In this framework some of the plans of donors have been inappropriate, for example, a proposal to spend US$5m on rape counselling. While a laudable use of money, such work is not possible within the six month timetable initially given by the donor. Fortunately this proposal has been amended but the ability of the INGO community to influence donors in this way is hampered by their own lack of coordination.

> *Coordination is most effective if it involves heads of agencies who share their strategies.*

Making NGO Coordination a Reality

Some of the major INGOs in Kosovo have attempted to facilitate NGO coordination through an NGO council. Initiatives such as this should be supported as they provide an accessible forum where the NGO voice can be developed – including that of the indigenous NGO community. At the very least, information can be shared to avoid duplication. This saves time and money by providing a common focal point to address shared problems. At the very best, it allows practitioners to share experience, learn lessons, and find common positions on which to base advocacy work with policy makers. For such councils to work they need to:

- be accessible to all NGOs, not just the rich and powerful agencies;
- provide translation services so local organisations and staff can participate equally;
- ensure commitment from NGOs to put aside resources towards participation in and the operation of such a council (as recommended in the Sphere project's 'Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response').

In the short term this may seem like an extra drain on resources. But in the long term it will save time and expense ten-fold.

Lessons from Bosnia-Herzegovina

The BiH experience has shown that coordination is more likely to be effective if it involves heads of agencies – that is, people with the power to make decisions and carry things through – who share their strategies. The short term approach of many in BiH where donors and agencies alike went off and 'did their own thing' should not be repeated in Kosovo. This led to a waste of money and opportunity. It also led to a constant shifting in donor emphasis that the NGO community had to mirror in order to retain funding. This distorted the work of many NGOs and led to huge gaps in provision. In addition, agencies in Kosovo should be mindful of not draining staff from the local sector through relatively high wages.

Role of the Military and Bilateralism

Another coordination dilemma is posed by both the role of the military as well as government bilateralism. In addition to impacting on coordination, these two problematics highlight the difficulty faced by INGOs in their approach to the increasing politicisation of aid (see previous article: 'Kosovo – drawing lessons from a Disaster').

Many NATO countries used their considerable military resources to provide humanitarian aid in Kosovo, building refugee camps for example. This was at the time when UNHCR was criticised for not being sufficiently prepared for the crisis (as highlighted in the first article, this criticism is cynical as UNHCR's capacity to respond is dependent on the extent of donor government support). While many in the NGO community have acknowledged the vital logistical role played by the various militaries, there are some who feel it is not appropriate for humanitarian aid to be delivered by soldiers – especially those whose countries are party to the conflict.

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Equally, bilateralism has posed challenges. This mitigates against common standards on levels of provision, which leads to inequality in terms of treatment of the very people agencies are there to help. It also opens up the possibility of manipulation by beneficiaries as they jockey to get the 'best package'. Conversely, beneficiaries feel anger as they see those with similar needs getting a better deal.

It should be remembered that there are common standards to which agencies and governments have signed up, such as the Sphere Standards (see RRN Newsletters 9 and 10). However, there is no point in having these standards if they are ignored when the time comes to apply them.

Once again, INGOs must have their own house in order if they are to challenge such action; they will not be in a strong position to criticise donor governments for uncoordinated, bilateral approaches if they themselves do not work in tandem with a common voice.

Integrity, or 'Just say no'

The biggest challenge to INGO integrity is their ability to say 'no' to a donor, government or head office. The pressure on agencies to establish a presence is not in itself justification for being there. Such justification must come from a need and an ability to meet that need effectively. To assess this there must be a sharing of information and assessment reports as a means of effective coordination. In this regard, some of the principles of 'Do no Harm' come to mind, and agencies should question whether their presence could actually have a detrimental effect. For example, are duplicated overhead and headquarters costs really the best use of funding? In addtion, the large number of agencies present hampers the chances of coordination.

The presence of a large number of international organisations can also have a distorting effect on the local economy and development of civil society. As agencies compete to have the best staff local salaries become distorted which leads to scenarios where, for example, a skilled local worker can earn more as a translator than in his/her original job as a doctor. In this context it becomes easy for INGOs to push aside local NGOs, ignoring the fragile development of local civil society and thereby damaging it. This was seen in Albania. Equally, it can be argued that donor priorities (and hence INGO priorities) distorted the growth of the local NGO sector in BiH where many local NGOs had to frequently change their focus in order to obtain the necessary funding to survive.

Conclusion

Many of those who work in the INGO community are anxious about the situation in Kosovo. They are uncomfortable about NATO action and the subsequent development of the province, and they feel frustrated about the seeming ignorance of lessons learnt in Bosnia.

Most of those involved recognise the need for the international community to develop a regional approach to south eastern Europe, seeing that instability in one part affects the whole. Many INGOs have built up huge experience throughout the region. They have a good track record and will be working in the region long after the bulk of the international community has left. In this sense they are in an excellent position to apply lessons learnt. However, they cannot do this in isolation. They should be encouraged and supported to organise forums in which to share experience and information, learn from each other and advocate on common issues.

If we can not get it right in Kosovo, with the considerable financial and political investment, then we will not be forgiven – not just by our donors and members, but by the very communities we seek to help.

ICVA has been working with the NGO Council in Pristina to support the Council's work. ICVA can be contacted in Bosnia on: Tel: (387) 71 210 201; Fax: (387) 71 668 297; Email: <icva@bih.net.ba> in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on Tel: (381) 11 621 545; Fax: (381) 11 185 569; Email: <icva-bgd@eunet.yu> and in Switzerland (HQ) on Tel: (41) 22 950 9600; Fax: (41) 22 950 9609; Email: <admin@icva.ch> Website: <www.ICVA.ch>

Correction: Refugees and Reproductive Health RRN Newsletter 14, p10

In the article entitled *Refugees and Reproductive Health* printed in the last RRN Newsletter we would like to make the following correction: The establishment of the RHR Consortium was not 'a result of ICPD.' In fact the impetus for establishment of the consortium came from the initiative of Carolyn Makinson at the Mellon Foundation who, in August 1994, called together representatives of CARE, IRC, the Women's Commission, JSI and MSI and asked them if they would be willing to establish a consortium to tackle the problem of reproductive health for refugees. Subsequently the agencies submitted proposals and were awarded funds from Mellon Foundation in March 1995.

Evaluative Studies of the International Response to the Kosovo Crisis

The purpose of this list is to make all those involved in evaluation activities on the Kosovo crisis aware of all the other studies that are planned, ongoing or have already been completed. The list has been compiled on the basis of information provided at the Sixth ALNAP meeting held at ODI, London, 14–15th October 1999, and from other sources. The list is regularly updated as more information becomes available. If you are aware of any studies that have not been included in the list or wish to correct any of the information provided contact John Borton, ALNAP Secretariat Coordinator: <j.borton@odi.org.uk> Information on ALNAP is available at <www.oneworld.org/odi>

1. Danida/ETC UK Real Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Crisis in Kosovo, March to May 1999. ETC UK, North Shields (covers only Albania). Contact: Phil O'Keefe <office@etcuk.demon.co.uk>

2. UK House of Commons Inquiry by the International Development Committee, May 1999. Available at <www.publications.parliament.uk>

3. UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) 'Kosovo Crisis: Lessons Learning Study Phase 1 Preliminary Analysis and Findings' Discussion Paper 16, August 1999. VALID International. Contact: Alistair Hallam <alistair@validinternational.org>

4. UK DEC Independent Evaluation of Expenditures of DEC Kosovo Appeal Funds. Contract awarded to HPG/ODI in September 1999. Fieldwork to be undertaken early 2000 with draft report by May and final report by June 2000. Contact: Margie Buchanan-Smith <m.buchanan@odi.org.uk>

5. UNHCR Evaluation. 'The Kosovo refugee crisis: An evaluation of UNHCR emergency preparedness and response' Team Leader: Astri Suhrke CMI, Bergen. Stakeholder meeting: 11–12 November 1999. Due to be completed by February 2000. Contact: Jeff Crisp <crisp@unhcr.ch>

6. ICRC/IFRC/National Societies: Evaluation of the Integrated Response arrangements. Three external evaluators teamed with counterpart teams. Due to be completed by mid-Feb 2000. Contact: Wayne MacDonald <wmacdonald@icrc.org>

7. Humanitarianism and War Project study of Civil-Military Relations during the Kosovo Crisis. Funded by Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and being undertaken in collaboration with the Humanitarian Law Consultancy, The Hague. Fieldwork September to October 1999. Final report to be presented at workshop mid-November. Contact: <Larry_Minear@brown.edu>

8. ODI research study on Politics of Aid Coherence with Kosovo as one of the two country case studies. Contact: Jo Macrae <j.macrae@odi.org.uk>

9. US Dept of Defence: After Action Review. *Information on timing and contacts to be obtained. Contact ALNAP.*

10. NATO Lessons Learned Study: military lessons. Study completed and understood to have been published in October. *Information on contacts to be obtained. Contact ALNAP.*

11. NATO Ad Hoc Group on Cooperation in Peacekeeping 'Exchange of Views'. Meeting held with humanitarian organisations in Brussels on 21 October 1999. Contact: NATO International Secretariat, Klaus Peter Klaiber phone +32 2 707 4111.

12. Humanitarian Ombudsman Project: 'A Possible Model for a Humanitarian Ombudsman: Report on Action Research in Kosovo, 3 August–2 September' by Raymond Apthorpe and Barney Mayhew. Available at <www.oneworld.org/ombudsman>

13. Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Internal evaluation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs response. Study requested by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Contact: Frederique De Man, Director of Political Affairs, The Hague

14. WFP Evaluation of WFP's Response to the Kosovo Crisis; TOR being finalised as at mid-October. Contact: Rolf Huss <Rolf.Huss@wfp.org>

15. MSF-Holland: Internal evaluation of its role in the refugee camps in Bosnia; coordination in relation to the humanitarian mandate of NATO and experience in the use of standards. Contact: Pieter Giesen <peter_giesen@amsterdam.msf.org>

16. UNICEF: Evaluation of its response being discussed with prospective donors. Contact: Kate Alley <ktalley@unicef.org>

17. OFDA/USAID. Mid-Term Review of USG humanitarian response being undertaken. Contact Anita Menghetti <amenghetti@usaid.gov>

18. Danish Refugee Council 'Lessons Learned Study' Scheduled for placement on DRC website late October: <www.drc.dk>

19. Group of Initiators (GOI), based in Denmark, is conducting a study on 'Civil-Military Relationships'. The Group includes SHIRBRIG (Strategic High Readiness Brigade), five Danish NGOs, and the Danish Emergency Management Agency. Terms of Reference for the evaluation have not been finalised as yet. Contact Mr. Henrik Nedergaard, Danish Red Cross, tel. +45 35 25 92 00. Email: <henrik-nedergaard@redcross.dk>

20. SCHR (Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response) Internal review of member agencies' experience with a particular focus on protection issues. Contact: Joel McClellan <schr@ifrc.org>

21. Groupe Urgence Réhabilitation et Développement (URD): 'Evaluation of the relations between civilian humanitarian actors and military actors in Albania'. Study undertaken in May 1999. Contact: François Grunewald <f.grunewald@infonie.fr>

22. Groupe Urgence Réhabilitation et Développement (URD) 'Albanian Civil Society and its Structures After the Return of the Ethnic Albanian Kosovar Population to Kosovo: Frustration of a Forgotten Actor'. Study undertaken in July-August 1999. Contact: François Grunewald <f.grunewald@infonie.fr>

23. CARE International 'Kosovo Crisis Lessons Learned Review'. Due to start in November and be completed by mid-December. Contact: Karen Moore <kdmoore99@hotmail.com>

24. CRS 'Lessons Learned Review' *Information on timing and contacts to be obtained. Contact ALNAP.*

25. EMG (Albanian Government Emergency Management Group) which coordinated Albania's response. 'Coordination in the 1999 Kosovo Refugee Emergency: EMG Albania'. An evaluation funded by DfID and led by John Telford is nearing completion. Contact John Telford: telford@ireland.com

Also of interest is *Forced Migration Review* 5 August 1999 'Learning from Kosovo' Email: <fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk> or visit <www.fmreview.org>

A Change of Policy and Attitude: UNHCR and Evaluation

UNHCR has created a new evaluation and policy analysis unit, which will report directly to the Assistant High Commissioner. The agency will develop a roster of consultants and consulting companies with proven evaluation experience, and put proposed evaluations out to tender. It will also invite NGOs and executive committee members to participate in joint evaluation missions. Moreover, all reports from 1996 onwards will be declassified and made available in hardcopy and on a new website. This is a welcome change from a tradition of commissioning evaluations after a crisis, which were kept confidential and on the shelf; a habit which angered donors and exasperated collaborators. The new organisational set-up, linking evaluation with policy, will also facilitate organisational learning and policy development.

A first major experience with the new approach will be the independent evaluation of the agency's response to the Kosovo crisis, one which UNHCR itself has commissioned. While the focus will be on UNHCR the terms of reference invite the evaluators to consider the role and impact of other actors involved in the crisis. This is an important evaluation because UNHCR has been heavily criticised, for three perceived failures in particular:

i. the failure to anticipate and prepare for the large scale refugee flow from Kosovo;
ii. the failure to respond quickly and adequately to this refugee flow;
iii. the failure to coordinate the response of the other humanitarian actors.

The debate between critics and UNHCR has already been going on for some months. UNHCR has argued that it was running an effective and well-coordinated operation in Kosovo prior to the evacuation of all international agencies, and that nobody had foreseen the scale and suddenness of the expulsion of Albanian Kosovars (contingency planning was for much smaller numbers). Moreover, preparing for a large scale influx of refugees would have been politically impossible; it would have signalled a lack of faith in the Rambouillet process at a time when Western governments were banking on peace.

When refugees began to pour out of Kosovo in large numbers, UNHCR did not indeed have enough material and financial resources at hand. Critically, however, the agency also had difficulty deploying enough experienced staff. It could also not unlock, without NATO intervention, the political doors that would allow trapped Kosovars to find transitional refuge in Macedonia. Overwhelmed by events in Macedonia and Albania, and by a multitude of bilateral actions through military contingents and NGOs, UNHCR subsequently could not re-establish the authority and credibility for effective coordination.

The evaluation will bring an independent and balanced perspective to this debate. The interest in the outcomes of the evaluation should not, however, distract from the other actors. Most international NGOs were also surprisingly slow in responding to the Kosovar refugee crisis. And reviews of the planning processes and mechanisms in the international community (governments, multilaterals, military, political and humanitarian actors) during the NATO bombing campaign suggest that every actor was doing its own planning in isolation from the rest, with little strategic coordination around key scenarios. UNHCR can be criticised but should not be turned into a scapegoat.

For the debate on UNHCR see, for example, the UK International Development Committee's Third Report (May 1999) and the Fourth Special Report (August 1999) containing UNHCR's response at: <www.parliament.the-stationary-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmintdev.htm> or articles in *Forced Migration Review* 5 (August 1999) at <www.fmreview.org>

Post-NATO Serbia

Nicholas Scott-Flynn, Regional Director, ICVA, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Prior to NATO action, Serbia was already in economic and social decline, with an estimated three million people living below the poverty line. This year has witnessed a drastic drop in economic activity with a corresponding decline in living standards.

It is the most vulnerable groups in society that feel this the most, including the internally displaced. The numbers of this latter group have been swollen by the influx into Serbia of an estimated 220,000 people from Kosovo, displaced by both NATO action and, as indicated in a previous article, the subsequent violence directed against Serbian, Roma and other communities in the province. This has added to the existing 520,000 refugees already in Serbia, mainly from Croatia and BiH. This group is often referred to as the 'Dayton caseload'.

For the past four years economic sanctions have been applied against Serbia, which is viewed as a pariah state by the international community. Despite the war, there is still little international and donor interest in the country. As a result many NGOs, along with UNHCR, are becoming increasingly worried about the plight of this forgotten refugee group – the largest in a single country in the region. To rectify this NGOs and inter-governmental agencies have sought to highlight this group's humanitarian needs and to de-politicise the aid agenda.

The progress that had been made in this respect up to March 1999 was shattered in the wake of NATO action. At the time of the bombing most of the international community left Serbia, though many NGOs kept their offices functioning with local staff despite confiscation of equipment and other forms of harassment. When the conflict ended the INGO community had to assess the full resumption of its activities in Serbia. Within agencies it was also a time for reflection and consolidation as local staff struggled to come to terms with the experience of

being under bombardment when their international colleagues had had the opportunity to leave. There was also the distraction of Kosovo where large amounts of donor money was now being directed and which was draining the pool of human resources within the NGOs in Serbia.

A counter-balance to these considerations was the overwhelming evidence of a growing humanitarian crisis within Serbia, arguably the worst in the region. An assessment carried out by OCHA in the late summer of 1999 highlighted massive need, which has now been compounded by rocketing inflation. The economic consequences of NATO action have seen a doubling in unemployment – which now stands at 33 per cent [December 1999], or approximately one million people. With no outside aid for reconstruction under the present political circumstances the numbers in need are growing. The Yugoslav Red Cross has reported a sharp rise in attendance at soup kitchens and is making plans to feed well over 100,000 people this winter. There is also a growing need among some population groups who are not normally vulnerable. For example, workers in urban areas on fixed incomes have either not been paid or have seen their income lose value in real terms. They have no recourse to growing their own food in the way that those in rural areas are able to, and so have become more vulnerable.

> *The economic consequences of NATO action have seen a doubling in unemployment.*

Damage to the electricity infrastructure has resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in capacity. In real terms this will mean that hundreds of thousands of people will not have any form of heating this winter. Along with this there has been a sharp reduction in the quality of the drinking water supply: over 90 municipalities tested have indicated unacceptably high levels of microbiological or chemical contamination.

A meeting of INGOs and UNHCR in Geneva in August called upon the international donor community to respond flexibly to the humanitarian need and not to politicise aid. Grave concern was voiced about the plans of some of the major bilateral donors to channel aid strategically to opposition towns. The division of aid in this way is not ethical and does not guarantee assistance, equally, to all vulnerable groups.

As winter approaches many INGOs have resumed full activities in Serbia, despite a continuing lack of legislation under which to operate. However, with continuing political uncertainty and economic decline there is growing humanitarian need combined with great fear for the short term. It is in this context that the NGO and international community should show solidarity with the most vulnerable. If political change does come about much of the work being done now by the NGO community – both national and international – will prove to be a solid investment for the future, as well as addressing current need. It is in no one's interest that there is avoidable suffering in Serbia, least of all those who long for this region of Europe to be stable, democratic and prosperous.

Contact details for ICVA are listed at the end of the article on NGO Coordination in Kosovo.

The Psychological Health of Relief Workers: Some Practical Suggestions

By Peter Salama, Medical Coordinator, Concern Worldwide, Dublin, Ireland

> *What we see is a new type of war veteran, the international humanitarian worker, returning from the battlefields unable to escape the horrors there. It is obviously very important that aid organizations begin considering seriously the factors affecting their project personnel. Someone must be able to spot the danger signals at an early stage, and help exposed personnel in dealing with their situation (Smith et al, 1996).*

Relief workers today are faced with situations which generate more stress than straightforward natural disasters. This happens in a context in which the usual support mechanisms of family, partner or close friends are absent. Furthermore, the culture in the humanitarian community – which may be one of bravado and competition in emergency situations – does often not allow the space for discussing issues such as psychological stress.

Despite mounting anecdotal evidence (and, recently, more substantiated findings; Markey, 1998) that stress and its consequences are key occupational health hazards, humanitarian agencies have not moved quickly enough to minimise the risks to the psychological well-being of their staff, whether they are expatriate or local.

Some Common Problems
Some of the common stress-related problems seen in relief workers include burnout, psychosomatic disorders, and risk-taking behaviour such as alcohol abuse. Unlike domestic rescue workers who are periodically exposed to short stressful events, relief workers may suffer exposure to chronic low levels of stress by, for example, residing in insecure environments for many years. It is in this setting that stress may be cumulative.

Burnout is probably the most commonly used lay term associated with cumulative stress. It is a process that is usually gradual in onset. Symptoms can be grouped into five categories (Kahill, 1988):

i. **physical:** fatigue, emotional and physical exhaustion, sleep difficulties, and non-specific physical symptoms such as headaches and gastro-intestinal disturbances;
ii. **emotional:** irritability, anxiety, depression, guilt, a sense of helplessness;
iii. **behavioural:** aggression, callousness, cynicism and substance abuse;
iv. **work-related:** tardiness, absenteeism, poor performance;
v. **interpersonal:** withdrawal, poor communication, distancing self from situation and beneficiaries.

Acute stress disorder (ASD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are more formal psychiatric diagnoses related to exposure to severe traumatic stressors such as a direct assault or abduction (primary traumatisation) or witnessing the death or abduction of a colleague (secondary traumatisation). The phenomenon of tertiary traumatisation is also increasingly recognised (Jensen, 1999). Examples include being witness to mass violence or listening to first hand accounts of traumatised people.

ASD appears relatively quickly after exposure to a particular stressor and, by definition, resolves within a month. It includes a spectrum of emotional reactions, cognitive changes such as confusion, and symptoms of mental and physical hyperactivity. PTSD symptoms appear from one month to three months after a given event. Symptoms usually involve 'flashbacks' to the events and a state of being hyper-alert. Symptoms may become chronic and extremely debilitating.

In their attempt to find a new internal equilibrium, relief workers may also respond to unresolved stress with more subtle behavioural changes. One such reaction has been termed 'enmeshment' and is akin to survivor guilt with an over identification with the beneficiary population (Smith *et al*, 1996). This reaction may be more common in the younger, more idealistic relief worker. By contrast, avoidance reactions of distancing, withdrawal and denial may be more common among experienced personnel. Finally, relief workers may exhibit self-destructive behaviours such as working to the point of exhaustion, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, or engaging in unprotected sexual encounters. Psychiatrists term this a dissociative response; the individual feels distant from his/her previous self and environment in which he/she may have acted more cautiously.

Problems Exacerbated by the Humanitarian Sector

Many of these problems may be exacerbated by factors particular to the humanitarian sector. For example, relief workers do not usually benefit from being in a well-trained, tightly knit unit with a clear command structure. In addition, training and briefing, particularly with regard to psychological issues, is generally inadequate. This is particularly pertinent for those organisations which deploy a high proportion of first assignment volunteers. Third, aid workers are often called upon to perform duties outside their realm of professional competency and experience. Finally, there is the pressure when the drive to ensure the visibility of their own organisation may over-ride questions of the appropriateness or quality of interventions.

Two other issues deserve mention because they are relatively modern sources of tension in the humanitarian sector. First is the pressure of discovering that one's internal mandate in terms of personal ethics and preferred approach does not match the mandate of a particular organisation. Second is the changing culture of humanitarian work. Organisations are more self-critical than previously and are increasingly putting resources towards evaluating their activities. Inevitably external criticism, even if constructive, leads to a re-assessment of an individual's perception of his/her own effectiveness. The latter is particularly true if individuals have an unrealistic expectation of what they may achieve under any given circumstance.

Recommendations

An individual has three levels of resources – personal, social and organisational – at his/her disposal with which to tackle demands. Organisations should seek to strengthen these resources wherever possible.

The personal level: Selection and training are key areas where organisations could better support their personnel. In the past the key qualities organisations have looked for when selecting personnel are flexibility, maturity, adaptability, ability to work in a team and past experience in emergency situations (McCall & Salama, 1999). While experience is crucial, this must be tempered by the knowledge that stress can be cumulative, especially in the setting of aid workers going directly from one emergency to the next. Individuals who have a past psychiatric history including that of alcohol abuse or those with a recent significant life event such as a relationship break up should be regarded as being at higher risk of psychological distress.

More effort needs to be made to ensure that an individual understands and is comfortable with the mandate of the organisation and has a realistic expectation of living conditions, security conditions, potential risks including to psychological health and what can be achieved in the circumstances. Some examples of best practice in this setting include being interviewed by the person directly responsible for the project by telephone or in person, and in-depth discussion of hypothetical field scenarios that illustrate some of the complex trade-offs inherent in humanitarian work.

Studies in various settings have shown that untrained, poorly briefed staff suffer most from stress-related illness (Ursano & McCarroll, 1994). Briefing and debriefing should be mandatory and in person. It should cover an individual's personal and emotional reaction to their work environment, not merely the programmatic or

administrative issues encountered. A briefing and debriefing by a psychologist or counsellor should represent the standard for all emergency assignments. Mental health professionals working in this role should themselves ideally have experience of humanitarian emergencies. Training courses should cover stress management techniques (types of stress, coping strategies, how to access help within the organisation), cross-cultural issues, team building/conflict resolution strategies, as well as the ethical frameworks and moral dilemmas of humanitarian relief. Courses should also help to prepare recruits for the task of adapting their professional skills to an environment which may demand a very different orientation.

> *The psychological support of relief workers is simply part of the employer's duty and responsibility. It is not an optional extra.*

The social level: Organisations should be more willing to accommodate couples on assignment, particularly if both have relevant skills. Unless situations pose extreme risk, couples themselves should be given the autonomy to weigh the benefits and risks of the presence of an accompanying partner. Managers should consider flexibility in breaks so as to maximise, wherever possible, couples' time together. It is also important that those responsible for recruiting understand the team dynamic in each particular field and attempt to match new recruits to a field that will potentially suit them.

The organisational level: Formal policies on the prevention of stress in the humanitarian sector are frequently non-existent or incomplete and vary significantly from one organisation to the next (McCall & Salama, 1999). Strategies for improving briefing, training and debriefing need to take place in the context of organisations developing clear, written and comprehensive policies on the psychological health of their employees. Within the framework of institutional policies, mechanisms to support relief workers in the field need more detailed elaboration. A formal mentoring system for new personnel or the designation of a particular individual chosen by his peers in the field to act as the support person for that particular area are two examples of current practice.

Policies on the use of critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) also need to be put in place. CISD may be a useful technique particularly in acutely traumatic events such as a line-of-duty death. There is still a need, however, to document its efficacy, to clarify the timing and location of this type of debriefing, and to ensure that the staff of less well-resourced agencies have access to it if needed. Furthermore, organisations should come to a consensus on the most appropriate methods for psycho-social follow-up of employees so that they are able to determine what happens to their workers after leaving the organisation; the success with which they negotiate the difficult transition back into their former environments, as well as the proportion that suffer psychological distress. Anonymous cross sectional surveys at regular intervals are one possibility.

Finally, there must be a recognition of the effects on empathetic field managers of coping with the stress of numerous employees. In effect this is a form of tertiary traumatisation and they too must be able to recognise the symptoms of stress in themselves and call in re-enforcements if necessary. Peer support networks of regional managers often occur on an ad hoc basis but this could be made more formal and facilitated by HQ.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, humanitarian emergencies are becoming more common. Concurrently the humanitarian sector is becoming larger and more professional, and we are seeing a new type of professional: the career relief worker. These environments, however, are not ordinary work places; they expose individuals and organisations to new dilemmas and new challenges. Staff turnover is high and burnout is common. Perhaps the crucial element in the achievement of the humanitarian goal today is the development of a stable and experienced workforce whose energies are effectively harnessed through more enlightened organisational policies. When seen in this light, the psychological support of relief workers is simply part of the employer's duty and responsibility. It is not an optional extra.

Peter Salama is a physician with experience both as a clinician and as a manager in humanitarian emergencies in Afghanistan, Burundi, Thailand, Sierra Leone and southern Sudan. At time of writing he was the medical coordinator for emergency programmes for Concern Worldwide. He can be contacted on: <salamapeter@hotmail.com>

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News

EC Push for NGOs to Form Consortia

As an administrative and financial system, the EC is cumbersome and complex. It suffers from staff shortages and struggles with management difficulties. These problems have led the EC officials in charge of managing subsidy programmes to move away from the small project approach in order to limit the number of contracts being processed. The trend has been towards encouraging NGO consortiums to apply.

The 'Consortium' Model

A consortium is an ad-hoc grouping between several NGOs with the aim of conducting a common programme or achieving a common objective. While there is a clear tendency within the EC towards this model, approaches vary depending on the directorate general (DG) or service concerned.

In general, DG VIII (now re-named DG Development) has encouraged NGOs to form consortia, but leaves the initiative to the NGOs. (ECHO is also increasingly, but still timidly, encouraging NGOs to present projects in this form). In line with this, the EC encourages NGOs in budget line B7-6000 to use the model of the consortium, and expects the following results from it:

- a reduction in the number of contracts to be administered by the EC;
- better understanding and more trust between the contracting NGOs and the EC;
- political dialogue;
- long term, more strategic approach to development activities;
- NGO grouping, exchanges of experiences, capitalisation and institutional support.

However, the risk is that small NGOs will be marginalised for lacking the institutional capacity to invest in a consortium. This is all the more so when DG1B, External Relations, only accepts consortium projects from NGOs. This happened in 1999 for several countries in refugees budget lines B7-302 and B7-312 (Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Guatemala). This experience has shown that the imposition of a consortium on NGOs that are not accustomed to working together brings with it significant legal, administrative, financial and operational difficulties.

From the point of view of the EC, the reason for this move towards consortia is clear: lack of human resources and therefore the need to reduce the amount of contracts. The SCR (External Relations Common Service) was created with the same aim. In line with this simplification, there is also an effort towards standardisation: the standard contract for all Commission services, which has been reviewed many times, has now achieved its (seemingly) final stage. Once it comes into force it will be used for all budget lines that are accessible to NGOs (except, for the moment, ECHO).

However, the reasons to simplify, reduce and standardise have a purely administrative/technical nature and do not take into account the reality on the ground. Therefore, while the encouragement to form voluntary consortia can make sense if it does not become the only way to access funds, forcing NGOs to form consortia (DG1B) is not admissible.

The Afghanistan Experience [1]

In June 1999, the EC announced to NGOs working in Afghanistan that the next funding round would only be given to a consortium of NGOs, united in one single contract. The four NGOs involved in this consortium did not self-select. Rather, the proposal was imposed on them and one was designated leader. The EC lacked the staff to manage the individual NGO contracts.

Operationally speaking, this consortium does not make sense: the NGOs concerned work in different parts of the country and in fundamentally different sectors (mines, agriculture, education and so on). On top of this, the consortium exposes the NGOs and their programmes to several dangers:

1. **Operational responsibility**: each NGO is responsible for the acts of the other NGOs of which they may know nothing. Therefore, the four NGOs are held jointly responsible vis-à-vis the EC for the successful realisation of the project.
2. **Financial responsibility**: the EC demands that the lead NGO gives a financial bank guarantee to ensure financial security. If a problem arises, the EC will claim reimbursement from this NGO, leaving it up to the NGO to claim from the non-performing NGOs the lost money. Even if the NGO leader is prepared to assume this risk, in most cases (like this one) it is evidently incapable of obtaining such a guarantee from its bank. The immediate consequence is therefore the blockage of the contract.
3. **Administrative complexity**: from an administrative point of view, the consortium model supposes several complexities that have important consequences for the

NGOs and their programmes. For example, as the contract has a start and an end date, all NGOs are obliged to begin their programmes at the same time and to manage them at an identical pace. In addition, the Commission does not take into account the history of each programme, nor the diverse difficulties that NGOs may face during the implementation of the project.

The Root of the Problem

While the EC is trying to institutionalise mechanisms to guarantee financial security, the vast majority of NGOs are opposed to the use of such a guarantee (in particular a bank guarantee) and consider that such should only be applied in exceptional cases. The experience this year, during which a large number of contracts have been blocked as a result of this requirement, shows the extent to which the systematic application of this mechanism would paralyse collaboration between NGOs and the EC. For the moment, and as a temporary solution, the EC has accepted the SCR proposal suggesting that the financial guarantee only applies to payments above a certain amount, and that use of financial audits should be systemised. There is also the possibility of requesting a derogation. NGOs believe that systematic audits on large projects or the use of their annual audits are the most

appropriate and effective solutions for improving financial security. The latter is common practice in most European countries. Moreover, the use of the audit would make it possible to develop a relationship based on genuine trust between NGOs and the EC, something that the financial guarantee cannot deliver.

[1] **Nota Bene (16 November 1999)**
Update on the Afghanistan contract:

The final contract has now been signed by the lead NGO under the following conditions:

1. It is stipulated that the lead NGO alone is fully responsible for the technical and financial realisation of the project. Therefore, it is not the joint responsibility of all/each NGO involved in the consortium.
2. The lead NGO received a derogation concerning the requested bank guarantee in November, having sent the EC a supporting letter from the French government which stated that the NGO is supported financially by other donors.

> For more information contact the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union Tel. (32) 2 7438760 Email <sec@clong.be>

DAC Guidelines on the Use of Incentives and Disincentives in Situations of Violent Conflict

In October 1998 the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation agreed to commission a number of case studies to examine the use of overseas development aid (ODA) as an incentive or disincentive in situations of violent conflict. Four cases were selected which reflected different conflict situations: Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.[1]

The studies examined objectives sought through the use of incentives and disincentives; contextual variables and determinants of effectiveness; available development cooperation instruments; donor coordination; and policy trade-offs and unintended consequences. In May 1999 the studies were reviewed in a workshop, and in August a synthesis and commentary report[2] was reviewed by an expert group. These form the basis for a consensual policy development process that will be submitted to DAC and then incorporated in the next edition of the *Guidelines*, currently scheduled for December 2000.

The definitions of 'incentive', 'disincentive' and 'conditionality' were refined only after the case studies

had been completed. According to the synthesis report:

Incentives for peace refer to all purposeful uses of aid that strengthen the dynamics that favour peace, by influencing actors' behaviours, by strengthening pro-peace actors' capacities, by changing the relations between conflicting actors (ethnic groups; the state and civil society), and by influencing the social and economic environment in which conflict and peace dynamics take place. Disincentives do the opposite: they weaken and discourage the dynamics that favour violence. Incentives and disincentives can occur in a conditional or in an unconditional manner (*i.e.*, with or without reciprocity requirements, with or without an expected immediate response).

Findings

1. The influence of aid in affecting the course of violent conflict is limited. While aid always has economic and political implications – creating incentives and disincentives for peace or for war – the political economies of war, with few exceptions, are driven by international, national and local interests of greater magnitude than the financial or political clout of external aid.

2. Aid inputs cause both intended and unintended results, and always have an incentive or disincentive quality. Far from being a neutral factor, aid and aid agencies

are seen as players in the conflict matrix. Aid can have a net negative effect, exacerbating conflicts rather than supporting peaceful processes, and in many cases perceptions are at least as important as facts.

3. In attempting to positively influence conflicts, aid agencies have increasingly used conditionality in recent years. The effects, however, have been disappointing. Conditionality does not work well except in specific circumstances, and when applied in a coordinated manner.

Implications

To become more effective in pursuit of peaceful change the aid community will have to change at many levels, from policy making and financing to implementation. This should include the following:

1. Aid agencies will need to improve their capacity to understand the environments in which they operate, including how they are perceived by various key actors. Analytical capacity should be used to develop peace and conflict impact assessments as a starting point for programme planning in conflict prone areas. Aid agencies will also need to improve their strategic vision in terms of their involvement in conflict areas. Since aid has the potential to play a role in shifting the balance of incentives from war to peace, optimal uses must be identified for the relatively small amount of economic and political resources at the disposal of the aid community.

2. Aid agencies should agree to coordinated implementation approaches. As noted in the *Guidelines,* however, coordination is voluntary in the current international assistance regime.[3] ODA policy is subject to the domestic agenda of donor countries, and is usually treated as a part of foreign policy. There is often a lack of clarity on the goals of cooperation, and a lack of coherence in the strategy of donor countries with political aid and security interests not always working in concert.

3. To be effective, aid agencies will need to influence international actors in other sectors, such as diplomacy, military, trade and finance, if they are to develop coherent policies conducive to peace. This can only occur through a collective understanding and commitment among the diverse aid community as a basis for encouraging and lobbying for policy coherence among other international actors.

Problems to Overcome

A reliably positive effect of aid on conflict situations will require more analysis, strategising and coordination. Blockages to cooperation in these areas are well understood. As noted in the *Guidelines,*[4] coordination is currently voluntary in the international assistance regime. Multilateral agencies and international NGOs in particular face a conflicted situation, with the financing structure of humanitarian and development assistance placing aid agencies in competition with each other. This means that coordination becomes a mixture of cooperation, competition and conflict. Debilitating competition and conflict among multilateral agencies is a structural problem that can only be addressed by a major restructuring of the current governance and financing regime.

In being responsible to their primary institutional interests, as well as the pursuit of fulfilling their responsibility to save and preserve life, aid agencies often find coordination more of a burden than a useful part of their modus operandi. A realistic vision that humanitarian and developmental goals can be better achieved through coordinated action is only now beginning to emerge.

Leadership among donors or groups of donors has been pointed to as an option to consensus-based approaches to coordinated action that have not proven effective. It remains to be seen whether 'coalitions of the willing' can proceed without slipping into divisive unilateral action. At a minimum, for this strategy to succeed there will need to be transparent communication.

Jon Ebersole works for the DAC Secretariat and can be contacted on Email: <jon.ebersole@oecd.org>

[1] Sponsored by the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark and Canada respectivly.

[2] Uvin, P, 'The Influence of Aid in Situations of Violent Conflict: A synthesis and commentary on the lessons learned from case studies on the limits and scope for the use of development assistance incentives and disincentives for influencing conflict situations; OECD, Paris, 1999. The case studies, and synthesis report are now available on the web at http://www.oecd.org/dac.

[3] Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation on the Threshold of the 21st Century, DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation, Paris, 1998, p29.

[4] ibid.

The RRN has added further reports to its website:

- A thematic index of all RRN publications
- Can Sanctions be Smarter *and* Sanctions: the current debate*
- A four page briefing on Humanitarian Principles, based on independent research by ODI
- A four page briefing on North Korea: Conflict Management, Food Aid and Humanitarian Principles
- Peacemaking through Protectorate: Six Months on in Kosovo
- A report on a security training in Kosovo

* Violating Human Rights in Haiti by E Gibbons, as reviewed in NL14, has since been published as *Sanctions in Haiti: Human Rights and Democracy Under Assault*

www.oneworld.org/rrn/index.html

Czech Humanitarian Assistance, 1993–1998

After the advent of democracy in 1989, the new Czech Republic suspended foreign aid (non-trade) for five years while government ministries were reorganised and the country underwent economic restructuring. The Republic re-instituted a foreign aid programme in 1995 – the first formerly Communist nation in central Europe to do so. This will likely reach $20 million in 1999. At the same time a number of Czech NGOs (ADRA, Caritas, People in Need Foundation) established their own fundraising and operational capacities in this area, and have provided millions of dollars in direct relief aid to crisis stricken countries in eastern Europe, particularly the former Yugoslavia and territories of the former Soviet Union.

Today, foreign assistance in the Czech Republic is regarded as a crucial feature of its foreign policy. The main criteria for the provision of Czech foreign development assistance are the urgency of need, relations between the Czech Republic and the receiving country, the level of democratisation and adherence to human rights principles, and effectiveness of cooperation including control of the funds' use. Foreign assistance is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while authorised ministries run individual projects. However, there is no specific department dedicated to humanitarian assistance. The government has established a target for foreign aid expenditures of about 0.1% of GDP, the minimum level for OECD member states.

Humanitarian assistance is mainly provided in cases of natural disasters or when people find themselves threatened by war. A specific form of humanitarian aid involves aid to refugees in the Republic itself

Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NGOs

Significant cooperation between the Czech government and NGOs in the area of foreign assistance began in 1995, when NGOs were first invited to participate in the implementation of government-funded programmes. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses a contract-based system for organising humanitarian aid through NGOs. However, documentation on projects is almost impossible to get, there has been no evaluation of any project, and no written account which sheds light on the experience of ministry employees concerning their collaboration with various humanitarian organisations.

General Problems Confronted by Czech Humanitarian Organisations

The financial situation of countries in transition is precarious, and the tradition of charity nearly non-existent. It is clear that the shortage of financial means for improving technical support and organisational structure is one of the major problems faced by humanitarian organisations in the country. State funds are intended exclusively for single projects; insufficient investment in the infrastructure of organisations has led to situations where organisations have not been able to introduce specialised training courses for their field staff. Given this situation, it is not surprising that humanitarian workers have only a vague knowledge of international humanitarian law and other related issues.

While a significant shift towards more effective collaboration between humanitarian organisations and the state has been made during the Kosovo crisis, problems in cooperation remain.

Geographical Distribution of Humanitarian Aid

Regions of Eastern Europe and of the former Soviet Union are the focus of both non-governmental humanitarian organisations and state institutions. At present, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports just a few major humanitarian projects per year. Efforts are undertaken to spend all humanitarian assistance money available as the amount not used in a particular year cannot be transferred to the next one.

Since 1995, about US$1m (30-40 millions of CZK) has been released annually for humanitarian assistance. As mentioned earlier, this amount has been substantially increased in 1999 with an unexpected increase to assist the Balkans. However, this decision highlights the absence of a coherent strategy on humanitarian aid.

The Future

In 1999 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs put forward several proposals aimed at increasing the effectiveness of Czech humanitarian assistance. Foremost, it proposed an exemption of humanitarian assistance on tenders and suggested that humanitarian agencies work within a system of accreditation. However, a detailed proposal on accreditation is not yet in preparation, so implementation would only come in one or two years time. Further, the ministry proposes the establishment of a fund for humanitarian assistance so that money not spent in a particular year can be rolled over. The need for a monitoring and evaluation system is also acknowledged.

However, a theoretical, strategic and systematic approach to Czech foreign aid remains elusive, and the decision making process haphazard. In recent years the government has requested assistance from USAID, the Know How Fund (UK) and other agencies to help it develop more effective mechanisms for targeting and implementing its aid programme, but these efforts have been severely hampered by political instability and ministerial in-fighting.

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The Limits of Humanitarian Aid

In July 1997 the Netherlands government requested opinion from the Advisory Council for International Affairs (AIV) on humanitarian aid in conflict situations. (For a summary of this report please see p40 of this newsletter.) The Advisory Council was asked to shed light on the dilemmas confronting donors and implementing agencies when executing humanitarian programmes and projects, often of a political nature. The questions were, *inter alia*, what role can humanitarian aid play in severe conflict situations in addition to political/military interventions or in the absence thereof? How far should humanitarian aid go; should it include rehabilitation? How can the negative side-effects of humanitarian aid, possibly in prolonging conflicts, be avoided? How can the neutrality of humanitarian interventions be ensured, while accepting simultaneously that some form of advocacy is often needed as well?

The Advisory Council, chaired by former prime minister Ruud Lubbers, published its findings in October 1998. The most significant element of the document is the plea for a more restrictive interpretation of humanitarian aid. The council claims that less than half of Dutch humanitarian assistance is not spent on humanitarian aid in the strict sense, but rather on more structural development. The Netherlands government reacted in May 1999 by nonetheless advocating for a more flexible, wide-ranging and integrated approach of humanitarian aid to include elements of more structural rehabilitation as well as elements of conflict prevention, reconciliation and reconstruction.

The report was discussed by parliament on 3 November 1999. The vast majority of political parties support the broader interpretation of humanitarian aid as advocated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Directorate General for International Cooperation. Humanitarian aid should be part and parcel of a more complex approach and cannot be limited to a set of 'basic needs' aimed at the mere physical survival of the beneficiaries. Much of the debate revolved around the need to build in time to discuss on a case basis the transition from emergency aid/rehabilitation to a more structural form of development cooperation. The minister for development cooperation argued that some of the concerns of parliament had already been addressed and that the programme for post-conflict areas such as Bosnia/Kosovo and Rwanda will be transferred from the humanitarian aid budget to other budgets aimed at more structural forms of cooperation. The minister also vowed that humanitarian aid budgets should not come at the expense of budgets for structural development, and that Africa should not suffer at the expense of increased donor attention on the Balkans.

> For more information contact Ferdinand Smit at the Crisis Management and Humanitarian Aid Department on <ferdinand.smit@dch.minbuza.nl>

NEDAD: Nedworc Disaster and Development Group

Nedad is a workgroup within the Nedworc, an association of independent consultants with considerable experience in various branches of development cooperation. The association provides a forum for its members to exchange information, knowledge and practical experience with each other.

As one of the study and reflection groups within Nedworc, Nedad (Nedworc Disaster and Development Group) brings together those Nedworc members with an interest in and/or working in the field of humanitarian assistance. The group started in early 1996, and at the moment has some 20 members. All members have a background in development cooperation, and are now partially or fully employed in the field of humanitarian assistance. The members have a great variety of educational backgrounds and technical expertise – such as water and sanitation, project management, monitoring and evaluation, agriculture, institutional building, credit, gender, income generating activities – and have worked for NGOs, international organisations, bilateral and multilateral agencies.

The main aim of the group is to use the mutual contacts of its members to raise their level of expertise and to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field. Regular meetings are organised (three to four times a year) where members discuss their latest assignments, or discussions are held which are centred on a specific theme. The members also consult each other for particular assignments, to share information and ideas or for support. Since members all have a background in development cooperation the link between relief and development is their special interest: how to rely on the capacities of the 'victims' themselves; how to strengthen local capacities and local institutions; and the phasing out of emergency assistance and an early start with rehabilitation and development efforts are just some of the issues at hand. Among the specific themes discussed during group meetings have been the assessment of local organisations, evaluation and monitoring of humanitarian assistance, and humanitarian assistance in 'no war-no peace' situations.

Anybody with a proven experience in humanitarian aid and with a strong belief in a developmental approach to emergency relief can become a member of the group. Humanitarian organisations, donors and consultancy firms may wish to contact Nedworc/Nedad when looking for experts.

> For more information contact: Ton de Klerk (klerk@nedworc.org) or the Nedworc-office (office@nedworc.org).

The People in Aid Code: Measuring Progress

The People In Aid Code has progressed significantly since its publication by the RRN in 1997.[1] Now reprinted, it has been translated into French and Spanish, and a Rome-based group of agencies recently produced an Italian version.[2] The Code was voted 'most stimulating Network Paper' by readers of the RRN in 1998.

But the People In Aid Code is more than just a reference document. Back in 1997, 11 NGOs from the UK and Ireland made a commitment to test it in the field and a three-year trial started.

The Code in Practice

Each pilot agency was free to decide where it tested the code, and in 1999 the agencies were asked to review progress to date. Nine responded to the challenge. In an interim progress report, pilot managers and teams described what their agency was doing to implement the code's seven principles. Many added evidence to back their reports including comments – both complimentary and critical – from field staff. Finally, plans for improvements to fill any gaps were described.

Findings from individual 'pilots' are included in a joint review, 'Measure For Measure: A progress report by agencies piloting the People In Aid Code 1997-99.' Because different agencies used different reporting formats, comparison was sometimes hard. However, for the purposes of the synthesis report a group 'score', based on how many described each activity underway, was agreed.

'Measure For Measure' found that over half the pilot agencies could describe in detail how they fulfilled Principles 1 to 3 on corporate strategy, policy, and fairness and effectiveness. All had appointed a pilot project manager, for example. Nine reported on allocation of resources to meet staff training and development needs. Just over half said they measured field staff recruitment against targets that reflect concern for racial or gender equality.

Fewer than half, however, described in detail how they measured up to Principles 4 to 7 on consultation, projects, training, and safety and security. Few limited staff working hours in the field. Surprisingly for a sector dominated by concern for human rights, few admitted trade union or staff association representatives into consultation processes. Least progress had been made on safety-record keeping. Only one agency indicated that records of work-related accidents, injuries and fatalities were systematically maintained and used to help reduce future risk.

It was generally acknowledged that the provisions of Principle 7 had often been the sole responsibility of field managers or partner agencies, rather than a corporate responsibility. Comments from staff, however, illustrated the different approaches to personnel security in the field. In one agency's programme: '[Staff security] is reviewed monthly at scheduled staff meetings, or earlier in case of emergency incident.' But in another's: 'Only when we were in the field and evacuation became a possibility [did we receive any information about what to do].'

Some Outcomes

Most pilot agencies plan to have a more proactive approach to safety and security in future. Some have begun by, for example, raising field staff insurance levels following concern voiced in RRN[3] and a review by People In Aid in 1997/98.[4] Others have contributed to the People In Aid/InterHealth brochure *Prevent Accidents!*[5] or plan to add health and safety to security and personal health briefings.

An issue for all agencies was how to communicate the lessons learned with colleagues, partner agencies and stakeholder groups. This meant advocacy by these organisations. British Red Cross and Tearfund, for example, saw an opportunity for direct dialogue and advocacy about the Code with 'partner' agencies in other countries. International Health Exchange produced a brochure, *Rights & Wrongs* for British expatriate field staff. RedR used its website to publicise generic issues.

Overall, 'Measure For Measure' found that most pilot agencies committed to the People In Aid Code despite the time needed for implementing and measuring progress. Pilot agency plans are now underway. Activities in 1999–200 will be externally audited in England, Ireland, Kenya and Rwanda, and a report published next year.

> For more information about People In Aid contact Tel/Fax +44 (0)171 235 0895 or Email: <Aidpeople@aol.com>

[1] *People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel* RRN, 1997.
[2] Codice di People In Aid sui Migliori Sistemi di Utilizzo nella gestione e nel sostegno del personale di aiutio, Volontari E Terzo Mondo 1-2, Rome, gennaio-giugno, 1999.
[3] *The Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complax Emergencies* A Hallam, RRN 1998.
[4] *Under Cover?* Insurance for aid workers, S Davidson and I Neal, People In Aid, 1998.
[5] *Prevent Accidents!* Dr T Lankester and S Davidson, InterHealth and People In Aid, 1999.

The Reach Out Initiative

The post-cold war era of the 1990s has been characterised by the proliferation of small, regional or internal wars, fought mainly for ethnic or economic reasons. These wars are marked by the deliberate targeting of civilians, resulting in extraordinary suffering and displacement. At the same time a majority of governments, responding to pressure from their electorate and influenced by media hype, are restricting access to those seeking protection from conflict and persecution. The result has been a reduction in the numbers of refugees granted asylum and a substantial increase in the numbers of internally displaced peoples who lack adequate protection either in law or in practice.

Until quite recently, the majority of humanitarian assistance agencies were convinced that they had no role in the protection of refugees and people in refugee-like situations, and relied on host governments, UNHCR and ICRC to assume full responsibility. Following a number of initiatives by UNHCR and ICRC, however, there has been a growing realisation that, while the main responsibility for the protection of refugees and people in refugee-like situations rests with sovereign governments, human rights and humanitarian assistance organisations also have a responsibility to provide protection. That said, it is understood that UNHCR and ICRC have an explicit and historic mandate for protection.

In March 1999 UNHCR held a meeting of 30 humanitarian assistance and human rights agencies in New York to discuss how NGOs and UNHCR could work better together in the protection of vulnerable people – the so-called Reachout process. An outcome of that meeting was a steering committee which spawned a total of six working groups to look at various issues of protection. The second working group entitled 'operationalisation of protection' and comprising the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Rescue Committee, CARE International, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response and SCF (USA), decided that it could best carry out its mandate by developing a project to provide training to operations staff in humanitarian agencies – principally field-based middle to senior managers. The working group was heavily influenced by the recent RRN Network Paper, *Protection in Practice*, by Diane Paul.

The prime objective of the project is to enhance refugee protection awareness, knowledge and skills of those persons responsible for the delivery of humanitarian assistance within NGOs, RCRC National Societies and their International Federation, and to improve collaboration and cooperation between UNHCR and course participants.

The project will use as its base text the recent publication 'Protecting Refugees – A Field Guide for NGOs' (published by HCR but written by the Norwegian Refugee Council; see review on p41 in the Publications section of this newsletter). The project proposes to draft a three-day training module plus a three-hour module that can be incorporated into other training sessions, and to hold 27 workshops throughout the three years of the project, plus a further nine training of trainers workshops. The proposal provides for a scholarship fund to enable national NGOs and Red Cross national societies who may not otherwise be able to afford to attend.

For more information contact Robbie Thomson at the IFRC on <thomson@ifrc>.org or Margaret Green at the IRC in New York on <mgreen@intrescom.org>

Virtual Disaster Library

The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) has developed a CD-ROM Virtual Disaster Library in collaboration with the Regional Disaster Information Center and the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The library contains more than 25,000 pages of experiences, ideas and solutions to advance the cause of disaster reduction, and calls itself 'the most complete collection of technical information on disasters and emergencies' worldwide.

The Virtual Disaster Library contains:

• More than 250 complete technical publications in English or Spanish on a variety of subjects related to preparedness, mitigation and response to disasters, especially in the health sector;

• All the technical publications on disasters published by PAHO (in English, Spanish or French) from 1979 to January 1999;

• The complete collection (from 1979 to 1999) in English and Spanish of the PAHO newsletter DISASTERS: Preparedness and Mitigation in the Americas;

• A selection of documents from the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and Costa Rica's National Emergency Commission.

In addition to the CD-ROM version, the library can be freely accessed through the internet at the following websites: <www.paho.org/english/ped/pedhome.htm> and <www.disasters.info.desastres.net>

African Universities Establish Graduate Programmes in Humanitarian and Refugee Studies

A workshop hosted by the Association of African Universities (AAU) was held in Accra, Ghana in June 1999. It brought together seven African universities in the process of establishing, or planning to establish, graduate programmes in the humanitarian and refugee field. Other participants included representatives of UN agencies and UK and US humanitarian researchers/academics.

It is hoped that this initiative will result in the provision of encouragement and support to these universities as they develop courses in this field. One of the points that emerged from the workshop was the need for the universities to establish good links with humanitarian agencies. In addition, the fact that the different universities had developed different fields of specialisation and strengths suggested that the initiative should encourage the development of a network of the universities (perhaps along the lines of the EU NOHA programme) where students undertake a common core curriculum and move to other universities to take their specialist courses.

The seven universities in the process of establishing or planning to establish the graduate courses and the contact persons in each case are:

Ibadan, Nigeria: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Department of Political Science. Focus: conflict-violence; conflict-peacemaking; refugees-migration; military-peacekeeping-peace enforcement. Status: planned for 2000. Contact: Prof Bayo Adekanye. uipolosci@skannet.com University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Lagos, Nigeria: Faculty of Law. Focus: law and refugees. Status: planned. Contact: Prof E O Akanki. lawlulag@micro.com University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria.

Makerere, Uganda: Faculty of Law. A masters degree in Forced Migration Studies has just commenced (autumn 1999). Contact: Dr Joe Oloka-Onyango and Dr James Katalikawe. lawdean@imul.com PO Box 7062, Makerere, Kampala, Uganda.

Witwatersrand, South Africa: Graduate School for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Focus: forced migration. Status: planned for 2000. Contact: Ms Zonke Majodina and Dr Sally Perbedy. 518pgrade@muse.wits.ac.za Private Bag X3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

UNISA, Pretoria: Socio-Economic and Human Rights Research Centre (SOCHRREC). Focus: human rights. Status: planned for 2000. Contact Prof Z N Jobodwana and Prof Louis Molamu jobodzn@alpha.unisa.ac.za PO Box 392, Pretoria, South Africa.

University of Ghana, Accra: Department of Political Science. Focus: conflict studies-resolution; refugees-ethnic studies; human rights. Status: planned for 2000. Contact Prof Mike Oquaye, PO Box 64, Legon, Ghana.

Egerton, Kenya: Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Focus: disasters awareness and management; society and international humanitarian law; conflict management and resolution; refugee rights and resettlement studies. Status: some of the courses already running, with others required to bring it to the level of a masters programme to be added, hopefully during 2000. Contact: Dr Michael Thuo Kuria. eu-cs@net2000ke.com PO box 536, Njoro, Kenya.

For further information on the AAU initiative contact: Prof Matos, Secretary General of the Association of African Universities, Accra, Ghana <matos@aau.org> or his assistant Agnes Apedoe <aapedoe@aau.org> PO Box 5744, Accra-North, Ghana.

Non-governmental Organisations and Natural Disaster Prevention

This represents a two-year research project managed by the British Red Cross to study NGO activities in the field of natural disaster mitigation and preparedness, principally in developing countries. The project now has its own website <www.redcross.org.uk/> Go to the section 'Our Work' and then to 'International Activities' where you can read and download an outline of the project and the position paper written at the end of its pilot phase.

Further information will be posted on the website between now and September 2000 when the project ends.

If you have ideas or information to share with the research team, you can send them to the project's email address <dmp@redcross.org.uk>

Country Updates

Chechnya

Chechnya declared independence in 1991, refusing to become a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In 1994, the Russians went to war with the breakaway republic, but in late 1996 Russian troops withdrew from Chechnya, demoralised and defeated after two years of brutality that had left most of Chechnya's infrastructure in ruins and some 50,000 Chechen civilians dead. The subsequent 1996 'peace agreement' left the question of Chechnya's ultimate status open until the end of 2001.

Chechnya enjoyed de facto independence, and Maskharov was elected president in January 1997. Internationally, however, Chechnya was not recognised. Two events have now triggered the return of the Russian army. First, the incursions by Chechen Islamic militants, led by their most successful guerrilla commander Basayev, into western Dagesthan in August. These were eventually driven back by Russian forces who then bombed alleged 'bases' in Chechnya. Second, a series of terrorist attacks in Moscow and south Russia, which killed hundreds of civilians. Russia has now sealed off Chechnya and despatched groundforces in a campaign to 'eradicate terrorism'.

This second Chechen war has created a large scale human rights and refugee crisis. More than 50,000 Chechens in Moskow, the second largest concentration after Grozny, are threatened and persecuted. And over 200,000 have become refugees, mostly in Ingushetia, with small numbers in North Ossetia and Dagestan. At least 160,000 others are internally displaced – a number that will rise as Russian troops closed the Ingush border in late October. This is about a third of a total population of around one million.

Like the Kosovars, the Chechen's have a high birth rate and therefore a very young population: many of the displaced are children and women, and also the elderly. The majority of refugees in small Ingushetia have (again) been taken in by host families, but the need for food, medical care and adequate winter facilities are desperate. They are also likely to be unmet. On the one hand, supply delivery is encountering many 'administrative' and 'logistical' obstacles from Russian troops. On the other, aid agencies are very cautious about deploying in this high-risk area: Chechnya became infamous after a spate of murders and kidnappings of aid workers in 1996 and 1997

(including that of Fred Cuny) which led to the total withdrawal of international organisations. International aid agencies, including the ICRC, UNHCR, NGOs and church organisations, are trying to help through local counterparts such as the Russian Red Cross and Russian Orthodox Church, or small Ingush and Chechen NGOs; the latter are sometimes set up by the former national staff of international organisations. But access and implementation capacity are currently very limited and a humanitarian disaster looms.

There are serious problems with Russia's military action. First, there is no proof that the Chechens are responsible for the terrorist bomb blasts (which the Chechen government has condemned). Moreover, the indiscriminate Russian bombing and shelling of Chechnya is causing mostly civilian casualties. This violates the most basic rules of international humanitarian law. Third, this offensive is more than likely to foster increased hatred and extremism among the Chechens – which dates back this century to the forced mass deportation of Chechens in the winter of 1944, mostly to Kazakhstan. This was so brutal that by the summer of 1948 a quarter of the 500,000 affected Chechen's and Ingush had died. Pouring more repression onto this existing hatred among Chechen's – with their own culture of hospitality but also of violent blood feuds – and in a

poor republic where there is a large number of unemployed young men, is a recipe for long term trouble.

International media attention is beginning to spur some international criticism of Russia's tactics. However, there are various reasons why the international community will not be assertive over Chechnya as it has been over Kosovo.

Criminal gangs thrive in Chechnya. They are heavily involved in smuggling and black marketeering, and have kidnapped foreigners for ransom. This lawlessness poses a potential threat to the oil industry in the Caspian Sea area in which foreign companies have invested. The centre of this activity is Baku in Azerbaijan, but vital pipelines run north through Chechnya and Dagesthan.

There is also evidence that Islamic extremists and potential terrorists have found a 'safe haven' in Chechnya, although the majority of Chechens resist Islamic fundamentalism. Chechens refer to these people as 'Taliban', though they are not necessarily all Afghans. This is a group that Western governments themselves would like to see eliminated. Add to this the desire of the West to rebuild relationships with Russia which were severely strained by NATO's bombing campaign against Serbia, as well as the unwillingness of the West to rock even more the very unstable Russian boat, especially with presidential elections due in 2000 and great uncertainty over the 'what after Yeltsin?' scenario.

It is therefore very likely that the Chechen population will continue to be held hostage by its own criminal gangs and extremists, and by Russia's army. Humanitarian assistance will likely only be used as a substitute for political action.
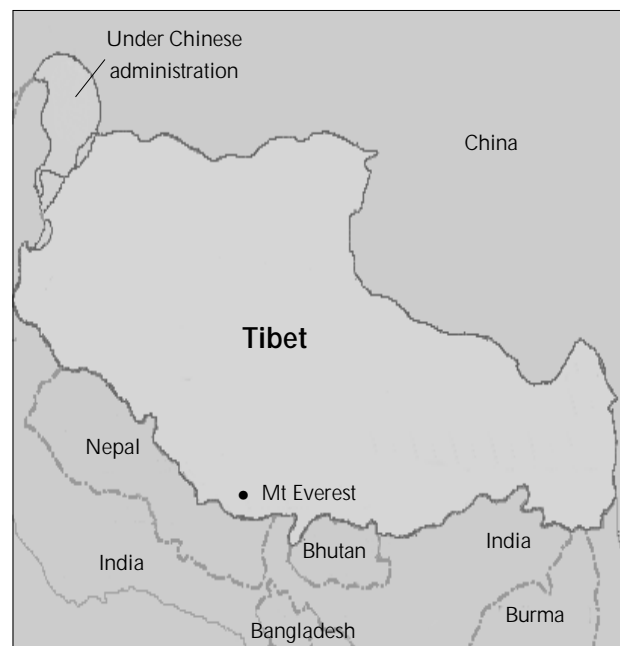
Tibet

In mid-October, Chinese president Jiang Zemin visited six countries, including the UK and France. In both these countries, police kept public protesters over Chinese human rights abuses in Tibet well out of sight.

The attitude of the UK government is all the more surprising given that Britain was the first to introduce the concept of autonomy for Tibet in a message to the Chinese authorities in 1912, and during the Simla conference of 1913–1914. Of course imperial politics dominated at the time, and the British position was motivated by the concern to secure the northern border of India by interposing an autonomous Tibet between China and India, and a Chinese territory between the British and Russian empires at a time when the latter two were concluding a treaty with Mongolia. But to the surprise of both the British and Chinese delegations, the Tibetans at Simla presented a demand for independence. Neither Britain nor China were prepared to accept this, so discussions centred on a distinction between 'Outer Tibet' (western Kham and central and west Tibet) enjoying substantial Tibetan autonomy, and 'Inner Tibet' (eastern Kham and Amdo), with a stronger Chinese presence.

Although the three parties did not reach formal agreement on all detail, the Simla conference for the first time discussed Tibet's relationship with China from an international perspective. Between 1912 and 1950 the Tibetans enjoyed de facto independence, mainly because China was occupied with revolution and civil war. But in 1950 victorious Communist forces entered Tibet by force – an act not challenged by the international community, itself still in imperial mode. The Chinese have since claimed that Tibet was historically a part of China. This is incorrect.

In 1951 the Tibetans and Chinese came to a 'Seventeen Point Agreement', but Chinese-imposed 'democratic reforms' and 'socialist transformation' in subsequent years revealed the profound differences between the two countries about the meaning and implementation of the agreement. A Tibetan revolt in 1959 was brutally repressed with over 80,000 killed. The Dalai Lama and some

100,000 Tibetans fled abroad, repudiated the 1951 agreement, and established a government-in-exile. The UN adopted rather meek resolutions about the right of Tibetans to self-determination and their own identity (www.tibet-society.org.uk/un.html).

The Seventeen Point Agreement discussed the status of Tibet in terms of the Chinese concept of 'national regional autonomy', and led to the creation of a Preparatory Committee Tibet Autonomous Region (PCTAR). The latter was formally created in 1964. The term is misleading. Territorially, the TAR is limited and excludes significant parts in the more resource-rich east which, together with its substantial Tibetan population, has been administratively incorporated into Chinese provinces. Second, the Chinese policy towards Tibet in practice has been one of assimilation, not of autonomy.

Two major strategies for assimilation have been adopted: the first went beyond 'communising' the feudal structures of old Tibet to a deliberate attempt to destroy the Tibetan identity, through attacks on its cultural and religious manifestations and beliefs. The strategy is to

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'sinocise' the Tibetans – that is, enforce a Han cultural identity on them. Following aggressive repression during the years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the Tibetans were again allowed more cultural autonomy. However, just as with Soviet attempts to 'russify' its non-Russian minorities (like those in the Caucasus) the assault on the Tibetan's cultural identity achieved the opposite. Tibetan nationalism, closely linked to its cultural and religious identity, revived in the early 1980s. At the Tibet Work Meeting in 1984 China therefore changed policy. The pursuit of assimilation through cultural and political change was replaced by a more aggressive policy of assimilation through physical and biological colonisation. Han colonists now began pouring into the TAR region, taking over all key economic positions, while coercive birth control policies – including enforced abortion and sterilisation – were added to turn the Tibetans into an insignificant minority in Han China. The World Bank (unwittingly?) collaborated when, as part of its poverty reduction campaign, it agreed a £100m loan to Beijing this year to resettle several thousand Han Chinese and Chinese Muslims to more fertile western Qinghai, once a part of Tibet proper but left out of the TAR (www.savetibet.org).

Since 1988 the Dalai Lama has adopted a 'middle way', accepting Chinese authority over foreign and defence policy but seeking advanced domestic autonomy for Tibet. The hopes subsequently raised by the collapse of the Soviet empire, the pro-democracy movement in China and award of the Nobel Prize to the Dalai Lama, have not yet yielded tangible results. The destruction of Tibet, as a territory, culture and race, continues. The powers that challenged Milosevic over his repression of the Kosovars have not challenged China. The NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade maybe a background reason. The negotiations for a trade deal to open the Chinese market, and bring China into the WTO, was probably a more prominent reason. Presumably the trade agenda is more important.

For further information read Smith, W (1996) *Tibetan Nation* (Boulder, Westview Press) and see <www.tibet-society.org.uk>

Somalia

In July, international aid agencies in Somalia issued a Donor Alert requesting US$17.5m to support emergency relief activities up to December 1999. Poor and erratic seasonal rains in southern Somalia, as elsewhere in the Horn and East Africa, prompted concern about a fourth successive crop failure and widespread water scarcity. The Donor Alert identified 1.2 million Somalis to be 'at risk', with 700,000 considered 'food insecure'. Although 1999 crop production may prove marginally better than previous years, the condition of livestock in 1999 is considered worse due to poor pasture.

The food security situation has been compounded by a downturn in the economy – a consequence of deteriorating infrastructure, the collapse of the banana trade, and the inflationary impact of the introduction of new Somali banknotes by warlords and businessmen during 1999. Whether the dire predictions of a food and water emergency develop into an acute humanitarian crisis will largely depend on the evolving political and military situation. If resources can be secured from donors, agencies should be capable of responding to the food, water and health needs identified in the Donor Alert. The ability of the system to respond to the impact of a major escalation in fighting is less clear.

When international peacekeeping forces withdrew from Somalia in March 1995 the country did not revert to full-scale war, as was widely predicted. Consequently the recurrence of famine has been avoided. In Somaliland (which declared secession in 1991) and Puntland State in the north (a non-secessionist regional state established in 1998) there has been a gradual political and economic recovery. In the south, a military stalemate has also created the space in some regions for the re-introduction of local administrations and a measure of order. The main exceptions have been the Bay and Bakool regions, which have been occupied by General Mohamed Farah Aideed's Somali National Alliance (SNA) since September 1995. In 1998, however, there was a resurgence in political violence and banditry throughout much of southern Somalia. This was followed in 1999 by significant changes in the political and military situation, the immediate cause of which was the financing and arming of Somali factions by Ethiopia and Eritrea and other regional powers such as Egypt and Libya.

Somalia and Ethiopia have a history of hostile relations revolving around disputed territorial claims. Somalia's collapse in 1991 and a change of Ethiopian government led to a temporary easing of tensions. Ethiopian security concerns resurfaced in 1995 and 1996, following cross-border raids into eastern Ethiopia, assassination attempts and bombings linked to Islamic radicals. In response to this perceived threat from Islamic groups – which had grown in strength following the

departure of international peacekeeping forces – Ethiopia attacked Islamic strongholds in Gedo region in southern Somalia in 1996. At the same time, under the umbrella of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia took on the challenge of pursuing a resolution to the Somali conflict and sponsored a protracted mediation process aimed at building an alliance of Somali factions. The so-called 'Sodere process' failed to elicit the support of the faction led by General Aideed's son, Hussein Aideed, and was undermined in December 1997 by an Egyptian mediated agreement between Aideed and other southern factions for the establishment of an administration for Benadir region, incorporating Mogadishu. The collapse of the Sodere process led Ethiopia to modify its engagement in Somalia from a political one to a more overt military one.

The foreign military engagement in Somalia escalated in early 1999 following the outbreak of the Ethiopia–Eritrea border war, as both states sought to advance their own war aims through Somali proxies. The fallout was rapid. In March 1999 the six-month old Benadir administration collapsed, leaving a political vacuum again in Mogadishu. In June, the Rahanweyn Resistence Army (RRA), with strong Ethiopian support, routed Aideed's SNA forces in Baidoa. In Gedo region Ethiopian troops intervened to support one faction of the Somali National Front. Having lost Baidoa, Aideed and allied factions captured the port of Kismayo from General Mohamed Hersi 'Morgan', who had held it since 1993. Security in the agriculturally rich Lower Shabelle region deteriorated following the RRA's threat to 'liberate' the region from occupying forces.

Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have denied their involvement in Somalia, and have managed to keep their forces hidden from international scrutiny. Their involvement clearly violates established international principles and the arms embargo on Somalia established by UN Security Council resolution 733 (1992).

Their engagement also served to exacerbate broader regional tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt that have previously undermined diplomatic efforts in Somalia. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have denied their involvement in the country, and have managed to keep their forces hidden from international scrutiny. While the UN Security Council, the European Union, the Organisation of African Unity and the League of Arab States have all expressed concern at 'reports' of external interference, none have verified the military engagement of regional states, or allegations of new arms flows.

Hopes of an end to the Ethiopia–Eritrea war and of averting further escalation of the Somali conflict are proving premature. Changes in the military balance of power have brought an immediate respite to some vulnerable populations – particularly in Bay and Bakool where international access has improved – and long term positive political change may accrue. However, foreign military engagement in Somalia has also served to revitalise the fortunes of the warlords, and to rearm of their militia.

Since August there have been some positive developments. In a comprehensive report on Somalia in August, the UN Secretary General, while recognising the complexity of the situation, urged UN agencies to do more to re-establish their presence in Somalia. The appointment of a new UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia is helping to revitalise a demoralised humanitarian community. There is also renewed optimism about diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. These are cohering around a process initiated by Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh which envisages a National Rescue Conference on Somalia. This will focus on the participation of representative Somali civil society actors rather than the politico-military leaders (the 'warlords').

The initiative is expected to be endorsed by IGAD in November, and will be formally launched after Ramadan with a Somali cultural festival in Djibouti in the new year. In a statement to the UN General Assembly in September President Guelleh argued that if the Somali 'warlords' fail to accept the process, or undermine it, then they must be charged with crimes against humanity.

Contributors to the News Section

EC Push for NGOs to Form Consortia: Pilar Mendez, Liaison Committee of Development NGOS to the European Union, Brussels, Belgium.

DAC Guidelines on the Use of Incentives and Disincentives in Situations of Violent Conflict: Jon Ebersole, DAC Secretariat, Paris, France.

Czech Humanitarian Assistance, 1993-1998: Blanka Hancilova, Institute of International Studies, Charles University.

Limits of Humanitarian Aid: Ferdinand Smit, Crisis Management and Humanitarian Aid Department, The Netherlands.

NEDAD: Nedworc Disaster and Development Group: Ton de Klerk, Nedworc, The Netherlands.

The People in Aid Code: Measuring Progress: Sara Davidson, People in Aid, London.

The Reach Out Initiative: Robbie Thomson, IFRC, Geneva, Switzerland.

Virtual Disaster Library: PAHO, Washington DC, USA.

African Universities Establish Graduate programmes in Humanitarian and Refugee Studies: Prof Matos, Secretary General of the Association of African Universities, Accra, Ghana.

Non-governmental Organisations and Natural Disaster Prevention: British Red Cross, London, UK.

Contributors to the Country Updates

Chechnya: **RRN Staff**.

Tibet: **RRN Staff**.

Somalia: **Mark Bradbury, Independent Researcher**.

Training Courses

Working with Conflict
1 May – 7 July 2000, Birmingham, UK

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

Strengthening Policy and Practice in Areas of Conflict
17 – 21 July 2000, Birmingham, UK

Primarily for staff of agencies concerned with relief, development, rights and peace-building programmes. The workshop will provide practical models and methods to assist aid agency staff to analyse conflicts, and to integrate effective conflict-handling strategies into their programmes.

For information on both courses contact: Responding to Conflict (RTC), Selly Oak Colleges (RI), 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ. Tel: (44) 121 415 5641. Fax: (44) 121 4154119. Email: <enquiries@respond.org> Website:

Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance
Sept 2000–May 2001, Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA

This one-year masters is a joint degree at Tufts University. Its focus is on world relief and development, and is intended for mid-career professionals who have significant field experience in humanitarian assistance.

The programme offers an academic setting where professionals can develop their knowledge and skills in the areas of nutrition, food policy, and economic, political, and social development as they relate to humanitarian assistance in famine, complex emergencies and other disasters.

For further information contact: Admissions/Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance, Feinstein International Famine Center, 96 Packard Avenue, Medford, Ma 02155, Phone: (1) 617 627 3423, Fax:(1) 6176273428, Email <ggamba01@tufts.edu> Website <www.tufts.edu/nutrition/famine>

Security Training Workshops
Various dates

RedR is running a training programme on NGO security in a number of areas affected by conflict. The aim of the programme is to provide field staff working in relief operations with an approach and set of tools that can help them operate effectively and safely in insecure environments. The programme includes a number of NGO security management workshops, staff security training courses, and agency security policy seminars.

For further information on forthcoming workshops and field training courses please contact: Kirstien Webb, RedR, 1 Great George Street, London SW1P 3AA Tel: (44) 171 222 0686 / 233 3590. Email: <kirstien@redr.demon.co.uk> Website: <www.redr.org>

Protecting Human Rights Under the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights in Situations of Conflict in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone
28 February–10 March 2000, Banjul, Gambia

This training session aims to encourage and enable Sierra Leonean civil society organisations to use the African Charter on Human and People's Rights for the redress of human rights violations, perpetrated during the recent conflict in Sierra Leone.

For further information contact Helga Gibbons, Projects Co-ordinator, Alliances for Africa, Unit 10, Aberdeen Centre, 24 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA Fax: (44) 171 354 49006. Email: <afa@alliancesforafrica.org>

International Summer School in Forced Migration
17 July–4 August 2000, Oxford, UK

The Refugee Studies Programme at Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford is offering a three-week residential summer school. The course is intended for upper and middle managers of NGOs, IGOs and government organisations and researchers involved with assistance and policy making for forced migrants.

For further information and application forms contact: The International Summer School Administrator, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St. Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA Email: <summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk> Tel: (44) 1865 270723. Fax: (44) 1865 270721.

Conferences

International Public Nutrition and Emergencies: The Potential for Improving Practice

Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA, 17–18 June 1999

What is Public Nutrition?

Public nutrition is a broad-based problem-solving approach to addressing nutritional problems of populations or communities. In contrast to clinical nutrition, the emphasis is shifted from the individual to the population level, and from a narrow set of technical interventions to a wide range of strategies, policies and programmes to combat malnutrition. Public nutrition is also distinct from public health in a few key ways. For example, public health tends to approach nutritional problem-solving using a medical, disease prevention model. Therefore, while social and economic determinants of health outcomes (including nutrition) are explicitly addressed, it is rare that public health programmes take account of the public policy in food-related fields outside of health – for example economics, trade or agriculture. This distinction is highly relevant to public nutrition in emergencies, where public health strategies fall short of taking account of the wider social, economic and political determinants of access to food, relevant public policies, and community and individual strategies for dealing with food insecurity. Additionally, a public nutrition approach makes explicit the impact of the political, economic and health environment on a family's ability to care for its members and itself.

This approach requires that a context specific analysis of the types and causes of malnutrition form the basis of decision making at all stages of the project cycle including planning and designing programmes, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Workshop

Presentations on the first day of the workshop focused on the conceptual issues around the role and significance of nutrition in emergencies. Speakers addressed issues relating to the nature of vulnerability and the need for better understanding of the impact of risks and shocks beyond physiological outcomes, the concept of public nutrition, and the responsibilities within the international humanitarian system for addressing nutritional problems.

The plenary discussions concluded that among the wider humanitarian system there are common misconceptions about the scope of nutrition, which tend to give it a narrow focus on malnutrition with a primary intervention of feeding people. This limits the scope of humanitarian response actions, and fails to take account of the social, economic and political determinants of malnutrition thus precluding the design and implementation of innovative interventions.

Participants attempted to reach a common definition and understanding of the international public nutrition approach, which proved to be a difficult and sometimes contentious discussion.

Presentations on the second day included operational tools and frameworks that directly impact on nutrition and are currently used by agencies. For example, representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP presented the memoranda of understanding between key UN agencies. In addition, an NGO representative with direct involvement in developing the Sphere project minimum standards for humanitarian response in relation to nutrition discussed their implications for future programmes. Six case-studies illustrated the components of a public nutrition approach and the practical constraints in addressing both malnutrition and its underlying causes.

Workshop Outcomes

Most key decisions about nutrition in emergencies are made by non-nutritionists. Hence participants agreed on the necessity of raising levels of awareness and understanding among senior policy-makers and all actors in the humanitarian sphere about the impact of their actions on nutrition. Recommended strategies for achieving this included:

1. ***Developing better multi-sectoral working relationships and strengthening relationships with donors and key decision makers in the humanitarian system***. The individual components of a public nutrition approach should not be seen as competing priorities but rather as fundamental principals of humanitarian action in response to nutritional crises.

2. ***Institutional learning, training and capacity-building***, particularly in relation to institutions based in developing countries and building upon initiatives such as the Sphere project. Appropriate training and education curricula and related materials were felt to be needed for both specialist and non-specialist staff working in food and nutrition-related programmes at all levels. Information was seen to be central to the process of institutional learning, education of the media, and informing key decision makers within the donor community. A central part of this learning should focus around how nutritional problems in emergencies are defined and identified, as this determines in part when and how to respond. Hence strengthening the conceptual basis is as important as technical and operational advances.

The papers presented at the workshop, plus an overview of the proceedings, are published as a special issue of the journal *Disasters*. This may be ordered using the form included in this Newsletter, or directly from Blackwell Publishers Journals (108 Coulee Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK *or* 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA).

Protecting People in Time of War

Grande Arche de la Défense, Paris, 2 July 1999

The theme of this conference is clearly of great significance as the international community begins to reflect on Serb repression of Kosovar Albanians and on the NATO response. But while Kosovo was an omnipresent backdrop, a number of speakers criticised the inconsistency with which the international community identifies and responds to complex political emergencies – a reflection of the political and economic influences on humanitarian assistance. Ongoing conflicts and human rights abuses in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Burma and South Sudan are barely recognised.

A variety of key themes were explored, mostly related to the changing nature of conflict. For example:

- Conflict is increasingly internal within states; numerous actors are present and the simple 'two sides' model no longer holds; globalisation exacerbates competition between groups; political violence, often directed at civilian populations is a key mechanism for obtaining power and resources.
- Global media is everywhere so the excuse that 'we didn't know' is no excuse.
- The emergence of privatised global armies whose lines of accountability are ambiguous reflect the pace of globalisation.
- Humanitarian organisations face the challenge of working with, and in some cases under, the guidance of the military; seeking to maintain their ethics and ethos despite a radically different world; protecting themselves at a time when humanitarian aid and workers themselves are targeted at unprecedented levels.
- International humanitarian law and international human rights law have become increasingly developed but their implementation, and sanctions against those failing to comply, are feeble. The limits to humanitarian action in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and equity are increasingly being highlighted, with increasing calls for detailed critique and examination of performance.

A post-conference series of meetings is envisaged to further develop key concerns. Among those that struck a chord were:

The need for more attention to prevention: Humanitarian actors and development agencies must recognise the importance of promoting equity-oriented development and ensuring that human rights are promoted and protected. Yet development expenditure is decreasing, and debt relief inadequate for current needs. Despite numerous early warning systems and vulnerability assessment, little heed is taken.

The fact that there are new global institutions and a reformed UN: Present structures are inadequate, with the veto held by five UN Security Council members identified as one of the most problematic features alongside failure by key donors, notably the US, to pay its debts to the UN. Proposals regarding how to assess and how to intervene in internal struggles, over-riding current concepts of sovereignty, are urgently required if consistency and accountability are to be promoted.

The protection of civilian populations must assume political priority: There needs to be political leadership in conflict affected countries, and in those countries responding to complex political emergencies. Kosovo raises questions about whether alternative strategies would have afforded greater protection for the Albanian population. International civil society has a key role to play in challenging states to prevent inequitable, conflict-inducing policies, and to ensure that humanitarian responses are 'people-sensitive'.

Humanitarian action cannot substitute for political action: The causes of major conflicts are invariably political and require political solutions. Humanitarian action is a 'convenient' but short term and ultimately inadequate response for failing to deal with the underlying political issues. Consistency of approach is wanted: where has been the reaction to repression in Turkey, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Burma?

The role of the military must be circumscribed in humanitarian response: Despite acceptance of the valuable role the military can play in facilitating logistics and communication, there is growing concern to contain military involvement in humanitarian assistance – not least to protect the independence and ostensible values of the humanitarian community. NGOs working with NATO are increasingly seen as agents of NATO and are unable to establish any sense of impartiality and independence.

Post-conflict transition requires rebuilding the state: Despite a decade or more of state-bashing, it is increasingly apparent that the absence of a functional state allows the rule of law to be undermined, the weak preyed upon, and the powerful made omnipotent and unaccountable. Working with indigenous structures and communities is key, as are efforts to support the development of transparent and accountable governance at all levels.

Justice must underpin post-conflict transitions: Attention to human rights, to bringing to trial the perpetrators of repression and ensuring that justice is done, are essential to promoting the long term healing necessary in conflict-blighted communities – especially those in which notions of ethnicity, religion and race have been inflamed as part of the conflict.

The need to build the evidence base for humanitarian action and post-conflict recovery: There is an urgent need to more critically assess the nature of humanitarian responses and learn from them.

Throughout all this, the viewpoint of affected communities and affected populations was glaringly missing. Future efforts must emphasise how to bring affected communities and their different perspectives more powerfully into the equation.

Anthony Zwi is Head of the Health Policy Unit at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Email: <a.zwi@lshtm.ac.uk>

Conferences

Older People – A Burden or a Resource?

Helsinki, 16 September 1999

> *Older people are our library – they have a great store of knowledge and experience which we call on when we face problems. (Young woman, Rwanda).*

The number of older people in developing countries will more than double over the next 25 years. Thus older people will form an increasing proportion of those affected by humanitarian crises. This conference aimed to focus more attention on the situation of older people in emergencies and contributed to the development of guidelines on best practice for older people in emergency situations.

The conference considered the findings of an ECHO-sponsored review of the experience of older people in emergencies using field research carried out by HelpAge International, in collaboration with humanitarian organisations. These findings were presented alongside the experience of a wide range of international agencies including UNHCR, WHO and the Finnish Red Cross.

The findings show that older people are consistently among the worst affected by humanitarian crises, since emergency situations rapidly alter the family and community relations that many older people rely on as part of their support network.

Some humanitarian agencies successfully include older people in their activities. However, older people remain marginalised in much relief work; their needs are misunderstood and the productive contribution they make to their communities goes unrecognised.

Main Issues Identified by Older People

* *Chronic ill health, income, mobility and mental health*: these are key factors that make it difficult for older people to support themselves and their dependants through an emergency. When service providers do not take these factors into account in emergency situations, older people experience discrimination.

* *Older people's contribution*: older people are more likely to be givers than receivers of aid, consistently making contributions in the provision of care, education, coping strategies, counselling, leadership, income generation, wisdom, knowledge and rehabilitation.

* *Lack of consultation*: the almost universal lack of consultation reported throughout the field research is both a symptom and a cause of the marginal position of older people in emergencies.

Rather than creating special services for older people, they should have equal access to all mainstream services alongside other vulnerable groups during emergencies. This is effective in both reducing their vulnerability and enhancing their contributions.

Key Principles and Approaches

The conference was told that older people have asked for the following support:

* to be seen, heard and understood;
* to have equal access to essential support services;
* to have their potential and contributions recognised and supported.

To achieve this, changes here need to be made in the way in which older people are viewed and the way in which essential services are delivered. Practical actions could include:

* find out where and who the older people are;
* revise and provide accessible services;
* recognise and support the potential and contributions of older people.

To obtain a copy of the conference overview paper and papers presented at the conference visit HAI's website at <www. helpage.org> or contact: Caroline Dobbing Tel: (44) 171 404 7201 Fax: (44) 171 7404 7203 Email: <cdobbing@helpage.org>

Wolfsberg Humanitarian Forum

Wolfsberg, Switzerland, 25–27 May 1999

The central theme of this third annual conference, organised by the ICRC was the protection of the victims of armed conflicts. The backdrop was the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. The discussions were organised according to three themes: protection as seen by the victims, by humanitarian organisations, and by governments.

Protection as seen by the Victims

The ICRC presented information on its 'People on War' project, a worldwide consultation of the general public in which both civilians and combatants are being asked how they view their experiences of war, what basic rules they expect to apply in war, why these rules sometimes break down, and what are their expectations for the future. The consultation is being conducted in a dozen conflict-affected countries and five non-affected countries. The data available so far makes clear that the basic principles of international humanitarian law are generally known and recognised, but that they are often violated. The first reaction of almost all those interviewed is that a distinction must be made between combatants and civilians and that the latter should be spared from the effects of combat. However, in many concrete situations this clear distinction becomes very hazy. The rules aiming to protect civilians are thus felt to be considerably less relevant, creating an antithesis between innocent civilians and guilty civilians.

Protection as seen by Humanitarian Organisations and Governments

Topics discussed were: the confusion between humanitarian, military and political action when all three are labelled 'humanitarian'; the attachment to certain principles; 'protection of the protectors'; and the necessity, beyond a certain insecurity threshold, to withdraw expatriates from the field and to try to maintain limited activities by means of local organisations. One of the fundamental questions raised was: under what circumstances is it legitimate to resort to violence in order to put an end to violence. The difficulty of clearly distinguishing civilians from combatants in certain contexts was also dealt with at length. Some participants drew attention to the fact that in the Balkans today the military is much better protected than the civilian population.

Justice and Violations of Humanitarian Law

The vast problem of justice and its relationship with post-conflict measures of national reconciliation was widely discussed, the general conclusion being that the two are not necessarily opposed. It is in any case not up to humanitarian organisations to plead for impunity. Another interesting question examined was whether other mechanisms should be used to bring humanitarian law violations out into the open, and whether certain NGOs should gain a better understanding of humanitarian law in order to complement ICRC activities by running public advocacy campaigns, as is already done with human rights.

> For more information see <www.onwar.org>

The Mobilisation and Participation of Transnational Exile Communities in Post-Conflict Reconstruction

University College London, September 1999

This one day workshop marked the half way stage in a research project to analyse the contribution of transnational exile communities to reconstruction in their home countries, without returning permanently. It has three specific objectives: to assess the activities of exile communities in the reconstruction process; to evaluate the capabilities of exile communities to participate in reconstruction; and to analyse the policy context – in both home and host countries – for the participation of exile communities in reconstruction. The research focuses on the cases of Bosnia and Eritrea.

An interim report, presenting findings from the first year of research and focusing on conditions in the host countries, formed the basis of the workshop. The workshop had three aims:

- to provide a forum for feedback on the report and research to date;

- to yield specific policy recommendations from the report;
- to inform a policy sensitive direction for the next stage of the research.

The interim report records a wide range of reconstruction activities within both Bosnian and Eritrean communities. It broadly distinguishes between economic, political, social and cultural activities demonstrating, for example, the crucial significance of remittances and the potential political power that is focused on refugees. It also distinguishes those activities with an impact on home countries, such as investments by refugees, from those with an impact in host countries, such as social and cultural events aimed at maintaining a 'national conscience' among exile communities.

At the same time significant variations in the capability to participate were found within both communities, particularly between gender and age groups. In analysing capabilities, the report distinguishes between capacity – or ability – to participate, and desire – or enthusiasm – to participate. Key factors influencing the capacity to participate were found to include security of employment in the host country, political integration in the home country, and social access to community events. Key factors influencing the desire to participate include economic incentives for investment in the home country, access to information about the home country, and social networks with family and friends in the home country. The three central policy implications arising from the workshop related to the security of status for refugees in host countries, democracy in home countries, and social integration within community organisations.

> For further information about the project, and for copies of the interim report, contact Dr Khalid Koser (k.koser@ucl.ac.uk). The project is funded by the ESRC Transnational Communities Programme. Its co-coordinator is Richard Black at the University of Sussex.

The Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance in Emergency Situations

Wageningen, Netherlands, 25–26 June 1999

This conference assessed the different approaches to the evaluation of policy and practice in the humanitarian context, and examined their underlying premises. It also addressed how best to take the beneficiary voice into account. Another session addressed evaluation practices, and a final session dealt with how to follow-up evaluation. A summary workshop report can be found on the RRN website.

> The proceedings and papers of the workshop can be obtained from Wageningen Disaster Studies, PO Box 8130, 6700 EW Wageningen, Netherlands. Email: <Disaster.studies@alg.asnw.wau.nl>

Forthcoming Conferences

CODEP 2000 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Critical Partnerships for Peace: Dynamic Collaborations in Conflict Situations
14–16 February 2000, London, UK

Organised by the UK Conflict, Development and Peace network, with the Health Policy Unit of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, this conference will provide access to new thinking and challenging analysis, and an opportunity to participate in informed debate on current research and field work focusing on the collaborations that are central to the way that agencies work. Participants will include activists, analysts and decision makers from academic institutions, government departments, human rights workers, and development and humanitarian NGOs working on conflict throughout the world.

Contact: Kathleen Armstrong, Coordinator, CODEP, 52 Great Portland Street, London W1N 5AH, UK. Tel: (44) 171 323 5779. Fax: (44) 171 323 5782. Email: <codep@codep.dircon.co.uk>

Security Sector Reform & Military Expenditure Symposium
15–17 February 2000, London, UK. Convenor: Department for International Development

The aim of the symposium will be to build on work already done in this field to achieve consensus on a framework for analysing and agreeing appropriate levels of military expenditure.

For details please contact Melanie Ramsdell, Concorde Services Ltd, 42 Canham Rd, London W3 7SR. Tel: (44) 20 8743 3106. Fax: (44) 20 8743 1010. Email: <melanie@concorde-uk.com>

Third International Conference on Global Disaster Information Network (GDIN)
26–28 April 2000, Ankara, Turkey

The main aim of this conference is to encourage a coordinated worldwide reponse to natural disasters. This should be achieved by nations pooling resources to develop and put into action new ways of disaster mitigation, early response, and effective reaction.

The conference will also be devoted to discussing how an internet-based and easily accessible information system can be created, funded and maintained globally for the benefit of all nations. This meeting will witness the drafting of a charter that will then be formally adopted by the respective governments.

For further information contact Ms Lale Gurel, Cultural and Convention Center, Middle East Technical UniversityTel: (90) 312 287 8803. Fax: (90) 312 287 8924. Email: <gdin2k@deprem.gov.tr>

The LACDE
(Local Authorities Confronting Disasters & Emergencies) 2000 Conference
28–31 August 2000, Reykjavik, Iceland

The main theme of the conference will be focused on the linkage between science and the authorities in disaster prevention and mitigation.

For further information please contact, LACDE, 3 Heftman St, Tel Aviv 61200, Israel POB 20040. Tel: (972)3 695 5024. Fax: (972) 3 691 6821. Email: <ulais@netvision.net.il>

Sphere Project Field Training

The Sphere Project will be conducting inter-agency workshops in various locations around the world during 2000. These workshops will explore the practical application of the Sphere Handbook in the field.

For more information please contact Sean Lowrie on <lowrie@uk.care.org>

Publications

The Scope Of Humanitarian Action: Expanding Agendas Or Back-To-Basics

Over the last few years humanitarian action, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not, has become embedded in wider strategies for conflict-management and peace-building. The following six titles illustrate a fundamental debate about the boundaries of humanitarian action. Closely related to this debate is the interest in promoting civil society as a significant contributing factor to good governance. This is explored in some other, new, documents after these six titles.

Causes of Conflict in the Third World

Synthesis report *(1999) Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 95pp*
Proceedings of a seminar on Intrastate Conflict and Options for Policy *held at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 1998, 85pp. The Hague, 'Clingendael' Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 1999. Fax: +31 70 32 53 84*
Social and Economic Policies to Prevent Complex Humanitarian Emergencies. Lessons from Experience. *26pp. J. Klugman, UNU/WIDER, Katajanokanlaituri 6B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland (wider@wider.unu.edu)*

The first two documents report the outcome of a research project that encompassed some 20 macro-level case studies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

A first major conclusion is that conflicts have long histories, are dynamic and multi-causal. It is possible to distinguish between pivotal root factors, aggravating factors, trigger events and mobilising factors, but attempts to conceptualise them into typologies and life-cycles are not very helpful. A second major conclusion is that political-military factors are more important in causing and prolonging conflict than socioeconomic ones. This refers to the ability to create and maintain a state in a plural society that is widely perceived as legitimate, and therefore widely accepted by all groups in society. Formal democracy per se is not enough as it may simply result in discriminary rule by a majority group. It is held that the perception of legitimacy is also related to the institutional capacity to deliver goods and services, a capacity that is stated to be eroded by IMF imposed structural adjustment programmes or SAPs.

Socioeconomic factors such as low growth rates, poverty and even inequality were found not to be significantly related to the occurrence of conflict. They can, however, be aggravating factors that leaders and political entrepreneurs can use to mobilise support for identity politics in the face of exclusive and discriminatory practices and policies by the ruling elite. If this is so, then more development assistance per se will not address the root cause of conflict. Finally, although most conflicts are now intra-state, external support often increases their duration and intensity. It is therefore necessary to rethink the simple dichotomy between intra- and inter-state conflict. Unfortunately, the project's analytical work in this regard only resulted in vague policy recommendations related to the promotion of substantive democracy, distributionary justice, civilian control over the army and police, and regional security. As one participant correctly pointed out, what are needed are much more practical guidelines for policy and decision makers.

The third document, *Social and Economic Policies to Prevent Complex Humanitarian Emergencies*, is a policy brief derived from a research project on 'The Wave of Emergencies of the Last Decade', which is also reported in three other documents. All generally come to similar conclusions. Persistent 'horizontal inequality', not between individuals but between groups in the political, social and economic sphere, constitutes a root cause of conflict. Poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and resource scarcity are aggravating factors, but it is discriminatory policies and practices and state-sponsored violence that transform these into fertile soil for violent opposition. External shocks – for example, due to rapidly falling terms of trade and the concomitant reduction in economic prospects – again can be aggravating factors. Interestingly, however, this research did not find that IMF conditionality had a significant impact for the simple reason that the programmes agreed under IMF terms are often not, or hardly, implemented. At the same time it is recommended that the macroeconomic emphasis in conflict-prone countries should be on the restoration of growth much more than on inflation control. Key to conflict reduction is the promotion of inclusive politics or representational and substantive democracy that restores the legitimacy of the state and gives leaders and groups a stake in it.

This policy brief is only slightly more specific about its policy recommendations: debt reduction, agrarian reform and land distribution, free universal education to guarantee access to education, debt relief, less volatile aid policies, aid to cushion countries from the effects of external shocks, and national policies that reduce group inequalities and that provide good public basic services. How these recommendations are to be reconciled with other policies and a discourse in favour of globalisation, less state is better state, greater reliance on market forces and concentration of capital and large enterprise, is a question unfortunately not even asked!

> **Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction**
> *(1999) House of Commons, International Development Committee (The Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, fax: (44) 171 873 8200; 2 volumes (75pp; 342pp) £11.50 and £25.20)*

When Labour came to power in 1997 it created the Department for International Development (DfID) separate from the Foreign Office, and for the first time published a government policy framework (White Paper) on development. The International Development Committee (IDC) is a cross-party group of parliamentarians which monitors the policies and performance of the government and of DfID in particular. This report provides minutes of evidence given in written and in public hearings in 1998 (Vol 2) and the concluding report of the IDC (Vol 1).

Members of IDC visited central Africa and the Balkans, and held specific inquiries into the 1998 row in Britain over public and private actions in the conflict in Sierra Leone, the 1998 Sudan famine response, and the 1999 crisis over Kosovo. Thematically, the report focuses on causes of conflict, conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, the private sector and conflict, arms proliferation and humanitarian assistance. Some key elements of the report are:

- Conflict is not only a strategic and moral issue but also a developmental one. It is often the result of bad governance and inequitable development and it in turn impoverishes through the destruction of social, economic and political capital.

- While poverty assessments are becoming more common and methodologically more robust, conflict impact assessments remain rare. They should be standard requirements not only for aid but also for trade policy, of a public nature (bilaterally, for example by the UK Department for Trade and Industry; and multilaterally, such as in World Bank and IMF lending decisions or in the EU proposals for trade reform under Lomé) but also of a private nature (that is, guiding decisions and policies of international business corporations). Current EU proposals are chided for not being sufficiently conflict sensitive; unfortunately there is not yet a convincing methodology.

- Post-conflict reconstruction requires the restoration of legitimate but also effective state institutions. Funding should not lead to advanced privatisation and fragmentation by NGO operations and SAPs should not create a lean state at the expense of it being under-resourced and therefore ineffective. Donors should better coordinate their programmes, pay more attention to debt relief, and provide aid for social spending.

- Post-conflict reconstruction also requires improved security; DfID is working together with the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence on security sector reform. There is a need for increased resource allocation for demobilisation and economic reintegration of ex-combatants, and for funding the restoration of an effective judiciary.

- Foreign direct investment of a commercial nature is now much bigger than official development assistance to developing countries. Private sector companies need to do more to promote conflict prevention and resolution, and this should be incorporated into existing codes of conduct. These companies should take more responsibility for their impact on labour legislation in developing countries, and the practice of bribery which fuels corruption should be criminalised.

- It is recommended that the WTO set up a unit to investigate the origins of products and the mechanisms of war economies.

- Private security companies should be brought under close legislative control; the experience with Sandline in Sierra Leone and criticism of British Petroleum's behaviour in Colombia, as well as their deployment on government contract in OSCE monitoring missions, raises great concern.

> **Rethinking 'Relief' and 'Development' in Transitions from Conflict** *by S Holtzman (1999) Washington; Brookings Institution (project on internal displacement) (41pp)*

The intended purpose of this study is to provide a conceptual framework to better integrate relief and development activities during conflicts and in post-conflict situations. The author argues for a comprehensive approach to societies in or emerging from conflict that is guided by the aim of 'maintaining capital'. Preserving and (re)building the human, social and physical capital is offered as an underlying principle to drive strategies of international aid. This means stepping away from the counterproductive division between 'relief' and 'development'.

The author pleas for a 'more expansive humanitarianism' under which international aid will be designed to sustain societies in conflict and promote the 'social and economic re-knitting of societies'. He then provides a rather rambling overview of the many destructive impacts of conflict on social and physical capital.

Anybody who has experienced the realities of conflict at close hand, the difficulties of formulating policy or designing programmes, and the very modest influence outsiders can exercise, is likely to experience a level of irritation that will prevent finishing the reading of this report. Although the author writes in his personal capacity, he is a social scientist with the Post-Conflict Unit of the Social Development Department of the World Bank. It is to be hoped that the conceptual mishmash of this report, without any tangible link to reality or any practical policy or programmatic recommendations, but with a metaphorical belief in 'societies as sweaters' that are presumably unravelled by conflict and only need 're-knitting', is not representative of the current state of social science, nor of the intellectual climate in the World Bank.

This report by an advisory council of independents is the response to a request, made in July 1997, by the Dutch ministers of foreign affairs, defence and development cooperation. Questions posed to the Advisory Council included: what space for humanitarian aid in conflict situations; what mimimal political conditions need to be fulfilled for humanitarian aid to be effective in conflict situations; how to avoid aid that contributes to a deterioration of (potential) conflict situations?

The report first reviews the expanding definition of 'humanitarian aid' in Dutch policy. In 1983 humanitarian aid referred primarily to the direct delivery of goods to meet basic needs through non-governmental and international organisations. By 1993, global humanitarian needs were stretching the international response capacity to the limit. In 1996, then minister Jan Pronk formulated his 'development-for-peace' policy, seeking greater synergies between political action (preventive diplomacy, conflict management) and aid (emergency, reconstruction and development). Aid was to contribute to peacebuilding in conflict, instead of only after the signing of a peace agreement, especially through building (on) local capacities. At this point the Directorate for Crisis Management and Humanitarian Aid was created within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Advisory Council holds that this approach, not undermined by empirical evidence, has created many problems: the proliferation of implementing agencies; the mandate creep of erstwhile specialised UN agencies; 'military humanitarianism'; the use of humanitarian aid to mask a political vacuum or as an instrument of a political strategy. All of this has contributed to growing confusion, insecurity of aid agencies and manipulation of aid. Humanitarian aid is no longer perceived as neutral, but as helping to absolve warring parties of their social obligations to civilian populations; it may even prolong conflict. A proliferation of actors all suffering from, but sometimes also actively pursuing, 'mandate creep', has also fudged the issues of responsibility and accountability.

The Advisory Council therefore recommends a new demarcation of humanitarian aid. The recommendation is for a back-to-basics, with emphasis on the provision of life-saving assistance. In situations of prolonged crisis, this can be expanded into programmes to promote basic education and self-reliance. There should be clearer quality control of NGO implementing partners, and humanitarian aid agencies should be required to formulate exit criteria. Reconstruction aid should not be offered unless there is fair security and stability and a commitment from the protagonists in the conflict to respect human rights and rebuild national institutions. At international level, the Advisory Council recommends Dutch support for better coordination in the UN, but also a clearer separation of responsibility between the early warning analysis and the conflict response strategy planning, and between the operational UN agencies. Other UN agencies than UNHCR, for example, should take the lead in reconstruction. (www.AIV-Advice.nl *or* AIV@SBO.MINBUZA.NL)

Civil Society

The creation of a separate Department for International Development (DfID) in the UK in 1997 has been followed by active policy formulation. The White Paper on Development of November 1997 sets out the overall policy framework; then came the articulation of 10 principles for a 'new humanitarianism' (RRN Newsletter 11); and in early 1999 the policy statement on 'Conflict Reduction and Humanitarian Assistance'. Working in partnership with others is a central tenet of the 'White Paper', and DfID is now producing specific statements about its objectives and priorities with different partners in a series of what it calls 'Institutional Strategy Papers'. Three have already been published on working in partnership with the United Nations, with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and with the European Community (for these reports see <www.DfID.gov.uk/public/> under 'What we do').

In 1998, DfID also initiated a wide ranging consultation about its possible relationship to and partnerships with civil society, outlining its (then) thinking in the paper 'Strengthening DfID's Support for Civil Society'. Over 500 individuals and organisations in the North and South participated in workshops or responded in writing, and the report of responses is now available.

There is widespread support for stronger DfID involvement with civil society, but respondents also warned that not all civil society organisations are pro-poor and that a careful selection is therefore required. Respondents also agreed that DfID should use its stature for stronger advocacy, development awareness and capacity building, but not at the expense of tangible programmes on the ground. DfID can engage with civil society organisations in poorer countries directly, but also through networks and by influencing other governments to create the legal and fiscal space for civil society development. Closer partnership with civil society will, however, require changes in DfID: a more strategic approach, a more open-mindset, a willingness to be changed by others, and longer term and more flexible funding.

If good governance is a prerequisite for conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding, then a vibrant civil society is typically seen as a contributing factor to good governance. This excellent book, with case studies from Hungary, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Peru, critically but constructively examines the theory and practice of the 'globalised idea' of 'strengthening civil society' popular with aid donors – be they multilateral, bilateral or northern NGOs.

Chapter 1 traces the connotations and understandings of the civil society concept in past and current political philosophy. This indicates, among other things, that the discussion about civil society has a particularly Western flavour and is linked to a particular historical, political and

ideological context. Not surprisingly, in certain non-Western areas, civil society promotion is associated with a rejection of Western liberalism with its atomised individual voters and consumers. Second, civil society has historically not been associated with the anti-state (rather than anti-regime) sentiments that it seems to be now. On the contrary, past thinkers have stressed the importance of the state to mediate the conflicting interests of the citizenry and as the promoter and guarantor of 'public goods'. Third, the notion of a 'civilised political community' need not be understood as a set of specific organisations, typically today the 'voluntary sector'. Rather, who participates in it and who doesn't is a matter of values, ideology and function in society.

Chapter 2 traces the motivations behind donor interest in civil society. A strong civil society is seen as promoting development and, even more explicitly, as promoting democracy. Strengthening civil society is then equated with stimulating a market economy, free enterprise and social equity. Yet the evidence indicates that NOGs can by no means substitute for the state in the provision of services and in stimulating macroeconomic growth. And the inclusion of private small enterprise in the definition of civil society leads to the warning that not all non-state actors are in the business of actively promoting democracy, be it through the creation of general social capital or more specific promotion of respect for human rights. Private organisations and associations, including NGOs, can be profoundly undemocratic and self-interested. It is not the type of organisation that counts, but what it does and how it does it.

Finally the analysis of donor discourses and practices indicates that donors are still exploring this new, and unavoidably political, avenue – political because civil society is about changing power relationships. Donors are struggling conceptually, are probably funding many organisations that do not deliver what they want, while the tools they have available (funds, projects and timelines) may not be the best to achieve their aims. The book concludes with an overview of mistakes and suggestions for better practice. Deep contextual knowledge, long term involvement and small financial inputs are among them.

> **Evolution of a Transition Strategy and Lessons Learned. USAID funded activities in the West Bank of Southern Sudan 1993–1999** *(1999) by A O'Toole Salinas and B D'Silva, 47pp <www.info.usaid.gov/ regions/ar/conflictweb/resources.html> or order through <www.dec.org or docorder@dec.cdie.org> (Document ID no PN-ACF-763)*

Since the 1988 famine, the US government has spent more than US$1bn in assistance to Sudan's enduring crisis. Advances by the SPLM/A in 1993-1994 led to greater security and stability in the parts of Equatoria province west of the Nile that are known as the 'West Bank'. This fertile area has historically been the surplus producing 'bread basket' of southern Sudan. Since 1993 USAID, unlike other donors, has been funding economic rehabilitation programmes in this 'pocket of stability' through a number of NGOs. US interest in promoting participatory democracy and good governance following the establishment of a civil

administration by the SPLA led to the allocation of US$7m of development funds, to be spent over three years (1998–2000) in the Sudan Transition and Rehabilitation Programme (STAR). This work is taking place outside the Operation Lifeline Sudan framework, which is criticised as being too bureaucratic and too dependent on Khartoum's consent for access.

The overall aims of USAID's funding are to jump-start the market economy, to promote the development of a civil society and of a functioning and accountable civil administration, to strengthen the self-sufficiency of the population, and to reduce the cost of relief activities. The report provides an overview of the various projects, their reported impact and lessons learned.

Valuable as the review is, there are omissions which should be addressed in future: the review offers little documentation or critical reflection on efforts to build the capacity of local groups and local administrations; it also relies heavily on self-reporting in agency project reports in the absence of baseline economic data, and a wider perspective on economic recovery activities undertaken by the Sudanese outside any USAID-funded project In addition, the attribution of general economic revival predominantly to USAID-funded projects appears somewhat uncritical or insufficiently substantiated at the least.

> **Protecting Human Rights: The Challenge to Humanitarian Organizations** (1999) *Mark Frohardt, Diane Paul, and Larry Minear (Providence: Watson Institute for International Studies) Occasional Paper #35, pp123*

This latest occasional paper published by the Humanitarianism and War Project at the Watson Institute is an authoritative, timely and thought provoking contribution to recent debates about the changing role of humanitarian organisations in situations of complex political emergency. Specifically, the paper seeks to navigate a difficult path between what the authors call the competing 'assistance and protection' roles of the humanitarian community. Conscious that without meaningful protection strategies, humanitarian assistance in conflict areas may lead to the 'well-fed dead' scenario, this paper seeks to 'provide aid personnel [with] an analytical framework for understanding the protection challenge'.

The key claim of the authors is that, with skillfully managed strategies, 'assistance and protection' should be seen as 'complementary rather than [as] competitive'. In terms of target audience the paper is not only aimed at aid personnel (it has been kept deliberately brief to ensure greater accessibility), but is based upon a series of policy dialogues with senior officials of North American NGOs, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, and a number of individual humanitarian organisations.

The paper is comprised of four chapters. Chapter 1 examines 'the changing political context of humanitarian action' since the end of the cold war, and seeks to provide 'a backdrop for more specific operational discussions' in later chapters. By drawing on a wealth of statistical data and other empirical material, the authors contest the prevailing view that humanitarian action has been compelled to develop

protection strategies by the changing nature of post-cold war conflict. This leads the authors to suggest that 'the changed geopolitical landscape and the altered circumstances of humanitarian action and actors' – notably direct involvement in areas of ongoing conflict – have led NGOs to reconsider the importance of protection. Accordingly, Chapter 2 examines how 'international and local actors, even under the most difficult circumstances, [have] devised and carried out effective protection strategies and activities [which] have mitigated, and in some instances prevented, violations of human rights'.

Three key factors in ensuring the development of effective strategies to protect civilians in armed conflict are identified: assessment, planning and implementation. These key components are explored across a number of cases including Rwanda, Bosnia, Tanzania, Kuwait. Similarly, Chapter 3 explores perhaps the most contentious area of protection: the issue of belligerents and criminals. Chapter 4 suggests future directions in protection strategies and the protection/assistance interface.

Throughout the paper the authors offer useful prescriptions and thoughtful reflections on existing strategies. What makes this paper stand out, however, is the recognition on the part of the authors that the meaningful protection of civilians can only come from sufficiently motivated governments. In the absence of such motivation, protection is set to be an increasingly important challenge which humanitarian organisations must tackle. This paper offers practitioners and researchers an insightful exploration of how protection and assistance need not be mutually incompatible goals.

> **Protecting Refugees. A field guide for NGOs** *(1999) UNHCR, Geneva (136pp) Workshop on Protection for Human Rights and Humanitarian Organisations.* **Doing something about it and doing it well** *(1999) ICRC, Geneva (90pp)*

Protecting Refugees is a user-friendly booklet that has been developed by UNHCR and NGO partners such as the Norwegian Refugee Council. It scans the various protection problems of refugees during the phases of flight, refuge and return, as well as the specific protection problems of women, children and adolescents, the elderly, IDPs and the stateless. The ICRC publication is the report of the third workshop (here January 1999; previously November 1996, March 1998) in what is becoming a process of interaction with other agencies to strengthen inter-agency collaboration around protection. Both publications are the result of a respectable intention to bring more attention to protection rather than material assistance needs.

Unfortunately, both unwittingly also illustrate why the intervening international community stands by when so much abuse against civilians is taking place. UNHCR has a particular mandate that focuses on refugees. The problem arises when UNHCR's perspective becomes a more general 'lens on protection' – a misconception that the booklet unfortunately fosters: 'The phrase international protection covers the gamut of activities through which refugees' rights are secured'. In other words, the thinking about protection is triggered mainly when someone has become displaced – ie, usually after the abuse has taken place. Little attention is paid to preventive action, as advocated by Diane Paul in RRN Network Paper 30.

Second, the UNHCR-NGO booklet promotes a type of NGO action that centres on awareness of legal protection instruments, on the provision of material assistance, and on monitoring violations of refugee rights and reporting to UNHCR, human rights organisations and sometimes the authorities. This reflects perhaps current practice, and it may be necessary, but anybody familiar with real situations also knows that documenting and reporting violations does little to stop them. Nor does the booklet address the reticence within humanitarian agencies to get involved with protection, or the more detailed 'how'. Contrary to its claim, it is certainly not a 'field guide'.

The ICRC process aims to enhance the complementarities between different agencies in the pursuit of better operational protection. It is painful, however, to read a report of a workshop that even some of its participants considered very theoretical and conceptual. The attempts to develop a 'deontological map' on which to chart the ethical principles of protection, and a protection framework that shows the inter-relatedness of responsive and remedial actions with actions aimed at creating a general environment more conducive to protection, may be interesting, but it is hard not to see another introspective and self-referential exercise of aid agencies where the inability to agree to a common definition on protection is a major stumbling block.

These publications will not stimulate greater protection for people threatened by aggressors who do not care about legal provisions. Practice-oriented learning requires more attention to critically documented case studies with contextual detail, and moving inter-agency workshops to real-life field settings.

> **Die Evaluierung der Osterreichischen Humanitaren Hilfe im ehemaligen Jugoslawien als Ausgangpunkt fur die Entwicklung eines einheitlichen Modells zur Erfassung und Dokumentation von Hilfsmassnahmen** *(1999) by C. Mulleder, Linz, Universitatsverlag Rudolf Trauner (222pp. + annexes). (The evaluation of Austrian Humanitarian Aid to the Former Yugoslavia as entry point for the development of a standard model for the documentation and analysis of project activities.)*

This report results from an attempt to take a comprehensive look at Austrian aid to the Former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1997. Part 1 provides a history of the conflict and the violent break-up of Yugoslavia. Part 2 is a general theoretical reflection on the evaluation of humanitarian assistance. Part 3 reports in detail on the database that the author created to combine organisational with project information, obtained mainly through questionnaire survey, the outcomes of its analysis and the constraints on the data.

Part 4 provides a succinct overview of the institutional structuring of aid in the Austrian government, which reveals that emergency and humanitarian aid is dispersed over different budget lines held by different departments and ministries, and that there is no integrated strategic framework that encompasses prevention, crisis response, rehabilitation and development. One of the final recommendations therefore is for reform of the government's aid structures.

Over the past year the RRN has devoted a significant amount of time to monitoring and reviewing its work. This has included questionnaire surveys, telephone interviews, and focus group discussions. In addition, three independent consultants – based respectively in North America, Europe, and East Africa – were contracted to review the RRN from September to November. Their terms of reference required that they explore how different types of professionals in the humanitarian sector stay abreast of developments, how they learn, what information and analysis services they use, and what value they derive from the RRN. The information gathered from the internal monitoring work was fed into this external review. However, for the purposes of reporting here we focus in particular on the questionnaire responses, which so many of our readers answered.

Questionnaire Responses

This year, 16.6% of RRN members (readers in English) returned their questionnaires. *This represents a significant improvement on last year, when only 9.85% responded.* Thank you to all concerned.

Returns by Organisation Type: Based on actual RRN membership per organisation type, it is clear that those based in NGOs were most active in their responses (49%). Research and training organisations were also enthusiastic respondents. However, unlike last year, when there was a low rate of return in the UN category to RRN membership (-4%), 1999 return figures exceeded the actual % of UN membership by 2%.

Years of Experience and RRN Membership: As with last year, it seems that the majority of respondents have worked in the field for more than 10 years (45%). This was up from 31% in 1998. In comparison with last year, the second largest group of respondents (30%) indicated they had been active in humanitarian work for between six and ten years. As the aim of the RRN is to help the humanitarian sector become a more 'knowledge-based industry' it is encouraging that the number of members who have been working in the sector for more than six years seems to be increasing. In this regard, the average number of colleagues that members share RRN publications with has grown from 3 in 1998 to 6 in 1999. This is extremely positive, and means we have an effective readership of some 7,400.

Most Popular Publications: Respondents were asked which publications they had found stimulating, which they had used to teach/train, or which they had not read over the past year. Those publications under review were: Network Paper (NP) 24: Reproductive Health for Displaced Populations in Emergencies; NP25: Humanitarian Action in Protracted Crises: The New Relief Agenda and its Limits; NP26: The Food Economy Approach: A Framework for Understanding Rural Livelihoods; NP27: Between Relief and Development: Targeting Food Aid for Disaster Prevention in Ethiopia; and Good Practice Review 7, The Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies

Extracting accurate information from this section of the questionnaire was problematic as some respondents only answered two or three parts of the question while others ticked more than one box per publication. Despite this, the following information throws up some interesting results:

NP24	NP25	NP26	NP27	GPR7
Stimulating 26%	Stimulating 65%	Stimulating 44%	Stimulating 51%	Stimulating 62%
Teach/train 18%	Teach/train 12%	Teach/train 18%	Teach/train 11%	Teach/train 19%
Not read 56%	Not read 23%	Not read 38%	Not read 38%	Not read 19%
(Not answered 31)	(Not answered 23)	(Not answered 32)	(Not answered 33)	(Not answered 13)
Calculated on 141	Calculated on 149	Calculated on 140	Calculated on 139	Calculated on 159

Newsletters: In terms of the newsletter, only 113 out of the total of 171 answered this section correctly. Analysis of the 113 showed that, as with last year, the articles section is by far the most popular, with 61% of the vote. The news section came second with 32%; next were the country updates with 13%.

Thank You

Once again, we'd like to extend our thanks to all those who have responded to our various outreach initiatives this year – not only to the questionnaire, but also to members interviewed as part of the external review process, and all those who took part in the telephone and focus group interviews.

The external review report is still in preparation, and you will be notified of its main recommendations and implications for the future work of the RRN in due course.

And Finally

The RRN Team

The RRN forms part of the Humanitarian Policy Programme, a wider group within ODI focusing on research into and evaluation of humanitarian policy.

Koenraad Van Brabant, **RRN Coordinator**

Rachel Houghton, **RRN Deputy Coordinator**

Rebecca Lovelace, **RRN Administrator**

Olivia Cheasty, **Projects Administrator**

RRN

Background

The Relief and Rehabilitation Network was conceived in 1993 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, SIDA (Sweden), the Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland), and the Department for International Development (UK). Over this 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

Sida

Department of Foreign Affairs,
Ireland

DFID Department for International Development

Netherlands *Ministerie van*
Buitenlandse Zaken/Ministry of Foreign Affairs