



## Tsunami Evaluation Coalition

Links between relief,  
rehabilitation and development  
in the tsunami response

### **A review of the debate**

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition



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TEC Thematic Evaluation on LRRD

LINKING, RELIEF,  
REHABILITATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
- A REVIEW OF THE DEBATE

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# **1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The challenge of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) has preoccupied aid organisations for well over a decade, conceptually, institutionally and programmatically. Why does it matter? What does it mean? How can it be done? What are the potential benefits? And what are the limitations? These are some of the questions that have spawned an immense amount of literature, debate and experimentation on the ground. But it is a debate that has neither reached closure nor consensus. Most of these questions continue to exercise all types of aid organisation.

The tsunami disaster in south Asia in 2005/06 has once again thrown some of these questions and challenges into sharp focus and has highlighted some of the confusion that persists about the concept of LRRD. As a result, LRRD is one of the five key themes being explored in the sector-wide evaluation of the international response to the tsunami, launched by the multi-agency tsunami evaluation coalition (TEC). The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview and update of the LRRD debate in the last ten years and thus to inform the LRRD themed evaluations. It is based on a review of the literature, both published and grey literature. Immediately apparent are the many layers at which the LRRD debate has been taking place, from the political context of aid and aid policy, to nuts and bolts programmatic and operational challenges. A contemporary review of the debate must take all of these different layers into account – a tall order. The question arises about where to draw the boundaries.

This paper does not claim to cover every issue that is relevant to LRRD, but it does aim to give an overview of the literature and to cover the key issues that are pertinent to this multi-layered debate. It begins by looking at the big picture, the context of the LRRD debate in terms of need on the ground but also the changing political context of aid policy and shifting

paradigms. It moves on to consider useful operational frameworks for LRRD, for integrating different time perspectives and different objectives. A section is then dedicated to rehabilitation and reconstruction, an under-explored topic a decade ago that has since received a lot of attention. The wide range of institutional issues that arise in LRRD debates are reviewed, from institutional cultures, working with local organisations to the realities of funding. Finally some of the limitations to LRRD are explored.

## **1.2 Whose perspective counts?**

Almost all the literature on LRRD has been written from the point of view of the aid industry which has organised itself over the years according to these particular categories. The debate has been concerned with organisational mandates; with labels given to different types of aid and the differing objectives, conditions and funding regimes associated with each of those different labels; with the way that institutions organise themselves and with clashing cultures and priorities. Above all, it has been concerned with integrating short-term perspectives and meeting immediate needs, with longer-term perspectives in support of the development process. More recently one strand of the debate has moved into the political domain of aid and security policy.

Although the perspectives of local people whom the aid industry sets out to assist are occasionally mentioned – usually in the context that neat categories of relief, rehabilitation and development mean rather little to people involved in the day-to-day struggle to survive and build their livelihoods – there has been remarkably little research done, or reports written on LRRD from their perspective. The TEC LRRD evaluation offers an opportunity to fill this gap<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The LRRD evaluation of Tsunami disaster support specifically mentions paying attention to the 'LRRD projects' of the affected people – a rare initiative to take account of local people's efforts, not just the aid industry's.

### 1.3 The evolution of the debate

The origins of the LRRD debate in the aid sector can be traced back to the African food crises of the mid to late 1980s although interest in this topic really flourished in the second half of the 1990s, accompanied by a burgeoning literature on the topic (see bibliography). It was initially driven by an awareness that emergencies were growing in number and intensity, were absorbing a rapidly growing proportion of aid resources<sup>2</sup>, and were perceived as displacing or disrupting development (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994). The differences between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development cooperation were thrown into sharp focus, in terms of objectives but also in the way that aid is channeled<sup>3</sup>. This triggered a preoccupation with the ‘grey zone’ between these two forms of assistance, accompanied by a certain amount of confusion about the potential role of rehabilitation aid<sup>4</sup>. The argument was made that: ‘Better ‘development’ can reduce the need for emergency relief; better ‘relief’ can contribute to development; and better ‘rehabilitation’ can ease the transition between the two’ (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994:2).

The concept of a continuum – or linear sequence from relief to rehabilitation to development – was discredited early on in the debate of the 1990s. Words such as contiguum were used instead<sup>5</sup>, to represent the reality that different needs and phases of response might co-exist simultaneously. Yet translating the concept of the ‘contiguum’ into planning and funding processes that tended towards the linear and bureaucratic has proved elusive. In practice, continuum thinking has continued to implicitly underpin much aid programming.

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<sup>2</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s, humanitarian aid accounted for less than 3% of all official development assistance. Since 1999 it has accounted for 10% (Smillie and Minear, 2004)

<sup>3</sup> See Buchanan-Smith, 1990

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Commission of the European Communities Communication on LRRD (1996 and 2001); Nielsen, P. (1995) on ‘Programming Relief in Development’

<sup>5</sup> For example by ECHO and ActionAid.

As the concept of the continuum was rejected the term ‘developmental relief’ came into use and is still widely applied. The Red Cross is credited with coining this term in the mid-1990s and the concept was further developed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) (Lindahl, 1996). The essence of developmental relief is that it sees acute needs as part of the whole life situation of those affected, that it looks for long-term solutions as well as responding to immediate and acute needs, that it builds on survivors’ capacities and on local institutions, setting sustainable standards for services and encouraging participation and accountability<sup>6</sup>.

Macrae and Harmer (2004a) have described all of the above as the first generation of the linking relief and development debate, primarily ‘managerial’ concerned with how relief could be more developmental and sustainable. However, even this first generation of the debate quickly moved beyond a technical discussion about best practice. Some analysts made the point that emergencies were not just a temporary disruption to the ‘normal’ process of development. Instead, they were a symptom of the lack of, or ‘crisis of developmentalism’ (Duffield, 1994). As Lindahl (1996: 14) points out in his study of ‘Developmental Relief?’ for Sida, the debate was touching upon ‘the most fundamental issues in development and aid’, questioning the most appropriate response to multi-causal emergencies such as Rwanda, the Balkans and Horn of Africa. The sector was also struggling with the concept of ‘permanent emergencies’ (Duffield, 1995). Eventually this evolved into what Macrae and Harmer (2004a) have described as the second generation of the debate, engaging with the political motivations behind aid policy. From the late 1990s there has been a focus on linking aid and security policy, particularly driven by post 9/11 foreign policy and security concerns. This shift from first generation to second generation thinking is associated with a more

sophisticated debate around aid policy, particularly humanitarian aid policy, placing the wider political context and political influence centre-stage.

Nevertheless, a review of recent documents from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) and donor agencies indicates that many of the original issues raised in the LRRD debate, about the objectives and channels for different aid instruments and flows, finding appropriate frameworks to guide long and short-term aid programming, and seeking appropriate institutional divisions and responsibility, still persist. This has now become a multi-layered debate with a host of different entry-points. Essentially, it is a debate about relationships and linkages. Lindahl (1996) identifies six key relationships between:

1. relief and disasters
2. aid and development
3. disasters and development
4. relief and development
5. aid and disasters; and
6. relief and aid

‘The very basic issue in the aid business is to understand how these relationships work, and how they may be manipulated’ (ibid: 4). A more recent addition to this list of key relationships is between relief and peace-building activities (Mancino et al, 2001). The ‘second generation’ of the debate identified by Macrae and Harmer (2004) raises the issue of relationships to a higher and more political level, to do with the links between aid, foreign and security policy.

#### **1.4 Who has engaged in the debate?**

As Macrae and Harmer (2004) point out, the debate was originally driven by humanitarian agencies and especially by multi-mandated agencies struggling to meet and to marry their developmental and humanitarian objectives. Organisations such as the International

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<sup>6</sup> Based on Sida, 1999 and Twigg, 2004: 321



Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), CARE International, ActionAid and Oxfam have all been engaged from an early stage as have a number of donor agencies such as Sida and the European Commission (EC). Gradually organisations more concerned with development joined the debate, for example the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank as they faced the challenges of working in unstable and transitional situations and sought a role in reconstruction and rehabilitation. Latterly, as the debate has reached higher political echelons, high level strategy discussions have taken place within donor governments connected with security policy, a growing concern with risk reduction and with post-conflict transition<sup>7</sup>. Although these high level political discussions start from a rather different place, they directly impact on ‘traditional’ LRRD issues, as explained in section 3.

There have been numerous academic contributions on the topic throughout, often providing an overview of ‘where the debate is at’, attempting to push it forward and make policy recommendations. Periodic reviews have been commissioned and written over the years, mostly from the humanitarian part of the aid community (and this particular review is no exception)<sup>8</sup>.

Macrae and Harmer (*ibid*) believe that humanitarian agencies have recently become more cautious about linkages between humanitarian and other forms of aid assistance (see section 8). This appears to be the case in conflict-related emergencies but less so for natural disasters, testimony to which is the current interest in LRRD in relation to the tsunami response.

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, a recent report from the UK government (Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, 2005)

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Smillie (1998); Mancino et al (2001); Campanaro et al (2002); Harmer and Macrae (2004)

### **1.5 Natural disasters and conflict-related emergencies: how do they relate?**

Models of natural disaster dominated the debate early on, giving credence to the idea of a linear continuum from relief to recovery to ongoing development. When attempts were made to apply this model to conflict-related emergencies the idea of the continuum began to unravel. It quickly became apparent that many conflict-related emergencies were protracted, lasting for years or even decades, and that post-conflict transition was a complex and extended process during which there was a high risk of violent conflict reigniting.

Eventually there was an inevitable split between natural disasters and complex political emergencies in the debate about humanitarian aid policy. This was entirely appropriate and freed up the conceptual thinking and analysis around conflict-related emergencies and associated humanitarian response, breaking away from the technical models of natural disaster that had limited relevance to many conflict situations. As a result, some of the most forward-thinking and insightful work has been done around conflict-related emergencies<sup>9</sup> with a lot of agency attention on post-conflict and transitional environments, and on the political context of humanitarian assistance.

The discourse around natural disasters took a somewhat different course. A number of very large-scale natural disasters at the end of the 1990s<sup>10</sup> focused attention on how to reduce disaster risk through development. These issues were picked up by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), set up in 2000 following on from the UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), and are discussed in section 5.3 below.

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<sup>9</sup> See for example, research done by the Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI, by Duffield and by Keen.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the 1997-98 El Niño related flooding in East Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, South and Southeast Asia; Hurricanes George and Mitch in Central America and the Caribbean; the cyclone in Orissa, India; and earthquakes in Turkey, El Salvador and Gujarat, India.

However, this growing distinction between natural disaster and complex political emergency has since been challenged by evidence of the widespread coincidence of both natural disaster *and* conflict-related emergencies. Buchanan-Smith and Christoplos (2004) cite more than 140 such examples between 1998 and 2003, and call for a more political analysis of many so-called ‘natural’ disasters.

This paper weaves its course through both natural disaster and conflict-related emergencies, where possible indicating the connections between the two but also the dissonances and separate characteristics of each.

## **2. WHO IS IT ALL FOR? THE CONTEXT OF NEED**

### **2.1 2.1 The humanitarian caseload**

The continually increasing humanitarian caseload is well-documented triggering ever-larger flows of humanitarian aid. Between 1990 and 2000 the volume of humanitarian assistance more than doubled (Macrae, 2002).

According to Pelling (2003) the number of humanitarian disasters triggered by a natural hazard has doubled every decade since the 1960s. Drought and famine have been the most deadly natural disasters. However, there is evidence of an increase in extreme weather events associated with climate change, particularly storms and flooding, and these are forecast to increase further<sup>11</sup>. For example, there has been a doubling of flood-related disasters in the last decade (Hoyois and Guha-Sapir, 2004).

Although the total number of armed conflicts have reduced in number from 31 in 1990 to 19 in 2003 (SIPRI, 2004), many of these are protracted. An estimated 14% of the population of developing countries (excluding India and China) now live in countries experiencing protracted crises (Randel et al, 2004). Furthermore, research suggests that half of all armed conflicts that have ended will re-emerge within 10 years (Sida, 2003).

There is clearly no room for complacency. These upward trends show little sign of reversing in the coming years and even decades.

### **2.2 The relationship to development**

According to the IFRC half of natural disasters occur in countries with a medium human development index (HDI) but two-thirds of the deaths occur in countries with a low HDI

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<sup>11</sup> See UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

(IFRC, 2001). The link to underdevelopment is clear. Over time a number of writers have sought to highlight the links between the political economic context and the impact of natural hazards, beginning with Hewitt in 1983 who demonstrated that ‘most natural disasters... are *characteristic* rather than accidental features of the places and societies where they occur’ (as quoted in Fordham, 2003). More recently, a body of research has identified how some of the dynamics associated with globalisation are increasing the vulnerability of poor people, for example rapid urbanisation resulting in impoverished settlements being located in marginal and hazard prone areas such as flood plains and unprotected coastlines<sup>12</sup>. Specifically related to the tsunami, UNDP-BCPR (2005) sketches out how global tourism (as well as the absence of an early warning system) has increased the vulnerability of the population across many areas affected by the tsunami.

As far as conflict is concerned, there has been a long-held belief that underdevelopment is one of the key causes of violent conflict<sup>13</sup>. A recent study concludes that high rates of mortality in conflict-related crises are more to do with the pre-existing fragility of the affected population than the intensity of the conflict itself (Guha-Sapir and Gijsbert van Panhuis, 2003).

### **2.3 Relevance to the LRRD debate**

Understanding how humanitarian emergencies relate to underdevelopment and development processes is central to the LRRD debate. Although there has been a certain amount of literature on this topic, there is scope for deepening the analysis and better understanding the causal relationships between underdevelopment and vulnerability to emergencies. In his treatise on ‘Humanitarian Futures’, Randolph Kent concludes that:

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<sup>12</sup> See Blaikie et al, 2004, Pelling, 2003

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Chalker, 1996.

‘In the future, we will need a humanitarian paradigm shift that understands disasters and emergencies not as unfortunate occurrences that take place at the margins of human existence, but as reflections of the ways that human beings live their ‘normal lives’, and hence the ways that they structure their societies and allocate their resources’.  
(Kent: 2004b: 12)

He draws attention to the possibility that the sources of emergencies may be increasingly global rather than local, and that the impact may be increasingly global, ‘interactive across continents’ (ibid).

### **3. THE CHANGING POLITICAL CONTEXT OF AID, ESPECIALLY HUMANITARIAN AID**

Macrae and Harmer (2004) claim that the early debate on linking relief and development made little impact in changing aid responses to protracted crises because it tended to overlook the political context of aid and the politically inspired distinctions between relief and development aid. Much has now been written on this topic.

The way in which humanitarian aid can be manipulated politically, giving a very different perspective to the LRRD possibilities, has been evident for more than a decade. In the wake of the Rwanda genocide and the massive but controversial international humanitarian response to the refugee crisis that followed, it was widely claimed that humanitarian assistance was the inappropriate fig leaf for failed political action<sup>14</sup>. Smillie and Minear (2004) point out that the response to the early years of the Bosnian crisis, and to meeting the food and medical needs of the Palestinians, have both conveniently been perceived as humanitarian rather than political/ military issues. In these contexts it is essential to understand the political context and political pressures on humanitarian aid to avoid naively embarking on inappropriate LRRD ventures.

The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI has traced the changing political context of aid, especially humanitarian aid<sup>15</sup>. Originally linked to issues of human security, with the launch of the ‘global war on terror’ post 9/11 the western security agenda has become more prominent and more controversial, now associated with the invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Where does this leave humanitarian assistance? Macrae and Harmer (2003: 2) believe that it makes much ‘more urgent’ familiar issues around the roles and responsibility of humanitarian actors and defining what role (if any) is

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<sup>14</sup> This was stated most convincingly in Eriksson, 1996.

appropriate in resolving conflict. This throws up political questions about the blurring of boundaries, not just between development and humanitarian aid, but also between humanitarian aid, foreign policy and military intervention<sup>16</sup>. The relevance and application of humanitarian principles, discussed in section 8 below, are at the heart of this debate.

One of the consequences, or indeed symptoms, of this changing political context is a move towards greater integration and coherence in donor government policy with insitutional implications discussed in section 7.2. Macrae and Harmer (2004) quote examples from Canada where there have been moves to bring together diplomacy, defence and development policy; and in the UK where the government's Conflict Prevention Pools have 'sought to develop common strategies across government in relation to key conflicts, drawing on a common pool of funds and a diverse range of instruments' (ibid: 4). This shift is also evident in the UN reform process which promotes greater cohesiveness and integration between the UN's political, peacekeeping and humanitarian actors. It is important to understand the political motivation behind these integrationist moves, whereby aid is considered to be a tool that can contribute to human security, specifically western security objectives, not least humanitarian aid in countries and areas where no other forms of aid are available. As Macrae and Harmer (2004) point out, this is likely to mean that aid is allocated according to the strategic (and security) priorities of donor governments rather than relative levels of need. These political arguments are rather different to the arguments that have traditionally been made in the LRRD debate.

Another aspect of the post 9/11 context of western foreign and security policy is the increased attention being given to failed states and protracted crises, now driven by security concerns associated with the Global War on Terror (Jones, 2004). Combined with concerns

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Macrae and Harmer, 2003; Harmer and Macrae, 2004



to make progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, this has meant a much greater engagement of development actors and increased flows of development aid in these contexts than hitherto. Thus, some of the relief/ development linkages that were sought in the late 1990s have happened in the early years of the twenty-first century, but driven by a very different political agenda. Macrae and Harmer (2004) see a growing convergence between the conceptual frameworks for development and humanitarianism influenced by the context of security policy.

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Macrae and Leader, 2000; Barry and Jefferys, 2002;

#### **4. A RIGHTS-BASED PERSPECTIVE: THE ULTIMATE OPPORTUNITY TO LINK RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT?**

Macrae and Harmer refer to the stagnation of the ‘first generation’ LRRD debate which achieved rather little in terms of changed aid practice. However, there has been a significant paradigm shift in development and emergency thinking within aid agencies in recent years, towards a rights-based approach. This appears to offer a more promising future for LRRD at aid agency level. Rather than focusing on need and beneficiaries, a rights-based approach focuses on people’s ability to claim their rights and on the identification of duty-bearers, particularly the state which has a duty to respect, protect and fulfil all the human rights they have committed to for all citizens. These include social, economic, cultural, civic and political rights.

Slim (2000) welcomes this shift to a ‘rights-based solution’ as a way of dissolving what he perceives as a false dichotomy between humanitarianism and development by integrating thinking and practice under a common set of principles. ActionAid echoes this view: ‘poverty and vulnerability to emergencies often share a common root: the widespread denial of specific rights and freedoms’ (ActionAid, 2000a:2). CARE (2003) welcomes a rights-based approach over the relief to development continuum framework as a way of understanding and addressing underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability, as well as rights violations which are expressed as symptoms. A number of authors in Pelling’s edited volume on ‘Natural Disasters and Development in a Globalizing World’ (2003) argue for more effective management of natural disasters from a rights-based perspective. Pelling himself quotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which ‘supports the right to personal security and for a basic standard of living during periods of unforeseen livelihood disruption’ (ibid: 236).

Importantly, a rights-based perspective puts power relations and issues of governance up front, not least in the analysis of vulnerability and hence in efforts to reduce vulnerability. ActionAid goes as far as spelling out what ‘people-centred governance’ means in order to reduce disaster risk by enabling people to realise their rights (ActionAid, 2005). Pelling (2003) believes that empowering citizens to challenge their own or other governments to fulfil the relevant articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ‘would act as a stick to provoke governments into taking more proactive steps to reduce disaster vulnerability in a coherent manner and by following internationally recognized guidelines for good practice’ (ibid: 237).

This shift to a rights-based approach offers one of the best opportunities for moving on from continuum thinking, although it does not come unchallenged. As the InterAction report comments, there is controversy around the universality of human rights and how these sit with cultural sensitivities in different political and socio-economic contexts (Campanaro, 2002). The challenge for many NGOs and other aid agencies which espouse a rights-based approach is how to apply it in practice, to reduce vulnerability in a more sustainable manner in the long-term and to address violations of rights in the short-term. ActionAid’s approach is to address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability as well as immediate needs. Norwegian People’s Aid works to support people to claim their own rights, building confidence in local organisations and drawing upon resources within their own communities. They are concerned to avoid creating dependency on short-term relief aid (as reported in Campanaro, 2002). However, the difference that this approach makes on a widespread basis as more agencies espouse a rights-based approach is still to be proven.

What is clear is that a rights-based approach tends to shift the spotlight onto local and national government and their obligations, to an extent away from the international aid

community. However, realising the full potential of a rights-based approach is still a long way off. Darcy and Hofmann's study in 2003 concludes that 'the concept of rights seems to be honoured more in rhetoric than in practice' (ibid: 22).

## **5. USEFUL FRAMEWORKS FOR LRRD**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Moving from the contextual to the practical, the following sections outline three related frameworks for operationalising some of the ideas behind LRRD. What each has in common is an attempt to link the short-term to the long-term, and to see the impact of a crisis in its wider and deeper context.

### **5.2 Vulnerability**

One of the most enduring concepts in the LRRD debate is the concept of ‘vulnerability’. As early as 1989 this was promoted by Anderson and Woodrow (1989) as the structural factors making a community susceptible to disasters as well as their ability to respond to such disasters. It has implications for development – addressing structural factors – and for emergency response – intervening when local people’s ability to respond is inadequate. The concept of vulnerability has been picked up and widely used by both development and humanitarian agencies, especially in relation to natural disasters but increasingly related to conflict. A widely accepted definition of vulnerability is: ‘the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard’ (Blaikie et al, 1994: 9)<sup>17</sup>.

The value of a vulnerability framework is that it encourages a longer term perspective than is usually associated with humanitarian assistance. It goes beyond the snapshot of a needs assessment that estimates numbers in need of assistance and the amount of relief required, to understand *how* people have become vulnerable, for example through processes of long-term political and/ or social marginalisation and discrimination. Blaikie et al (1994) have been

credited with placing some of these socio-political factors centre-stage in their disaster pressure model which shows how disasters are the outcome of a natural hazard coinciding with human vulnerability which in turn may have deep-seated root causes such as limited access to power and resources:

‘Vulnerability is deeply rooted, and any fundamental solutions involve political change, radical reform of the international economic system, and the development of public policy to protect rather than exploit people and nature’  
(ibid: 233)

Blaikie et al’s model is also credited with combining different causes of vulnerability: local, national and global (Pelling, 2003). Darcy and Hofmann (2003) highlight the contribution that vulnerability analysis can make to humanitarian needs assessments because it demands an understanding of trends, and has the predictive ability to anticipate a disaster or to identify particular groups that will be most vulnerable to particular threats.

The importance of understanding underlying vulnerability in order to design and plan an appropriate emergency response was very evident after the Gujarat earthquake. An evaluation of the UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)’s appeal funds found that many agencies new to Gujarat were slow to pick up on underlying patterns of discrimination and unequal power relations in society, instead focusing on material need. As a result, relief distributions often became progressive (captured by the better off) not regressive (favouring the poor) and the poorest and most marginalised received least (HI et al, 2001).

An approach that emphasises vulnerability has direct implications for development work. Reducing vulnerability to hazards, shocks and to the impact of violent conflict is usually long-term work to do with building assets, social inclusion, and asserting rights. It is intimately linked to poverty reduction as poor people are usually the most vulnerable to both

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<sup>17</sup> Much of the work on vulnerability has been based on natural disasters. Adapting frameworks to violent conflict

natural disasters and to the impact of violent conflict. As an example of this, Twigg (2004) cites the earthquake that killed 1,200 people in Guatemala City, making a further 90,000 homeless. It was aptly called a ‘class quake’ because most of the victims were the poorest living in slum areas, often in dangerous ravines which were the only places they could afford to live. The rich who lived in better housing and safer locations were affected far less. Economic pressures often force poor people to live in cheap and dangerous locations that are most at risk of natural hazard.

A number of agencies have pioneered different models of vulnerability assessment, for example WFP’s Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM), Tear Fund’s disaster crunch model<sup>18</sup>, and ActionAid’s Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (ActionAid International, 2005). What they all have in common is a framework designed to capture dynamic processes and underlying causes, with a longer-term perspective. However, Darcy and Hofmann (2003) comment that the way an agency understands vulnerability is often driven by its mandate and objectives. Thus, the Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) for Somalia is concerned with economic vulnerability, CARE uses a model of biological vulnerability according to age, disability or gender, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) emphasise political vulnerability according to social and political status. Interestingly, understanding and addressing long-term vulnerability reduction has been recommended as a future role for the UN as opposed to hands-on engagement in emergencies (Kent, 2004a).

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is still in the early stages.

<sup>18</sup> See Buchanan-Smith and Christoplos, 2004: 10

### 5.3 Risk reduction

The concept of risk (and therefore risk reduction) is now commonplace in humanitarian parlance. It is closely associated with the concept of vulnerability:

risk = threat/ hazard x vulnerability  
(Blaikie et al, 1994)

This has long been the domain of natural disaster discourse. UNISDR (2002) has defined risk as ‘the probability of harmful consequences, or expected loss’ and sketches out a disaster risk reduction framework. This discourse was initially criticised for not adequately engaging with the social, political and economic contexts of risk, nor the interplay of disaster with national development (Pelling, 2003). However, the tide seems to be turning and in theory at least, more attention is being paid to these factors, as evidenced in recent UNISDR documents. Work done by the ProVention Consortium also promotes a more holistic understanding of risk.

There is a growing body of literature that argues that risk management should be central to aid programming, especially development programming. For example, Twigg argues that:

‘risk management should be an integral part of the way organisations do their work, not an add-on or a one-off action... disasters are no longer seen as unfortunate one-off events to be responded to, but also as deep-rooted and longer-term problems that must be planned for’  
(Twigg, 2003: 2-3)

TearFund has published a tool for ‘Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction’ (La Trobe and Davis, 2005). Much of the discussion around risk management and risk reduction focuses on mitigation, defined as ‘any action to minimise the impact of a potential disaster’ (Twigg, 2004: 2). But despite these encouragements and insightful writings there is still a tendency for many development and humanitarian organisations to overlook risk reduction in favour of a somewhat short-termist approach (Benson and Twigg, 2004). As mentioned below, mitigation activities are usually poorly funded by donors.



Translating the concept of risk and the practice of risk management into conflict situations is at an earlier stage than for natural disasters. But it is beginning to happen, and there is evidence that it is happening at a high level. For example, the British Prime Minister's Strategy Unit has recently published a report 'Investing in Prevention: An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response' (2005) containing an instability framework that incorporates risk. Not dissimilar to the approach recommended for risk management for natural disasters, it recommends 'the first strategic response (as) investing in stability by building country capacity and resilience' (ibid: 7).

#### **5.4 Livelihoods**

A livelihoods framework is another way into issues of vulnerability and risk reduction. Indeed, sustaining and strengthening livelihoods has become central to much of the debate about poverty reduction, naturally and helpfully raising issues of vulnerability. The dominant framework for much of this livelihoods work is the 'sustainable livelihoods approach'<sup>19</sup>. It focuses on people's assets (tangible and intangible), their ability to withstand shocks (the vulnerability context), and policies and institutions that reflect poor people's priorities. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) was one of the early proponents of the sustainable livelihoods approach although it is now widely used by many other agencies including CARE, Oxfam and UNDP. However, the potential for using a livelihoods approach for risk reduction work does not appear to have been realised. Twigg (2003) believes that paying attention to the extent and nature of poor people's livelihood assets, and their vulnerability to hazards and other external forces should make it possible to identify entry points for protecting those assets that are most at risk, or that could be most valuable in a crisis.

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<sup>19</sup> See [www.livelihoods.org](http://www.livelihoods.org)

From the humanitarian side, whether an agency is concerned about protecting livelihoods – as well as saving lives – seems to depend very much upon its mandate (Darcy and Hofmann, 2003). Agencies with a dual development and humanitarian mandate, such as UNICEF and CARE, tend to emphasise protecting livelihoods in their humanitarian work. Agencies with a sole humanitarian mandate, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and MSF, tend to define their humanitarian objectives more narrowly.

Yet the value of extending the objectives of humanitarian work to save livelihoods as well as lives, thus encouraging a longer-term perspective, are widely recognised. According to ActionAid (2002) this dispels the ‘historical view of relief and development as diametrically opposed processes’, and is a way of ensuring that people affected by the emergency are placed at the centre of any intervention. Sida’s concept paper on Developmental Humanitarian Assistance ‘is based on both an immediate needs assessment of those affected and on an analysis of the entire life situation of those affected’ (1999:5). Similarly Oxfam is grappling with how to strengthen the links between its humanitarian (often called food security) and its development (livelihoods) work, arguing that ‘emergency food security and development livelihoods approaches are highly complementary and that Oxfam’s ‘dual mandate’ continues to be the best course to overcoming poverty and suffering’ (Oxfam, 2004:2).

In protracted crises the pressure to protect and sustain livelihoods through aid – usually humanitarian aid – is greatest, especially if there is an absence of social and economic infrastructure in an environment of ongoing instability. South Sudan and Somalia demonstrate this well: ‘the challenge is not solely a short-term problem of saving lives, but a long-term one of sustaining large populations in environments where the normal parameters

for development do not apply' (Darcy and Hofmann, 2003: 22). They go on to comment that a number of UN agencies and NGOs have adopted a livelihoods or food security framework as a way of linking emergency and non-emergency analysis and responses.

Some interesting work has been done recently to adapt the livelihoods framework to unstable and disaster-prone situations (Collinson, 2003). This is driven by a perceived need for humanitarian agencies to strengthen their political analysis of the environments in which they are working, despite the well-known pressures of short project cycles and high staff turnover. By integrating a political economy analysis that focuses on changing power and wealth relations with a local vulnerability and livelihoods analysis, agencies are encouraged to take a view that is (ibid: 18):

- (i) dynamic, focusing on change
- (ii) broad, connecting changes in one place or group to those in another
- (iii) longitudinal, incorporating a historical perspective; and
- (iv) explanatory, asking why certain people are affected by conflict and crisis in the way that they are

## 6. REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

Rehabilitation has been seen as the critical ‘link’ between relief and development although it is a nebulous concept often with hazier objectives even than ‘relief’ or ‘development’<sup>20</sup>. In theory at least, its potential is in terms of gap-filling between the emergency and development phases, especially during periods of long transition. So can it occupy this much discussed ‘grey zone’ between relief and development?

The EC has paid more attention than many donor agencies to the concept of rehabilitation, defining it in the 1996 LRRD Communication as: ‘an intermediate strategy of institutional reform and reinforcement, of reconstruction and improvement of infrastructure and services, supporting the initiatives of the populations concerned towards the resumption of sustainable development’ (CEC, 1996). As early as 1993 the EC established special budget lines for rehabilitation which gradually proliferated. Although these created a confusing and complicated array of rules and procedures they did increase the EC’s capacity to operate in the ‘grey zone’, to continue to work in countries such as Liberia and Somalia in the late 1990s which were no longer eligible for regular development funding under the Lomé Convention.

Rehabilitation is seen by many as an opportunity to bring about positive socio-economic change, and not merely a return to the status quo (Twigg, 2004; DHA, 1994). This is how a number of agencies responded to the rehabilitation task after the Gujarat earthquake. For example, both SC-UK and ActionAid saw it as an opportunity to promote the rights of those who were most discriminated against. SC-UK ensured that the *Anganwadi* centres (for Integrated Child Development Services) were rebuilt in locations where *dalits* would have

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<sup>20</sup> In this paper the term ‘rehabilitation’ is favoured over ‘reconstruction’, implying a broader range of interventions or activities designed to rebuild and secure livelihoods whilst reconstruction is often associated with the physical reconstruction, for example of infrastructure.

access (often for the first time) as well as other castes. ActionAid campaigned for women's land rights, especially for widows (Buchanan-Smith, 2003).

A more challenging environment for rehabilitation and reconstruction is the context of protracted crises. As Macrae (2001) points out, a linear 'political continuum' from war to peace agreements/ peace-keeping to peace is an elusive ideal. Instead of a well-defined phase of post conflict transition the reality is usually more complex and messy, defying categorization, with the stark warning that many armed conflicts that have supposedly ended have a high probability of re-igniting (section 2.1). For example, the 2003 Consolidated Appeal for Somalia described the country as being in a process of 'recovery', yet insecurity was escalating, 750,000 people were described as 'chronically vulnerable' and the asset base of many was said to be declining. Similarly, Sudan was described by the UN as a country in 'transition' in 2002 whilst it hosted over 4 million displaced people and 3.5 million people were assessed to be food insecure and in need of food aid (as quoted in Darcy and Hofmann, 2003: 22). In both cases substantial humanitarian need persisted and the fragility of the recovery process was evident. The challenge is usually accessing funding for rehabilitation/ recovery interventions in such environments, with a tendency to dress up rehabilitative/ developmental interventions as humanitarian to maximise the chances of securing donor funds. The difficulties many NGOs face in accessing funding for rehabilitation activities has been documented by Twigg et al (2000).

In contrast, the funding context is usually very different in 'transitional' countries of strategic political significance. Afghanistan post 2001 is a case in point, just as it throws into sharp focus the highly political dimension of much rehabilitation and reconstruction work, especially when it becomes a politically-motivated project of nation-building. Is this rehabilitation or political reform? Whose model of 'the nation' is being built? And what role

should humanitarian, rehabilitation, and/ or development aid play in such a political project? (Donini, 2004). The blurring of boundaries between military and rehabilitation objectives have been extreme and controversial in Afghanistan<sup>21</sup>. For instance, the US-led Coalition Forces have been engaged in both anti-insurgency activities and in a hearts and minds operation that provides assistance to local people, not least through a number of ‘Provincial Reconstruction Teams’ (Donini et al, 2005). There has been a well-documented and direct link between the provision of aid assistance and intelligence gathering about the insurgency by the military. Rather than a technical fix, it is well-recognised that reconstruction is a long-term political process, dependent on negotiation between different and diverse interest groups and political actors (Barakat, 2002).

A more programmatic exploration of working in protracted crises is presented in the ‘Report of the UNDG/ ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues’ of 2004. It recognises the unpredictability of transition situations which may get worse before they get better, that external assistance is crucial to support and underpin fragile cease-fires and peace processes and identifies a range of interventions needed, from restoring essential social services; rehabilitating physical infrastructure; disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants; promoting and protecting human rights; promoting good governance and capacity-building; and humanitarian assistance.

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<sup>21</sup> It contributed to MSF’s decision to leave Afghanistan in 2004 after the tragic killing of five MSF aidworkers.

## 7. INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

### 7.1 Working with local organisations and local people

Almost all texts on developmental relief emphasise building local capacity and adopting participatory approaches<sup>22</sup>. The reasons are many, to do with valuing and building upon the capacity of local organisations and local people; efficiency; local knowledge; ensuring that mitigation and preparedness measures are locally embedded; laying the groundwork for sustainable development after the crisis has passed. Working with, and strengthening local organisations is entirely consistent with, indeed is central to a rights-based approach to humanitarian action. Messer (2003) spells out the ideal collaboration between state and civil society in terms of combining knowledge, technology, expertise and institutional capacities. ActionAid goes further in talking about ‘people-centred governance’ as an essential route for disaster risk reduction (ActionAid and Ayuda en Accion, 2005).

But in practice the record is pretty dismal. Despite statements of intent, codes and guidelines, ALNAP reviews show that international agencies are failing to live up to these commitments (as reported in the forthcoming ALNAP Annual Review of Humanitarian Action). Smillie (2001) talks of ‘the dilemma ...[of] the tradeoff between outsiders doing things themselves – meeting needs in the midst of humanitarian emergency – and working to build longer-term capacities among local organisations so that people will be better able to deal with their own problems’ (ibid: 1). This is most acute during the height of a humanitarian crisis when local capacity is more likely to be bought or rented than built, and resources for such activity are usually available only *after* the crisis has passed (Christoplos, forthcoming). The critical periods for working with and strengthening local organisations are actually *in advance* of the

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Twigg, 2003; Mancino et al, 2001; Smillie, 2001; World Disasters Report, 1996; as well as the Code of Conduct for Disaster Relief (IFRC, 1994)

disaster to build preparedness, and during the recovery phase to build ownership and sustainable structures. To make this a reality, Christoplos claims that there would need to be a new approach to relief and development relaxing the standard categorisation. There is also an acknowledgement that current capacity-building practice for humanitarian work is based on short training inputs, usually for service delivery, and that this is a far cry from genuine empowerment which would require northern agencies to give up some control of the humanitarian agenda.

A less ambitious but none the less relevant aim is to sustain the existing capacity of local systems and institutions when an emergency happens (Campanaro et al, 2002). Examples abound of international organizations poaching local staff from local organisations, and of bypassing local structures when a large-scale international humanitarian response is launched.

Finally, Christoplos (forthcoming) argues that hard data are needed to provide convincing evidence of the relative effectiveness of local organisations in humanitarian operations, and further investigation is needed into the usual ‘excuses’ for the failure to build local capacity, such as corruption, speed and scaling up.

## **7.2 Organisational cultures and mandates**

Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994: 12) identified the ‘different organizational cultures which beset relief and development organisations’. OECD’s DAC talked of ‘the functional disfunctions of the various agencies involved and (the challenge) to integrate, rather than merely co-ordinate, relief, rehabilitation and development objectives within the framework of a long term strategy’<sup>23</sup>. Smillie (1998) talks of the walls between organisations, and

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<sup>23</sup> As quoted in Sida, 1999:3



within some organisations, between relief and development departments, as well as the ‘developmental disdain for relief (and) the institutional culture of emergency assistance’ (ibid: 61).

The integrationist agenda for protracted conflict-related emergencies, outlined in section 3 above, has encouraged much closer working relations between the humanitarian and development wings of many governmental and UN agencies in recent years. Within the UN, for example, integrated missions whereby a system-wide UN response is launched to help countries in the transition from war to lasting peace ‘by subsuming (UN) actors and approaches within an overall political-strategic crisis management framework’ (Eide et al, 2005:3) is now widely accepted as common (and good) practice. Yet the Secretary-General has recently acknowledged the continuing ‘gaping hole’ in the UN’s institutional machinery in transitional contexts<sup>24</sup>. A recent report on integrated missions makes a series of recommendations on how they can be improved to fulfil their function better (ibid). As discussed above, the motivation for such an integrationist approach is primarily political.

At a different level, InterAction’s report on developmental relief lists ways in which NGOs have tried to improve the relationship between relief and development institutionally. For example, some organisations have established a new department to address the needs of developmental relief programming; others have integrated previously separate relief and development sections into a single department. But a brief trawl through evaluations of humanitarian operations reveal the challenges that still exist in shifting from one organisational culture to another, most evident when an agency has to shift gear from development to emergency mode. These institutional challenges are usually greatest for multi-mandated agencies. And they are not restricted to NGOs. The InterAction report on

developmental relief notes a rift between the development and emergency departments of many donor agencies, due to physical separation, cultural differences, lack of communication and clearly segregated budget lines (Campanaro et al, 2002).

Meanwhile, there are some examples of a deliberate retrenching of the categorisation of relief and development, most obviously within the EC where ECHO has been encouraged to focus on its core mandate of ‘life-saving operations in emergencies which aim for the earliest possible exit’ (CEC, 2001: 9).

### **7.3 Funding**

Funding is a recurrent theme in the LRRD literature over at least the last ten years, explaining how and why little progress has been made in linking relief and development.

Issues include<sup>25</sup>:

- (i) the sporadic and short-term nature of most emergency aid even when needs and reconstruction opportunities are long-term
- (ii) the lack of explicit funding for rehabilitation and transitional activities
- (iii) inconsistent and often inflexible rules between donors about what is considered eligible for humanitarian (or development) funding
- (iv) difficulties in accessing funding for preparedness and mitigation activities which are often perceived as a cost rather than an investment
- (v) funding gaps when the emergency wing of a donor agency withdraws and there is a time delay before the development wing engages

There is a certain amount of cynicism that, despite donor strategies and policy papers that apparently commit them to finding ways of linking relief and development, the reality of the funding environment is very different. NGOs that have greatest flexibility in funding developmental relief activities are usually those least dependent on official donor funding, with large amounts of private funding instead.

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<sup>24</sup> As reported in the Secretary-General's report on UN reform in March 2005: 'In Larger Freedom: towards, development, security and human rights for all'

<sup>25</sup> Compiled from Smillie, 1998; Campanaro et al, 2002; Darcy and Hofmann, 2003; Messer, 2003.

## 8. APPROPRIATE LIMITATIONS TO LRRD?

A controversial consequence of the blurring of boundaries between humanitarian action, foreign policy and military intervention is the pressure it has placed on humanitarian principles. Although there have been many initiatives to break down some of the artificial distinctions between the objectives and programme approaches of humanitarian assistance and development, there have also been strident efforts to promote and defend humanitarian principles in conflict environments, to protect the neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian assistance, and thus to gain access to those most in need (see, for example, Leader, 2000). Providing humanitarian assistance according to humanitarian principles means *not* engaging in more political rehabilitation and reconstruction work that compromises impartiality, neutrality and independence. Eide et al (2005: 3) draw attention to this '*humanitarian dilemma...a tension between the *partiality* involved in supporting a political transition process and the impartiality needed to protect humanitarian space*' in their report on UN integrated missions. In conflicts characterised by deep divisions within society it may not be possible for international organisations to support local organisations in humanitarian work, in order to protect their impartiality and neutrality. In extreme circumstances adherence to humanitarian principles may mean withdrawal of humanitarian agencies from some emergency contexts when they believe they can no longer operate impartially (as happened with MSF in Afghanistan in 2004), thus immediately cutting off opportunities to link relief and development.

Applying humanitarian principles in practice continues to exercise many humanitarian agencies, especially in highly politicised emergencies and in the context of this integrationist agenda<sup>26</sup>. It clearly limits the opportunities to link relief, rehabilitation and development.

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<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Donini, 2003; ODI, 2003

Macrae and Harmer (2004b) believe that the distinctiveness of humanitarian aid is increasingly acknowledged, but that the principles of humanitarian action are still weakly understood by the development community.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has sketched out some of the different drivers of the ‘linking’ agenda. These range from high-level politics in the context of failed states and protracted crises, to programmatic drivers and the search for unifying conceptual frameworks amongst many humanitarian and development agencies themselves.

Whilst a lot has been written about LRRD by academics and agency staff, often from a theoretical or conceptual point of view with numerous policy recommendations, the shifts in agency approach and practice do not appear to have matched the thinking and writing. For example, whilst it is well-known that neither natural disasters nor conflict-related emergencies are one-off *ad hoc* events, but that their impact is heavily dependent on how society is structured, this way of thinking is still poorly reflected in development programming or in humanitarian assistance. The bottom line – how aid funding is made available – is often most revealing of the extent to which brave policy statements on LRRD have actually been translated into practice.

Yet despite this inertia, some unexpected linkages have taken place between humanitarian, development *and* conflict resolution/ peace-building agendas in the last five or more years, reflected in closer working relationships between different donor ministries and departments and in integrated objectives and frameworks for UN agencies as well as donor governments. However, these changes have little to do with the ‘traditional’ LRRD debate, but instead have been influenced by bigger political agendas, namely western foreign and security policy. If anything they have encouraged a more cautious approach to LRRD on the part of many humanitarian agencies struggling to protect humanitarian principles in this politicised environment.

From an aid agency point of view the rights-based approach to emergency and development work appears to offer one of the more exciting and promising opportunities to really make progress in the LRRD debate. But there is still a long way to go to realise this potential, and it is not uncontested. Meanwhile, the three frameworks presented in this paper – vulnerability, risk reduction and livelihoods – offer a very practical way of operationalising some of the ideas that are central to the LRRD debate, for example ensuring that long-term perspectives are adopted in humanitarian work, and that development work addresses issues of vulnerability and risk.

As far as rehabilitation is concerned, although it is hard to delineate this as a discrete time-defined phase, the amount of attention and funding that is now being given to this set of activities does appear to be addressing some of the grey zone dilemmas. Not least it helps to address the breakdown in resources that can occur between humanitarian assistance drying up and development assistance starting to flow. Rehabilitation is receiving most attention in post-conflict transition where it can also be deeply political, to an extent that is not always acknowledged and that can compromise efforts to provide impartial humanitarian assistance alongside. There is still considerable ambiguity about the objectives and funding streams for rehabilitation work, an ambiguity that may give donors convenient room for manoeuvre.

Finally, there is a surprising dearth of information on how local disaster-prone people perceive their situation and relate to the concepts of relief, rehabilitation and development. Although some interesting studies have been done, for example looking at local people's perceptions of war and of security, this seems to be a real gap in the LRRD literature. Yet this kind of exploration could be very helpful to the international aid sector.

## ACRONYMS

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (DAC)
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee (UK)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK government)
DMI	Disaster Mitigation Institute, India
EC/ CEC	European Commission
FSAU	Food Security Assessment Unit
HDI	human development index
HI	Humanitarian Initiatives
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group (ODI)
IDNDR	UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LRRD	linking relief, rehabilitation and development
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	non governmental organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SC-UK	Save the Children UK
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
TEC	tsunami evaluation coalition
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNDG/ ECHA	UN Development Group/ Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)



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