

Newsletter

Relief and Rehabilitation Network

Number 6

All RRN materials are produced in English and French

November 1996

Editorial

This is last mailing of the first phase of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network. The RRN team would like to thank EuronAid our funders and mentors for the past 3 years for their on- going support. In 1993, before the debates on NGO performance standards, accountability and lessons learned had reached their current prominence on the relief agenda, EuronAid, recognised the importance of information and experience sharing as a resource for NGO workers and UN/donor personnel alike. Their confidence and support over this period has enabled the RRN team to produce 4 Good Practice Reviews, 18 Network Papers and 6 Newsletters and to grow from a one and half person team to two full-time and two part-time staff. Membership has expanded to over 410 individual members based in more than 50 countries, from NGO, UN/donor organisations, the media and research/training institutions.

As regular readers will know, the RRN aims to: provide a mechanism for the exchange of experience and good practice between individuals and institutions working in emergencies around the world, and to bridge the gap between headquarters and field staff and between research and practice. The results of the February 1996 members' questionnaire, reported on page 2 of this issue, indicate that 78% of members feel that the RRN achieved this objective. While such a verdict was warmly received, we also recognise the need to go further and to improve the RRN 'service' in a number of important areas.

Over the coming three years we are planning a number of initiatives to respond to your comments and concerns about the RRN and to strengthen it still further. We look forward to reporting these initiatives to our membership in the first Newsletter of 1997. The next Phase of the RRN will be supported by two significant new donors – DANIDA and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, both of which have committed funding for the RRN for the next three years. We have also had positive indications from two other funders.

Despite the well-known pressures of securing funding for the coming phase, the editorial team has not been idle. The current mailing reflects current policy trends and programming debates at headquarters and field levels.

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Editorial (continued)

The Newsletter focuses on two main areas. First, the debates running throughout the international relief system – donors, UN and NGOs – on the development of common performance standards, monitoring and evaluation tools and measures of accountability. Although not new on the ‘humanitarian agenda’, examples of poor performance such have been documented extensively by recent evaluations of emergency assistance to Rwanda and of Operation Lifeline Sudan. These reports have confirmed anecdotal evidence from relief workers and others about difficulties in ensuring effective relief programming, providing the critical mass needed to formulate and implement policy reform.

Peter Walker, reports on the impetus building up within the NGO community to raise standards across the board is – *Developing Minimum Performance Standards in Humanitarian Relief*. In the UK, the consortium People in Aid has published its Statement of Principles regarding the Management and Recruitment of aid workers, a tangible response to the research report by Rebecca Macnair, published last year by the RRN.

These initiatives are welcome and signal the willingness of NGOs working in relief to put their house in order to overcome some key weaknesses. However, Nick Stockton, Director of Oxfam’s Emergency Department in his article, *Rations or Rights? – Humanitarian Standards*, strikes a note of caution into the standards debate.. He agrees that NGOs face important challenges in setting future standards for relief practice. But, he insists that while important, addressing standards alone will not be sufficient to confront some fundamental criticisms of the aid industry. Defining a clear legal, economic and political framework will be as important to redress deteriorating living conditions for the majority of the world’s poor.

Lola Nathanail, Joanna Macrae, and Philippa Atkinson consider three very different humanitarian interventions in North Korea (*Small Fish in a Deep Dark Sea: NGOs’ Response in North Korea*), Sudan (*Conflict, Conditionalities and the Continuum – Key issues emerging from the Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan*)

and Liberia (*Do No Harm or Do Some Good - NGO Coordination in Liberia*) respectively.

Despite the distinct political environments, causes, duration and nature of these humanitarian emergencies, all three articles highlight the limitations of relief aid in the absence of an acceptable political and legal framework within which agencies can operate. They suggest that ignoring, or failing to face up to the political context within which relief is delivered and the political impact of relief actions, aid will necessarily fail to meet the short-term basic needs of disaster-affected communities, nor will it nothing to improve their long-term prospects. Drawing on recent field visits and research, each of these articles goes on to identify ways in which the humanitarian community can and should go beyond relief to respond to complex emergencies..

Finally, we turn to food. In his article (*Food security in the post-GATT World*), Professor Alan Matthews of Trinity College, Dublin addresses the question of whether the framework created by GATT, for international trade and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation, is likely to lead to a more or less food-secure world. The theme of food security is also taken up in Network Paper 17, in a thorough treatment of CRS (Catholic Relief Services) Baltimore’s experiences of the *Monetisation of Food Aid in Emergencies*.

The final RRN Network Paper of the year is published in collaboration with CODEP – the conflict, development and peace group, based in the UK. In 1994, CODEP organised a workshop which sought to respond to the increasing unease within the NGO community regarding policy and programming strategies in conflict situations. That meeting resulted in extensive discussion and ideas about how the issues confronting agencies working in actual and potential conflict situations. Two years later the issues are as pressing as ever and CODEP organised a second workshop to provide NGOs from Europe and Africa to reflect on what we have learned about working in conflict, and to identify lessons learned. RRN Network Paper 18 outlines the context against which the meeting took place and reports on the key elements of the discussion during the workshop.

Feedback

Results of RRN Members’ Questionnaire

In the June Newsletter, we flagged up the very positive

nature of the response to the RRN members’ Questionnaire, mailed in February this year. We also promised a fuller analysis of those responses and an indication of future directions for the RRN. A complete report is available on request from the RRN, including

more detailed statistical analysis. The following is an edited version outlining the principal conclusions drawn from that data. We have not attempted to respond to each point raised in turn, but to report key findings.

A number of initiatives are planned for the second three year phase of RRN operation to address some of our members' concerns highlighted by the results of this survey, including electronic distribution of our material, and the possibility of moving to free membership. These initiatives will form the subject of a more detailed report in the January 1997 Newsletter.

The total number of RRN members at February 1996 was 278 (today the total is 410). We received a total of 50 completed questionnaires (or 18% of total), a more than representative sample figure, according to one international commercial polling organisation.

The principal objective of the questionnaire was to establish whether our output (Good Practice Reviews (GPR), Network Papers (NP) and Newsletters (NL)) meets members' needs and is considered to offer an effective contribution to humanitarian workers' learning in the provision of emergency relief. It also gave us the opportunity to get a feel for the composition of our membership – predominantly NGO, donor, UN, academic etc, to help us focus future strategy.

RRN Member Profile

The survey supported our assessment that NGO workers represent the RRN's largest audience/membership (74%). Of those, just under one third were based in Africa, 5% in Asia, with the majority, 62%, coming from developed countries.

Publications

Respondents were asked to rate each GPR, NP and NL section on a scale of very useful (3), quite useful (2) and not useful (1). We also looked at reasons given for *not* reading publications – ranging from 'not relevant', to 'no time' or 'not received'.

The higher percentage of respondents who considered GPRs 'very useful' – 34% for GPR 1 (Water and Sanitation) to 71% for GPR 3 (General Food Distribution) suggests that the GPRs are improving in terms of usefulness. In terms of relevance, however, there appears to have been little difference. It is particularly encouraging that no respondent indicated they found the content of GPRs to be of no use.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Network Papers ranged widely in readers' perceptions of usefulness. Clearly, the tendency for them to focus on a particular country or agency experience limits them to a more specific readership.

The Newsletter met with greater success than was

anticipated. The *articles/news* sections and *book reviews* received the highest ratings, with 51% and 47% of respondents rating them very highly respectively, followed by the *editorial* and *feedback*. Lowest on the scale were the *update* and *conference* and *training* sections, although these nonetheless scored well compared to individual Network Papers or even Good Practice Reviews. To some extent, this can be explained by the fact that Newsletter information is likely to be more accessible and relevant to all, focusing less on specific activities or fields of humanitarian response. On the whole, it seems that this is still a valued tool and members would not wish to lose it.

Publication sharing

In response to the question 'With how many others do you share RRN publications', a total of 173 *other* people, read our publications. It is interesting to note that although many members do not find individual papers to be relevant to their own work, the above results seem to indicate that those which are not thought to be relevant are passed to others. We are aware that the charges made for membership have been, for some organisations, a barrier to membership. The above results suggest that if our current total membership is 410, then readership (and potential membership if/when charges are removed/reduced considerably) would be in the order of 1,418. Therefore, should we be in a position to offer free membership to all, there is a considerable potential readership and rationale for continuing to produce a range of papers on quite different subjects.

'Delayed in the Post?'

Our attempts to establish whether our publications actually reach their destination met with some rather curious discrepancies, with some members receiving early mailings but not the more recent ones and even some publications of the same mailing being received and not others. The conclusion we have drawn from this is that there are problems at the recipients' end (local postal systems or internal distribution hitches) or that papers were received but rapidly borrowed by colleagues. The anticipated the removal, of subscription charges for RRN membership (depending on funding availability) would ease the need for borrowing from colleagues as many more individuals will receive their own material. Where the problem is a question of wrongly addressed mail, we strongly urge members to let us know their change of address or post as early as possible so that we can operate effectively. Internal distribution systems are up to you!

RRN vs the Rest

When asked to compare our material with that of other 'similar' publications, the principle areas of advantage of the RRN compared with others seem to be: greater relevance/practicality from a field perspective; comment and analysis rather than simple unprocessed reporting; offers a breadth of country examples and overall, is seen

to complement other information, such as Sitreps.

The principle criticisms were that much of our information is too specific and scientific. Our main competitors are considered to be the Refugee Participation Network, Monday Developments, Refugee Studies Programme and VOICE newsletter.

Mailing Frequency

The overwhelming conclusion from the questionnaire responses was to maintain the current frequency of mailings, ie. quarterly.

To redesign or not to redesign

Perhaps unsurprisingly, few respondents felt strongly about changing our current grey and red colour scheme or the format. Moreover, it seems that the clear, simple and readable format is widely appreciated, and that the informality and non-glossy appearance fits with our audiences's general taste. There was also evidence that it is recently rather improved. The principal criticism is that the our output tends to be rather 'paper bound'.

Members' contributions

Nearly half the respondents (46%), indicated a willingness to contribute written material to the Network. Of those, the majority offered articles to the newsletter (17, or 34%) with a few volunteering Network Papers (5 or 10%). No-one came forward and offered to draw up a good practice review. [It may have helped members to know that GPRs are commissioned and a fee is also offered to the peer group reviewers].

Cost Recovery

In terms of future RRN strategy, it was useful for us to know that 58% of respondents would be willing to continue to pay in some form or another for membership of the RRN, a positive indicator of the value attributed to our output.

Objectives achieved

78% of members feel that the RRN achieves its stated objectives: that is, 'to provide a mechanism for the

exchange of experience and good practice between individuals and institutions working in emergencies around the world. It aims to bridge the gap between headquarters and field staff and between research and practice'.

Of those that did not, the main criticisms are: the limited involvement of the membership in guiding topics covered; more detailed experience wanted from the field; less emphasis on statements and a greater collection of members' views; there does not seek to be a real feeling of an 'active' network (although these are probably more realistic at a national level); written material has too high a 'threshold' and a more diverse way of getting information in and out is needed.

Comments

A number of constructive comments were made by members on ways of improving our 'service'. The most frequently cited was a desire to see a more active dialogue with members and more democratic selection of papers; more information on members' own publications and more information available via email. On the positive side, our objectivity was described as central to what we do.

Erratum

Please note an important correction to the article on Refugees in South Kivu, Zaire, by Danielle de Lame in the last Newsletter (June 1996). The first line of the second paragraph on page 11 should read:

"Violence has affected all Rwandans in one way or another. Among Hutus, mainly men have been killed."

Articles

Developing Minimum Performance Standards in Humanitarian Relief

Why bother?

by Peter Walker

Peter Walker works for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Humanitarianism is concerned with the universal right of all people to live without being subjected to violent, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or conditions. There is widespread evidence that these rights are being denied more than ever before particularly amongst those fleeing conflict and violence.

At the same time as the beneficiaries are getting a poorer deal from the humanitarian system, the funders, donor agencies and governments, are demanding higher levels of accountability and performance measurement from implementing agencies.

The Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), an alliance of Oxfam, Save the Children, Caritas Internationalis, World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and CARE International, which developed the *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGO Code of Conduct*, (RRN Network Paper 7), believes that we now have to move forward with a technical elaboration of the *Code*. InterAction, a coalition of over 150 US-based NGOs, is also of this view and recently agreed to work together with SCHR on this project.

Project objectives

The project objective is to develop a *Beneficiaries Charter* and associated set of agency *minimum performance standards* articulating what a disaster victim – a programme beneficiary – is entitled to and what standards of assistance s/he has a right to expect the assisting agencies to deliver. This will be done in collaboration with leading NGOs, interested donor governments and UN agencies. The project will also disseminate the resultant products widely within the international humanitarian system and encourage their formal adoption and practice by relief agencies and their donors.

Ongoing work

Other agencies are expressing similar worries, as are a number of key donors and inter-governmental agencies.

- ! In Europe, MSF has taken a lead over the past decade in developing standard response packages.
- ! A technical grouping involving UN, Red Cross & Red Crescent and NGO personnel has been developing common standards on medical issues, such as a list of essential drugs in disaster response.
- ! A similar grouping led by Oxfam and UNHCR has been developing standards in water and sanitation.
- ! In the UK, *People in Aid*, (see Code of Principles on page 13) is developing a common set of standards in

the field of human resource development.

Many of these initiatives are at a very technical level, developing catalogues of standard equipment and procedures, whilst others, like the Code of Conduct, are at the other end of the scale setting ethical and behavioural norms.

The present project proposes to fill the gap by elaborating a set of programme standards to apply the principles of the Code and use the information in the "catalogues".

But, to elaborate technical standards to guide agency practice, without reference in any way to the rights or aspirations of the assisted beneficiaries, risks becoming a self-serving exercise concerned more with agencies' accountability to donors and their public. We believe that any set of "industry" standards must first be prefaced by a set of "consumer" standards; a *Beneficiaries Charter*, which lays out in simple terms what a beneficiary should have a "right" to in a humanitarian crisis.

Essential sectors

To allow agencies to practice their relief programmes in a way which respects the *Beneficiaries Charter*, a set of minimum performance standards in relief are needed. Such a set of standards would cover the four essential sectors of relief assistance:

- ! Food and nutrition
- ! Water and sanitation
- ! Medical care
- ! Clothing, shelter and settlements, including the selection of relief camp sites.

Relief programme management and cross-cutting issues

Many previous attempts at deriving standards have focused exclusively on the end point delivery of assistance; quantitative entitlements. SCHR believes that the industry needs to go further and set down guidance on *how* those entitlements are delivered, covering issues such as local procurement, targeting and distribution systems.

Equally we have to be concerned with actions after delivery. As implementing agencies, we have a responsibility to be accountable to our beneficiaries, to ourselves through programme monitoring, to our donors and, through evaluation, to future programmes. We also need to take into account certain cross-cutting issues such as environmental and gender considerations.

Minimum performance standards therefore need to cover:

- ! What the agency should deliver, or ensure is available, as a minimum for survival, ie. that needed to fulfil the absolute minimum entitlement of beneficiary.
- ! What the agency should deliver, or ensure is available, relative to the norms of the country where the victims are being assisted, ie. standards relative to local conditions.
- ! The means by which relief is made available to beneficiaries – *how* is relief assistance provided?
- ! Different levels of agency accountability: to beneficiaries and the local population, to donors, to own staff and membership and to future operations (in the form of evaluations and a commitment to continuous improvement).
- ! Cross-cutting issues such as gender and the environment.

Project management

This project will be conducted under the auspices of the *Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response* in collaboration with *InterAction*. The SCHR and InterAction initiative will incorporate a wider reference

group, drawing in for instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), ICVA, VOICE and MSF. This wide group, which met for the first time in early October this year, will allow for each agency/network to focus on a particular sector where its contribution will be the most valuable, helping to avoid duplication of effort, whilst providing vital coordination.

The project will employ a full-time project manager, and managers for each sector on six month secondments from the member agencies. Working mostly from existing material and with reference to recognised professional peer-group networks the project hopes to have derived and published its standards manual by the end of 1997.

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Small Fish in a Deep Dark Sea: NGOs' Response in North Korea

by Lola Nathanail

Lola Nathanail, of Save the Children Fund UK, was seconded to the United Nations' World Food Programme to conduct an assessment of the food and nutrition situation in North Korea (in March/April 1996). The opinions expressed in this article are her own and do not necessarily reflect those of the two organisations.

[NB: The term NGO is used here without due regard to the enormous differences that exist between humanitarian agencies. Agendas, capacities and competence vary enormously. The paper simply presents a generalised picture of 'NGOs', with the full knowledge this may bear little resemblance to some agencies' reality.]

North Korea's historical record will, in years to come, feature a small turning point: the "1995 Flood Emergency". Of course, when compared to other key episodes in the same century – the end of Japanese rule in 1945; the respective roles of USSR and USA in the North and South of the peninsula until the end of the 1940s; or the Korean war in the 1950s, 1995 will seem a small turning point indeed.

But what exactly did turn (or begin to crack at least)? A mind-set, or rather, a political ideology which had, until then, demanded self-sufficiency at all costs – *Juche!* The "1995 Flood Emergency" opened the remarkable possibility of a trickle of western humanitarian relief – at

the request of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Food aid (from rice to tinned fruit salad) arrived by train, truck or tanker from Hong Kong, USA, Japan, Italy, Syria, UK, Switzerland.

However, the 'flood emergency relief effort' was carried out in a context of highly charged political imperatives and economic conditionalities. Donor governments' concern was not unconditional – most importantly, they sought the political kow-towing of the DPRK government to other nations, including the USA and southern Korea Republic with whom the DPRK is still officially at war. Failing that, the only possibility for leverage was a disaster, an emergency. A humanitarian crisis could be used to facilitate entry, to overcome the political obstacles, and allow donor governments a foot in the door. Yes, help to alleviate the suffering of the North Korean people would be given; but a crisis would also offer the opportunity of exerting pressure to widen any cracks in the Pyongyang regime and speed up the process of political change.

Politics were paramount. Instead of acknowledging that reality and placing their efforts in a perspective, aid agencies chose to ignore it – at least in public. The donor government agenda seemed to drive all other thinking – NGOs and UN both – rather than the other way around.

NGOs needed an emergency as this would greatly enhance the likelihood of funding. And so they embarked on a mad scramble to 'get in there', to be one of a very privileged few who had been permitted entry into the last remaining bastion of Stalinism. It verged on voyeurism; the prime concern was to get there (even for only a few days), never mind what was achieved/achievable in that time. One NGO was so intent on entering the DPRK that it effectively bought entry visas with food aid.

Food aid was the major preoccupation, for DPRK Government and UN/NGOs alike. The Government was interested in maximising donations while minimising the presence/influence of agencies. To a certain extent, NGOs were happy to go along with that – donations were made through the Red Cross, World Food Programme of the UN or the Ministry of Food Administration and little operational/advisory presence was sought or permitted. The constraints to working in the DPRK were enormous, not least because UN/NGOs had to liaise with a Government which simply had no experience of dealing with international agencies. For example, the role of DHA was a source of confusion and mystery for government authorities up to and beyond the second consolidated appeal!

NGOs occupied themselves with cursory visits, organising donations (of food, as well as clothes and medical supplies), rebuilding some of the houses that had been washed away, and some wishing to maximise the profile gained. Eye-witness accounts of the emergency formed the focus of media coverage of events in the

DPRK, my own included. Where was the analysis?

There were organisations who, having had a presence in the DPRK prior to the floods, were in a potentially powerful position to pursue a course of action informed by better understanding of the context. But they didn't; some NGOs allowed themselves to be led along by the hype and propaganda being fed them (by DPRK Government, donors, media etc), presumably for fear of losing the trust and working relations that had previously been established with the local authorities.

Yet reality, as far as it is possible for an outsider such as myself to comment, was much more complex. The food deficit of 1995/1996 had root causes way beyond the 1995 floods and the crop and food stock damage which resulted. The national economy, with agriculture at its core, has been in slow decline for a number of years. Trade has been diminishing as a result of the country's poor credit reputation and fuel shortages have impeded industrial production and thus reduced the availability of export commodities. The DPRK has been experiencing a structural crisis, and the 1995 floods served only to exacerbate this already fragile state.

Was it a missed opportunity? Could NGOs have done more? I think the answer is yes, even allowing for the serious constraints posed by the authorities in Pyongyang. Where was the analytical thinking, the careful consideration of opportunities and priorities for effective intervention in the DPRK? Where was the balance between pragmatic action and advocacy? If it existed, it was well hidden. An opportunity was missed for NGOs to demonstrate a more careful response to the DPRK's current needs in a longer-term context. Few pursued any line which extended beyond needs in 1995/96. And few pursued any line which was not being pulled by the lure of grants and fundable projects. An opportunity was missed to exercise independent thinking with a view to more effective and appropriate action.

There was also a missed opportunity of NGOs coming together to speak with a coherent and informed (as far as that is possible in the DPRK) voice. The competition over speed, entry visas and profile seemed to take over NGO agendas and the rapport that can emerge during new emergencies seemed absent.

And what of my own efforts – an NGO worker asked to offer technical support to a UN agency in assessing the food and nutrition situation? I attempted to present an analysis of the current shortages in a longer-term context, trying to describe the evolution of the deteriorating food security situation of the country over the last ten or so years. My appeal was for an understanding of the process rather than simply the outcome, because, I argued, the conditions seen in 1995/96 were not the final outcome. The situation would deteriorate further over the next few years unless concerted effort was made to support the flailing economy. But nobody wanted to hear that. My

argument didn't fit with the political imperative of emergency/humanitarian response. Governments weren't ready to offer structural, bilateral support to a regime it didn't trust – and that was that.

The case of NGO efforts in North Korea is a microcosm of, I think, NGOs' role in development globally. NGOs did (and are doing) what they could, but that barely scratched the surface of the real needs of the country. In a context of political isolation from much of the rest of the world, economic stagnation and commercial alienation, small-scale contributions of basic food commodities to relieve the current food gap were important, but not enough. That is why it was vital to ensure that NGOs exerted pressure on donors to acknowledge the economic crisis that is slowly but unremittingly engulfing the DPRK. The food crisis was a structural one, not one caused by the flood emergency. Yet, little was said and even less was heard.

We (NGOs) have a responsibility to be more than just proxies for donor government agendas; and we have a responsibility of making sure we understand the wider context in which we are operating.

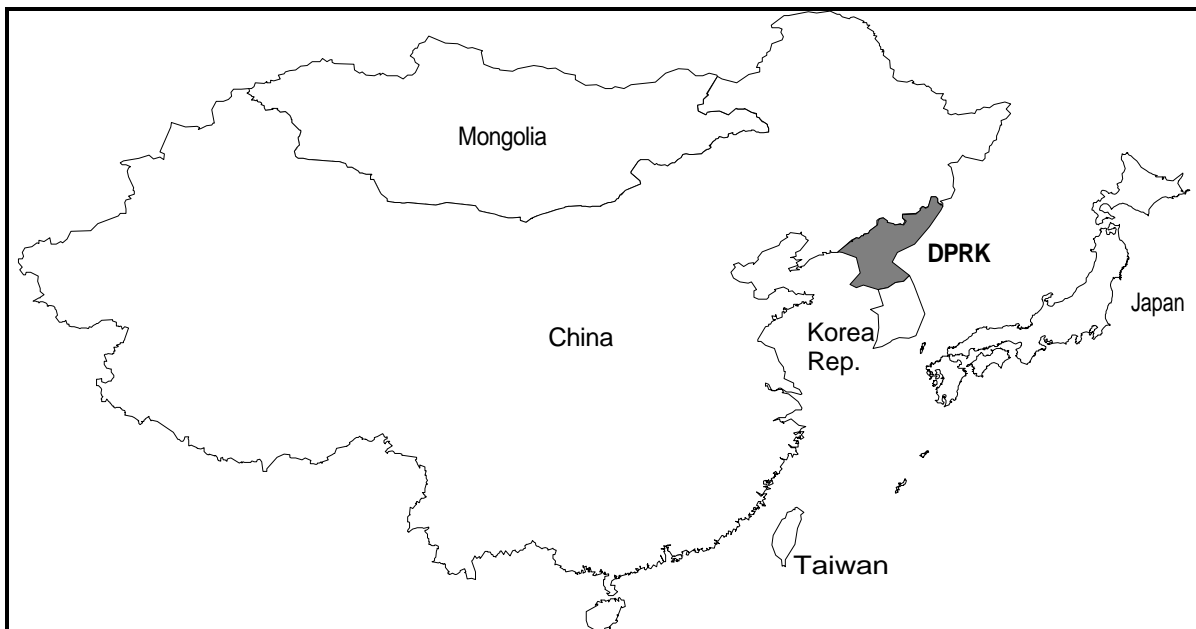
We are moving in a dangerous direction of 'short-termism' whereby concerns about self-preservation are seemingly overriding, or at least taking on equal importance to, local needs – particularly longer-term needs. We are perilously close to selling out altogether. If that happens, the development debate will have lost one important voice – that of the independent humanitarian NGO.

by Nicholas Stockton

Nicholas Stockton, Emergencies Director of Oxfam UK and Ireland, has been one of the most active advocates of the raising of humanitarian standards, contributing to the development of the Red Cross/NGO Codes of Conduct and, more recently, of technical standards and claimants rights. Here, he highlights the issues to be tackled by NGOs in future standard-setting, cautioning that while important, addressing standards alone will not be sufficient to confront some fundamental criticisms of the aid industry.

The renewed clarion call for the setting and imposition of standards for humanitarian aid is increasingly offered as a panacea for solving all the ills of emergency interventions. Indeed, for some the idea of cleaning up the humanitarian industry seems to offer the even more attractive prospect of removing a hideous carbuncle disfiguring the otherwise beautiful face of international development cooperation. The purpose of this paper is to assess the extent to which these hopes and expectations of catharsis through quality control are reasonable. It concludes that while helpful in addressing some issues, there are still many unresolved institutional and procedural problems to be overcome and that there exist other, perhaps more profound challenges that standardisation will not tackle.

Types of standards



Rations or Rights? B Humanitarian Standards

The succession of high profile débâcles, in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Burundi that have enmeshed and apparently confounded the international humanitarian

industry in recent years has created a chorus of voices, from almost all sectors, for radical reform of the humanitarian system. The calls come from human rights groups, journalists, the industry itself, and now, in the multi-donor evaluation of Rwanda, from a potent combination of academics and donors in the most authoritative study so far. Many of these critics have called for a variety of new standards to control the humanitarian industry. To review these, it is helpful to propose a basic typology of standards, by which we can categorise and assess the various approaches that have been recommended. These seem to fall into three major categories, 'professional', 'industrial' and 'consumer', each type having a number of sub-variants. (See article on Minimum Performance Standards on page 4).

Professional standards

Following the well trodden path of occupational professionalisation, a large and growing body of best practice guidelines in humanitarian service delivery has been produced to prescribe the manner in which 'professional' humanitarian workers should ideally operate. There are a number of existing 'best practice' manuals, including the RRN Good Practice Reviews, and Oxfam UK & I manuals, which will be added to an extensive and burgeoning international catalogue of overlapping, and sometimes contradictory formulations of best practice.

The next step in the professionalisation process is therefore to establish a single set of standards. To this end the Disaster Relief Committee of InterAction, the US relief and development 'trade association', began the process of drafting best practice guidelines for water, sanitation, food security and health training in emergencies. Likewise, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) recently developed a strategy for the establishment of humanitarian standards which includes the identification of professional best practice. (These two initiatives have since come together in an important move to eliminate duplication and ensure that the standards reach the wider international community – a fuller report on this is featured in the article on page 4).

This article expresses the view that occupational performance standards do not *on their own* ensure quality control. For example, Oxfam's status as a leading professional agency in emergency water provision does not by itself guarantee the competence of its engineers, as project evaluations sometimes reveal. The demand for rapid recruitment in emergencies can result in inexperienced and unsuitable staff being pitched into the most demanding and responsible of occupational contexts, with negligible specialist induction and support, as was shown by the recent Multi-donor Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance to Rwanda.

Professional Associations

Therefore, a crucial step in the classical process of

professionalisation is the creation of a professional association that can 'control' entry into the occupation. In the UK, the consortium 'People in Aid' is currently investigating how to establish such an association of relief and development workers that would enable the creation of professional entry norms, methods of peer review and the endorsement of a standard code of professional practice. (The People in Aid Statement of Principles, agreed at the inter-agency meeting held in July 1996, features in an article on page 14).

There are problems with this approach. The successful creation of a professional body that covers such an enormous range of occupations as exists in the humanitarian industry is without precedent. In the final analysis, it is arguable that the only characteristic shared by many relief workers is that they conduct their work as *expatriates*. Even this somewhat dubious distinction would be lost were the 'profession' to be fully internationalised. It is also highly questionable how, without parliamentary legislation, a professional association of relief and development workers could safely judge professional competence, and still more problematic, incompetence, and then make this information available to employers.

'Industry' standards

Deriving from the tradition of industrial and commercial standardisation, is an approach that aims to lay down corporate or institutional norms that can confer a guarantee of quality on the work of selected institutions. The Red Cross Movement and NGO Code of Conduct is one example of what in the USA is referred to as a 'trade association' standard. Again 'People in Aid' is worthy of mention here as it plans to develop a *human resource management standard* that would be granted to UK relief and development agencies fulfilling specified staff recruitment, development and management norms. (A parallel idea is the Ethical Trading Standard). In the USA, InterAction are drafting a 'field protocol' for humanitarian agencies, detailing best practice in co-ordination, security guidelines, local employment practice and so on. Other initiatives, for example to create standards for ethical fund-raising also fall into this category.

Like professionalisation, a critical weakness of this approach is that institutions empowered to conduct peer reviews and impose sanctions do not currently exist. In their absence, donor agencies are proposing to promote quality control by conditioning aid contracts against, as yet undefined, industry standards. Both the ODA and the OFDA are on record as saying that they intend to introduce some kind of corporate accreditation scheme, as recommended by the Rwanda evaluation. Several senior staff in ECHO are also known to favour such an approach. This has certain problems.

NGOs with significant private donor income would not be affected, except where countries had the will and capacity to enforce an accreditation scheme. Worryingly,

experience of such regulatory regimes suggests that performance quality is not a key consideration in licensing NGOs. Furthermore, it would surely be folly to suggest that the interests of states and humanitarian objectives are always compatible. In cases where these were not, humanitarians would quickly learn to regret any comprehensive endorsement for a state monopoly in running regulation and accreditation schemes. A careful examination of the humanitarian content and orientation of any country's foreign and security policy record would surely dispel any naive assumptions of complete mutuality of purpose.

Trade Associations

The onus must therefore fall upon networks of humanitarian agencies to develop mechanisms for enforcing members' compliance with agreed behavioural standards. Again, this approach will not be without drawbacks. The legitimacy of a trade association depends upon exclusion as much as it does upon inclusion. If we draw up the rules of the club today, how many of tomorrow's Oxfams will be excluded. How many small and Southern agencies would make the grade? Would trade association standards stifle innovation? Would radicalism and critical debate be kept private, so as to prevent bringing the association into disrepute?

Furthermore, for the present, in a highly segmented and non-regulated industry such as prevails in the international aid market, professional and trade standards provide no final guarantees for the intended beneficiary, since these could only ensure the application of quality standards to individuals and institutions, not to the system as a whole.

'Consumer' standards

The key difference between 'professional', 'industry' and 'consumer' standards is that the latter have the potential to strengthen (or generate) 'consumer sovereignty' in the face of service provision monopolies. For example, the right of the 'humanitarian claimant' (see also page 4) for protection from violence under international law could, in theory, be elaborated so that it would be possible to judge the efficacy of the whole system, and thereby make it more accountable to the intended beneficiaries. Arising out of this movement to provide such statutory rights for citizens, a considerable amount of work, particularly by the United Nations agencies, has been devoted to defining the essential life support requirements for persons affected by humanitarian emergencies.

Whilst much of this work has sought to establish minimum universal standards of service provision, for example in litres of clean water, kilojoules of food etc., the approach has been dogged by physical relativities (e.g. the effect of temperature upon energy consumption) and sociological debates (e.g. cultural norms in water consumption etc.). Inherent in any project to establish humanitarian rights will be hazardous judgements about what constitutes an acceptable range of life chance indicators. What crude

death rate is deemed acceptable? What standard deviation from this norm is considered as acceptable, and how will this translate into minimum individual as opposed to minimum average standards?

While these are difficult moral questions within any one community, they become infinitely more challenging from a global perspective. For example, what standard of service provision should be offered when the ambient life chance indicators of host groups fall below the level presented by a refugee community? Ultimately, in this debate it will be necessary to confront the empirical reality where global and regional inequalities condemns the populations of large parts of the world to less than half of their biblical allotment of three score years and ten under 'normal' circumstances. Should international humanitarian standards apply to everyone, everywhere? And if not, why not? Because of the profound and perhaps subversive implications of these questions, we need to make every effort to get them answered.

Sadly international humanitarian law has not yet been elaborated into mandatory entitlements, nor operationalised into institutional responsibilities and system wide accountability. So far, instead of establishing what humanitarian claimants are entitled to, 'consumer standards' have attempted to produce a science based calculus of what people *in extremis* need for elementary survival. At present humanitarian food aid is not quantified on a mandatory protein/energy based calculus of food rights, but rather is a matter of divvying up available supplies up into rations, influenced by political considerations and nutrition criteria in that order.

Is quality the only issue?

There may be dangers in believing that by subjecting the international aid and humanitarian industry to quality controls we can solve all the major issues confronting us. There are some very challenging critiques of humanitarianism, indeed of the whole world of international aid that will not be 'fixed' through the setting of professional, agency and consumer standards alone. I believe that the new challenge is to identify and forge linkages that can demonstrate the moral and pragmatic reasons why the opportunity costs of extreme poverty should be borne by those who most profit from it. Perhaps we should now send the humanitarian bill to the corporate sector rather than leaving it to be picked up by states. Indeed, there is much evidence to suggest that new strategic alliances between progressive governments and enlightened humanitarian agencies could be built around a campaign to build global tax regimes that create disincentives to corporate behaviour that fosters political violence. An elaboration of humanitarian and human rights would help to quantify this bill: standards and principles come with a price tag. It will soon be time to decide who will pay.

Food Security in the Post-GATT World

by Prof. Alan Matthews

Professor Matthews lectures in agricultural trade policy and development at Trinity College, Dublin.

Since the signing of the Final Agreement of the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations in Morocco in early 1995, there has been a growing interest in evaluating the impact which the new world trade regulations will have on the ability of countries, and particularly developing countries, to meet specific national objectives. Questions have been raised about the compatibility of the new trade regime with environmental sustainability objectives and the achievement of food security.

This contribution addresses the question whether the changing international environment, and particularly the emerging framework for international trade embodied in the Uruguay Round Agreement and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation, is likely to lead to a more or less food-secure world. Specifically, we focus on the links between trade and food security given the major changes now underway in the international trade environment.

Both for developing and developed countries, the amount of reliance to be placed on trade is a key element in their food security strategies. Trade contributes to food security in a number of ways. For example, it enables countries to consume more food than they produce; it can help to even out supply variability, which would otherwise cause significant price fluctuations; it enables faster income growth and thus holds out the potential for higher food consumption; and it permits global food production to take place in those regions most suited to it, thus minimising the likelihood of adverse environmental effects.

But reliance on trade also brings risks for a country's food security. These include the risks of deteriorating terms of exchange on world markets (falling prices for agricultural exports, higher prices for food imports); of unreliable suppliers; of importing price instability if world markets are more unstable than domestic food markets, of widening domestic consumption inequalities; of exacerbating domestic hunger by increasing competition for available food supplies; and of increasing environmental stress. Trade is not always and for everyone a positive factor promoting food security. The question is whether the emerging global system of trade regulation increases more the risks or the benefits.

From the food security perspective, the agricultural

agreement in the Uruguay Round is the most significant element, although the overall impact of the general agreement on trade and economic growth will also be significant. The agricultural agreement covers market access, disciplines on domestic support and export subsidies, as well as regulations governing the use of sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

The quantitative results of the Round fell short of what some participants, including the major Latin American food exporters, had hoped for, but are still considerable. Aggregate domestic support for global agriculture will be cut from \$198 billion to \$162 billion (mainly in developed countries) and export subsidies will be cut from \$21.3 billion to \$13.8 billion. Agricultural tariffs have been reduced by around one-third on average and, more important, non-tariff barriers have been converted to tariffs. Non-tariff barriers, including quotas, variable import levies and seasonal import restrictions, have always been more important instruments of protection in agricultural trade compared to trade in manufactures. Virtually all agricultural tariffs will be bound in future, i.e. ceiling rates have been established, which adds greater security to trade. A modest amount of new market access has been provided. The quantitative limits on export subsidies mean that market growth in future will be met by low-cost agricultural producers.

The changing policy environment has implications for the size and stability of world food markets and for the likely future level of world food prices. A number of developing country participants in the Uruguay Round feared it would lead to higher prices for food imports. Developing country agricultural exporters will benefit from these increases, while agricultural importers will tend to lose from higher world food prices. This loss can be minimised if importing countries fully pass through the change in world prices to their own domestic markets, thus encouraging their own producers and consumers to adjust to the new market conditions.

These adjustments, however, are not easy to make. On the consumer side, the high share of total income spent on food in low-income developing countries means that increasing food prices has a very significant welfare impact in these countries. On the producer side, the ability to increase production may be relatively inflexible. Generating a response to higher food prices requires complementary public investment, in roads, irrigation, research and extension. Unfortunately, in many developing countries, public investment in agriculture has been falling as part of the fiscal retrenchment encouraged by structural adjustment programmes.

A detailed examination of the outcome of the Round indicates that the initial fears were overstated. The lack of 'bite' in many of the disciplines which have been introduced (for example, many countries exaggerated the tariff levels from which the reductions are calculated so that their practical effect is much smaller than

anticipated) means that the expected increases in world prices after the full implementation of the Round will be smaller than earlier projected, perhaps of the order of 0-5 per cent rather than the 5-10 per cent which some had foreseen. In real terms (i.e. relative to an index of manufactured goods prices) both FAO and World Bank projections indicate that food prices will continue to fall, even after the implementation of the Uruguay Round. This is not to argue that world agricultural prices cannot increase in future (witness, for example, the rise in world wheat prices over the past two years well before the Uruguay Round could have an impact). However, the Agreement itself is unlikely to put much upward pressure on food grain prices to the end of this decade.

An important consequence of the Agreement for food-insecure countries which rely heavily on food aid deliveries is its likely effect on food aid flows. Under the Agreement, *bona fide* food aid is exempt from the prohibition on export subsidies, so the possible consequences for food aid flows are indirect. Because food aid has been related to the disposal of surplus production in food exporting countries in the past, reduced government stock-holding in exporting countries might be expected to lead to a reduced willingness of donor countries to provide food aid. A counter-incentive, however, is that food aid may become a more attractive outlet for countries with surplus disposal problems now that tight limits on the volume of subsidised exports are in place. On balance, future food aid deliveries will be more influenced by public perceptions of its usefulness and value than by the GATT agreement itself.

Some developing countries have been concerned that the restrictions imposed by the Agreement on the range of policy instruments they can use to pursue their agricultural policy objectives will make it more difficult for them to achieve their agricultural growth and food security objectives in the future. While direct subsidisation of producers will be increasingly restricted, there are no restraints on the use of public investment measures for agricultural and rural development purposes. Investment and input subsidies, both frequently used measures in developing countries to promote increased production, continue to be permitted in developing countries under the Agreement. In this respect, disciplines imposed by structural adjustment programmes often go much further than the policy constraints imposed by the GATT Agreement.

A major concern of food-insecure countries is the disruption of domestic markets by imported world price instability. Changes introduced by the Uruguay Round agreement should contribute to the stabilising of world markets, though, in the case of grains, these positive links may be outweighed by reductions in the level of stocks held by the main exporters as the extent of policy support is reduced. Smaller global stocks mean that the world is less able to smooth adjustments in consumption to changes in production.

Some mechanism to ensure that the necessary minimum of stocks are held and rules for their use in times of shortfalls is urgently required. It was the skewed distribution of the costs of stock-holding, largely borne by the US and the EU, not their absolute size, which was problematic in the past. Negotiating a burden-sharing agreement will not be easy, but there is a precedent in GATT's sponsorship of food aid burden-sharing under the 1967 Food Aid Convention. The global community may be more willing to contribute to the costs of maintaining a global reserve given that the threat of subsidised competition from existing stock-holders is now contained.

Finally, from a food security perspective, the impact of the Agreement on incomes and purchasing power, particularly among the poor, is of crucial importance. While the likely income effects of the Uruguay Round, and particularly their distribution within and across developing countries, is controversial, there is good evidence to suggest that, on balance, the Uruguay Round will lead to a reduction in absolute poverty. As around half of the world's absolute poor live in China and India, if these two countries increase substantially their share of world markets in clothing and other labour-intensive export manufactures as a result of the Agreement as is likely, then these gains will swamp all other effects on poverty in other developing countries.

There are thus good reasons to be optimistic about the consequences of the emerging trading order for food security in developing countries.

Do No Harm or Do Some Good?

NGO Coordination in Liberia

by Philippa Atkinson

NGOs working in Liberia have been grappling with the difficulties of delivering aid in a neutral and impartial fashion since the beginning of the conflict in that country in 1990. The highly complex environment in which relief agencies work has continually jeopardised their ability to provide aid to those who need it most, and has at times produced perverse outcomes where relief aid has contributed directly both to the violence of the war and to the efforts of the warring factions. There have been at least two occasions where food distributions have been followed by massacres of civilians by fighters, including at Sinje this year in September, and countless incidents of looting of relief convoys and the property of relief agencies. Property targeted for looting includes vehicles and radio equipment, used for logistics purposes by warring factions, while relief food aid is often taken directly from civilians by fighters in a form of taxation. As the conflict has deepened over the years, with increasing factionalisation of the country and increasing internal displacement necessitating the continuation of external assistance, the contradictions inherent in the traditional relief response of delivering food and medical aid have become clearer.

The large amounts spent in the Liberia region on food aid alone over the seven year crisis, of over US\$500m, highlight the ineffectiveness of the "band aid" approach to relief, which focuses purely on temporary responses to the humanitarian crises caused by wars. In Liberia, the relief community has been there throughout to mitigate the civilian hardship caused directly by factional fighting over territory, resources and power, while international commitment to finding a political solution to the conflict has been lacking. Many commentators have suggested that the major humanitarian effort of the US government especially, has served to mask in some way its responsibility to try to develop a political solution to the war. As in other conflicts, some believe that the very presence of the relief community lessens the pressure on warring factions themselves to seek a political solution. In Liberia, where the faction leaders have clear national political ambitions, it is certainly useful for them that responsibility for the basic needs of their citizens has been taken on by the international humanitarian community. The prolonged engagement of the humanitarian community in Liberia may thus have had the unintended effect of helping relieve pressure for a political solution both internally and externally.

A growing awareness of the political issues involved in delivering aid led last year to the adoption of an

operational code of conduct by the relief community in Liberia including the United Nations, based on the *Red Cross/NGO Codes of Conduct* (see RRN Network Paper 7). The adoption of the code was an attempt to ensure that all agencies in Liberia would abide by humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality, thus limiting the possibility of manipulation of aid by the warring factions, and helping to ensure that it reaches targeted beneficiaries. This year, following the massive looting of property from relief agencies during six weeks of fighting in the capital, Monrovia, with total losses of the humanitarian community estimated at up to US\$20m, the NGO community has taken the unprecedented step of restricting its work to "life-saving" operations only. This policy, of minimal capital inputs and carefully targeted interventions, was agreed by a group of twelve international NGOs still active in Liberia after the April crisis. It was designed to demonstrate to the faction leaders the seriousness of NGO commitment to limit their own contributions to the war, and as a way to put pressure on faction leaders to respect the principles of humanitarianism.

The new policy of NGOs marks an important step in its recognition of the ambiguous role of relief aid in the conflict, and shows progress in the crucial area of policy coordination between relief agencies. The presentation of a "united front" to the faction leaders was seen as an important aspect of both agreements, and UN agencies, although not officially signatories to this year's joint policy statement, have adopted a similar stance in limiting their replacement of stolen equipment for example. However, although both these policy statements demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated analysis and understanding of the situation by the agencies, and thus represent important progress, in practice, both the commitment of all agencies to the Operating Principles, and the willingness of the warring factions to cooperate when their own interests lie elsewhere, have proved lacking. The difficulties faced by relief agencies in conflicts in which they have for a number of years been important institutional players do not diminish even as their own appreciation of them improves.

Thus, just as the extent of the looting suffered by the relief community this year exceeded all previous incidents, the recent crisis in western Liberia surpassed previous manipulations of relief aid as civilians were, some maintain, kept as prisoners and deliberately starved by fighters in order to attract food aid to the area. Relief agencies and CNN arrived in the area, and the situation took on crisis proportions which many believe exaggerated the extent of the humanitarian need. The increase in relief activity, with new NGOs setting up operations in Monrovia, has served to undermine to an extent both the cohesion of the joint policy of NGOs, and some of its component principles, including that of minimal inputs. As relief aid has been delivered to this highly volatile and

strategic area, fighters have stolen food from civilians, at Sinje killing up to 25 people immediately after a distribution, and have taken convoys of aid personnel hostage on two occasions. The situation demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining cooperation amongst the relief community, and shows the extent of the manipulation of relief by the warring factions. Major abuses of human rights have taken place throughout the war in Liberia, including the taking of civilians as hostages for fighting and labouring, and the massacre at Harbel in June 1993 of 600 people occurred following a distribution of relief food. However, this latest incident is unprecedented as it entails human rights abuses directly linked to the provision of relief food, and it demonstrates the increasing sophistication of fighters in Western Liberia in their ability to manipulate the relief community.

Some of the problems raised by this situation can be tackled within the context of the existing joint policy. Better coordination with new members of the relief community, including the dissemination of available information on fighters' tactics, and thus the rationale for the policy of minimal inputs, would help limit avoidable mistakes. Mechanisms for responding to violations of humanitarian principles by factions must be implemented, as with the recent strike by agencies operating in Gbarnga following the looting of a food warehouse involving faction members. It is crucial for the humanitarian community to convey to the factions their unwillingness to work in the context of these abuses. However, such incidents in which the factions' very tactics are shown to involve the deprivation of civilian populations and manipulation of relief supplies, highlight the basic inadequacy of humanitarian principles. The benefits of opening up humanitarian corridors when the humanitarian need is deliberately created in the first place in order to attract relief aid are questionable. This raises very difficult issues for the relief community, but ones which must be faced. The counterproductive effects of prolonged emergency aid programmes must be analysed, and the importance of advocating for respect of civilians' human rights must be acknowledged.

The need for informed research on various aspects of the conflict is increasingly being recognised by the NGO community. A detailed study on the dynamic role of aid in the war commissioned by the Fondation Médecins sans Frontières has been completed this year. This report documents the multiple negative impacts of aid on the conflict, from the looting of relief items to the important symbolic political recognition afforded to the factions by the institutions of the relief community. It concludes however, that the perverse effects of relief aid are not decisive in determining the causes and dynamics of war. Therefore, aid can and must be redesigned to limit its harmful effects, and not simply be abolished. A rethinking of food aid policy is suggested, and the use of minimal capital inputs to reduce the possibility of diversion. NGOs

in Monrovia recently held a workshop to discuss coordination and policy, and ways to implement a "do no harm" approach to relief as developed by the Mary Anderson consultancy group. It is important however that in working to analyse and limit the perverse and negative effects of aid, that NGOs do not lose sight of their responsibility to also "do some good". An increased role for NGOs in advocacy is one component of the joint policy statement, and an advocacy strategy is currently being developed, both at field and head office level, with research already being funded. Advocacy work involves a recognition and understanding of the political aspects of conflict, which may challenge the traditional neutrality of the relief community. However, it is only with this acknowledgement of the political role of the humanitarian community that real progress can be made in the provision of aid that can have a positive impact in conflict situations.

Conflict, Conditionalities and the Continuum

Key issues emerging from the Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan

by Joanna Macrae

Joanna Macrae is a Research Fellow at the ODI and was a member of the OLS Review Team.

Following close on the heels of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, comes a critical review of one of the world's longest running relief programmes – Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). The OLS Review complements the Rwanda evaluation; while the latter study focused on international response during an acute phase of an emergency, this report analyses the evolution of responses to a chronic political emergency. Given the protracted nature of conflict-related emergencies, including those in the Great Lakes Region, the OLS review raises issues likely to be familiar to many of our readers.

Operation Lifeline was initiated by the late James Grant, Director of UNICEF in 1989. It was created in the aftermath of one of the most severe war-created famines ever recorded in which over 250,000 people are estimated to have died. Bahr el Ghazal region, the epicentre of the 1988 famine, was also the frontline between government and opposition forces. Since famine creation constituted an important part of the military strategy of the government, and since the donor community and the UN chose to respect the sovereignty of the government, the scale of the crisis in southern Sudan was underplayed by the international community, and the area remained largely inaccessible to the UN and NGO relief agencies.

OLS was created to respond to the final phases of this catastrophe. It was constituted as a mechanism to access civilians living in both government and rebel-held territory, through a series of formal and informal agreements between the UN and the warring parties. In common with all relief programmes, OLS was designed to be a short-term, rapid response focusing primarily on the provision of food aid. What makes OLS unique, however, is the emergence of distinct operational and regulatory regimes in government- and rebel-held areas of the country.

In government-held areas, largely in the north of the country, a conventional UN structure has developed, with UNDP acting as the representative of UNDHA and coordinating the operational work of WFP, UNICEF and other UN agencies; the Government of Sudan remains the sovereign authority. In rebel-held territories, the UN, specifically UNICEF, acts as the *de facto* governmental authority; providing the regulatory and coordinating framework for the relief operation at least. NGOs wishing to operate in rebel-held areas sign letters of association with the UN, not with the Khartoum government; on signing these letters they gain access to the OLS logistics network in particular access to air transport for personnel and cargo.

Thus, over the past seven years OLS has moved from a short-term, ad hoc initiative to become one of the most complex and largest relief operations in the world, costing an estimated US\$264 million between 1993-1995 alone. The Review concluded that OLS, despite its scale and complexity, has lurched from crisis to crisis and is presently confronting what might be described as the humanitarian impasse. In other words, relief aid, designed as a short-term response to primarily natural disasters, is unable to cope with protracted, highly political emergencies.

The report is long – over three hundred, dense pages. In addition to reviewing seven years of several UN and multiple NGO activities, it covers issues as diverse as food security programming, cost effectiveness and social impact of relief. In a short space it is difficult to do justice to the report, but two key issues stand out as particularly salient:

First, the continued importance of sovereignty in influencing international relief programming, particularly that of the UN. Despite increasing claims that humanitarian interests are taking precedence over sovereignty concerns, in Sudan respect for sovereignty continues to take precedence over adherence to humanitarian principles. Thus, for example, counter to the principles of neutrality and impartiality, the coverage of the OLS needs assessment is determined by the government's political criteria, not according to need. Similarly, it is the Government of Sudan which has ultimate control over flights into rebel-held territories in the south: by mid-1996 increasing government restrictions

on the type of aircraft and conditions for their flights meant that OLS-southern sector food aid and non-food aid delivery rates were only 20% and 30% of their targets, prompting the heads of WFP and UNICEF to make formal representations to the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to act. What this suggests is that where states are also a party to a conflict, sovereignty continues to act as an important obstacle to achieving impartial and neutral allocation of relief resources.

A second key area is that of the content and strategies of relief programming in the context of a chronic political emergency. The protracted nature of the emergency has prompted different responses in government and rebel-held areas. In government-held areas the primary response has been to promote the idea of the relief-development continuum. In practice, since the donor community is unwilling to commit development aid to Sudan, this has meant reducing free food distributions and increasing allocations of seeds and tools. However, having been stripped of the bulk of their assets, the large population of war-displaced in Sudan are still unable to return home neither they do not possess sufficient land and or other assets to provide a basis to restore livelihoods. As if this wasn't enough, they continue to be subject to often violent harassment by the government and civil and military authorities. In Khartoum, for example, some 600,000 war-displaced have had their shelters demolished since 1991 and been forcibly relocated by government authorities. In south Darfur, war-displaced populations are unable to access sufficient land and agricultural inputs to subsist; in the absence of relief they are therefore forced to work as share-croppers, typically leaving them in debt and without sufficient food. In this context, far from enjoying an improvement in their position, many war-affected populations in Sudan have experienced a *deterioration* in their living conditions and nutritional status.

Despite this, an unlikely coalition of interests has emerged to defend the reduction in free rations. This includes some donor and UN representatives, the Government of Sudan, and NGOs, each of whom caution against the emergence of relief dependency, each of whom stand to benefit in different ways in financial, institutional and political terms from promoting the idea that the position of war-affected and other populations is stabilizing. Evidence suggests however, that the extent of developmental space is extremely limited; until it increases populations remain in need of food aid to maintain their health and nutritional status.

Promotion of the concept of the relief-development continuum in government-held areas has taken place without a clear analysis of the continuing political and economic dynamics and impact of the war. This stands in contrast to the evolution of UN and NGO responses in rebel-held territories. Here, far from ignoring the war, the UN has placed it at the centre of its analysis. It has made

humanitarian principles – neutrality, impartiality and accountability – explicit in informing programming strategies. Furthermore, in a move which links humanitarian operations with human rights, OLS has promoted the concept of ground rules which aim to encourage rebel movements to respect the rights of civilian populations under their control.

What this signals is the emergence of conditionality on relief aid. Conventionally relief aid is seen by donors to be unconditional, in contrast to development aid which is usually provided subject to economic and policy conditions. The OLS Review concludes that the introduction of conditionalities on relief aid is justified in the south and should be extended to government-held sectors. It emphasises that it is *humanitarian* principles, particularly neutrality and impartiality, which must be maintained, not the political or economic conditions associated with development aid lending. It argues that only through active inclusion of principles in programming can relief aid be effective and efficient. It is only by active implementation and monitoring of these humanitarian principles that manipulation of relief supplies by warring parties can be minimised, the interests of war-affected populations be safeguarded and subsequently the impact of relief maximised.

At the same time, the idea that relief workers and organisations can remain uncritical observers of violent strategies of warring parties has also been questioned by the OLS experience: the introduction of Ground Rules for the warring parties derives from the recognition that it is the conduct of the war, more than the organisation of the relief operation, which primarily determines the welfare of civilians. Advocating respect for human rights in wartime is therefore a critical task for donors, the UN and NGOs.

These themes will be familiar to veterans and observers of the Red Cross Movement, particularly ICRC. For over a century the Red Cross has attempted to both improve the ~~conduct of war and to facilitate the provision of relief.~~ What the OLS review has highlighted is the need to reassert humanitarian principles throughout the international relief system. As more actors, some such as the UN working within multiple mandates, begin to work

in conflict zones, so the need to define and defend the terms of humanitarian engagement has become an imperative. Humanitarian conditions provide a means of protecting the entitlements of conflict-affected populations to continued relief support if it is indicated by objective assessment, not political or financial imperatives. They also inform strategies of delivering assistance in order to ensure that aid reaches the intended beneficiaries, reducing scope for manipulation of relief resources by powerful interest groups.

Operationalising humanitarian principles requires an appropriate institutional framework. The OLS Review concluded that existing UN institutional arrangements in government-held areas of Sudan are inappropriate. The UNDP Resident Representative also coordinates the humanitarian aid programme: in the view of the Review Team this is inappropriate. For example, it is difficult for the same person to one day reprimand the government authorities for violations of humanitarian principles and the next to work with the same authorities as counterparts for development programmes. The Review therefore recommended clear separation between relief and development activities.

It also emphasised the importance of investing in good information systems and analysis; meaning both people and data. Politically neutral and impartial aid programming is not the same as politically uninformed programming: capacity for careful assessment, monitoring, evaluation of relief programmes is a necessary condition for improving their effectiveness. This will not be a cheap option, therefore. Donors will need to invest in developing information and management systems to ensure that their investments in food aid and other supplies are used effectively.

☞ Copies of the report by Ataul Karim *et al* (1996): *Operation Lifeline Sudan: A Review*, are available from Carmen Montenegro, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10. Tel: +41 22 788 1404. Fax: + 41 22 788 6389. Email: carmen.montenegro@dha.unicc.org.

News

People in Aid Code of Best Practice:

Statement of Principles

Britain's hundred or so international relief and development agencies together sent roughly 9,000 expatriates abroad last year. They can expect to receive, however, 3,000 unsolicited applications in a single week. Few can afford to support a permanent 'ensemble' of experienced, technically qualified emergency relief staff.

So, many field workers move, like jobbing actors, from contract to contract and employer to employer, often accepting poorer working standards or career prospects as a result. No humanitarian agency or donor would support a programme that achieved welfare for one group in the community at the expense of another, and this standard must be applicable to an agency's own staff as well as the beneficiaries of its work. Respect for an aid worker's value is an essential part of any aid agencies' relief or development programme if the quality of programme is to be maintained and improved.

The *Statement of Principles* is the heart of People in Aid's Code of Best Practice. People in Aid aims to ensure best practice in the management and support of those who work in emergency relief, rehabilitation and development programmes. It reflects concern to see the people-centred values of aid agencies extend to all those who work for them. This, we believe, is key to enhancing effectiveness and professionalism in our work with communities suffering poverty, discrimination and disaster.

The *Statement of Principles* was drawn up by the 12 members of the ODA-funded People in Aid Steering Group. The Group was faced with the task of reviewing and recommending human resource management practice in field operations on behalf of a wide range of organisations: some agencies focus on long-term development while others respond principally to disasters and emergencies; some employ salaried field staff, while others recruit volunteers; some organisations recruit their staff directly, while others recruit technical personnel for associate agencies.

The evidence of Rebecca Macnair's seminar report, "Room for Improvement", on the management and support of expatriate relief and development workers, emphasised the need to put our house in order. We presented a draft *Statement of Principles*, refer to all staff, including volunteer and contract staff, who work in international relief and development operations, whatever their country of origin.

The *Statement of Principles* is, however, only a start. The full *People in Aid Code of Best Practice* will be published in 1997. It comprises the *Statement of Principles*, a plan of action and a set of guidelines, benchmarks and examples that show how to put these principles into practice.

People in Aid believes that aid agencies should remain accountable: both to those they channel resources to, and to those who supply them. People who work in aid agencies supply the most valuable and the most vulnerable resource. We believe an agency can only value itself as highly as it value its people.

People in Aid Statement of Principles Draft

(Note: the Statement of Principles is a part of the People Aid Code of Best Practice on the Management and Support of Aid Personnel to be published in 1997. The full Code will comprise the Statement of Principles, a plan of action and a set of guidelines, benchmarks and examples that demonstrate how these principles may be put into practice.)

1. The people who work for us are integral to our effectiveness and success

Our approach to the people in our organisation is a fundamental part of our work. We recognise that the effectiveness and success of our organisation depend on all the people who work for us. Human resource issues are integral to our strategic plans

2. Our human resource policies aim for best practice

We recognise that our human resource policies should aim constantly for best practice. We do not aim to respond solely to minimum legal, professional and donor requirements.

3. Our human resource policies aim to be effective, efficient, fair and transparent

We recognise that our policies must enable us to achieve both effectiveness in our work and good quality of working life for our staff. Our human resource policies therefore aim to be effective, efficient, fair and transparent and to promote equality of opportunity.

4. We consult our field staff when we develop human resource policy

We recognise that we must implement, monitor and continuously develop our human resource policies in consultation with the people who work for us. We aim to include field personnel in this process, whether they are full-time, part-time temporary, short-term or long-term members of our staff.

5. Plans and budgets reflect our responsibilities towards our field staff

We recognise that the effectiveness and success of our field operations depend on the contribution of all the salaried, contract and volunteer staff involved in them. Operational plans and budgets aim to reflect fully our responsibilities for staff management,

support, development, security and well-being.

6. We provide appropriate training and support

We recognise that we must provide relevant training and support to help staff work effectively and professionally. We aim to give them appropriate personal and professional support and development before, during and after their field assignments.

7. We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff security and well-being.

We recognise that the work of relief and development agencies often places great demands on staff in conditions of complexity and risk. We take all reasonable steps to ensure the security and well-being of staff and their families.

Further information on the People in Aid initiative can be obtained from Sara Davidson, Interagency Coordinator. Tel/fax: +44 171 235 0895.

Direct Funding for Conflict Prevention

This article briefly sets out ODA's approach to conflict-related work, outlining support measures available to NGOs and other agencies seeking support for conflict reduction activities.

Following Baroness Chalker's (UK Minister for Overseas Aid) address to the Institute for International Affairs (IIA), Stockholm, on 1 October, on the contribution of aid to conflict reduction, a new fund has been set up at the ODA to help agencies working towards conflict prevention.

The Seedcorn Fund, managed by the Conflict Policy Unit, supports conflict prevention, resolution or reduction projects where alternative sources of funding through ODA's geographical, sectoral or research departments do not exist.

The fund was created as part of a new approach the ODA is taking toward conflict prevention, detailed in an ODA booklet launched at the Minister's address to the IIA.

The booklet, "Conflict Reduction Through the Aid Programme" reflects growing concern at the increase in conflicts worldwide. Since 1980s, the proportion of

development assistance OECD countries spend on emergency relief has risen from three to 10 per cent.

The 10 page booklet was written for agencies seeking support for conflict reduction activities. It explains how aid can contribute to conflict reduction, the role ODA plays, and how agencies can apply for funding.

It asks the important question, hitherto often skirted by humanitarian agencies – can aid activities really reduce violent conflict?

The ODA view is yes, partially. "Through helping to build the political and social space in which disputes can be resolved non violently, a range of traditional and non-traditional aid activities can contribute to the prevention, resolution or reduction of violent conflict, and the reconciliation of groups within divided societies."

The recent booklet details ways in which aid projects can help reconciliation work in the short and longer term such as community-based mediation, the strengthening of civil society, and support for independent media during a conflict.

The booklet also outlines the work of the Conflict Policy Unit, which was established to integrate conflict handling within the policy and practice of the British Aid Programme.

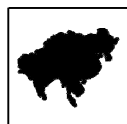
To obtain a copy of the booklet, a transcript of the UK's Overseas Aid Minister's speech, or to apply for funding, contact the Conflict Policy Unit, Emergency Aid Department, Overseas Development Administration, 94

Victoria Street, London SW1E 5JL, UK. Tel: +44 171 917 0061. Fax: +44 171 917 0502.

Email: dru0acl.vs3@oda.gnet.giv.uk.

Update

Earlier articles have highlighted the country situations in Korea, Liberia and Sudan. For this reason the Update section of the Newsletter is shorter than usual.



Asia

Afghanistan... The seizure of Kabul by the radical Islamist group, the Taleban, which had taken the southern and western provinces of Afghanistan over the previous two years, has provoked strong reactions from the international aid community.

There has been particular concern at prohibitions on women working or girls having access to education. Agencies working in Kabul have held discussions with the Taleban at which operational concerns arising from these restrictions have been raised. The needs of the 30,000 war widows in the capital, and the requirement to employ women on relief programmes, were a major focus of the discussions.

The willingness of the Taleban in Kandahar to permit women to work in the health sector, following discussions with agencies working there in early 1995, prompted hopes among agencies in Kabul that the Taleban would also be responsive to dialogue on the issue of women working in other types of humanitarian programme. There has been some movement in their position, but agencies do not yet feel that they can encourage all their female staff to return to work.

Strong statements have been issued by the UN and the European Union which call on the Taleban to observe UN Conventions on Human Rights, and it is clear that international recognition of the Taleban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan will be contingent, at least in part, on conformity with these Conventions.

Fears of renewed fighting in the capital, prompted by efforts on the part of the ousted Government to advance on the city, have led to a growing exodus from Kabul to Pakistan. The fleeing population are also said to be anxious about conscription and angry at the restrictions imposed upon women and girls. 10,000 people fled to Pakistan in September, following the Taleban capture of Jalalabad and a further 10,000 have left Kabul for

Pakistan since the capital was taken on 27 September. An additional 11,500 people have sought the assistance of UNHCR after fleeing from Kabul to Northern Afghanistan.

There remain 1.5 million Afghan refugees in Iran, living under increasingly difficult conditions as they attempt to survive within a deteriorating economy. The prospects for repatriation remain extremely limited.

There are also almost one million Afghan refugees still in Pakistan. Since rations for those in the refugee camps stopped in September 1995, Afghans in Pakistan have, like their compatriots in Iran, had to survive on the labour market. There has been a steady return of refugees to southern Afghanistan, encouraged by the good security there, but fears of renewed insecurity are inhibiting any large-scale return.

Northern Iraq... There has been heavy fighting since the middle of August between the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in the Iraqi Protectorates of Arbil and Suleimaniyah.

The take-over of the Suleimaniyah governorate during the week 7 September has brought the entire autonomous region in the north of Iraq under KDP control. The insecurity and population movements have hampered efforts to implement the recent Memorandum of Understanding between the UN and Government of Iraq to provide US\$ 1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Iraqi people in the North and South.

However, humanitarian agency access has been able to continue throughout the rest of the country as usual, with a temporary block in Suleimaniyah from 10 September for security reasons. UN bodies (UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP) are currently assessing needs as a result of the considerable population displacement caused by the violence. The events resulted in delays in the implementation of Security Council Resolution 986 allowing for the sale of limited amounts (US\$ 1 billion every three months) of Iraqi oil to pay for the distribution of essential food and medical supplies and this has caused very serious humanitarian conditions to persist. Emergency WFP food aid stocks were not expected to cover the needs of 1.485 million (WFP) targeted beneficiaries in the centre and the south beyond October

1996. In the north, 666,000 beneficiaries are expected to be covered until December. Net WFP emergency requirements are estimated at 6,560 mt for the north and 47,350 for the south and centre between October and December.

Sources for Update Section: British Agencies Afghan Group, DHA-Geneva Sitreps and WFP Weekly Reports.

Training Courses

SC38 Food Security in Africa: Policy, Planning and Intervention, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK, 6 May - 25 July 1997

This course, launched in 1991, aims to help food planners and practitioners to analyse the causes of food insecurity in Africa; take a critical look at plans, policies and interventions to alleviate food insecurity; and plan and prepare for future attempts. Countries are encouraged to send teams of participants working on different aspects of food security and at different levels: for example, national and district level food security planners, early warning and relief personnel, food marketing and food production officers, nutritionists, etc. This enables participants from the same country to work together, sharing experiences and perspective and relating the content of the course to their own country context. It is hoped that this will strengthen institutional capacity on food security within the country concerned in a coherent way.

☞ To obtain an application form or for more information on IDS courses, contact the Teaching and Training Unit, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9RE, UK. Tel: +44 1273 606261. Fax: +44 1273 621202/691647. Email: ids.teaching@sussex.ac.uk

Disaster Management Course, Farington, Oxfordshire, UK, 29 July-29 August 1997

Organised by the Disaster Preparedness Centre, Cranfield University, this international course is aimed at those with disaster management responsibilities, but who may have a limited knowledge of theory and practice. Integrated with

the disaster management content of the course is instruction on wider management skills such as presentations, project formulation and management and organisational development networking. On successful completion of the course, participants are awarded a Cranfield University Certificate.

☞ For further information and application forms, contact Siân Chubb, Disaster Preparedness Centre, Cranfield University, RMCS, Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 8LA, UK. Tel: +44 1793 785 287. Fax: +44 1793 782 179.

Courses run by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK

The School offers a number of courses leading to University of Liverpool degrees and diplomas, ie Master of Tropical Medicine, Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Diploma in Tropical Child Health, a series of School Certificate Courses, ie Management of Primary Health Care, Epidemiology in Action and a number of Short Courses, ie. Tropical Medicine for Nurses, Computing Skills for Health Workers.

☞ To obtain more information on all the School's courses, contact the Teaching Office, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Pembroke Place, Liverpool L3 5QA, UK. Tel: +44 151 708 9393. Fax: +44 151 708 8733.

Are you running a training course for relief workers in 1997? If so, do let us know!

Conferences

Forthcoming Conferences

Aspects of Peacekeeping, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK, 22-24 January 1997

This Conference intends to address the many aspects of modern peacekeeping operations, including the military, political, humanitarian and media dimensions and to provide a unique forum in which to hear leading voices in this important area of international relations. Confirmed

guest speakers include Larry Hollingsworth, UNHCR, Martin Bell, BBC, Jean-Marie Kindermans, Director of Médecins sans Frontières International, Lt Colonel Gary Coward, former UNPROFOR Media Spokesman, Dr Glynn Evans, former Head of the UN Department of the FCO, Mats Berdal, IISS and Professor Adman Roberts of Oxford University. Also speaking at the conference will be representatives from the ICRC, Oxfam and other NGOs, as well as several speakers from the academic community

and representatives of the British Armed Forces. The cost of the entire conference, including all meals and accommodation at the Academy is £260.

☞ For more information, contact Ian Stewart, Conference Administrator, The Sandhurst Conference 1997, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4PQ. Tel: +44 1276 412502. Fax: +44 1276 412359.

Forced Migration and Human Rights, Oxford, UK, 9-15 March 1997

The aim of this seminar is to provide an understanding of the legal, political, foreign policy and institutional issues relating to forced migration. Emphasis will be placed on the competing humanitarian, human rights, domestic political, immigration and foreign policy demands on government ministries, the courts, international and non-governmental organisations when they are faced with large-scale forced migrations. In particular, the seminar aims to develop an analytical framework for understanding the international human rights law dimension of forced migration. [NB: the RRN will shortly be publishing a paper on international humanitarian law as part of its Network Papers 1997 series.]

☞ For more information, contact: the International Seminars Department, The British Council, 1 Beaumont Place, Oxford OX1 2PJ, UK. Tel: +44 1865 316636. Fax: +44 1865 557368.

Conference Reports

First International Emergency Settlement Conference, University of Wisconsin, USA, 15-19 April 1996

The International Emergency Settlement Project consists of a series of activities aimed at proposing solutions to the international issues of emergency settlement and to study ways to incorporate mitigation and development perspectives into settlement management. As part of this project, the First International Emergency Settlement Conference was held in April 1996. Participants represented field experience from 49 countries. The Conference provided a forum for 170 professionals with a wide range of expertise and organisational affiliations to discuss the critical issues concerning populations in need of emergency humanitarian assistance. These small working group discussions were based on preliminary conference papers prepared in four broad theme areas: identification and planning of emergency settlement; political, security, protection, civil and human rights aspects; basic assistance needs and social, psychological, economic and developmental issues.

☞ To obtain a copy of the 500 page preliminary conference proceedings (US\$50 not incl. post and packing), which consists of the working drafts of 24 topic

papers, or more information about the Project, contact the UW-DMC by phone at +1 608 262 5441, by fax at +1 608 263 3160 or by email at dmc@engr.wisc.edu. You will also find information through the UW-DMC WWW homepage at: <http://epdwww.engr.wisc.edu/dmc>.

5th IRAP Conference on Forced Migration, Eldoret, Kenya, 9-12 April 1996

This 5th International Research and Advisory Panel Conference was organised and hosted by the Centre for Refugee Studies of Moi University. It was attended by some 150 participants from 31 countries, academics, policy-makers and practitioners in the area of forced migration, about half of whom presented papers. The Conference ran in plenary and parallel sessions charting new research and policy direction under five main headings: 'Forced Migration and Environmental Change'; 'The Reception and Representation of Refugees in Host Countries'; Gender and Children's Issues in Forced Migration'; 'Unaccompanied Minors' and 'Repatriation and Reconstruction'.

☞ To obtain a complete set of the Conference papers, contact Khalid Koser, ERCOMER, PO Box 80.140, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 30 2531885. Fax: +31 30 2539280. Email: kkoser@fsw.ruu.nl

International Workshop on Health Impact on Large Post-Conflict Migratory Movement - The Mozambique Experience, Maputo, Mozambique, 20-22 March 1996

The workshop, jointly organised by the Ministry of Health of Mozambique and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Maputo, aimed to address issues relevant to the work undertaken by many agencies and individuals in the successful implementation of the peace process in Mozambique. It was felt that the lessons learned in the Mozambique experience was particularly relevant to a number of other ongoing peace processes, particularly in terms of the reintegration of displaced persons. The topics covered were: civil war; return of the displaced; reintegration of returnees and long-term national reconstruction.

☞ To obtain a copy of the workshop report, contact Loretta Iuri, Medical Services, IOM, 15 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland. Email: iuri@geneva.iom.ch

Alliances against Hunger B Building Partnerships for Development, Rhode Island, USA, 24-26 April 1996

The Conference was attended by individuals from academic, government and non-profit sector organisations. Its purpose was twofold: to bring together academics and professionals with a particular interest in hunger issues to facilitate a sharing of information between field workers and researchers. Thirty speakers addressed seven topics: 1) blocking hunger in the United States: government programmes at risk; 2) the role of civil society in eradicating hunger and poverty: towards a process of

mutual learning; 3) developing food security indicators from local knowledge: methods and experience; 4) building gender-based partnership for livelihood security; 5) the development-to-relief continuum in Rwanda; 6) female-headed households: a worthy target? and 7) reconciling divergent priorities: developing the Mekong Basin.

2124. E-mail: ukaldscon@gn.apc.org.

☞ For further information contact: Brown University, Alan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Program, Box 1831, Providence, Rhode Island 02912, USA. Tel: +1 401 863 2700. Fax: +1 401 863 2192.

Seminar on NGO Action on Refugees and Displaced People and Their Vulnerability to Hiv/aids, Baden Powell House, London, UK, 28-29 October 1996

The seminar was called by the UK NGO AIDS Consortium to address the growing need for NGOs to develop responses to displaced people and refugees' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. It was clear that the huge numbers of people fleeing conflict, particularly from high HIV prevalence areas of the world such as Rwanda, and factors specific to refugee life could fuel the spread of the virus. It was also clear that little is as yet being done to address this problem. The seminar was seen as the first step of a process towards clarifying the issues and developing possible solutions. Papers were discussed giving the perspective of refugees, UN agencies, NGOs, the army and the local population in refugee-influx areas. Broadly speaking, there were three main categories of issues raised.

1. People's vulnerability differed enormously. Sex, age, occupation (particularly for members of the military), all had a bearing and that information on different groups' vulnerability is sketchy.

2. Programming issues were frequently stressed. Effective programmes would need to involve people in all stages of developing responses to ensure as many different groups' needs are taken into account, and to ensure cultural and social relevance of interventions.

3. Issues of identity and human rights were fundamental to all discussions on refugees and displaced people and their vulnerability to HIV.

A half day meeting on the day following the seminar was attended by around 20 of the 100 people at the conference who wished to look into methods of carrying these issues forwards. A proposal was made to draw up a set of examples of best practice to be tabled at the Steering Committee of the UNHCR in October 1997 and to feed into the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response *Beneficiaries Charter* of minimal performance standards.

☞ Proceedings and papers can be obtained from Sue Lucas, The UK NGO AIDS Consortium, Fenner Brockway House, 37-39 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 0ES. Tel: +44 171 401 8231, Fax: +44 171 401

Publications

The News Media, Civil War, and Humanitarian Action, by Larry Minear, Colin Scott and Thomas G. Weiss, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU, UK, 1996, ISBN 1-55587-676-5, 123pp, Paperback £9.95

This brief study looks at institutional interactions between the news media (both print and electronic) on the one hand, and government policy makers and humanitarian agencies on the other. Case studies from Liberia, northern Iraq, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Rwanda distill some of the experiences gained from calamities that have elicited widely varying coverage and response. Acknowledging that the three sets of actors have differing agendas, limitations, and constituencies, the book nevertheless identifies a common interest in improving the quality of interactions for the benefit of victims.

The Symphony of the Damned: Racial Discourse, Complex Political Emergencies and Humanitarian Aid, by Mark Duffield, Occasional Paper 2, School of Public Policy, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK, March 1996, ISBN 0-7044-1664-6, 50pp, £8.00 (all orders require prepayment)

This paper concerns the manner in which the West is responding to protracted political crisis beyond its borders. It examines the main forms of organisational adaptation among international aid agencies and governments. Changes associated with the formation of large UN integrated relief programmes, the enhanced role of NGOs and in some places, the military protection of humanitarian aid, are of particular concern. The paper concludes with a call for an innovative political and ethical framework within which to consider the new political formations – an exercise which is as much to do with reconstructing and internal political consensus in the West as with formulating solutions for complex emergencies. [A shortened version of this paper is published in *Disasters* 20 (3)]

The Horn of Africa: Politics and International Relations, by Peter Woodward, IB. Tauris Publishers, 45 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2HY, UK, 1996, ISBN1-85043-741-6, 226pp, Hardback £39.50

In this history of the Horn of Africa – principally Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, the author argues that while the principal conflicts have arisen from domestic issues of ethnicity, history and traditions, they have been magnified by international involvement in this flashpoint which stands at the hinge of Africa and the Middle East. The book offers a background to the tragedy that has beset the Horn and of the prospects for peace.

War and Rural Development in Africa, *IDS Bulletin Vol 27 No 3, July 1996*, Institute of Development Studies,

University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK, ISSN 0265-5012, 98pp, Single Copy £9.25, Annual Subscription £40.00 (surface) £52 (Airmail)

Through the seven articles listed below, this *Bulletin* seeks to address a key question facing rural development analysts and practitioners: does the upsurge in armed conflict in Africa, especially pronounced since the end of the Cold War, mean we need a new or additional agenda for rural development?

- ! Contemporary Warfare in Africa: Changing Context, Changing Strategies, by Alex de Waal
- ! Livestock Raiding Among the Pastoral Turkana of Kenya: Redistribution, Predation and the Links to Famine, by Dylan Hendrickson, Robin Mearns and Jeremy Armons
- ! Towards a Gendered Understanding of Conflict, by Bridget Byrne
- ! Conflict Management for Multiple Resource Users in Pastoralist and Agro-Pastoralist Context, by Ben Cousins
- ! Agricultural Rehabilitation and Food Insecurity in Post-war Rwanda: Assessing Needs, Designing Solutions, by Johan Pottier
- ! The Mental Health of War-damaged Populations by Melissa Parker
- ! Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: an Agenda for Peace?, by Hugo Slim

Children in War, report by Maggie Black, Children's Aid Direct, 82 Caversham Road, Reading RG1 8AE, UK, 1996, £6.00.

This report, commissioned by Children's Aid Direct (formerly known as Feed the Children (Europe)), focuses on the predicament of children and their carers affected by war and its aftermath. Its intention is to stimulate discussion and encourage a response towards an effective solution for children caught up in conflict around the world. Another report with the subtitle "A Practical Response to the Evolving Needs of Children in Bosnia and Rwanda" has also been produced under the main Children in War heading. It is essentially a case study detailing the history of the humanitarian work of Children's Aid Direct both during and after the conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda; the organisation's activities in the fields of nutritional care, education and recreation, healthcare and protection of childhood are given a particular focus.

The Reality of Aid 1996: an Independent Review of International Aid, by ICVA, EuroStep and Development Initiatives, Earthscan Publications Ltd, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN, UK, 1996, ISBN 1-85383-292-8, 244 pp, Paperback £14.95

Now in its fourth annual edition, the Reality of Aid examines the reality behind the rhetoric of development

assistance, and the discrepancy between the targets to which 21 member countries of the OECD Development Assistance Committee are publicly committed, and the aid that is actually disbursed. Part 1 of the report examines the current issues and key themes. In a new section, Part 2 presents perspectives from the South, with contributions from India, Cambodia, Peru, Zimbabwe, Poland and Fiji. Part 3 consists of detailed, country-by-country profiles of the aid performance of the OECD donors, and Part 4 reviews aid spending by Northern governments and NGOS.

Landmines: Legacy of Conflict B a Manual for Development Workers, by Rae McGrath, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ, UK, 1994, ISBN 085598-264-0, 86pp, Paperback £7.95

This book is written for development and relief workers in mine-affected countries, and for policy-makers and planners. The changing technology of mines and mine-deployment are explained and there are photographs and descriptions of the most common types of mine. The book describes the vulnerability of particular groups within rural communities, advises on how best to avoid hazardous areas, considers activities that mine-affected communities can undertake, and suggests measures that could be introduced at local and international levels to deal with the problem.

Food Scarcity and Famine – Assessment and Response, by Helen Young, Oxfam Practical Health Guide No 7, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ, UK, 1992, ISBN 0-85598-145-8, 124pp, Paperback £5.95

This book provides an approach to assessing and responding to situations of food scarcity and an explanation of how to judge which interventions will be most effective. The book offers advice on carrying out initial assessments and nutrition surveys, and emphasises the importance of finding out the underlying causes of food scarcity by seeking out the views of those affected. Food distribution, and how to target the people who need it most, supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes, are also covered. Detailed information on, for example, survey techniques, types of food used in feeding programmes, and recipes for supplementary food mixes, is given in appendices to the main text.

Planning for Training and Development: a Guide to Analysing Needs, by Kerry Thomas and Theresa Mellon, Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD, UK, May 1995, 92pp, Paperback £9.50

This practical 'how to' guide aims to assist managers and other staff in NGOs responsible for identifying training and development needs, developing training plans and budgets and evaluating training and development programmes. It outlines the steps to be taken to conduct a training needs analysis. The manual draws on the field experience of staff in NGOs and provides case examples to illustrate good practice and problem areas. It promotes

an approach which: involves people in defining their own needs and finding ways to improve performance; integrates learning with work; aims to build capacity; and considers non-training factors and solutions.

The Military Utility of Landmines..?, edited by Dr Chris Smith, Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, University of London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS, June 1996, ISBN 0-9521-8763-9, 105pp, Paperback £25.00

This report analyses the military doctrines associated with the use of anti-personnel landmines (APM) in several European countries: the Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden, Germany and the UK. It is based upon interviews with key defence planners in the countries concerned and extensive desk research. This is the first report from a longer project currently underway at the North-South Defence and Security Programme at the Centre for Defence Studies. A further two reports are planned in the future.

Human Development Report, by the UNDP, Oxford University Press, Distribution Services, Faxon Way West, Corby, Northants NN18 9ES, UK, 1996, ISBN 0-19-511159-1, 229pp, Paperback £14.50

This Report explores in details the complex relationship between economic growth and human development. Its central message is clear: there is not automatic link between economic growth and human development, but when these links are forged using the right policies and determination, they can be mutually reinforcing and economic growth will effectively and rapidly improve human development. The Report contains a series of statistical indicators on broad aspects of human development.

Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiative B The Liberian Peace Process: 1990-1996, edited by Jeremy Armon and Andy Carl, Conciliation Resources, Lancaster House, 33 Islington High Street, London N1 9LH, UK, 1996, ISSN 1365-0742, 104pp, £10.00 (\$15)

Part of the International Review of Peace Initiative, this paper represents a contribution from the international NGO community to the limited resources available for understanding conflicts. It emerges from a collaboration between Conciliation Resources (CR), the International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the International Peace Bureau (IPB), Geneva. ACORD seeks to offer comparative information and experience to help minimise mistakes in design and implementation of peace interventions. The review provides commentary, background information and critical analysis on specific interventions, alongside texts of basic agreements, with the focus of this paper being the Liberia, 'a stark witness to the shortcomings of international peacemaking efforts' and to offer some insight into why 13 individual peace accords have collapsed in half as many years.

World Disasters Report 1996, by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

Oxford University Press, 1996, ISBN 0-19-829079-9, £15.99 (\$29.95)

This annual report examines key issues from food security to population movements, promotes best practice in developmental relief and disaster nutrition, analyses recent crisis response efforts from Rwanda to Japan, the US to DPR Korea, and offers an comprehensive disasters database.

Crosslines Global Report, edited by Edward Girardet, bi-monthly

Written by and for journalists and aid workers, amongst others, the news journal *Crosslines Global Report* looks at the humanitarian world and the media which cover that world. *Crosslines* offers up-to-date reporting and analysis of complex emergencies, from Rwanda to Afghanistan, Bosnia to Cambodia. In addition, the journal provides contact lists, job ads, etc. Six double issues are planned for 1997 on issues including aid and ethics, Biafra and the road from Rio 92. To obtain a free sample copy, contact tel: +41 22 7561984, fax: +41 21 808 5830, email: 106011.1437@compuserve.com.

Finally...

Editorial Team... Laura Jackson, RRN Coordinator, continues to manage the RRN on a full-time basis, together with Nathalie Shellard, RRN Administrator. Nathalie will be taking six months maternity leave beginning in mid-November and is due to return in June 1997. She will be replaced by Sophie Peace, who will be providing continuity during November when Laura also takes leave to get married and go on honeymoon (there are rumours that ODI will soon be replacing Dateline!), so please bear with her during this time. John Borton – founder and former RRN Coordinator – and Joanna Macrae, ODI Research Fellows, also offer guidance and research support to the RRN.

The team would like to thank the Technical Unit at CRS Baltimore for all the work they put into Network Paper 17 on a US NGO experience of food aid monetisations; and Jon Bennett and Mary Kayitesi-Blewitt who brought us the CODEP report; thanks are also due to Elizabeth Winter, chair of the British Agencies Afghanistan Group for her editorial support on this paper.

Good Practice Review 4 on Seed Provision During and After Emergencies rates as one of the most widely reviewed of our series and the thoroughness of the authors' investigations has not gone unnoticed and we believe it will be an important contribution to RRN material. It will not come as a surprise to many agency personnel engaged in humanitarian programmes to learn that Good Practice Review 5 on the Identification and Registration of Beneficiaries has presented both author and editorial team with some of the most difficult issues yet. It is due for publication in January 1997 and we are confident that it will do justice to the considerable reflection that has gone into its preparation.

RRN on the Internet... Since taking our first steps on the WorldWide Web, some members have remarked to us that they have had difficulty in accessing our home page. The correct address remains: <http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html>. Please let us know if you continue to have difficulty getting through. Also, should you know of others who have experienced difficulty in sending applications for membership from the Web page direct to us via email, please let us know. We apologise if this is the case and are looking into the problem, but in the meantime, it might be advisable to print the application forms and send in the post!

Office Move... Do remember to update your records. Our new details are:

Relief and Rehabilitation Network, Overseas Development Institute, Portland House, Stag Place, London SW1E 5DP, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 (0) 171 393 1674/47. Fax: +44 (0) 171 393 1699. Email: rrn@odi.org.uk

Funding...

Our EuronAid grant has now come to an end. The editorial team would therefore like to thank EuronAid for giving the RRN the support it needed in getting established and for the support and direction which has been shown to us over the past three years. We can now confidently say that the RRN will be operating for at least another 3 years and look forward to working with DANIDA and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs who have committed to funding us for the coming three year period. It is hoped that they will shortly be joined by two other potential funders and that the planned developments for the Network will become a reality as a result. More information on the next three years will feature in the January 1997 Newsletter.

Relief and Rehabilitation Network

The objective of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN) is to facilitate the exchange of professional information and experience between the personnel of NGOs and other agencies involved in the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance. Members of the Network are either nominated by their agency or may apply on an individual basis. Each year, RRN members receive four mailings in either English or French comprising Newsletters, Network Papers and Good Practice Reviews. In addition, RRN members are able to obtain advice on technical and operational problems they are facing from the RRN staff in London. A modest charge is made for membership with rates varying in the case of agency-nominated members depending on the type of agency.

The RRN is operated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in conjunction with the European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations for Food Aid and Emergency Relief (EuronAid). ODI is an independent non-governmental organisation, limited by guarantee and registered as a charity, which undertakes the study of development and humanitarian issues. It also encourages the exchange of information and experience of these issues to inform public debate and policy. EuronAid provides logistics and financing services to NGOs using European Commission food aid in their relief and development programmes. It has 27 member agencies and two with observer status. Its offices are located in the Hague.

For further information, contact:

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Tel: +44 (0) 171 393 1674/47. Fax: +44 (0) 171 393 1699
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RRN Web Site: <http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html>***