



Editorial



François Grunewald

Don't shoot the ambulance!

Humanitarians are neither enemies to be killed, nor merchandise to be sold. And yet, the recent attack against the house of United Nations' staff in Kabul shows that aid workers in general, and the UN in particular, are clearly considered to be parties to the conflict. In Somalia, the war between the transition government and opposition groups has resulted in a huge increase in the price of militias. Those who do not have access to the spoils of piracy are looking for other sources of revenue. As a result, the hostage industry has made venturing into the field extremely dangerous. In Darfur, hostage taking is no doubt carried out more for political ends than for financial gain, and the recent events in Chad and CAR have not yet been analysed in sufficient detail.

Different approaches exist to these situations. The bunker approach, with armed escorts, should be the last resort. Strategies are being developed to improve acceptance of humanitarians by local people and parties to conflicts or to limit the attention that the aid sector attracts. In certain contexts, it is now quite common for humanitarians to use a "remote control" approach.

Unfortunately, violence continues to be aimed at those who have chosen to bring assistance and protection to people in distress. It has become increasingly extreme and remains utterly unacceptable. Certain victims come out at the other end broken by the experience, others come out in body bags. We have friends among the victims and our thoughts are with them, their families and their colleagues... We are left full of anger, because it is a combination of political mistakes, ideological folly and a predatory strategy which has cut access to people in distress, and this access is central to the work we do.

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Humanitarian space

Afghanistan: Chronicle of a defeat foretold

Laurent SAILLARD

Following the fall of the Taliban, the war appeared to be practically won. Eight years later, the spectre of defeat looms large. How has this happened? Between false premises and the devastating effects of certain tactical decisions, Afghanistan is currently on the edge of the abyss, moving closer and closer to another civil war.

In his treatise on war, Carl Von Clausewitz wrote: "War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means". Even though this definition is applicable to conventional wars like the ones which took place in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries, wars like the one currently raging in Afghanistan, one of the principle theatres of the Global War on Terrorism or, as it is now known, Counter Insurgency (COIN), appear to obey a different set of rules. Rather than serving a precise political agenda, these wars create only a persistent vacuum, which leads only to disillusionment, rejection and the spectre of a serious political defeat for the West and its belief in the universal nature of its values.

Following the attacks of September 11 2001, the whole world seemed to approve of the USA's military intervention and its crusade against terrorism, Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The vast majority of the Afghan population welcomed the foreign armed forces with open arms, seeing them as liberators. Very quickly, all that was left of the Taliban was a small band of diehards in disarray, who took refuge deep in the tribal zone between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2002, only 10% of the Afghan territory was affected by fighting and victory seemed imminent.

Eight years on, the international military contingent, made up of around 100 000 men from 41 different countries, is still fighting in Afghanistan. Despite its undeniable technological superiority, it has faltered and is slowly heading towards what looks more and more like political, if not military, defeat. Such a statement may seem peremptory, but the evidence is there, terrible and difficult as this may be to admit. After eight years of fighting, not only has the opposition army not been defeated or destroyed, it has gained ground to such an extent that it now poses a serious threat over more than 60% of the country, perturbs economic development, defies governmental authority and inflicts

losses on the Afghan and international forces on a daily basis. There appears to be so little hope for the future that a great number of Afghans are now trying to leave their country by any means possible. Disillusion is so great that many Afghans look back fondly on the Soviet era. How did the countries of the West, with all their strategic advantages, manage to mess things up so badly?

False premises

It is still too early to draw up a list of all the errors that have been made and to learn from them. However, we already know that some of the premises on which the international community's intervention was based were wrong, or at least debatable.

The whole military intervention in Afghanistan was based on shaky foundations. The nature of Afghan society immediately after the fall of the Taliban was only superficially analysed. The importance of religion and the influence of the clergy were undoubtedly underestimated. The population was apprehensive about the ex-Mujahedeen taking power and what the long-term consequences would be for those who supported them. And, no distinction was made between Al Qaeda and the Taliban. These are some of the main pieces of the Afghan puzzle, which were either neglected or misunderstood from the outset. The absence of a political framework for the military intervention (to this day, the international community's agenda in Afghanistan is, above all, military in nature), the idea of reproducing a Western political model in such a complex cultural and geopolitical context, where values are so different, the difficulty for the foreign powers to respect their own values, the loss of any ethical standards and the fact that they have increasingly committed the same kind of crimes as their enemies are some of the other factors which, at least in part, explain the current situation in Afghanistan. Due to their increasing number of blunders, the Western nations have missed opportunities, closed doors and, slowly but surely, lost the confidence of the Afghan population, to such an extent that fewer and fewer people believe that the current stabilisation process can succeed. The conditions in which the last presidential elections took place and the disastrous manner in which the United Nations dealt with the issue of fraud have done nothing to improve this trend.

Causing the fall of the Taliban in October 2001 was no doubt the right thing to do, but subsequently attempting to destroy them was a serious mistake. Traumatized by the attacks on the World Trade Center, the West, and particularly the USA, let their emotions get the better of them. This had a major impact on the international community's intervention. As a result, its main objective remained security rather than a political solution. Of the estimated 100 billion dollars that have been spent in the last eight years, 60% has gone to security, 25% to development and 10% to anti drug-trafficking activities.

Wounded, the USA has mistaken haste for speed and revenge for justice. The war should have ended as soon as the Taliban had lost control of the country. Immediately after, a broad peace and reconciliation process should have been launched and special military operations should have been stopped. Some of these involved eliminating entire lists of individuals considered to be dangerous without trial, sometimes on the basis of very unreliable information according to certain people who worked for the United Nations at the time. This unjustifiable practice created new injustices and began an interminable cycle of violence. Whether innocent or not, individuals were kidnapped, tortured and killed by our armed forces, entire families were destroyed, villages were bombed (more than 2000 civilians were killed between January and October 2009). Over time, the population's view of the international forces changed. Initially seen as liberators, they became occupiers, like the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

Placing short term gains before long term objectives: the example of the militarisation of aid.

Because they are looking for something that they can "sell" to the public to justify the military presence and the associated costs, our politicians sometimes make decisions which compromise long term objectives. A perfect illustration of this is the search for immediate synergy between war and reconstruction and the association of security and development which has led to an ever-increasing militarisation of aid.

Since the beginning of the military intervention in Afghanistan, more and more public funds have been allocated to aid projects implemented by the military or associated structures like the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The US Congress has recently doubled the army's "aid" budget to 1.5 billion dollars for 2010 alone. Generally, this money does not pass through any central coordination mechanism. The Afghan government, the Ministry of Finance and the provincial authorities get little, if any, information about

how this money is spent. These funds are primarily used to make US soldiers' mission easier by "winning the hearts and minds" of the Afghan population in the regions where they conduct operations. The "Win Hearts and Minds" doctrine is not only applied by US troops but by all the nations with a military presence, including France. Over the years, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on projects which are not always particularly well-founded, in often chaotic conditions and with very little control of how these funds are spent. In the end, lack of targeting and knowledge about the local population has created more tension between communities. Lack of control over how the funds are used and lack of knowledge of the context has fed the explosion of corruption and the projects that have been implemented have often been short-lived with extremely poor level of cost-effectiveness.

In addition to the inefficient use of public funds, this approach has produced a series of negative effects. Aid distributed either directly by the armed forces or via paramilitary bodies like the PRTs or businesses who use the services of private security companies (like Blackwater) blurs the lines between civil and military actors in this context of war. This endangers the lives of workers from the social sector who try to continue working in dangerous regions. This blurring of lines is partially responsible for loss of access and the destruction of an extensive NGO network which once covered the country and provided the Afghan population with support where there was the greatest need. The aid distributed by military forces involved in the conflict (or by specific partners which are easily confused with armed forces) also creates an ambiguous and unhealthy relationship between international actors and the civilian population. Though, in general, the Afghans accept the aid that is distributed, they rarely support those carrying the arms that are used to kill their compatriots. This despicable tactic shows only contempt for the civilian population, and they know it only too well. How can a relationship of trust be built on foundations of this kind?

Recently the Boston Globe published an article by Andrew Wilder on the doctrine of "Winning Hearts and Minds", in which he writes, "The war in Afghanistan will not be lost due to a lack of schools and clinics, but because the taxpayer's money is being spent irrationally, which feeds more and more massive corruption, which in turn discourages the people and discredits both the government and the international community". Far from winning hearts and minds, the approach used by the US army, and also by France, produces frustration and anger, creates unhealthy relations with the population, feeds corruption more than

combating it, threatens development efforts, endangers humanitarian workers, and even sometimes provides the armed opposition with un hoped for support. A large number of military personnel with whom I have spoken about this admit that they are not convinced about this mixing of security and development, criticising the political pressure that has forced them to implement activities for which they are rarely qualified.

Recommendations

Since Ahmid Karzai's re-election, Barack Obama, Gordon Brown, Bernard Kouchner and many others have rightly criticised a corrupt administration. But Western nations need to be aware that they too are contributing greatly to this corruption and that without better coordination with the Afghan authorities, it will be impossible to find a solution. Karzai is due to take on a new five-year mandate. What support will he receive from the Western nations? Will they continue to waste public money by sacrificing long term prospects for short term goals? Or will the disastrous results of the last eight years of war make them rethink their approach? Will they attempt to develop a common vision, strengthen the coordination of aid and accept that the Western model has very little chance of working in Afghanistan?

Some recommendations:

- Military action should be kept separate from development and humanitarian aid – the right partners need to be found – healthier relations need to be re-established with the Afghan population – the waste of public funds needs to stop (the cost-effectiveness of the relief and development projects implemented by the military is generally disastrous);
- Governance and combating corruption should be made priorities and a firm position should be held vis-à-vis the Afghan authorities on these two points (even if this leads to regular short-term crises);
- The peace process should be supported anywhere dialogue is still possible and arrests and the physical elimination of anyone identified as being 'Taliban' should be stopped. Among other things, this implies that Western nations should completely revise their approach to the Taliban and the idea that Afghanistan could adopt a Western model of democracy in the near future.
- Coordination of international aid should be made a priority, working in close collaboration with the Afghan Ministry of Finance and the relevant technical Ministries. No funds should be used in Afghanistan without the authorities being informed and without at least an agreement in principle between donors and the au-

thorities about the projects which can be directly funded by international aid without first going through the Afghan state.

In short: It is perhaps necessary to do less, but what is done should be done much better and should include controls. The West could lose this war not because there are not enough schools or clinics, but because public funds are being wasted, corruption and projects which lead to more destruction rather than reconstruction. Soldiers doing agricultural development in Kapisa when they are being shot at as soon as they leave their base camps is completely absurd. How can needs be assessed and constructive and sustainable relations with the population be developed? How can a project be implemented and monitored in such conditions? It might be preferable to do nothing else other than support a process of conflict resolution and stabilisation via dialogue and negotiation. All the rest is nothing more than a plaster cast on a wooden leg.

Conclusion

A few weeks ago, I sat in a room full of engrossed Afghans and watched a play performed by a Colombian who had been a political prisoner and a victim of torture in his country in the 1980s. His story is a simple one. It is the story of an adolescent who has had the misfortune of being born in a country torn apart by civil war and who is arrested by the police because of a letter he wrote to his idol, Che Guevara, when he was still a child. He is locked up and tortured and he disappears from circulation for a few years along with his younger brother, who dies in captivity. The ICRC track him down and re-establish contact with his family. He learns that his mother died a few months after her two sons disappeared.

At the end of the show, he is somewhere in the United States on a march with his two children surrounded by people who, like him, campaign for human rights and against torture and police violence. He ends the show with the following words: "We have to march, shout and dance so that the terrorist that sleeps within us does not wake up". Sitting at my desk where I can hear the gun shots and explosions which punctuate Kabuli life, I wonder how many Afghans go over to the other side each day as a result of our errors, our abuses and our crimes. How many "terrorists" are born each day and take up arms?

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The socio-economic impact of the international community's presence in Abeche

Mahamat Mustapha ABSAKINE YERIMA

In order to respond to the situation in Eastern Chad, most humanitarian agencies have set up offices in Abéché. The large number of humanitarian and military actors who have moved into the city since 2006 have had a significant socio-economic impact, further deteriorating the living conditions of a large proportion of the population. The fact that they do not benefit from any of the humanitarian operations being run makes this situation all the more frustrating for them.

Since 2003, the presence of the international community has transformed Abéché. A great number of people from all over Chad have come to the city to find work with humanitarian organisations.

As a result, the population has grown 600% in 6 years, from 50 000 before 2003 to 300 000 in 2009¹. The arrival of these two groups has generated a situation where demand far outweighs supply. This has caused numerous socio-economic problems such as access to housing, employment, healthcare, energy and clean drinking water as well as environmental damage, the explosion of the price of basic goods and security problems.

Nature and objectives of the humanitarian presence in Abéché

In 2003, the crisis in Darfur led to the arrival of large numbers of Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad. Humanitarian organisations moved to Abéché in order to gain access to the refugee camps in Bahai (in the North) and Koukou Angarana (in the South). The hu-

manitarian presence grew again in 2006 to respond to the needs of 180 000 Chadian IDPs in the same region.

In Abéché today, there are around 60 humanitarian NGOs, 10 United Nations agencies, a major deployment of soldiers from the United Nations Mission for the CAR and Chad (MIINURCAT) and a number of international businesses. The city is used as a base for logistical and coordination activities as the vast majority of humanitarian programmes are run in camps, sites and villages situated further to the East. As a result, the residents of Abéché suffer the consequences of this presence without directly benefitting from any aid programmes.

From an increase in prices to an increase in the level of malnutrition

Food prices have risen substantially due to the explosion in demand, the absence of price controls and market speculation. Before the conflicts in Darfur, Abéché was supplied by Sudan (200 km away) and Libya. Since 2003, with the deterioration of commercial networks between Chad and Sudan, Abéché is now principally supplied by N'Djamena (875 km away) and Libya (more than 2000 km away).

Poor households are obviously the worst-affected by the rise in prices and face major difficulties ensuring their food security and particularly that of young children. According to a nutritional survey carried out by Action Contre la Faim in June 2009, the level of acute malnutrition in Abéché is 20.6% (Reference NCHS 1977z-score), a level which is well above the warning threshold (the UNICEF norm is 15%).

Changes in food prices between November 2002 and November 2009
(In CFA Francs / 1 CFA = 0,0015 €)

Changes in food prices in Abéché market	Period			Remarks
	November 2002	November 2009	Increase	
Onion (87 kg bag)	10.000	30.000	200 %	The very high price of imported goods (petrol, oil, soap, rice, flour, etc.) can be explained in terms of transportation costs and international price increases. The stallholders that were met claimed that they fixed their prices on the basis of costs.
Garlic (73,8 kg bag)	36.000	95.000	164 %	
Flour (50 kg bag)	16.000	30.000	88 %	
Rice (50 kg bag)	15.000	25.000	67 %	
Meat (/ kg)	750	2.500	233 %	
Millet (100 kg bag)	14.000	30.000	114 %	
Sorghum	12.000	24.000	100 %	
Charcoal(bag)	2.500	12.000	380 %	
Chicken	1.000	3.000	200 %	
Sheep	15.000	25.000	67 %	
Petrol (/ litre)	400	700	75 %	
Caprid	10.000	20.000	100 %	
Milk (carton)	1.500	2.500	67 %	
Sugar (100 kg bag)	25.000	35.000	40 %	
Spaghetti (packet)	400	1.000	150 %	

Source: Abéché office of ONASA (National Food Security Office)

Housing in Abéché

Even before the massive influx of people, Abéché had very little accommodation that could be rented apart from a few rooms reserved for visitors in certain homes. There were therefore very few tenants in Abéché before 2003, and if there were empty houses they were rented for very little (between 1000 and 1500f/month) if anything at all.

Nowadays it is very difficult to rent a house in any of the city's neighbourhoods, with the owners now demanding certain conditions: tenants should be married and should have their family with them, have to pay at least one month's rent in advance, in certain cases have to pay for water and electricity in addition to rent and have to have a job with an NGO or other international organisation.

Rents between November 2002 and November 2009 (in CFA Francs)

Rent per month	November 2002	November 2009	Increase
Cost of renting a house (room)	3.000	20.000	567 %
Shop	10.000	30.000	200 %
Workshop (welding, mechanics...)	10.000	40.000	300 %
Market store	1.500	3.000	100 %
NGO office and lodgings	200.000	600.000	200 %
Storage warehouse	6.000	25.000	317 %

Due to the huge increase in rents, only agency employees, NGOs, private companies and local civil servants with a monthly salary of more than 200000 CFA F are unaffected by the social crisis. Even a large proportion of civil servants and young graduates due to enter the civil service appear to prefer to look for work with international organisations. In addition to this drain on highly qualified personnel, many feel that there is inequality in recruitment practices. People feel that the recruitment of humanitarian staff is biased and that employees of NGOs take advantage of their position to help their friends and families to get jobs. This is a widely held opinion and feelings are sufficiently strong to have caused a certain amount of tension within the population.

Positive impact of the humanitarian presence on the socio-economic development of Abéché

In parallel to the different problems outlined above, the presence of the international community has also contributed to significant socio-economic development via the creation of jobs and increased trade. Local staff have been able to invest in collective and individual actions like the construction of infrastructure or the creation of businesses. However, only a minority of the population benefits from this economic development, which has been particularly strong in the last three years, and which has increased the gap between the new rich and the new poor.

Conclusion

The presence of the international community in Abéché has had a major impact in terms of socio-economic changes, with both positive and negative aspects: the development of the local economy appears to have a positive impact but the demographic explosion has contributed to a general increase in the cost of living. The poorest sections of the population are the worst hit by these socio-economic changes. The planned reduction in the number of humanitarian NGOs by 2010 should further modify the situation. It remains to be seen how the city and its inhabitants will be able to adapt to this new situation...

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¹ According to the Governor of Ouaddai, the mayor of Abéché and the head of STEE (water and electricity company) in Abéché.

The forecast is not good

With the extremely disappointing outcome of the Rome Summit on Food Security and the dreadfully insufficient commitments made at the Copenhagen Climate Change conference, there is only one conclusion possible: things are going to get worse before they get better.

In the last few years, the number, magnitude and devastating effects of so-called natural disasters have been enormous. 2003 ended with the dramatic Bam earthquake in Iran, while the following year, the South-East Asian Tsunami struck just after Christmas, with terrifying effects. In 2005 the number of hurricanes was so high that specialists had to turn to the Greek alphabet having used up all the letters in the Latin alphabet. In the same year, the Pakistani earthquake and Hurricane Katrina showed the terrible power of natural forces. Between the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006, a devastating drought brought suffering to the Horn of Africa. 2007 and 2008 too, had their share of suffering, with new peaks being reached in 2009, with a combination of devastating climatic and tectonic disasters. People's resilience has been significantly undermined by the combined effects of the food price crisis and the global economic crisis. In certain parts of the world, tension over water and pastureland is being exacerbated, bringing conflict between communities which is increasingly lethal due to the proliferation of arms. In others, islanders watch in desperation as their islands begin to disappear below the water. And elsewhere, landslides threaten shanty towns on the outskirts of major cities.

Will this trend continue? Is the world ready to confront its own vulnerability? With a growing number of threats to our increasingly fragile planet, are nations (from state institutions to civil society), ready to rise to the challenges ahead? What are they prepared to do? While we continue to shoot ourselves in the foot in summits like Rome and Copenhagen, these are the questions that we should be trying to answer.

Though in the past, natural disasters were overshadowed by wars and other forms of human madness, they still caused enormous destruction. Cyclones in Madagascar, earthquakes in Turkey or Central America, droughts in Africa, floods in Asia, and very recently in Europe on an unprecedented scale, have taken place and taken their share of human lives regardless of the political regime in place. Disasters of this kind are increasingly becoming a major global problem. But are they really natural? In reality, more and more people are living in the most precarious areas, desperately looking for land close to rivers, coasts or cities.

Global warming has raised another set of critical issues and particularly the possibility of runaway climate change which could have devastating effects in the future: the possibility of further warming of the atmosphere and oceans (what will happen if the trajectory of the Gulf stream is modified?), the melting of polar ice caps and permafrost (what will happen if millions of tonnes of methane are released into the atmosphere), etc. The possibility of an exponential increase in the number of refugees and IDPs due to climate change is now being discussed in international forums. While there seemed to be mounting support for the Kyoto Protocol, the lack of consensus at the Copenhagen Conference is extremely worrying.

What has emerged is the image of a small planet increasingly shaken by multi-dimensional crises involving a broad range of human and natural factors. Wars, bad governance and, most recently, economic crises have made people more vulnerable to natural disasters. Access to and control of natural resources (land, water, etc) is increasingly acquired through violence, extortion or corruption. The poor are increasingly pushed out to the margins of society where they are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, economic crises and social conflict...

As people's situation deteriorates their only concern becomes day to day survival. Survival mechanisms, such as reducing food intake, relying on wild food (leaves, forest fruits and tubers, etc.) are the last line of defence before complete destitution. In contexts like these, characterized by a high level of scarcity, people have no other choice than to adopt environmentally unsustainable

practices : production of charcoal, deforestation, depletion of wild food reserves, gradual selling off of livestock (first the lactating female camels, then sheep and goats) and equipment, etc. De-capitalisation leads to destitution, which, in turn, leads to shanty towns, IDP camps and the peripheral areas around cities, where risks are the greatest...

World leaders failed in both the Rome and Copenhagen conferences to reach the kind of compromise that is needed in view of the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need to take action. Civil society was unable to make its mark sufficiently strongly in the arenas where decisions were made. We will all have to pay the price for these failures.

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Crises and vulnerabilities

The city as a place of refuge for IDPs

Agnès de GEOFFROY

When the Cold War ended, it gave way to a fragmented world of complex crises where civilians are increasingly at risk. As a result, the number of registered IDPs has grown enormously since the end of the 1980s.

Forced displacement, caused by crises and conflicts, is a sad and bitter echo of other kinds of movement which are judged to be “virtuous” in the age of globalisation and international exchange. The international community’s attitude to those fleeing violence has been a mixture of rejection (closing of borders and containment strategies) and intervention (mechanisms implemented to respond to forced displacement and the idea of shared responsibility between the international community and the state where the displacement is taking place). The term “Internally Displaced Persons” (IDPs) began to be used at the end of the 1990s to refer to this new category of people. They became the object of a specific type of humanitarian response and of new policies in the countries where they were present.

The following comparison of the situation in Bogota (Colombia) and Khartoum (Sudan) analyses the nature of the IDP category, which originated in the humanitarian sector, and measures the ideological and political influences involved in these two different national contexts. It then goes on to study the specific issues that are raised by IDP populations in urban contexts, the range of actors working with them and the different strategies that they adopt.

The political origins of the IDP category

A broad consensual definition of the term IDP was established when the United Nations Assembly adopted the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in 1998, following extensive legal deliberations initiated

by Francis Deng (Representative of the Secretary-General on Internal Displacement) which focused on the different existing norms which were applicable to situations of forced displacement. In addition to this effort to provide a legal structure, a system for humanitarian response to IDP crises was also developed, with the primary responsibility remaining that of the state where the displacement takes place. The IDP category has therefore always been deeply ambiguous. Tension exists between the international and national levels about the responsibility, the right and the decision to intervene. The notion of IDPs is reworked, modified, enlarged or reduced depending on the political context and policy decisions in different countries. As early as 1997, a law concerning IDPs was adopted in Colombia, giving a legal, and therefore restrictive, definition of who can and can not be considered to be displaced. The question of knowing who does and does not have IDP status is crucial as it gives access to aid and specific rights. The definition of IDPs is therefore closely controlled and the criteria used change depending on the policy decisions made by the government. The non-recognition of people who have been displaced by fumigation and large-scale agricultural projects and the growing temptation to no longer recognise those who have been displaced by paramilitaries should be seen as attempts to validate both international policy decisions (cooperation with the United States in relation to Plan Colombia) and internal policy decisions (the ‘Justicia y Paz’ policy which President Alvaro Uribe has implemented since being in power, which aims to end the conflict through negotiations with the paramilitary groups and their demobilisation).

In Sudan, the situation is quite different. Continued pressure from the international community has led to the Sudanese regime gradually recognising the problem of forced displacement. Relations between Sudan and Western countries are turbulent to say the least,

but the issue of IDPs has given them the opportunity to make amends. However, the policy decisions that have been made remain vague and are rarely applied. Several bodies have been created one after the other since the 1980s, but they have remained ineffective on the whole. The criteria which have been used to define and distinguish IDPs (called *naziheen* in Sudanese Arabic) have changed depending on the period and the actors involved. Tribal criteria and geographical origins were used for a long time. For the great majority of Sudanese people, IDPs are the people from Southern Sudan who have settled in the North, and more recently, people from Darfur who have settled in Khartoum. The question of why displacement has taken place is not taken into account. A person is considered to be a *naziheen* or not on the basis of physical criteria related to obvious social vulnerability and depending on when they arrived in the North or where they live (on the outskirts of the town or in IDP camps). The recent studies which preceded the adoption of a new decree on IDPs did not result in the clarification of this notion. Despite repeated efforts on the part of international organisations to encourage, accompany and advise the government during the discussion and decision-making process, the end result is so vague that it can be understood to refer to a large proportion of the Sudanese population or to just a small portion depending on how it is interpreted. It makes no reference to armed conflict or the violation of human rights, nor to international conventions or the Guiding Principles. The definition that it gives of IDPs is individuals or groups of individuals who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes before, during or after a natural or man-made disaster, and have moved to another area within Sudan. This document will therefore probably have a similar impact to the previous policy commitments made by the Sudanese government concerning IDPs and will probably not lead to a change in strategy.

IDPs in urban contexts: problems and issues

The influx of IDPs to both Khartoum and Bogota has caused similar problems and raised a large number of issues.

Urban development

First of all, IDPs represent a significant proportion of the population of both capitals. Even though it is impossible to establish precise figures due to manipulation of data and the volatile nature of such populations, certain studies have made it possible to estimate how many IDPs there are and the percentage that they represent of the overall population in the two capitals. In Bogota, the 625 000 IDPs who arrived in the city between 1985 and 2006 (CODHES figures) represent more than 8,5% of the city's population (7 242 123 inhabitants). In Khartoum, the number of IDPs is estimated to be close to 2 million, which represents around 40% of the city's total population (4.5

to 5 million inhabitants). The number of IDPs has therefore contributed to the expansion of these two capital cities. IDPs mainly settle on the outskirts of cities on land which has been left vacant, sometimes expressly for this purpose (as is the case for Khartoum), in the poorest, and therefore most marginalised areas. The fact that IDPs settle on the outskirts of cities is the result of both market forces (rent and land prices and the cost of services) and deliberate policies of exclusion and segregation.

Social integration

There is undoubtedly a link between urban development patterns and the social integration of IDPs. Access to basic services such as water, health, education, and more broadly, access to resources, is a particularly complex issue in terms of urban planning and social policy. Urban expansion means building new infrastructure and connecting these peripheral neighbourhoods to water and sanitation networks. What is more, the high level of vulnerability of IDPs makes their integration in cities all the more difficult. The majority of them come from rural areas¹, which generally means that they have a lower level of education than the norm in the capital city and skills which are not adapted to an urban context. Having experienced violence and loss, they often suffer from long-lasting trauma. The discrimination that they experience in cities is the result of this objective disadvantage as well as external segregation mechanisms. They are confronted with rejection and suspicion on the part of the resident population, and in the case of Sudan, they are discriminated against by the regime.

Political cohesion and security issues

The IDPs in Khartoum and Bogota stand out from the rest of the population. In both contexts, their presence can be seen to be threatening, though not for the same reasons. Having come from regions where there is conflict, the resident population perceives them as potential trouble-makers who are responsible for the violence rather than its victims. In Bogota, IDPs are regarded with great suspicion: "... they wouldn't be here if they hadn't done something wrong..." Nevertheless, the arrival of IDPs in the capital has upset previously existing balances and therefore has caused a certain amount of disturbance...

In Khartoum, forced migration is both a fantastic opportunity to build a new national identity which embraces diversity and a threat to the regime's foundations. There has been 'arabisation' of the IDPs who have arrived in Khartoum, but their arrival has also led to more ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, countering the image of a purely Arab and Muslim Sudan. The influx of IDPs has also led to the strengthening of political opposition in the capital. Support for the ideas of the SPLM is high among people from Southern Sudan and people from the Nuba

Mountains and Darfur are more inclined to support opposition parties and groups. The IDPs therefore constitute a potential threat to the regime, which keeps a very close eye on them. Certain events have shown this threat to be real: the riots following the death of John Garang (August 2005) and the attack on Omdurman by the JEM (May 2008). The waves of repression which followed were particularly revelatory about the fears of the regime.

In Bogota, the influx of IDPs has contributed to the spreading of the conflict and the infiltration of armed groups into the city. The continued arrival of IDPs in the outskirts of the city has made it easier for armed groups to go unnoticed. In addition to being a threat to the security of the city, this phenomenon seriously undermines the security of the IDPs, who are its main victims. The threats and violence which forced them to flee their homes are repeated in the city to which they have fled. This has been particularly evident since 2005. Demobilisation and reintegration into civilian life has led many former paramilitaries to come to Bogota to start a 'new life'. They mainly occupy the peripheral neighbourhoods alongside the IDPs and the urban poor, forming armed gangs which aim to gain territorial and economic control of the neighbourhoods. The number of homicides in these neighbourhoods has exploded in recent years, a disproportionate number of the victims being IDPs. This phenomenon has reinforced the suspicion of the resident population who blame the IDPs for the deterioration of their living conditions.

What response to the influx of IDPs into the capital?

The approach in each context has depended on how the situation has been analysed and which problems and needs have been considered priorities.

Bogota: individual and legal approach, based on respect for human rights

In Colombia, the law adopted in 1997 guarantees specific assistance to IDPs. The President is directly responsible for the aid system and its coordination via the *Accion Social* agency. The system aims to provide comprehensive assistance to IDPs at all the different stages of displacement and to restore and protect their rights. In keeping with the 1991 Constitution, the whole legal framework regarding IDPs is based on human rights. The response to displacement is therefore profoundly social in nature. As it is based in law, rather than short-term policy decisions, it remains the long-term responsibility of the state. In practice, the system falls short of these extremely ambitious objectives, but the Constitutional Court repeatedly urges and compels the government to respect its commitments towards IDPs. The national budget allocated to the comprehensive assistance policy has constantly

been increased, with a significant leap since 2004 (the year of sentence T 025 by the Constitutional Court). However, the fact that the displaced population continue to have considerable needs and are affected by long-term vulnerability does raise some questions. Does the Colombian aid system need more effort on the part of the state and humanitarian actors, or is there a more structural problem of effectiveness and pertinence? Aid agencies in Colombia need to position themselves in relation to this dilemma. The vast majority of actors (donors, international organisations, UN agencies and NGOs) are directly involved in the different parts of the state's comprehensive assistance system: emergency assistance, socio-economic stabilisation (training, income-generating activities, micro-credit), psycho-social assistance, education, health, shelter, etc.

On the fringes of the aid system, a number of national and international NGOs have locked horns with the government, calling for the aid system to be improved or to be reformed. Colombian civil society is particularly strong and well-structured and Colombian NGOs are very present in the movement for change. This battle has taken place mainly on legal terrain, as the individual and collective rights of IDPs are very well protected by the law and legal institutions.



Hills to the south of Bogotá

The IDPs are themselves very active in defending their rights. Colombia's strong political and trade union culture is equally present amongst the IDPs and empowerment activities by NGOs are particularly well-received. Numerous leaders have emerged and continue to emerge, defending the collective cause and giving structure to the IDPs' demands. Though these methods are beneficial to the IDPs in the short to mid term, allowing them to gain by force what the state has been reluctant to give them, they also increase the divide between the IDPs and the rest of the population and reinforce the climate of suspicion and lack of understanding between the IDPs and civil servants, and even, sometimes, between the IDPs and aid agencies.

Khartoum: a spatial approach dominated by security concerns and political pragmatism

The approach to IDPs in Sudan is completely different. In relation to Khartoum, this involves two major policy lines: spatial control and urban regulation, on the one hand, and the return of IDPs to Southern Sudan on the other. In order to deal with the destabilising effects of such large numbers of IDPs in Khartoum, the government has reinforced the police and military presence in the neighbourhoods where they have settled. The popular committees (*lijan sha'biya*), which were created when Omar al-Bashir came to power in 1989, are another social and political control mechanism. These neighbourhood committees (one committee per unit of 10 000 inhabitants), play a fundamental role in the running of local affairs (notably in relation to access to basic services and property). These committees, which, in theory, are elected, are, in fact, local antennae of the ruling party, the National Congress Party (NCP), and are generally made up of party members. Urban policy, which is principally guided by security and economic considerations, constitutes another spatial control mechanism. Urban regulations and policies regarding the legalisation of neighbourhoods and the attribution of land effectively push the most vulnerable people further out to the current limits of the city. They control who has access to land and ensure that the financial benefits remain in the government's hands. The government's methods are authoritarian and the legalisation of neighbourhoods involves forcing people out of their homes, which are then raised to the ground with bulldozers. Then, after several weeks or months, marked out and registered plots are allocated. In theory, access to land is strictly regulated, but there is a lack of transparency and widespread corruption according to those who live in the neighbourhoods in question. There is also a great deal of speculation on property, which is rarely to the benefit of the IDPs. Though the legalisation of neighbourhoods allows some IDPs to gain ownership of land, it also leads to the eviction of all those who are too vulnerable to take part, who are subsequently moved to the outskirts of the city. Despite the fact that this process leads to considerable loss in material terms, the inhabitants are in favour of it as they feel the potential benefits outweigh the loss incurred.

For a long time, humanitarian actors played the role of service providers in new areas where the IDPs settled and tried to limit the consequences of the authorities' authoritarian and discriminatory policies. When humanitarian agencies withdrew en masse from Khartoum at the end of the 1990s, this left the IDPs, who had been completely dependent on their assistance, in a very precarious situation. A veritable humanitarian invasion took place to rebuild the South following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 and in response to the Darfur crisis. A few NGOs started run-

ning programmes for IDPs in Khartoum. However, the expulsion of NGOs following the issuing of an arrest warrant against President al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court in 2009 once again had a serious impact on IDPs' situation. Since 2003, following the resumption of large-scale destruction and legalisation of neighbourhoods by the government, part of the international community has been active in denouncing and monitoring the government's urban policy in Khartoum. But the pressure they have exerted has not put an end to the process, and the state has only consented to implementing a number of mixed commissions (Sudanese authorities and international actors). The situation is tense for aid agencies, which does not make it easy for them to adopt strong positions. Administrative problems, delays and blockages of all kinds can sometimes prevent them from gaining access to beneficiaries, or even from carrying out a project. The NGOs expulsion following the International Criminal Court's verdict last March forced humanitarian actors to question the order of their priorities: witnessing, access to victims, advocacy...

The international community has reacted very favourably to the government's policy of supporting the return of IDPs. A joint plan of return was signed by the governments of Southern and Northern Sudan and the United Nations in 2006. Its aim was to organise the return of 150 000 IDPs to add to the spontaneous returns which had taken place since the signing of the cease-fire in 2004. The return process received significant financial support from the international community. The International Organisation for Migration was chosen to coordinate the logistical support to the returnees and a number of NGOs and agencies took part in the different phases of the plan, from the pre-departure information campaigns to assistance and protection activities during the return and in the resettlement zones. The plan came up against numerous problems, whether these were logistical (poor infrastructure and communication channels, unattainable zones in the rainy season, etc.), social (difficulties with the reintegration of the IDPs into their communities of origin), or political (counter pressure from the Sudanese authorities from the North and the South). With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, the IDP issue took on a new dimension. Several events will give the IDP population in the North increased 'political value': the survey carried out in 2008, which will make it possible to determine how resources are distributed between the regions; the national elections of 2010; and the referendum of 2011 when the Southern Sudanese will decide whether or not the South will become independent. In addition to overall policy there are also local and individual considerations. Sultans, who are the traditional political leaders in Sudan and whose legitimacy is based on the tribal system and territorial origins, have been destabilised by displacement. The government has nominated new sultans



Destruction and reconstruction : Rakubas in Wad El Bashir camp.

within the displaced population in Khartoum who receive much less support from the population, but often have more influence than the traditional sultans because of connections with the party in power. For these 'new' sultans, to return is to risk being ousted from their position. The IDPs in Khartoum are therefore subject to pressure from various quarters: the government of South Sudan and the regional governors who organise their return, the government in the North, whose policy towards them is often ambiguous, contributing to their marginalisation while, at the same time, attempting to retain them in the North for a time at least (the legalisation of neighbourhoods and distribution of plots has a significant impact in this regard) and the sultans, some of whom advocate return and others who try first to consolidate their position in the North before a possible return to the South.

Conclusion

IDPs are in a kind of limbo. Having been torn from their previous lives, they are caught between war and peace and between their place of refuge and their homes. After the violence and loss, they remain trapped in a condition which can seem never-ending. Although the Colombian approach has many good points in theory, it nevertheless encloses IDPs in a separate category and does not appear to favour their reintegration, but rather keeps them on the margins of society. The law and the aid system have therefore failed to achieve their initial objective, despite the continued efforts of a part of civil society. Campaigning for their rights, the IDPs have become entrenched in an increasingly conflictual relationship with political and administrative bodies. In Sudan, the stigmatisation of and discrimination against IDPs has become state policy. The current interest in them is an opportunity and a source of hope that politicians will begin to look for longer-term solutions. However, the strategic importance of the IDP population means that they are rarely considered from a politically neutral point of view. By working with IDPs, humanitarian actors run the risk of compromising their neutrality and, despite

their best intentions, often get caught up in internal political affairs. The city was initially seen as a place of refuge and hope for those fleeing violence in search of safety and new lives. But, in many ways, they find themselves like the bird in the children's song 'Alouette', which, gradually, is plucked of all its feathers.

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¹ The agglomeration of Bogota includes the municipalities of Bogota and Soacha. Soacha, which is the municipality to the south of Bogota, also has a large number of IDPs. The fact that the two municipalities merge into each other means that Soacha is an integral part of the agglomeration.

² These figures are only given as an example. We have seen that defining and counting IDPs is affected by ideological considerations. In the case of Sudan, there are only estimations as the results of the last census carried out in 2008 are not yet available for use. The previous census was carried out in 1993.

³ 77% of IDPs in Bogota are from rural areas, CODHES ; no figures for Sudan, but given the low level of urbanisation in the South, in the Nuba Mountains and in Darfur in the 80s and 90s, the overwhelming majority of IDPs in Khartoum must come from rural areas as well.

Neglected cities: the responsibilities of aid agencies in post-crisis contexts - The case of Afghanistan

Béatrice BOYER

Crises have left cities in Afghanistan with informal settlements, plundered property and out of date forms of urban planning. These cities have strong identities but governance is non-existent or biased. How is the reconstruction process progressing in the urban sector? What are international actors doing and what more could be done?

Are cities victims or sources of crises?

The world is becoming increasingly urban. Whether for economic, cultural or climatic reasons, more and more people are heading for cities. By 2020, almost 80% of the world's population will live in cities in poor and emerging nations. This urban pressure results in informal urbanisation, revealing the structural fragility of urban systems which are particularly sensitive to crises.

The observation and analysis of humanitarian action in different post-crisis or post-conflict urban contexts, shows that post-crisis actors involved in reconstruction are generally not equipped to deal with the complexity of urban contexts. On the other hand, in these unstable contexts, local authorities are themselves disorientated by urban phenomena most of the time and completely unable to cope with the effects of these crises, whereas the private sector is often very dynamic despite - or perhaps because of - the crisis. Through its actions, the private sector puts pressure on the city in the absence of clear technical and administrative institutional responsibilities. Development actors, or those responsible for urban policy or urbanism, are conspicuous by their absence, only intervening when the situation is stabilised and made secure. There is therefore a lack of clear action, and sometimes complete impotence in the gray area between the post-crisis and pre-development phases, during the complex process of establishing who will do what to improve living conditions in the city. In general, funding and operations are redirected towards other contexts where the struggle against vulnerability is easier to identify such as rural health and education, which are sectors where aid organisations have more experience. The city is unsettling.

But although urban contexts are complex, and particularly in an emergency situation or during a crisis, not running projects or running inappropriate projects can

create new imbalances in the long term which exacerbate inhabitants' problems. Urban crises are a new type of crisis. In already unstable situations, they add to the problems of people who live in small, densely populated areas. In the short term, these place more obstacles in the way of a crisis resolution: political discontent, poverty, social discord, insufficient resources, food insecurity and hygiene-related vulnerability, particularly concerning clean drinking water. In the long term, these cause social disintegration, economic inequality or injustice, added costs in providing facilities and services and irreversible environmental pollution in degraded and over-developed cities.

Cities are also a concentration of various elements and are therefore a wonderful and powerful agent for positive change. A great deal of work needs to be done on post-crisis aid in urban contexts (debate, analysis, innovation) in conjunction with the different professions already working on urban issues. In order to analyse urban contexts affected by crises and propose actions which would be appropriate in these, there is a real need for clarification and discussion of the issues involved. The urban situation in Afghanistan a few years after the arrival of the international aid community is an interesting example to look at.

The unprecedented level of urbanisation in Afghanistan

Afghan cities, like the majority of cities in the global South, have been experiencing major demographic growth for a number of years. Afghanistan has experienced erratic population movement in recent years. There have been a number of related causes such as the Soviet occupation, the resistance period, internal conflicts and rural poverty. The urban population has grown exponentially and at unprecedented levels since refugees began to return after the end of the conflicts in 2001. The authorities misjudged the scale of the phenomenon. Being a traditionally rural country, the Afghans did not give these social and geographic changes the attention they deserved. After years of inertia, and "laissez faire", during which there was no maintenance or investment in the urban sector, the Afghan authorities have finally opened their eyes to the anarchic state of their cities and have reacted with anger, but with little effect. Completely out of touch with modern urban reality, the authorities continue to

apply an outdated, rigid and ineffective form of management, furious that cities have become so chaotic and polluted and that informal urbanisation has taken place. They complain that the urban situation is unacceptably chaotic and blame those who have settled illegally.

These *informal settlements*, which form the majority of the urban residential neighbourhoods, are used as a pretext for blocking any actions to improve the living conditions of their inhabitants. After numerous interviews with the Afghan administration and analysis of documents, it is clear that there is a serious problem with the urban planning documents which are used in all the major cities. These are called Master Plans. They were established between 1960 and 1978 by the Russians, during the assistance and occupation periods. These 15-year plans were never fully implemented for various reasons, but they have nevertheless remained an absolute reference for the administration despite the fact that they are completely anachronistic as they define the framework and rules for cities which have changed so much that they are no longer comparable.

The continued use of these administrative and legal reference documents means that Afghan cities are currently in a schizophrenic situation, between two types of urbanisation: one which is the result of law and the other which is the result of reality. According to the Afghan politicians and administration the legal city falls within the limits and zones which were defined and drawn up in the MPs more than thirty years ago. All the other peripheral urban areas and city districts which are not within these limits are not considered to be part of the city. The problem is that the urbanisation that is contested by the authorities sometimes represents up to 70% of a city, as is the case now in Kabul.



The relative coherence of the urban fabric in Afghan cities, including in the informal settlements

For example, three quarters of the Afghan capital, practically all the neighbourhoods which have been created with the arrival of refugees, returnees, IDPs and the rural exodus, are not considered to be part of the city by the authorities as they were not part of the Master Plan and therefore can not benefit from facilities, infrastructure or public services. The inter-relationship between occupation rights and administrative responsibilities is the reason why Afghans have lost all sense of responsibility for what is done in their cities and why it is so difficult for the international aid community to provide assistance.

The complex and chaotic Afghan urban context

The Afghan urban sector is extremely complex and conceptually difficult for the majority of actors, including the Afghan authorities, who sometimes use outdated practices and references. This has considerably slowed down the analysis process and assistance. A more detailed and informed approach produces a more nuanced analysis than the very pessimistic view which prevails in Kabul.

Though inhabitants, authorities and all other people passing through are right to say that Afghan cities are anarchic, in decline and polluted, they also have some positive features which could be of use in rehabilitation operations. The original structure of the cities have a certain level of coherence, with a relatively well-organised urban fabric, numerous well-organised and well spread out transportation networks and regular-sized blocks of buildings.

Afghan urban landscapes are made up of traditional clay buildings with flat terraced roofs. Though the balance between built up areas and green or natural spaces has been destroyed in certain places due to anarchic construction, no man's lands or polluted areas, there is a common desire on the part of those who live in cities and the authorities to re-establish this balance. This may involve preserving agricultural areas on the outskirts of cities like to the south of Jalalabad or to the west of Mazar e Sharif, the restoration of green spaces around cities like Kabul or Mazar, the purification of the water and banks of urban rivers like Kabul river or in Pul e Khumri, or the restoration and accessibility of parks like the famous *Babur garden* in Kabul or those of Jalalabad, a former holiday town.

Another observation which puts the view that there is urban chaos in perspective is that each of the major Afghan cities is firmly anchored in its local context historically, culturally and geographically via its customs and heritage. Ancient and powerful links tie these

provincial cities to neighbouring countries, with trade and cultural networks which structure society and the economy. Links of this kind exist between Herat and Iran, Mazari Sharif and Uzbekistan, Kunduz and Tajikistan and Jalalabad and Pakistan. This kind of social cohesion also exists in a town like Bamiyan, even though it is looking to establish the right balance between the rural, the urban and tourism linked to its Buddhist heritage. The challenge for Kabul, the capital, which has been physically and socially shaken, is to re-establish its image and identity both nationally and internationally.

Crises have brought new dimensions and opportunities to the pre-existing structures within Afghan cities¹. The *informal settlements* create more need but also more potential. And there has been recent growth in the private sector. Whether it is in the form of modernist buildings, big concrete villas, office blocks or utopian urban developments, there is a local dynamism which could contribute to the general improvement of cities if it was properly channeled. The presence of the international aid sector provides an opportunity that the Afghans must not miss.

The ineffective rehabilitation process in Afghan cities

Both in the formally recognised parts of cities and in the informal neighbourhoods, the state of infrastructure is disastrous and needs to be rehabilitated to improve people's living conditions and to allow Afghans to come to terms with this new dual city. They are not very well prepared for this kind of challenge, caught up in internal conflict between the executive and the administration, but the international community is also finding it difficult to calibrate its assistance.

The city neighbourhoods, formal residential neighbourhoods, old urban centres and newly urbanised peripheral neighbourhoods have all been affected by deterioration, destruction, administrative disaffection and social breakdown, with widespread defiance of the authorities by the inhabitants. The rehabilitation and reconstruction process has been too slow and too ineffective due to incompetence and conflicts within local institutions as well as the lack of international coordination, relevant expertise and action on an appropriate scale. The whole of the urban sector requires the implementation of a vast programme of action which should be coordinated at various levels.

As the urban sector has not been considered a separate sector either by the Afghans or by the international aid sector, urban issues have not been a priority

and it has taken a long time for them to be taken into account. In the initial I-ANDS² document, which outlined the national and international reconstruction strategy for Afghanistan, there was no general understanding of the scale of the problems, needs and costs of an appropriate response for the urban sector. The sector only began to be considered a separate area of action when this idea was promoted by the international community and certain donors in particular³ who understood the considerable needs involved. The idea of urban policy slowly began to be accepted locally. It was only in the second version of the ANDS, in 2005, that the Afghan government announced a national urban development programme. This included only the broad outlines of this national programme and a first series of assessments⁴ carried out with the help of UN agencies like UN-Habitat, bilateral partnerships like GTZ⁵, and major private organisations like AKDN⁶. However, it was not until 2008, seven years after the first deployment of reconstruction aid, that certain major donors discovered the size of the needs in this sector and the absence of operations and coordination⁷.

The differences of opinion between Afghans and the international aid community about priorities for reconstruction are not the only issues which have held up the process. On the Afghan side there has been a lack of understanding of urban issues and mechanisms, malfunctioning or mixing of institutional roles and responsibilities, a lack of expertise in governance and urban management and a lack of decision-making tools. Added to this, the expertise and methods of intervention applied by aid agencies have been inappropriate for urban contexts.



Kabul: construction of an access stairway in the informal zone

What is the international aid community doing in Afghanistan in relation to the urban sector? How could this be made more relevant and effective?

Without underestimating the scale of economic and technical needs for reconstruction and rehabilitation, on the Afghan side, two major obstacles stand in the way of the elaboration of coherent strategies for cities. One is the illegal occupation of land in large parts of the city. The other is the weakness of the institutional and administrative institutions and their poor level of expertise in urbanism (planning, development, renovation, urban management, mapping, etc.). These two obstacles lead to mistakes, inertia and worsening of the situation. But what are international organisations present in these contexts doing?

In this unclear period, which is no longer really an emergency situation, but not yet a development situation, where security issues predominate, aid agencies are not sure what strategy to adopt and are unable to find the right scale of intervention, either in terms of budget, spatial coverage or timeframe. Urban operations funded by international donors⁸ do not correspond to the reality of the cities as they are generally limited in scale to the legal neighbourhoods of the MPs, leaving large parts of the cities – the informal settlements – without assistance. Most of the time, these operations take the form of one-off, pilot projects, which, too often, are not followed up because they only receive short-term post-crisis funding. In 2008⁹, due to security problems, sources of funding began to dry up without any commitment of further funding to allow long-term strategies to be implemented in proportion to needs.

Everyone agrees that there is not enough international coordination or investment. There is also a lack of progress regarding city-based operations in ongoing post-crisis phases. Examples of areas which could be improved are :

- the need to rebuild a positive image of the city to regain confidence
- the possibility of bringing in legal expertise to help develop property regularisation mechanisms and create land reserves for urban development
- the need for urban planners, architects, surveyors, economists, etc. to be involved as early as possible in discussions about the kind of assistance to provide
- the need for structured support provided by technical agencies (water, energy, waste)
- the potential for private economic activity, regional cooperation and skills transfer between cities which is not exploited during this phase of assistance.

Afghanistan, and particularly Kabul, could be a very

useful laboratory for developing common strategies for reconstruction assistance in urban settings. The work already being done by a section of the international aid sector could be strengthened, complemented and relayed by urban specialists: urban developers, economists, regional planners, sociologists and land agents.

A number of questions remain which need to be debated:

- How quickly can this type of city be turned around?
- What steps in urban development are unavoidable?
- What steps, errors and dead ends can/must the aid sector avoid so that these cities can be rebuilt taking into consideration specific issues related to climate change such as the reduction/production of energy, urban density and the goal of creating a new kind of city.

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¹ M. Djallalzada, Deputy Minister of Urban Development (MoUD) advanced this idea already in 2004.

² I-ANDS: *Interim National Development Strategy*, Bonn 2001.

³ In particular the World Bank.

⁴ ANDS: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *National Development Strategy*, Urban Development Sector 13 August 2005.

⁵ *Overview of Challenges-and-Policy-Options-Urban-Sector*, 2005.

⁶ German technical assistance.

⁷ Agha Khan Foundation.

⁸ Interview with an EC representative in January 2008.

⁹ Amongst which: the World Bank, the EC, ADB, bilateral aid such as KWF, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DFID, Norwegian, JICA, the Agha Khan Foundation and the United Nations.

¹⁰ For example, following a decision by Geneva for the ICRC in Mazari Sharif or by USAID for property regularisation mechanism projects.

Education in emergencies: the need for schools

Elise JOISEL

In 2009, half of the children in the world who do not go to school live in conflict zones. It is vital that the international community, aid organisations and donors understand the importance of having schools in crisis and early recovery situations and it is vital that they act on this issue. The schools created in IDP sites in Eastern Chad illustrate this point very well.

“What we are going through in our country - war, hunger and poverty - is largely the result of our ignorance. We need to send our children to school to have a better future”. These are the words of Ousman Zakaria, head of the parents' association in Gassiré, a little village in Eastern Chad where there is an IDP site with 15 000 people. Before the crisis, the proportion of children who went to school in the Sila region on the border with Sudanese Darfur was 7%¹, one of the lowest rates in the world.

Approximately 75 million children in the world do not go to school. More than half of this number live in countries where there is conflict. Several million live in regions affected by natural disasters. Education, which, for a long time, was neglected during humanitarian operations, is increasingly considered to be essential. For a few years now, there has been growing awareness that education programmes are extremely important in emergency and early recovery situations. Education is the unavoidable first step towards a better future.

An urgent need for well-managed, quality schools which are open to all

In Chad, the JRS² developed a support project for the primary education system when IDPs arrived in the region around Goz Beida and Koukou Angarana, for a population of more than 100 000 people. From the outset, the project aimed to provide the national Ministry of Education with support in creating community schools for and with the IDPs.

For education in emergency situations to contribute to the protection of displaced or refugee children, the stabilisation of society and the development of the child in a sustainable manner, good quality, well-managed schools which are open to all need to be built or rebuilt. This is not just a question of constructing the buildings, but also of building what goes to make a good quality school: trained teachers who get paid regularly, trained parents' associations, girls and boys who go to school regularly and a sustainable school which is autonomously managed by the parents and the Ministry of Education.

The idea should be to allow all children of school age - girls and boys, IDPs and host populations - to go to school. The education system which is created should be integrated into its context. In Eastern Chad, IDPs live alongside the host population, Sudanese refugees and semi-nomadic communities. Everyone should be able to go to school. Educational projects should be coordinated between all actors (state and humanitarian) so that all children, regardless of their origin, have access to education.

In order to make sure that schools are not just short-term projects and that they stay open once the humanitarian organisations have left, community-based schools should be developed. In IDP sites in Eastern Chad there can be as many as thirty different communities, with people who come from thirty different villages. The 100 000 IDPs around Goz Beida and Koukou come from more than 200 villages situated at various distances from the Sudanese border. When these people go home, each village (or group of adjacent villages) should have the possibility of rebuilding a school.

In order to do this, people from each community need to be trained. Though it is possible to attract qualified teachers by offering them a good salary, it is obvious that when the humanitarian agency leaves, the source of funds will dry up and the schools will die. In Eastern Chad, there are very few schools, very few literate people and even fewer trained teachers. A recruitment test was carried out to identify those in each community who could read and write the best, and then these people were provided with training.

Access for all is of primary importance, but it is also very important to have quality schools. An education project in an emergency context should improve the quality of education and the learning environment by significantly increasing the level of knowledge of the teachers, through academic and pedagogical training. The lack of qualified teachers was the biggest problem facing the Chadian education system. Violence had already pushed a lot of teachers out of the schools. Furthermore, the official salary of community teachers is very low, particularly in relation to the mounting cost of living in this part of Chad. The state often pays them very late, and sometimes does not pay them at all.

It was very important to provide training that led to a qualification and a diploma that was recognised by the state so that the teachers could eventually be incorporated into the national education system³. Two hundred teachers were therefore provided with continual training in the afternoons after classes and during the school holidays. In addition to basic pedagogical con-

cepts, the teachers were also trained in basic Maths, Arabic, History and Science.

In terms of management, IDPs have to be able to re-create the schools in their home villages. It is therefore essential to strengthen the management capacity of parents' associations and school directors. One man and one woman from each home village was trained in running a parents' association and then in running a school. Five hundred people have been trained to date.

Paying teachers regularly is also a fundamental part of running schools properly. At the very beginning of the crisis, in order to fill gaps in the service provided by the state in this area, an educational humanitarian project can encourage teachers with bonuses and community-based income generating activities can be developed with parents' associations. It is important to work constantly with the government so that they pay the teachers properly.

Education in emergencies: What a school can bring to an emergency context

Emergency situations caused by war, conflict, forced displacement, civil war or natural disasters cause dislocation, uncertainty and instability which affect children's educational opportunities. Setting up a school in these situations is recognised by many to be the most important form of protection for a child, as going to school diminishes the chances that the child will be recruited, exploited or exposed to other risks. Susan Nicolai has counted five types of concrete protection provided by schools⁴: raising awareness amongst the children and/or the parents through parents' associations, improving access to education for the most vulnerable people's children, introducing a child-centred pedagogical approach which counters the spiral of violence through peace education, transmitting protection messages and giving children the initiative through activities which encourage self-protection.



Arabic lesson with six year-olds, Gassiré IDP site school, January 2008

In Eastern Chad, it is at school that displaced children learn about the risks of unexploded munitions or basic health and hygiene rules. These things are sometimes taught by protection and hygiene actors, but most often by the teachers themselves. Going to school each day is also a way of returning to normality. Even if very few children were able to go to school before the crisis, the regular and daily routine of school is reassuring in itself. Education helps to establish a routine and stability for children, families and communities. Schools provide safe environments to learn and also to recuperate.

What the emergency context brings to the school

Despite the tragic aspects of being uprooted, massive displacement has allowed people from hundreds of isolated villages close to the Sudanese border to gather in a safer area. This makes the logistical aspects of projects much easier, like the creation of schools and the training of teachers and parents. This kind of project is almost impossible to implement in hundreds of different villages in very dangerous zones. The teacher training activities are a good example. It is much easier to train the teachers when they are grouped together and each of them is close to their shelter than to train teachers living in scattered communities.

The fact that people are grouped together in IDP sites in Chad has led to a very high level of school attendance. School attendance in IDP sites has its own momentum. Mothers send their children because their neighbours do the same. School canteens contribute to this phenomenon as the principle reason for school absenteeism is that children often have to work to feed themselves.

In such a fragile educational system as the one which exists in Eastern Chad, in a context where people have been displaced for almost four years and where the schools have been open since they arrived, children become accustomed to going to school on a daily basis. School becomes an essential part of community life. This is evident in the fact that IDP leaders all talk of returning to their villages of origin only if there is security, healthcare, water *and* education, despite the fact that the majority of villages did not have schools before the crisis.

In addition, IDP sites draw the humanitarian community. An educational programme can often find partners for a school canteen, water and sanitation and awareness-raising about child protection. However, the fact that a large number of NGOs work in the same zone can also destabilise the local education system. In Chad, almost all the French-speaking teachers prefer to work for an NGO rather than for community schools as the salary is 3 or 4 times higher.

At the same time, the participatory and voluntary approach which is essential in educational projects is often not very well understood in humanitarian assistance contexts. Many of the NGOs run “cash for work” or “food for work” programmes, or provide assistance that is completely free.

In such a context, where there is very little state presence, it is important to continually raise awareness within communities who do not always understand the difference between an ‘NGO health centre’, an ‘NGO pump’, food that is distributed for free and a school that belongs to them and for which they are responsible. Awareness-raising and training are therefore necessary. When parents build and maintain classes on a voluntary basis, they feel responsible for the project and there is a heightened sense of ownership on the part of the community.

How schools contribute to crisis resolution

It is important to remember that education is universally recognised as a fundamental right of all children. It contributes not only to social and economic development, but even more, it prepares children for life, laying the foundations for their development and well-being. Providing education contributes enormously to creating continuity, teaching survival skills, and the meaning of responsibility, giving hope and reassuring displaced people in emergency situations.

In the short term, providing children with access to basic education allows children to acquire knowledge and skills which help them to deal with their difficult circumstances more effectively. In the long term, it provides the necessary foundations for the children’s personal development and well-being by helping them to understand their living conditions, communicate effectively, make enlightened decisions, resolve problems and take initiatives.

It is also important to remember that it is primarily the state’s responsibility to educate its population. Educational programmes in emergency contexts should include constant communication with the national Ministry of Education so that schools are not considered to be “NGO schools”, but national schools. If we are dealing with IDPs, they have been displaced within their own country and it is therefore that country’s responsibility to provide them with schools.

The Chadian state is a sovereign state. It is responsible for the Chadian population, which includes Chadian IDPs. For this reason, everything that is done in the educational sector must be done in accordance with national law and the national education system. Support should be given to the Ministry, which, in the future, will run the system alone: recognising the value of teachers, paying and training them, building schools, encouraging more girls to attend, running school canteens, etc.

Education in emergencies: a growing sector

In April 2000, at the World Conference on Education for All in Dakar, a framework for action was adopted: “Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments”. The participating states committed themselves to the objective of quality basic education for all by 2015. In September 2000, at the Millennium Summit, the Member States of the United Nations reaffirmed this commitment as one of the Millennium Development Goals, which aim to end extreme poverty in the world. The second of these goals is to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015. Following this, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was created. It includes United Nations agencies, NGOs, practitioners, donors and researchers. It established the “Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction”⁵. Education in emergencies has therefore become an integral part of humanitarian action.

Though there has been progress towards the Dakar and Millennium goals, a lot remains to be done and particularly in terms of funding. Donors continue to be reticent about funding this sector, partly because they consider that it does not save lives, that it is not genuine emergency relief. Education in emergency situations was only allocated 3.1% of the total humanitarian aid budget in 2008. In 2007, the United States, France, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Japan and Switzerland allocated less than 3% of their total humanitarian budgets to basic education. Much more effort will need to be made to make emergency education one of the principal pillars of humanitarian response and a priority in early recovery situations. Education in emergency situations is increasingly necessary due to the existence of complex protracted crises. It is an extremely important sector which needs to be developed in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Education in emergencies – helping children to live

In recent years, humanitarian aid has become more sophisticated. Practitioners have become conscious of the need to treat the root causes of vulnerability, to help people recover and rebuild their lives in the long term and to promote human dignity. Education is perfectly adapted to this new approach because it contributes to the long term recovery of children by helping to protect them and by giving them dignity.

It is essential that advocacy work is carried out to put pressure on donors to fund emergency education. Of course, education is not as vital as the immediate distribution of emergency medical supplies, food or shelter, but human beings need certain things to “survive” and others to “live”. This is what makes education so

important. It not only helps them to survive, it helps them to develop their knowledge and skills, to become active citizens and build a better future. In other words, it helps them to live.

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¹ Estimated figure from the Sila National Education Inspectorate, October 2003.

² The Jesuit Refugee Service has been running a project providing support to the Primary Education system for IDP and host populations in the Sila region since April 2006. In collaboration with the Chadian Ministry of Education, 26 schools and 26 parents' associations have been created, 17000 children have been provided with schooling and 200 IDPs have been recruited and trained as teachers.

³ JRS trained the teachers for the BEPC (secondary school exam) as this is the qualification that community primary teachers are required to have by the Chadian state. In June 2009, almost two thirds of the teachers working in IDP site schools were officially recognised by the state.

⁴ Susan NICOLAI, "Education that protects", *Forced Migration Review*, January 2005.

⁵ www.ineesite.org.



Pupil learning mathematics, Gassiré IDP site school, January 2008

Aid and Quality

Mainstreaming the environment into humanitarian action

Tom DELRUE - Renard SEXTON

A failure to address environmental risks and insufficient inclusion of environmental considerations in relief operations can undermine the relief process, causing additional loss of life, displacement, aid dependency and increased vulnerability. Although this relationship has been documented in case-studies, and is commonly acknowledged by humanitarian practitioners in the field, there remain many opportunities lost and risks ignored in the environmental sector throughout the humanitarian phase. This article focuses on the opportunities to respond to this gap and on the activities UNEP wants to undertake with partners in the humanitarian community.

Introduction

Disasters and conflicts often impact the environment in ways that threaten human life, health, livelihoods and security. Whether through direct damage to land, water or air, or through coping strategies that indirectly stress scarce natural resources, environmental im-

pacts in the aftermath of crises can threaten the success of recovery activities by leaving populations with degraded natural resources and vulnerable to future events.

At the same time, the relief and recovery operations that follow disasters and conflicts can sometimes cause as much environmental damage as the crises they were designed to respond to. Indeed, unsustainable and degrading techniques used in the humanitarian phase can leave disaster and conflict prone regions on path-dependent trajectories that continue to overexploit natural resources and the environment. At the same time, the basic operation of a large humanitarian presence, which is designed for rapid and intense operations, all too often leaves behind a trail of polluting waste, concentrated resource overuse and heavy, unsustainable urbanization.

A failure to address these risks and insufficient inclusion of environmental considerations in relief operations can undermine the relief process, causing additional loss of life, displacement, aid dependency and increased vulnerability. Although this relationship

has been documented in case-studies, and is commonly acknowledged by humanitarian practitioners in the field, there remain many opportunities lost and risks ignored in the environmental sector throughout the humanitarian phase.

Therefore, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in its capacity as the focal point for environment within the humanitarian coordination system, is working with partners in the UN, NGO and donor communities to seize the current momentum to better mainstream the environment in humanitarian action. UNEP has stepped up its efforts to improve awareness and incorporation of environmental issues within humanitarian operations. The aim of this initiative is to minimize the possible negative environmental impacts of these operations to ensure they do no harm with regard to longer-term vulnerability and development. Cooperation with all the stakeholders involved is key to the success of this effort, resulting in the close cooperation of humanitarian and early recovery actors, authorities, donors, and affected people on environmental concerns.

Challenges

The challenges to successful mainstreaming of environmental best practices through humanitarian activities stem from many sources. To begin with, the impact of humanitarian operations on the environment is often underestimated by relief and recovery actors. Although Principle 8 of the Red Cross Code of Conduct stresses the need to pay particular attention to environmental issues in the design and management of relief programmes as part of reducing vulnerability and addressing basic needs¹, many emergency response operations still negatively impact the environment. (See Figure 1, summarizing a joint leaflet by UNEP and OCHA ²).

Second, in situations of mass displacement the humanitarian community often misses the opportunity to minimize the environmental impact of refugee and IDP settlements. Displacement camps are built out of short term necessity, but in practice usually endure for many years. If not well managed, competition for scarce resources around such camps, such as water, wood and land, can create conflict drivers which hamper long term peace building efforts. In the Darfur states of western Sudan, for example, boreholes have run dry in some camps and conflict between local residents and wood gathering camp dwellers is commonplace, with large scale deforestation quite common. ³ Similarly, between 1994 and 1996, 36 million trees from the Virunga National Park in the Dem-

ocratic Republic of Congo were used to meet the cooking and shelter needs of Rwandan refugees,⁴ at great cost to the natural environment and future sustainable development efforts.

Third, natural resources are often required to meet the immediate relief needs of affected populations following a disaster or conflict. Unfortunately, this is often achieved through intensive and rapid extraction of scarce local resources, creating new sources of risk and vulnerabilities. For example, in Afghanistan, the energy and construction needs of conflict-affected populations have devastated the once grand pistachio trade that formerly provided a long term environmental investment for the population.

Finally, in the midst of a crisis, there is a common perception that natural resources and the environment represent a trivial or less pressing issue than immediate humanitarian needs. Because the practical benefits of integrating environmentally sustainable policies and practices are not well understood by enough actors in the field and too little human capacity of the issue is in place in crisis situations, this myth too often remains unchallenged. Though natural resources are often the starting point for economic and social reconstruction and environmentally sensitive recovery is vital for ensuring long term sustainable development, the marginalization of the environment is widespread.

Overcoming these challenges

Some environmental challenges for humanitarian action can be solved through relatively simple and quite feasible changes to standard practice of relief and recovery operations. For instance, small operational modifications, such as the use of green procurement to minimize the long term impact of packaging or eco-friendly fleet management and driving techniques to reduce air pollution and fuel consumption, can improve the long term impact of humanitarian activities.

However, several of the challenges require a larger commitment from the humanitarian community of practice. First and foremost, changes are needed in the current operational approach for humanitarian response in order to mainstream environmental concerns. The existing *modus operandi* of humanitarian actors — short term, ad-hoc planning and decision making that takes place within operations with many, small financial contributions — are fundamentally counterproductive to environmental concerns, which are relevant in a broad time spectrum. To counter this, a shift in mindset and policy scope is needed, with the

operating procedures of humanitarian actors and donors reacting to the needs of the medium and long term, as well as the short. Indeed, a change in the 'way of doing business' is needed that recognizes that human needs will continue, if not intensify, following the initial emergency phase.

Second, a significant change is also needed in the manner in which humanitarian action is financed. While the donor community acknowledges the importance of preserving the environment and using natural resources in a sustainable fashion during emergencies, too often funding structures prevent multi-annual commitment and support for mitigating activities. As noted before, taking care of the environment during relief and recovery activities is an ongoing endeavor, and an effort that provides important benefits in the long term. It is important that donors start providing funds to humanitarian actors to allow them to design their response plans in a way that greatly reduces negative impacts for the environment, and reduces the need for donors to later fund additional clean-up or reclamation activities, let alone additional crises from migration or conflict⁵.

Finally, although the need to include environmental considerations in humanitarian responses has been clearly recognised by the humanitarian reform process, leading to specific guidance regarding mainstreaming, what was envisaged has mostly not materialised in practice. The environment remains marginalized in institutional planning, the implementation of needs assessments and program design and during response activities. For one, environmental concerns have been a casualty of the ongoing debate about the boundaries of "lifesaving activities," which are the essential role of the humanitarian response. Though many humanitarian practitioners agree that contributing to livelihood revitalization and sustainability, including the environmental response upon which they rely, is a core role for early response humanitarians, others argue that any activity that falls outside a strict, historical definition of humanitarianism is inappropriate. As such, it is key that policy makers and planners within the humanitarian community aggressively tackle these contradictions, using multiple fora and by producing practical suggestions for relief actors in the field.

Action to be taken

Following consultations with cluster leads (UN) and non-UN actors and by taking into consideration the lessons learned and the recommendations provided by several studies and best practices to date⁶, UNEP

intends to respond to the challenges mentioned above in a collaborative and pragmatic fashion with key partners from the humanitarian, development and environment community. A number of responses have been designed that will strengthen the capacity of the humanitarian community to react to environmental concerns and prevent relief and recovery activities from dealing environmental damage in post-crisis situations.

A. Environment Network and information sharing platform. An Environment Network at global level will serve as a community of practice and an information sharing platform. Within the network, a core group will be formed that will meet on a regular basis to identify the gaps and needs in terms of tools, guidance, training, technical support for country operations, to identify the activities needed, to share the work load to meet the needs, and to develop joint advocacy strategies. The UNEP-managed Environment Network web page for the environment on the *OneResponse* website⁷ will be accessible to the general public as well and will be an indispensable platform for information sharing.

B. Integrating environmental needs within IASC policy and operations. In order to influence the IASC process and other relevant humanitarian policy developing processes, UNEP will (i) increase its active participation in IASC subsidiary bodies, task forces, and working groups of concern (Sub Working Group on the CAP, Task Force on Climate Change Adaptation, Task Force on Needs Assessments, etc.), (ii) enhance its interaction with the other actors in the humanitarian coordination mechanism (clusters of concern and the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery in particular, OCHA, etc.), and (iii) undertake awareness and advocacy activities targeting staff at decision making / policy level in relevant organizations, as well as donors. A cost-benefit analysis of environmental mainstreaming in humanitarian action will support the awareness efforts.

C. Training for humanitarian actors to integrate environmental issues within their operations. Training on Mainstreaming the environment into Humanitarian Action⁸ will strengthen the capacity of UN and non-UN actors and training materials will be developed. On a needs driven basis, regional and country based trainings will be organized /to the extent possible and sector specific training modules will be derived. Modules on mainstreaming environment in humanitarian action will be integrated in humanitarian coordination trainings, early recovery advisory trainings, resident and humanitarian coordinator trainings, and trainings of

other relevant clusters. Training will be developed based on mapping of existing material.

D. Tools and guidance. UNEP, with the partners on the Environment Network, will develop technical standards, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Based on a mapping of existing tools and guidance, new tools will be developed, adapted or standardized. Tools and guidance will be disseminated globally and will be shared through the Environment Network website.⁹

E. Field deployment and real-time technical assistance. Upon request and following the necessary training, UNEP or other partners in the network will participate in inter-cluster / inter-agency needs assessment processes and provide real-time environmental advice to humanitarian agencies on minimizing environmental damage and doing no harm while meeting humanitarian needs.

F. Contribute to the sustainability of early recovery operations. With a view to ensuring the sustainability of early recovery operations, we will have to invest in enhancing the environmental response (i) at the international level, by improving communication, liaison and interaction between relevant cluster members; and (ii) at the local level by building the capacity of national experts and institutions. National strategies, local experiences and coping mechanism should be taken into account when and where appropriate. Such an approach will help to strengthen the institutional capacity of humanitarian and other actors concerned to mainstream environmental considerations into policy development, monitoring and evaluation tools and frameworks, staff training, advocacy and fundraising strategies, and, most importantly, their operations in (post)crisis situations.

Conclusions

Humanitarian action stands to benefit immensely from the effective mainstreaming of environmental considerations into crisis response, as environmental best practices provide for a smoother shift into sustainable recovery. A reduction in the negative, sometimes irreversible, impacts on the environment will contribute to a faster recovery and will be conducive to rebuilding livelihoods and the socio-economic fibre of communities, while contributing to poverty alleviation. Less soil contamination and soil degradation will allow people to restart small scale farming; more equitable management of natural resources, water, fertile soil, will contribute to better inter-community relations and will have a conflict preventing effect and enhance peace-

building and reconciliation efforts¹⁰. Alternative cooking and heating systems will reduce the exposure of women and children to exploitation and sexual violence: they will not have to walk for hours to collect wood in remote places and children and girls will be able to attend school more often. The mitigation of negative environmental impacts will contribute to a reduction in the institutionalisation of emergency situations and diminish the chance that groups of people find themselves in a protracted situation of dependency.

Lastly, closer cooperation between the environmental community and the humanitarian community will lead to more collaborative and coherent responses to all crises, showing solidarity with vulnerable and hurt people rather than discord and competition.

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¹ Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, Available Online at: <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp>

² 'Humanitarian Action and Environment – Essential Guidance for Humanitarian Actors', UNEP-OCHA <http://oneresponse.info/crosscutting/environment/publicdocuments/Forms/DispForm.aspx?ID=5>. The leaflet includes two pages of available standards, guidance, tools and resources.

³ For more see the UNEP Sudan Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment, Available online at : <http://www.unep.org/sudan/>.

⁴ For more see Biswas, A. & Tortajada-Quiroz, H. (1996) Environmental impacts of the Rwandan refugees on Zaire. *Ambio* 25(6):403-408 and The Encyclopedia of the Earth, *Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo* Available online.

⁵ Morton, A. and Jensen, D. 'Managing environmental issues: a case for substantive reform, FMR, issue 29.

⁶ E.g. 'Mainstreaming the Environment into Humanitarian Response – an Exploration of Opportunities and Issues', Environmental Resources Management Limited, November 2007, p. 27-29.

http://oneresponse.info/crosscutting/environment/publicdocuments/ERM_%20Final%20Report_08%2011%2007.pdf

⁷ <http://oneresponse.info/crosscutting/environment/Pages/Environment.aspx>

⁸ Such training is currently being developed by Groupe URD and UNEP in consultation with other actors.

⁹ Examples of existing tools are the 'Environmental Needs Assessment in Post-Disaster Situations - A Practical Guide for Implementation', UNEP, March 2008.

http://oneresponse.info/crosscutting/environment/publicdocuments/UNEP_PDNA_draft.pdf and 'PCNA-TRF Tool Kit - Note on Addressing Environmental Issues', February 2009 <http://www.undg.org/docs/9926/Final-Draft-Toolkit-Note-Environment-9-March-2009.doc>

¹⁰http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/title_search.asp?search=peacebuilding

Figure 1: Humanitarian activities that can cause new environmental impacts

	Environmental impacts that can affect humanitarian activities	Humanitarian activities that can cause new environmental impacts
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contamination by chemicals, hazardous waste and weapons ▪ Release of asbestos from collapsed buildings ▪ Presence of debris and carcasses ▪ Unsafe chemicals management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improper management of healthcare waste and expired medicines ▪ Improper management of chemicals required for health protection (eg. water treatment) ▪ Improper management of waste, debris and carcasses
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contamination of water sources by chemicals, hazardous waste and weapons ▪ Damage of water and sanitation infrastructure, leading to cross-contamination ▪ Presence of debris and carcasses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over-pumping of groundwater aquifers ▪ Improper rehabilitation and decommissioning of wells ▪ Water contamination from sewage disposal ▪ Inappropriate / energy-intensive WASH systems (e.g. septic tanks, desalination plants)
Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contamination of land by chemicals, hazardous waste and weapons ▪ Environmental hazards (e.g. floods, landslides, volcanoes) ▪ Loss of forests resulting in reduced access to fuel wood and building materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unsustainable supply of shelter construction materials ▪ Inappropriate design for a specific need, site, community or culture, leading to misuse or non-use ▪ Unsustainable use of timber and fuel wood in shelter construction ▪ Deforestation and soil erosion ▪ Inadequate disposal of construction and packaging waste
Camp Coordination and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contamination of land by chemicals, hazardous waste and weapons ▪ Environmental hazards (e.g. floods, landslides and volcanoes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land degradation and biodiversity loss ▪ Improper management and decommissioning of pit Latrines ▪ Unsustainable use of natural resources (e.g. timber, fuel wood) ▪ Contamination by fuel spills and disposal of chemicals ▪ Improper decommissioning of camps ▪ Inadequate disposal of construction and packaging waste
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental hazards (e.g. floods, landslides and volcanoes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improper management and disposal of fuel, waste oil and tires ▪ Chemicals and waste from logistics base operations ▪ Procurement of goods produced through unsustainable practices
Early Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Damage to natural resources that support livelihoods ▪ Loss of government capacity for natural resources management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unsustainable use of natural resources for reconstruction and livelihoods ▪ Improper land use and urban planning ▪ Failure to conduct strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments ▪ Inappropriate building designs or choices of reconstruction materials ▪ Unequal access to natural resources and changes in Tenure ▪ Development of unsustainable livelihoods

Improving Humanitarian Assistance: A Transatlantic Agenda for Action

Andrea BINDER - Kai KODDENBROCK - Julia STEETS

Recent political changes in the U.S. and the EU possibly open a window of opportunity for enhanced humanitarian cooperation. While this offers the chance to overcome old policy faultlines and increase mutual learning, such a bridge over the Atlantic must avoid exacerbating the “Western bias” in the current humanitarian system. Following some reflections on the framework in which enhanced humanitarian cooperation could take place, this article discusses possible avenues for working together on implementing lessons learned and LRRD.

Emergency response and preparedness: A common global challenge

The number of emergencies the global humanitarian system has to deal with has risen continuously since the end of World War II. It is poised to rise even further due to the effects of climate change. This, combined with population growth and urbanization, will mean that more and more people will be affected in the future. Over recent decades, emergency response activities have become more effective, resulting in a decline in disaster-related deaths and improved assistance for the victims of conflicts and complex emergencies. This is due to improved national emergency response systems, the professionalization of humanitarian agencies, and the great increase of resources available for humanitarian assistance, now estimated to be at least \$12 billion per year.¹

At the same time, a severe identity crisis is undermining the ability of humanitarian actors to respond coherently and effectively to the challenges of the future. The current humanitarian system is built on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Yet, these principles have come under pressure as humanitarian actors face difficulties providing assistance effectively and on the basis of need. Several developments explain the challenge: the nature of conflicts has been changing, blurring the lines between combatants and civilians; humanitarian actors are increasingly pressed to address root causes, especially in protracted crisis situations; and integrated approaches are being developed that link humanitarian to development assistance and include military and private actors in response activities.²

To deal with this identity crisis, humanitarian actors, including donors and implementing partners, have to make tough choices. There are three options. They

could revert to a strict interpretation of humanitarian principles, accepting a narrow mandate that would not cover local capacity building, addressing root causes, or linking relief and development. Alternatively, they could widen their mandate to include these and other similar activities to respond to a wider set of needs, while acknowledging that this would further blur the distinction between humanitarian assistance and other policy areas and would probably exacerbate access and security problems. Or, they could continue to pursue the currently popular approach of “strategic muddling through” claiming strict adherence to humanitarian principles, while expanding activities and mandates in practice. In this case, however, humanitarian actors would have to accept that the contradictions inherent in this approach will lead to a loss of credibility, as well as to operational problems.

A critical role for the EU and the U.S

To make the humanitarian system fit for the challenges it faces and ensure that it becomes more effective and efficient at saving lives and alleviating human suffering, humanitarian actors need to improve their policies and operations, enhance the coherence of the humanitarian system, and redefine the position and role of humanitarianism within the broader aid and policy spectrum.

The transatlantic donors play a critical role in achieving these goals. Together, the European Commission, EU member states, and the U.S. Government provide almost two thirds of global humanitarian assistance. Through their policies and funding decisions, they have an important influence on the performance of the humanitarian system. They shape norms and policies at the global level through their participation in multi-lateral organizations and multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (GHDI), and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP). Due to their extensive field presence, they also have a direct impact on operations.

A window of opportunity for enhancing EU-U.S. cooperation in humanitarian assistance?

Under the Bush Administration, the relations between the EU and the U.S. experienced a marked cooling. Close collaboration regarding humanitarian issues

was limited by the clear link the U.S. government made between security issues and humanitarian affairs, alienating the more principled European Commission. However, since the Obama Administration took office early this year, there has been a remarkable improvement in EU-U.S. relations. At the EU-U.S. summit in early November this year, climate change, food assistance, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals were all on the agenda, signaling that closer transatlantic cooperation in development and humanitarian affairs is within reach.

However, on closer inspection this window of opportunity appears less promising. USAID has remained without proper leadership for over a year and the Obama Administration only managed to find a suitable nominee for the agency on November 10th. The candidate, Rajiv Shah, will have a lot to do to reestablish USAID's independence and to push back the influence of the Defense and State Departments on the American humanitarian agenda. In the meantime, uncertainty about where U.S. humanitarian assistance is heading will remain. Likewise, the European Union is currently undergoing important institutional change. How humanitarian assistance will develop under the signed Lisbon Treaty, the second Barroso Commission, and the newly appointed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, is also still very much in the open. An Obama administration official commented the appointment of the latter as being "rather less than we were hoping for"³. The way the new leaders on both sides of the Atlantic design their respective aid systems in the months to come will determine whether there will be closer transatlantic cooperation in the years to come or whether old faultlines will prevail – for example, with respect to the question of food aid and food assistance.

Effects of enhanced cooperation

A closer working relationship between the EU and the U.S. promises to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance. First, it could generate greater policy coherence and ensure that the transatlantic partners do not duplicate their activities or undermine each other's efforts, for example with respect to support for the Humanitarian Reform. Situations in which the mass delivery of Western food commodities undermines efforts to strengthen local food markets by purchasing food regionally or locally or using cash hand-outs, for example, could be avoided. Second, closer cooperation would create opportunities for joint or mutual learning. This is critical

to adapt humanitarian policies and practices to changing circumstances and to address existing gaps in analytical capacity in the humanitarian arena. Finally, by working together, the transatlantic partners could be very effective in promoting sector-wide reforms. Acting in concert, they could be the driving force behind the implementation of lessons learned concerning, for example, local capacity and gender and the establishment of a coherent approach to linking relief, rehabilitation, and development.

However, if the EU and U.S. increase their cooperation, they should do so in ways that avoid potential pitfalls. First, cooperation should be structured so as not to exacerbate perceptions that the humanitarian system is dominated by and biased towards the "West" or that humanitarian agencies are pursuing other political aims. This perception makes many non-Western governments hesitant to support the humanitarian system. Even more problematic is that a growing number of governments, including Myanmar, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Sri Lanka, are using this argument as a reason or pretext for at least temporarily or partly denying humanitarian agencies access to those in need. Transatlantic initiatives can only be successful if embedded in a larger international strategy, including other relevant actors, such as recipient countries' governments and emerging donors like China, the Arab countries, or Brazil. Second, enhanced transatlantic cooperation should not threaten the independence of humanitarian assistance to further exclusively humanitarian and not other political goals. It also means ensuring that the transatlantic partners are careful not to abuse their joint influence over implementing partners, and that they do not undermine their independence. Finally, high levels of cooperation and coordination can be costly, not only in terms of transaction costs, but also because less diversity in the humanitarian system could diminish its capacity for innovation.

Recommendation 1: Emphasize informal cooperation, strengthen multilateral channels, and hold high-level bilateral discussions

The European Commission and the U.S. Government should thus prioritize the following cooperation modalities to strengthen coherence, enhance mutual learning, and provide a stronger impetus for system-wide reform, while avoiding a stronger perception of "Western" dominance, safeguarding the independence of humanitarian action and limiting coordination costs.

Strengthen the enabling conditions for informal cooperation. Informal cooperation holds many advantages. Through flexible and pragmatic exchanges, it is one of

the most effective tools for joint or mutual learning, a core objective of enhanced cooperation. Moreover, it typically has lower transaction costs than formal meetings. Informal cooperation also can – and should – be designed in ways that are open to the participation of other interested parties. Currently, both donors report relatively strong informal collaboration at the field level, and weaker informal cooperation at headquarters level.

Emphasize multilateral and multi-stakeholder channels for cooperation. The European Commission and the U.S. Government participate in a broad range of multilateral and multi-stakeholder initiatives relevant to humanitarian assistance. These initiatives are less exclusive than bilateral channels, yet provide important opportunities for strengthening transatlantic cooperation. The transatlantic partners should increase their strategic use of and support for multilateral and multi-stakeholder initiatives by: promoting reforms to increase the quality and effectiveness of these fora and initiatives and focusing on opportunities for EU-U.S. cooperation within these frameworks, for example by expanding internal EU coordination meetings to include exchanges with the U.S. Government at an early stage.

Use high-level, bilateral meetings to address key policy differences. Current policy differences concerning the role of humanitarian principles, the integration of humanitarian assistance with other foreign policy and security goals, the role of the military, and food aid are an obstacle for a closer transatlantic relationship and hinder effective operational cooperation. The transatlantic partners should address these divergences explicitly in high-level bilateral meetings involving relevant decision-makers and allowing for direct, focused exchanges.

Recommendation 2: Improve the capacity of humanitarian donors to implement lessons

Time and again, evaluations in the humanitarian sector identify “lessons learned.” Yet, their implementation remains an important challenge to donors and implementing agencies alike. The inability of humanitarian actors to implement lessons is thus a key obstacle for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian donors are usually not at the forefront of humanitarian action where humanitarian services are provided on the ground. Yet, through their policies, their interaction with humanitarian agencies and organizations, and their funding decisions they shape humanitarian assistance. Therefore, if lessons like the need for gender-sensitive programs and the need to

strengthen local capacity are to be put into practice, they have to be integrated into the policy-making, funding, and coordination activities of donors. To enhance their ability to implement lessons, the European Commission and the U.S. Government should take the following measures:

Increase focus on and capacities for policy-making. To date, donors like DG ECHO and OFDA lack policies on important issues such as gender and local capacity. This compromises the quality and sustainability of their activities. In part, this is related to the perception of many humanitarian actors that independent and neutral humanitarianism needs to refrain from politics. To counteract this trend, DG ECHO has decided to increase its focus on policy-making and should continue in this direction. OFDA’s ability to develop independent policies has been curtailed over recent years. The new U.S. Administration should hand back authority to OFDA to back up its new Wilsonian spirit with action. Moreover, both donors need to enhance their expertise for developing appropriate policies. OFDA has a Technical Assistance Group and an inclusive approach in developing guidelines which is well-placed to infuse internal and external knowledge into policy-making. DG ECHO needs to further expand its pool of policy expertise, either through further enlarging its policy unit or through engaging more systematically with external operational and academic experts. Stronger input from external actors could support policymaking. Humanitarian agencies should therefore engage more closely with parliamentarians and recognize that their relationship with donors is not exclusively about money, but also about policy.

Enhance conceptual clarity and coherence. The transatlantic donors remain unclear on whether they should pursue a needs-based or a rights-based approach to gender and local capacity. Yet the two approaches lead to very different understandings of the purpose of humanitarian assistance and the mandate of the agencies providing it. This creates operational confusion and undermines sustainability. Therefore, both donors and implementers need to take clear positions. Once a position is taken, it should be explained clearly with regard to its aims, its implications and its limits, and applied consistently in all policies and actions, including in the selection of partners.

Expand or create technical surge capacities for donors. Where know-how and a certain degree of capacity exist within the humanitarian community, as for example in the area of gender, donors should strengthen this capacity and systematically include it into their activities. OFDA is already very efficient in

including external know-how, but both donors should improve their efforts in strengthening existing gender capacity. They could, for example, support the Inter-agency Standing Committee's Gender Standby Capacity (IASC GenCap) Project. The GenCap Project deploys senior gender advisors (GenCap Advisors) who help build the capacity of humanitarian actors at country level to consistently consider and include the different capabilities and needs of women, girls, boys and men into their projects and programs. For example, the GenCap Advisors can help humanitarian country teams improve their capacity to collect and use sex- and age-disaggregated data, integrate gender into funding appeals, project proposals and work plans and can help to coordinate gender-related activities between the different sectors. It should be scaled up to provide additional capacity not only to UN agencies, but also to more humanitarian NGOs, donor organizations, and evaluators. At the moment, no similar mechanism exists for strengthening the humanitarian community's approach to local actors. The transatlantic donors should therefore jointly establish a similar tool. They could create a pool of local anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and cultural scientists from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to be deployed within their respective regions to support policy-making and programming of humanitarian donor and implementing agencies at the country level. While such a mechanism cannot replace the devolution of decision-making power to local actors and the upwards mobility of local staff from field to headquarters, it could be an important intermediary step facilitating the systematic integration of local knowledge into the humanitarian system. As an important first step, the U.S. and the EU could jointly advocate for the establishment of an IASC Sub-Working Group on local capacity in humanitarian action.

Recommendation 3: Decide on the desirability of LRRD. If desirable, strategically define opportunities and develop better methods to link relief, rehabilitation, and development

Humanitarian assistance and development are regarded as two distinct areas of activity, driven by different objectives and governed by different principles. While the former strives to be impartial and independent of other goals and to focus on immediate activities to save lives and alleviate human suffering, the latter is often driven by concrete foreign or domestic policy goals, explicitly sides with certain groups or organizations and aims at creating systems and institutions for long-term development. The separation of

the two areas is important because it enables humanitarian actors to pursue their mission of saving lives and alleviating suffering undisturbed by other political considerations and ensures their access to affected populations, as well as the safety of humanitarian workers.

Over recent years, however, both humanitarian and development actors have come to realize that they can benefit from stronger linkages between their fields. If uncoordinated, short-term relief activities can undermine longer-term development efforts. This is, for example, the case when mass donations of foreign commodities destroy local industries and markets and when relief interventions stabilize autocratic, corrupt, and self-interested regimes. Moreover, especially in protracted crises or areas experiencing recurring natural disasters, effective humanitarianism requires investments in preparedness and prevention measures, which traditionally belong to the realm of development. With most humanitarian actors working in these areas in the medium- to long-term, they *de facto* engage in development work and the separation between the two realms can become a question of labeling.

Humanitarian donors like the European Commission and the U.S. Government have therefore made a strong rhetorical commitment to "linking relief, rehabilitation, and development" (LRRD) or "development-relief." This commitment is reflected in a stronger official emphasis on crisis preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and the development of local emergency relief capacities. In practice, however, tensions and sometimes incompatibilities between humanitarian assistance and development persist and the implementation of LRRD remains haphazard. Particularly in (post-) conflict settings, for example, neutrality requires avoiding engagement with state structures, whereas development logic emphasizes the need for state and government building activities. For fear of compromising humanitarian principles and to appeal to many principled public and private donors, many humanitarian actors have therefore been slow to embrace the concept of linking relief, rehabilitation, and development in their work. Moreover, many humanitarian agencies remain unsure what they could do in practice to link their work more effectively to that of their development colleagues.

The European Commission and the U.S. Government should take the following steps to help address these challenges:

Decide where linkages are desired, and where not. The European Commission and the U.S. Government should start by analyzing the current gap between re-

lief, early recovery, and development activities and explore the tensions between the objectives, guiding principles and practices in each of these areas. They should support a systematic analysis of the costs and benefits of adopting a narrow versus a broader approach to humanitarian assistance. On this basis, the two donors should choose between the three following approaches to LRRD: keep “muddling through”, claiming adherence to humanitarian principles while supporting LRRD; largely forgo LRRD to protect the independent and principled provision of humanitarian assistance; or expand humanitarian mandates to enable LRRD, while acknowledging that this undermines the independence of humanitarian assistance.

Improve practical methods to link relief, rehabilitation, and development. If the European Commission and the U.S. Government decide they want to strengthen the links between relief and development, they should also develop better techniques for doing so. This would entail the following: focusing on the similarities between humanitarian and development assistance, which are both geared towards supporting people in need; ensuring that the responsibilities of humanitarian and development departments are defined in such a way that LRRD programs do not continue to fall

through the cracks; engaging in joint emergency-specific situation analysis and scenario planning to identify opportunities for linking the two realms; strategically identifying implementing partners with good LRRD programs; and focusing on the development of local relief capacities.

Andrea Binder (Project Manager), Kai Koddenbrock (Research Associate) and Julia Steets (Associate Director) conduct research on humanitarian assistance at the Global Public Policy Institute, an independent European think tank based in Berlin. This article is based on the findings of the recently completed “Raising the Bar” project which analyzed transatlantic approaches to emergency relief. For more information, please visit www.gppi.net and www.disastergovernance.net/publications.

¹ In 2008, \$12 billion were reported to the financial tracking system of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/fts> (last accessed June 2009). Other estimates are even higher, cf. for instance Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance 2007/2008* (Somerset: 2008).

² “Humanitarian space” is a concept to denote the neutrality and independence of humanitarian actors from military and political forces that allows them to provide lifesaving aid to those in need on both sides of a conflict.

³ Garton Ash, Timothy, “With this timid choice of leaders, the EU may have the faces it deserves”, *European Council for Foreign Affairs*, 25 Nov 2009. Accessed from : http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_comment_is_free_guardian_ash-ton_garton_ash/.

Water and sanitation in post-crisis situations: between relief and development

Julie PATINET

The water and sanitation sector is affected by the same “classic” problems as other sectors in post-crisis situations: the need for high quality initial assessments, positioning in relation to the state, funding for the intermediary phase between emergency relief and development, coordination and planning ahead for the transition from assistance to cost recovery. Humanitarian and development agencies have interconnected know-how, but there is a lack of understanding between them. Can they work together better?

A seminar in January 2009 looked at the Water and Sanitation sector in post-crisis situations. The conclusions of the seminar have now been published in the French Development Agency’s “Savoirs Communs” series.

With climate change and the probability of increasing urban growth, access to potable water and sanitation are becoming more and more pressing issues. During the reconstruction phase, it is essential to take a long term view of WASH issues: humanitarian and deve-

lopment actors need to work together in order to develop the most appropriate techniques and approaches which give people affected by a crisis sustainable access to water and sanitation. The quality of the transition between emergency relief and development is fundamental.

This article presents some of the key points and conclusions of the seminar in Paris co-organised by the French Development Agency (AFD) and Groupe URD on 12-13 January 2009. The seminar was a chance for professionals from the sector to share their experiences and preoccupations. A collective communication document was very rapidly produced summarising the main points which emerged during the seminar. Under the aegis of the Partenariat Français pour l’Eau, this was taken to the World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009. The seminar was also the subject of an issue of « Savoirs Communs » which can be downloaded from the AFD’s website or Groupe URD’s website.

Over and above external communications, the objective of the seminar was to help actors from the humanitarian and development sectors to get to know each

other better. This helped to collectively produce genuinely operational recommendations for actors of all kinds, including donors.

Before going any further, it is important to point out two things. Firstly, the overall objective of this kind of seminar, with its technical and institutional discussions, remains improving crisis affected populations' access to potable water and appropriate sanitation systems. And secondly, covering these essential needs should always be done in keeping with the specific socio-cultural characteristics of the people concerned.

Important points

Two important points were made on the basis of participants' experiences.

First of all, the majority of current crises are complex, protracted and of an unpredictable duration. The supply of bottled water is actually the exception. Humanitarian agencies are increasingly present in long-term crisis situations where sustainable tools and equipment need to be installed (e.g. pumps) and adapted to the new contexts.

Secondly, it seems that, even after the international year of sanitation in 2008, this sector remains relatively underfunded. And yet we know that access to potable water is inextricably linked to effective and decent sanitation, which is therefore extremely important in terms of health and development.

The key issues

In order to be able to deliver quality services in an effective and sustainable way, a number of key issues need to be considered.

1 – Initial assessments need to be further improved.

Initial assessments of post-crisis contexts for water and sanitation need to be technical, sociological, cultural, financial and organisational. What problems exist in relation to access to water? What stakeholders are involved and what capacity do they have? What technical, organisational or financial solutions have already been attempted in the area, and what were their results?

The future users of these services are the best placed to explain their needs and their capacity to participate and pay for water. Involving local people not only in the initial assessment, but also in the design and implementation of the project can have a positive impact on fragility by creating social relations around a specific topic.

2 – Relations with the state. The place and role of NGOs and humanitarian agencies in post-crisis contexts are often difficult to define, between the need to reinforce the normative/regalian role of the state and the need to secure people's access to mechanisms which can satisfy their needs. Should NGOs be service providers or work in partnership with the state or should they support forces of opposition or social control mechanisms? Certain humanitarian organisations refuse to have any relations with the state, which means that in contexts like Eastern Chad, they know nothing about local organisation of water, the technical choices that have been made by the authorities and the existing structures. As a result, responses are not adapted to the context and are not sustainable.

The goal should be to work with both state and non-state actors and for projects to be part of a partnership rather than purely the provision of a service: finding the right balance between these is a constant challenge.

3 – Funding mechanisms for this "grey area".

Humanitarian funding is limited to the duration of a crisis while development funding takes a long time to process and requires long term guarantees which are incompatible with post-crisis contexts. The WASH sector lacks continuity of funding between emergency, reconstruction and development phases. Innovative funding mechanisms need to be encouraged, for example, which allow projects to be funded over a longer period (several years). In order to respond to people's real needs more effectively, funding procedures need to be more flexible and funding must not be tied to political priorities.

4 – Planning the move from free assistance to paid-for services.

In camps, water and waste management are generally free. How the system is paid for becomes a political issue as soon as the humanitarian crisis is over: should the water be free or not? Using a resource necessarily incurs costs, if we want the resource to be protected and renewed and if we want sustainable access and a good quality of service. The objective is not necessarily to provide everyone with free water, but to establish access in economic conditions which are acceptable to everyone, with help for the most vulnerable groups.

The system should be transparent so that it is possible to identify who can and cannot pay. If the best solution is to turn to the private sector, it is important to know what "private actors" are available, in order to choose the one that suits the local situation best - from the maintenance man who has a contract with a village to maintain its pump to the big multinational company.

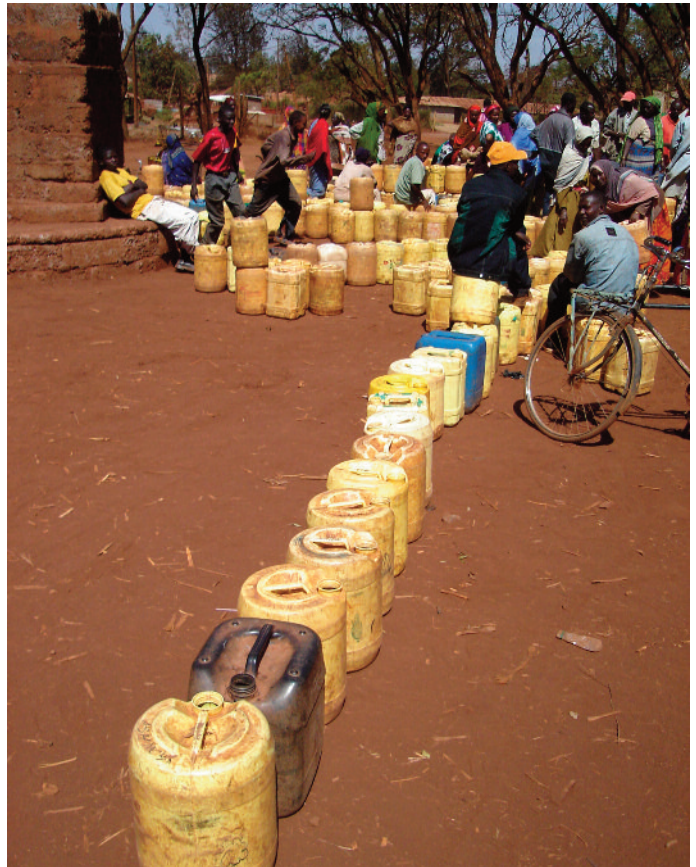
5 – Coordination. In the field, coordination is essential to avoid, for example, a camp or village being provided with more wells than it needs, while other areas have nothing. At the local level, coordination has been made uniform by the UN cluster system. An evaluation of this system is being carried out which should help to improve it in terms of effectiveness and governance. In addition to purely technical or geographical aspects of WASH programmes, it is important that this evaluation looks at issues such as involvement in national aid systems, respect for the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence and the diversity of aid actors. Coordination also needs to take place away from the field, to improve mutual understanding. This will make any future exchanges and the sharing of experiences easier. However, the time-consuming nature of coordination activities should not be under-estimated: how can the right balance be found between operational needs, the need for closer cooperation and the need to manage time efficiently?

Finally, there is renewed need for advocacy in favour of mutual recognition of the specific characteristics and constraints of humanitarian aid and development aid.

The seminar showed that there is the will to draw up practical recommendations but that there is a collective problem transforming observations and good intentions into effective solutions in the water and sanitation sector.

We must now share these recommendations with our colleagues in our organisations and make a firm commitment to making the transition between relief and development as smooth as possible so that we no longer see water pumps and latrines being abandoned by a population a year after they have been installed!

Julie Patinet is a WASH researcher at Groupe URD



People waiting for water distribution in North Kenya

Bibliography

Disaster Risk Reduction - DRR

GLOBAL NETWORK OF NGOS

Building disaster resilient communities: Good practices and lessons learned

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION; UNDP; UNITED NATIONS, june 2007. 56 p.

This publication is a joint effort of the “Global Network of NGOs for Disaster Risk Reduction”, an emerging network of national and international NGOs aiming to reduce disaster risk worldwide. It makes the case for increased community-oriented DRR action, and is aimed to stimulate more interest in the subject from donors, policy makers, as well as other stakeholders. To this end, close to 100 case studies have been collected through the Network members from different parts of the world. To make the task easier, practitioners were only asked to fill-in a questionnaire by “bullet-pointing” very specific answers. To conclude the process, the “good practices” compiled in this publication were selected and polished. Most of the good practices were or are implemented by local NGOs, with support from international NGOs, donors, and regional organizations; one of the criteria for selecting them was their potential for replication. All of the cases involve disaster-vulnerable communities, either directly or through community-based structures. Additionally, attention was also paid to geographical balance and thematic coverage.

Download: http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/06-ngos-good-practices/ngos-good-practices.pdf

Developing Early Warning Systems: A checklist

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION, FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE, UNITED NATIONS, 2006. 10 P.

Report of the Third International Conference on Early Warning Systems organised by the German government. Early warning is an essential part of disaster risk reduction. It allows losses to be avoided and reduces the physical and economic impact of a disaster. In order to be effective, Early Warning Systems should actively involve the exposed communities (awareness raising and training, effective communication, warning and monitoring to maintain a constant state of preparation). In January 2005, the World Conference on Disaster Prevention adopted the “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 - 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters”. It explicitly argues for the development of early warning systems using a participatory approach. The third international conference on Early Warning Systems which took place in Bonn, in Germany, 27-29 March 2006, was an opportunity to present innovative projects in the field of early warning and to discuss natural risks throughout the world and how their impacts can be reduced by implementing early warning systems centred on the community. The present document “Developing Early Warning Systems: a checklist” was drawn up after the Bonn conference in connection with the Hyogo Framework for Action. Organised around the four key parts of effective early warning systems, it is a simple checklist which can be used by governments and community organisations when they develop or evaluate an early warning system, or to check that essential procedures are in place. It is not a full design manual but a practical and non-technical reference guide.

Download: <http://www.unisdr.org/ppew/info-resources/ewc3/checklist-english.pdf>

Disaster risk management systems analysis: A guide book - FAO, january 2008. 68 P.

BAAS, Stephen / RAMASAMY, Selvaraju / DEY DEPRICK, Jenny / BATTISTA, Federica

With mounting international concern at the rising frequency and severity of natural hazards and disasters, in part due to factors related to climate change, there is increased impetus in many countries to put in place policy, legal, technical, financial and institutional measures that will reduce the destructive effects on the lives and livelihoods of individuals and communities. The effective implementation of both DRR and DRM systems is contingent on sound institutional capacities by key actors at different levels of government, the private sector and civil society as well as effective coordination between these actors and levels. FAO’s field experiences with DRM, supported by normative studies, revealed that there are few practical tools available to guide the analysis of national, district and local institutional systems for DRM and to conceptualize and provide demand-responsive capacity-building thereafter. This Guide attempts to fill this gap by providing a set of tools for evaluating existing structures and local capacities and improving the effectiveness of DRR and DRM systems in development planning. It aims to improve understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of DRR.

Download: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/ai504e/ai504e00.pdf>

Tools for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: Guidance notes for development organisations

PROVENTION CONSORTIUM, January 2007. 178 P.

BENSON, Charlotte / TWIGG, John / ROSSETTO, Tiziana

The development process does not necessarily reduce vulnerability to natural hazards. Instead, it can unwittingly create new forms of vulnerability or exacerbate existing ones, impeding efforts to reduce poverty and promote growth, sometimes with tragic consequences. Since the late 1990s, there has been increasing recognition of this need to 'mainstream' disaster risk reduction into development – that is, to consider and address risks emanating from natural hazards in medium-term strategic frameworks and institutional structures, in country and sectoral strategies and policies and in the design of individual projects in hazard-prone countries. This ProVention project on Tools for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction supports this process, providing a series of 14 guidance notes for use by development organisations in adapting programming, project appraisal and evaluation tools to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development work in hazard-prone countries. The guidance notes concentrate specifically on where and how to take environmental issues into account, by ensuring that disaster risks and the possibilities linked to the reduction of vulnerabilities are taken into account in countries exposed to danger. The scope, level of detail and emphasis of country programming and project appraisal and evaluation practices obviously vary between different organisations depending on their area of specialism, developmental approach and the scale of assistance provided.

Download: http://www.proventionconsortium.org/themes/default/pdfs/tools_for_mainstreaming_DRR.pdf

Indigenous knowledge: Disaster risk reduction: Policy note

SHAW, Rajib / EUROPEAN UNION; ISDR; KYOTO UNIVERSITY; SEEDS, 2009, 18 P.

Indigenous Knowledge is the basis of community coping practices that have helped vibrant communities survive natural calamities over centuries. The Asia Pacific region is particularly rich in such bodies of knowledge. Ancient civilizations, a multihazard context, frequent disasters, diverse geo-cultural communities and large populations dependent on scarce resources have all led to the evolution of very low cost ways of life that include Indigenous Knowledge and disaster risk reduction (Disaster Risk Reduction) in a very strong yet inconspicuous way. Even though these local practices are based on solid principles of interaction between humans and nature, the political context in relation to disaster management in most countries has evolved and the principle of governance has been widely adopted. Most countries have tended to work with relief codes and with an approach of being prepared for delivering calamity relief. The emergency response systems based on disaster management models adopted from the west have generally overshadowed the Disaster Risk Reduction aspect of disaster management, and particularly Indigenous Knowledge within Disaster Risk Reduction. The recent initiatives for development of national and local disaster management plans in many countries in the region have recognized this limitation, but have so far been able to address it in very limited ways. In spite of increased investments in the area of disaster management in recent decades, the losses continue to mount. There is an evident gap between practice and policy. The need to bridge this gap with adequate recognition of the domain of indigenous knowledge and local coping capacities is very urgent. There is a strong need to recognize the potential of community knowledge and actions, and of switching to a bottom-up approach that uses appropriate community practice as the base for policy formulation. Indigenous knowledge can be difficult to define and identify, since in many cases it emerges more as a way of life rather than a set of specific initiatives or tools. Having said that, there are a large number of individual practices that can be highlighted as specific disaster reduction mechanisms. These practices, however, need to be viewed with caution when seen without their larger contexts.

This report presents the issues related to integrating indigenous knowledge at the policy level and presents concrete examples of good practice.

Download: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/8853_IKPolicyNote.pdf

* Consult the full bibliography on the Groupe URD website: www.urd.org/newsletter

Events

New training module: The Quality Mission: An introductory module on the principles of quality in humanitarian action can be downloaded at www.compasqualite.org

Groupe URD has developed a new introductory module on Quality in humanitarian action. The Quality Mission takes users to the island of Eolia, where they learn how to manage the Quality of humanitarian projects being run in an IDP camp.

Aimed at all humanitarian staff, whether they are in headquarters or in the field, this interactive self-training module introduces the principles of quality in a fictional context.

The introductory module is part of a series of modules on Quality in humanitarian action run by Groupe URD. For more information, contact: formations@urd.org.

The new introductory module is available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded free at www.compasqualite.org.



Training course: Mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian action, 01-05 February 2010

Although there is increasing acceptance amongst humanitarian actors that the environment needs to be taken into account during the design and implementation of programmes, there is a current lack of methodological and technical know-how in this area.

This five-day course aimed at programme coordinators who work either in the field or in headquarters will look at the different ways in which the environment can be taken into account in humanitarian contexts. It includes: analysis of environmental fragility; assessing the environmental impact of a programme; and operational and institutional obstacles which can affect the ability to take the environment into account. General issues such as climate change and environmental refugees will also be covered.

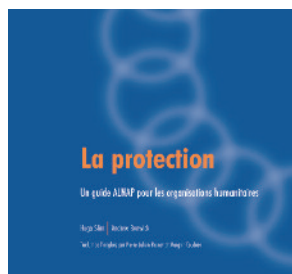
The course, which is run in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is free (participants will be expected to pay for transport and accommodation).

To register or for further information please contact Pierre Brunet - pbrunet@urd.org.

Tel: + 33 (0)4 75 28 29 35

'Protection – an ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies' by Hugo Slim and Andrew Bonwick, is now available in French

This guide offers essential advice and insights to humanitarian practitioners involved in providing safety and protecting vulnerable people in war and disaster. It provides a framework for responsibility and action which helps clarify conceptual issues and helps humanitarian field workers position themselves in relation to other actors with overlapping mandates.



This is a French translation of the book published by ALNAP in 2005.

Copies of the book can be ordered from Groupe URD (urd@urd.org) or ALNAP (aln@aln.org).

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For extended articles and a bibliography go to:

www.urd.org/newsletter



Groupe URD

Groupe URD (Urgence – Réhabilitation – Développement) is a non-profit research, evaluation and training institute. Its main objective is to help improve humanitarian practices in favour of crisis-affected populations. Following research carried out since 1999 on quality in humanitarian action, it developed the Quality COMPAS and the Dynamic COMPAS, a Quality Assurance method specifically designed for humanitarian actors.

Further information

www.urd.org

www.compasqualite.org

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Humanitarian Aid on the Move – a quarterly, trilingual e-newsletter – aims to share the results of work on important issues currently facing the sector.

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