Editorial
François Grünwald

* Special issue *
WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

The Secretary General’s initiative to organise a summit “for all stakeholders”, and not just for governments, was an original one. A lot of energy was put into preparing this exercise, based on a considerable level of consultation of all kinds, rather than the usual inter-governmental processes. Groupe URD was involved in the thematic work groups and regional consultations from November 2014. With the Summit due to take place in a few days, this special edition of Humanitarian Aid on the Move looks at some of the issues that will be debated. How can we reinforce local capacities or give back national actors the role that Northern organisations tend to monopolise? How has disaster response changed since the Haiti earthquake? What potential changes will the digital age bring to humanitarian methods? How should we understand the current engagement of donors from the Gulf States? There is also an analysis of the central issue of protection in a context where crises are increasing in number, duration and complexity and where there is a massive increase in humanitarian needs and population displacement. First of all, though, we felt it was essential to publish the key messages from the 3rd French National Humanitarian Conference, which constitutes one of the contributions of the French humanitarian sector to the World Humanitarian Summit.

Contents

Key messages from the French National Humanitarian Conference .......................................................... 2

Humanitarian space

- Strengthening national capacities from rhetoric to reality, from theory to practice Edith Favreau ......................... 5
- The Evolution of Humanitarian Protection: A Critical Perspective Arjun Claire ................................................................. 10
- The funding of humanitarian action by the Gulf States: a long-term commitment Céline Billat ......................... 15

Point of view

- Towards genuine partnership with Haitian NGOs Prosperity Raymond ................................................................. 20

Aid and Quality

- Disintermediation - the future of Aid in a Digital world? Ian Gray ................................................................. 22
- Nepal earthquake: a rapid review of the response and a few lessons learnt François Grünwald & Anne Burlat ........ 26

Bibliography .............................................................................................................................................. 31

Events ......................................................................................................................................................... 34
Key messages from the French National Humanitarian Conference

The French National Humanitarian Conference gathered more than 400 participants from France and abroad, on the theme, “What will be the role of international humanitarian actors in the aid system of the future?”
The following key messages summarising the day’s debates will be taken by French stakeholders to the World Humanitarian Summit.

Called by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, the first World Humanitarian Summit will take place in exactly 3 months, on 23-24 May 2016, with the view to rebuild an international partnership for humanitarian action. Current events have shown how important this initiative is.
The participants at the 3rd French National Humanitarian Conference (CNH) discussed the ideas laid out in the Secretary General’s report¹. The results of the conference were as follows:

• Acknowledgment that the current situation is much preoccupying, with millions of victims around the world and equally worrying prospects for the future;
• A mixed assessment of the humanitarian sector, with some major steps forward in recent decades but also the recognition that the system is reaching its limits in terms of capacity;
• Proposals for ways of consolidating a “diversified humanitarian ecosystem, centred on populations and structured by humanitarian principles”, which would be able to meet current needs more effectively and prepare to meet the challenges of the future.

Consensus on the seriousness of the current situation

A real increase in the number, duration and complexity of crises:
• The number of conflicts and attacks on civilian populations is constantly increasing;
• Certain protracted conflicts have created untenable situations for the populations involved;
• Climate change is increasing the stress on systems that are already fragile (e.g. the Sahel, the Oceanic Islands, Madagascar, and the Andean cone) and produces extreme climatic events;
• Natural disasters have a direct impact on the most vulnerable and exposed populations.
The reasons for this situation are primarily political, notably for security crises, and can only be solved by political solutions. However, difficulties in preventing or ending political crises have become obvious notably in Syria, which was mentioned several times. This raises several issues:
• National sovereignty is too often used to legitimate serious violations of human dignity or the holding up of the aid delivery;
• Non-compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), despite being unacceptable, is increasingly common, affecting populations and humanitarian actors, and sometimes leading to impunity;
• Global governance of international security has had mixed results, questioning the capacity of the United Nations to prevent or end conflicts;
• Regarding the so-called natural disasters, the realization of the gravity of the coming impacts of climate change has been too slow, impacting the effectiveness of the reaction.

Consequently, humanitarian needs have grown in quantity and complexity, and are characterized by:
• Mass population displacement, some of which are currently towards Europe;
• Long-term crises that have an impact on entire generations, notably on the youngest who are undergoing significant psychosocial impacts;
• High standard of living and education in societies affected by the current crisis, which makes the usual humanitarian aid irrelevant to address their needs;
• Problems of insecurity and access to populations;
• Deterioration of the living conditions of millions of people caught up in conflicts.

A mixed analysis of the humanitarian system

Positive steps forward

The humanitarian system has become more structured in the last 20 years, and has grown in capacity to address the humanitarian needs. Nowadays, the sector is well-organized and the role of humanitarian organisations is recognized. International NGOs have become more professional, United Nations agencies have increasingly become involved in these crisis contexts and donors have taken part in the structuration of the sector by bringing transparency and accountability.
Local stakeholders (central and local public entities, civil society, etc.) have developed their capacities, have gained in experience and have learned from the crises that have affected them. They are now willing to play a more important role in the response to the crises and in terms of leadership, notably because they have real competencies in this area.
New sources of funding have emerged through the private sector, foundations and emerging countries, and also
through forms of solidarity from individual to individual, such as through diasporas.

Finally, various promising technical and technological innovations have improved certain areas of aid and have contributed to increasingly draw the attention of the private sector.

**A system which is reaching its limits due to a major increase in needs and the changing nature of operational contexts**

The first limit concerns funding and funding instruments. There is insufficient funding. The volume of aid has been multiplied by 12 since 2000, but there continues to be a shortfall of about 15 billion US Dollars to cover all funding requests. In addition, there is insufficient funding for disaster preparedness and prevention, though it is generally accepted that this kind of investment is less expensive than dealing with the consequences of natural disasters afterwards. The funding allocation process is complex and sometimes unsuitable. Reporting mechanisms are not harmonized between donors; there are a large number of sources of funding and little coordination between them, notably in relation to LRRD (“linking relief, rehabilitation and development”). Funding is allocated per country whereas crises are often regional. Finally, in order to reduce administrative costs, donors tend to concentrate on fewer and larger operators. There is a risk that this trend will lead to a reduction in the effectiveness of the system.

The second limit is at the level of operators themselves. Development organisations need to address vulnerabilities ahead of a crisis. For their part, humanitarian actors need to revise their operational methods and think on the long term. Both development and humanitarian organisations need to fine-tune and contextualise their approaches, and avoid the standardization of practices and tools.

The third limit concerns coordination and the humanitarian system. Partnerships with local actors and the localisation of aid are at the heart of humanitarian system reforms. The system is too often disconnected from the reality of local contexts. Too often the authorities and organisations from the countries affected by crises are not sufficiently involved, if at all. Concrete, operational methods need to be brought up today to foster major changes.

**Proposals for a “diversified humanitarian ecosystem, centred on populations and structured by humanitarian principles”**

Given these observations and the issues raised, French humanitarian organisations are supporting the emergence of “a diversified humanitarian ecosystem, centred on populations and structured by humanitarian principles”.

In this ecosystem, everything should be done to prevent crises and end conflicts, notably with greater political commitments from governments to face situations of fragility and crisis. Humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for a lack of political action. It is important to bear in mind that it is the responsibility of States to apply IHL and that standards need to be respected (as, for example, by: supporting the proposal to abandon Security Council vetoes if there is a resolution that aims to end mass crimes; reinforcing IHL monitoring systems; or respecting humanitarian principles in decisions about providing populations with aid). Measures to promote the protection of humanitarian actors and to end impunity should be reinforced.

With the increase in the number of so-called “natural” disaster situations, the commitments of the COP 21 and the Sendai conferences must lead to concrete measures. This will require actions in several areas: combatting climate change; reinforcing preparedness and prevention measures; climate change adaptation; and a concrete action plan for environmental migration.

This ecosystem needs to end the dichotomy between development and emergency humanitarian actions. All actors are concerned by crisis situations and they have to contribute to their resolution, taking into account the specificities and the capacities of each kind of actors. Knowledge has to be better used in order to prevent and manage the crisis. This implies that humanitarian actions have to better integrate medium and long terms agenda in order to guarantee the sustainability of the development actions which will be carried out.

The ecosystem needs to adapt to local contexts. This is not possible with a “one size fits all” approach. Cash transfer programmes, which have been a positive development in recent years, require a contextual analysis of the absorption capacity of local markets. It is important to be able to be flexible, to support innovation and to adapt, and also to accept that risks sometimes need to be taken. The system needs to be based on networks of different kinds, with different types of partnerships. It should guarantee the involvement of local actors in all contexts, including urban contexts.

The growing role of local stakeholders needs to be more supported, without being naive or dogmatic, and taking local contexts into account as well as the political issues at stake in crisis situations. The localization of aid is more efficient economically, but it is much more than that. It brings continuity, knowledge of what is needed on the ground and risk prevention. The system should therefore allow access to structural funding for local NGOs that meet the criteria and conditions to enter into a partnership, possibly using pre-qualification mechanisms. Beyond speeches on partnerships and capacity building, it is time to consider the concrete changes it implies. The extent to which capacities have been transferred should be evaluated, using indicators, as a central factor of project’s success. This is not simply a question of access to funding for local NGOs, it also addresses specific jobs and methods of action for genuinely structural partnerships.
It is also crucial to mobilise new resources and to ensure the effectiveness of the use of available resources to respond to the growing number of crises. This could involve: new sources of funding (the involvement of private stakeholders for example); using innovative funding (as taxes on financial transactions); adapting funding to the complexity of crises and situations (by developing multi-country, multi-sector, multi-phase and multi-stakeholder approaches); lightening and harmonizing donors’ administrative procedures (resolving the issue of multiple, redundant and expensive controls; making multi-year funding or commitments easier, etc.); or facilitate access to funding for local NGOs by helping them to develop their organisational capacities.

This ecosystem should ensure that the diversity and complementarity of stakeholders is fostered. A large variety of stakeholders should be taken into account, each with their own added value (local and international NGOs, States, regional authorities, diasporas, the private sector, new private donors such as foundations, etc.). It is crucially important to reinforce the role of new actors in crisis situations, such as businesses and regional authorities, and to encourage partnerships. The humanitarian system needs to take advantage of this diversity and to be more inclusive.

Facing these issues, it is important to review the effectiveness of the coordination mechanisms, and notably make the cluster system more flexible, more accessible and, particularly, less cumbersome. This implies rethinking aid architecture, notably at the United Nations level where there is still too much administrative burdens, duplication and competition between agencies. Networks and local consultation based processes have shown that they allow the development of a good quality dialogue and help to identify complementary between actors (e.g. multi-actor regional networks). Lastly, the system should aim at being more balanced. Funding mechanisms should not lead to a concentration of humanitarian actors and the creation of “super organisations” that are not suitable to offer flexible responses. Giving priority to partnerships between stakeholders, while avoiding the creation of oppositions and specifying the conditions for partnerships (principles, accountability, combating impunity, legal security, risks sharing, etc.), remains the cornerstone of a responsive and effective system in crisis contexts.

To conclude, we support the Secretary General’s call for a renewed political commitment towards the prevention and resolution of crises. Assisting and protecting crisis-affected populations is everyone’s responsibility: politicians, humanitarians, development workers, business people, and committed citizens.

We therefore call for the implementation of a series of measures to strengthen and facilitate the functioning of the aid ecosystem, so that it is centred on populations, structured by principles, and encourages diversity and complementarity between stakeholders.

Official text drafted after the Conference and containing the key messages from French actors.

Humanitarian space

Strengthening national capacities from rhetoric to reality, from theory to practice

Edith Favoreu

More than ever, the localisation of aid is at the centre of debates in the humanitarian sector. But in order to localise aid, national capacities need to be reinforced. Too often, the concept of reinforcing national capacities refers to the actors that are "to be reinforced". This article looks at this question from the perspective of international aid organisations and the strategic reflection that they will need to engage in.

By way of introduction

The thoughts expressed in this article are guided by two ideas from different periods:

"What you do for me but without me, you do against me” (Gandhi)

"As local as possible, as international as necessary” (One Humanity: Shared Responsibility - Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit; 2016 (A/70/709))

Capacity strengthening is currently a very fashionable concept. As the topic of numerous conferences, and the central topic of several internal debates, it underlines tensions between the need to localize aid and the necessity to increase international aid, tensions that are related to factors that are themselves controversial. The limits and constraints of external aid are well-known. These include: the fact that it leads to substitution and dependency, the destabilization of national and local contexts, political instrumentalisation and the imperialistic undertones of such an approach. The limits and constraints of localization are also known: the insufficient number of actors, their limited capacities and resources (including financial resources), corruption, doubts about their neutrality and impartiality, uncertainty about the quality of their operations and about their accountability, etc. These often genuine limits are still too often used as an excuse for not giving national actors more power.

In this article, we will use the term capacity strengthening, meaning a process by which individuals and/or groups develop their ability to make decisions, take on responsibilities, resolve problems, and set and meet objectives, in an autonomous and responsible manner. Capacity strengthening therefore means increasing the ability to take action.

Clarification of terminology and concepts

What are we talking about? An attempt to clarify the concept of capacity strengthening

We found various terminology, used as synonymous: Capacity building, capacity strengthening, capacity development, etc. “Capacity development commonly refers to the process of creating and building capacities and their (subsequent) use, management and retention. This process is driven from the inside and starts from existing national capacity assets”. (UNDP, 2008)

In this article, we will use the term capacity strengthening, meaning a process by which individuals and/or groups develop their ability to make decisions, take on responsibilities, resolve problems, and set and meet
objectives, in an autonomous and responsible manner. Capacity strengthening therefore means increasing the ability to take action. This requires a bilateral approach, based on a mutual process: for the actors themselves, the aim is to develop a genuine ability to make decisions; while the other protagonists need to respect this ability as being valid and effective. This does not rule out the possibility of criticism or contradiction, but guarantees that different opinions are respected.

Capacity strengthening obviously has to do with the notion of "capacities", but it is also connected to that of "capabilities". This concept, which was introduced by Amartya Sen, refers to a "set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another" (1992). It therefore concerns personal, cultural and environmental conditions which allow capacities to be genuinely exercised, at a given time, in a specific environment.

To speak about individual and collective capacities and capabilities, people and organisations need to benefit from a certain number of conditions. They need to:

- Feel confident to take actions and make decisions that affect their future and for which they take responsibility. Confidence is a central factor of the notion of “power from within” which is intrinsically linked to self-esteem.

- Have the necessary knowledge (knowledge, know-how, analytical skills and social skills), physical, material and financial resources, to be able to “do” and “have”. These factors are necessary in order to be able to implement their “power of” having and doing.

- Have access to spaces, whether concrete or abstract (physical, temporal, symbolic, etc.) within which they can mobilise and organize themselves with others to achieve common objectives. People and organisations can then develop their “power with”.

- Have a “capacitating” environment that is open to this change, where each type of power can be welcomed, perhaps encouraged, and at least recognized or integrated.

It is only if these different cumulative conditions exist that people and organisations are able to have power “on/over” their reality. Thus, capacity strengthening is neither a secondary activity, nor an incidental effect of a project or an activity. It is the result of a complex strategy, where the process is as important as, if not more important than, the result.

The notion of capacity strengthening has been around in the humanitarian sector for two decades, with the aim of allowing national and local actors to take ownership of the operational mechanisms and programmes that affect them. The notion was then correlated to the relief-development continuum, and is currently connected to the concept of resilience.

Capacity strengthening is also connected to the concepts of empowerment and participation, as well as to that of self-sufficiency, the latter being understood in terms of sustainability (in the sense of greater autonomy in the implementation of a programme, process or product), more than durability (in the sense of continuity). It is linked to the notion of decision-making, the process by which an organization is able to acquire the means necessary to become autonomous. The concept of strengthening is also connected to the idea of the primary responsibility of states in crises that affect their country, and therefore is related to recognizing and reinforcing the capacity of authorities, civil society organisations and populations themselves to be the primary actors in the delivery of aid. In addition, another link can be established with the increasing practice of remote management, particularly in conflict situations where access is impossible, limited or too dangerous. Finally, it is connected to the notion of partnership, which concerns a dynamic relationship, based on comparative advantage and mutual benefit, and including mutual respect, equal participation in decision-making and risk-taking, and applying mutual transparency and accountability (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Overall, it has to do with two related ideas: reinforcing actors and helping actors to reinforce themselves.
Deconstructing “local” in favour of “national”

Current debates are focused on the development of “local” capacities. And yet, “local” should not be used in contrast to “international”. Local, in fact, should be used in contrast to “global”, and “national” in contrast to “international”. Though the concept of nation is perhaps controversial, the adjective “national” nevertheless seems pertinent to differentiate between the international and local levels.

What is more, “local” is understood in relation to a centre, or at least in relation to a bigger scale, often considered to be more important, which tends to relegate the local to a subordinate role. In addition, the local seems only to exist due to the delimitation of a larger zone, for example, a regional or national zone. It therefore characterizes a level where there is a restricted territory often with a certain cultural, linguistic, or even organizational homogeneity.

In the semantic field of international aid, whether humanitarian or development, the term local is used to refer to actors from countries where operations are taking place when they are not from the West. This dissimulated ethnocentrism casts the other – this similar but different being – in an inferior position. Too often this leads to a view that is tarnished by paternalism. Even when it is connected to the idea of participatory and community development (the concept of local development), the term “local” is no less culturally specific and expresses a historically hierarchical vision of international cooperation.

As a result, the term “national actors” will be used in this article rather than “local actors”. The concept of local does nevertheless still have its place, as mentioned above, when it is used to refer to a specific local territory at sub-national level.

“Strengthening” capacities rather than “building”: change can also be achieved via semantic deconstruction

The power of words is well proven. Words are not neutral. They express ideas and the wide range of terms show that each word has its own meaning, and carries its own representations. Nevertheless, we do not believe that reality can be changed simply by changing words, even though paradigm shifts do necessarily require a change in terminology.

Though in French a conceptual clarification is not necessary, great care is needed when using English. Indeed, it is high time to drop the term “capacity building” in favour of the notion of “capacity strengthening”. The idea of “capacity building” has intrinsic Eurocentric and colonial connotations. From this point of view, capacities are seen as non-existent and therefore need to be built. This is a dreadful error at a time when we are talking of recognizing the mechanisms that exist within communities and their role in overcoming the issues they currently face! Each community knows its own reality best and has capacities at different levels, as well as resilience mechanisms.

Capacity strengthening combines several dimensions: new capacities to be developed; existing capacities to be reinforced; existing capacities to be recognised and validated; and an internal and external environment that allows all of this to be done.

Whose capacities should be developed?

The concept of national/local actor is a fluid concept and a context-specific notion (Ropstroff, 2016). In this article, we will take it to mean organisations of a more or less formal nature, belonging to a given society, whether from the public sector (States, national and local authorities, public services, etc.) or the private sector. In terms of the private sector, a distinction should be made between the business sector and the non-profit sector, which we will group together under the label of civil society.

Civil society organisations, who are leading lights in the aid sector, share common characteristics with traditional humanitarian actors. They are often citizen-led initiatives based on public or collective interest, and are non-governmental and non-profit.

These organisations are the main, but not exclusive, interlocutors of international actors. It should be noted that philosophically, it is the population itself as a whole that should be reinforced. In doing so, it should be understood in all its diversity (in terms of geography, gender, age, culture, ethnicity, religion, etc.). It is essential here to underline the importance that should be given to vulnerable groups, regardless of the source of this vulnerability. In this context, identifying leaders or representatives is equally necessary and sensitive.

Reinforcing national actors? Paradigm shifts, accepting and letting go

It would have been interesting to present the capacity strengthening needs of national actors and the different forms such a process can take. However, we will limit ourselves here to describing the perspective of international organisations. Two introductory remarks need to be made. Firstly, there is the lack of organisations (quantity, capacity, etc.) to cover the growing needs of at-risk populations.
Capacity strengthening is therefore one way of addressing this gap, to complement other mechanisms. Secondly, it is important to point out that focusing on capacity strengthening does not mean that we should turn our backs on direct action: both approaches are necessary to respond in an optimal and multidimensional way to the needs of the present and the future.

We will focus here on what international humanitarian actors should do if they commit themselves to a genuine capacity development approach. This is made up of three complementary steps: analysis, the definition of options, and internal changes within international organisations.

**Analysis.** Improvisation is neither appropriate nor effective. A genuine multidimensional analysis is needed and implies:
- The mapping of actors, including national training providers;
- The analysis of national actors' existing capacities, needs, barriers and challenges;
- An assessment of individual and collective needs in terms of skills reinforcement;
- An evaluation of international actors' capacity to reinforce other actors;
- An evaluation of existing practices;
- The identification of lessons learned on the basis of good and bad practice;
- The sharing of experiences, including an analysis of processes.

**The definition of options.** It is important to define the level at which an organisation can/wants to take action:
- Organisational level: institutional reinforcement, technical support, managerial support, etc.
- Individual level: training, coaching, mentoring, exchange of practices, etc.
- Inter-organisational level: networks, partnerships, etc.
- Resources level: direct resources, favouring access to donors, etc.

The variety of approaches that different organisations could take would be useful to meet the needs of the different levels. However, if the actions are not coordinated, or collectively defined, this variety could potentially be harmful and lead to contradictory approaches or tension for the "reinforced" organization.

**Change within organisations.** For international actors, reinforcing the competencies of other national actors implies working with both positive approaches (doing) and negative approaches (giving up/limiting) but also with dynamics of change (modus operandi) and a certain "letting go" with regard to the results of this process (accepting to...).

International organisations therefore have work to do in advance to reinforce themselves both at the technical level and in terms of processes and resources. For example:

- Their analysis of the organisation and its potential must be accurate: they need to have a clear idea of the organisation's capacity to reinforce the capacity of others. Are the appropriate human resources available? For example: are these new or reconverted people sufficiently trained in providing support, in skills transfer and in contextualisation? As well as being experts (technical or general) are they trainers, mentors or coaches?
  - Appropriate mechanisms and tools for analysing individual and organizational needs should be developed;
  - Processes and tools to reinforce networks need to be developed;
  - Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms specifically for capacity development need to be developed;
  - Simplified knowledge management and experience sharing mechanisms, in relation to processes, results and effects need to be developed;
  - Specific resources need to be found or allocated for capacity development.

International actors should also accept to reconsider a certain number of points, and to limit, for example:
- Their decision-making power;
- Their direct operations, in favour of support operations;
- Direct access to populations, and even their direct relations with authorities and other types of stakeholders.

International actors also need to accept that, even if they transmit their principles and approaches, these may be interpreted, contextualised and perhaps modified. They will therefore have to make certain changes to their modus operandi, such as:
- Redefining their partner-based approach to establish genuinely balanced partnerships;
- Advocating for the redefinition of funding architecture.

Finally, by adopting a genuine capacity development approach, international actors will have to accept to "let go" to some extent. This will involve:
- Transferring decision-making power, or at the very least, establishing joint decision-making;
- Reducing their access to resources and their preferential access to donors;
- accepting that humanitarian principles can be discussed, challenged, even questioned, by national actors;
- national actors creating new ways of operating, in the different phases of a response;
- Establishing de-growth indicators (operational, financial, human resources de-growth, etc.) as indicators for performance and national capacity development;
- repositioning themselves; changing their raison d'être to some extent, particularly for traditionally operational organisations.

Putting capacity strengthening into practice is not a mantra with no consequences. It means that international actors
who adopt this approach will have to rethink their organisations, and particularly their institutional culture and their way of functioning.

Are organisations willing or able to develop national capacities?

Whether organisations decide to take this option as a general premise, as a cross-cutting element of their approach, or even as a specific method in a given programme, these choices need to be reflected in their institutional and operational strategies, programmes, projects and activities.

This change in organisational culture should be made on the basis of a specific and de-compartmentalised analysis. This will involve answering two questions:

- Do we have the analytical capacity to contextualise our approaches? This amounts to questioning the opportunities and weaknesses of a capacity development process depending on the context: conflict context/context that is vulnerable to disasters; relief/rehabilitation/reconstruction/development phase, etc. Differentiated approaches should be given priority in order to grasp the inherent complexity of different types of crises and be able to respond to them creatively and qualitatively.

- Are we prepared to accept the risks, and even the dangers, involved in a transfer of power? This will involve genuine reflection internally on differentiated approaches in order to find the right balance between capacity building, localising aid and guaranteeing a quality response based on humanitarian principles.

Innovation plays a vital role in this approach, and requires a certain level of risk-taking. It is important to carry out tests, as these are a genuine source of learning and provide the possibility to readapt programmes. Capacity strengthening is a learning process, not only for the organization that is “reinforced”, but also for the organization that does the reinforcing: both become learning organisations and reinforce each other mutually. What is more, capacity development, as a means of continuous reflexive learning, depends on the right to make mistakes. Nevertheless, this must always be accompanied by an ethical dimension so that the flexibility of the framework is not detrimental to the security and well-being of populations.

The capacity strengthening process, which is often seen as being bilateral – national actor/ international actor – needs to be understood systemically. It is an opportunity to develop a genuine system in which South-South reinforcement, the reinforcement of national training organisations, the reinforcement of national research, and the reinforcement of national networks of actors, are the cornerstones of durability and self-sufficiency.

Conclusions

“As local as possible, as international as necessary”. The current move to reinforce national capacities – related to the localisation of aid – is the result of a demanding process that cannot be done without proper preparation. In order to put this process into practice in an optimal manner, medium and long-term actions are needed, with genuine investment in order to be able to withdraw properly. This process does not mean that other operational methods have to be excluded. It should be seen as complementary. What is more, it must not lead to disengagement on the part of international humanitarian actors, but rather the rearrangement of programmes.

In order to put this process into practice in an optimal manner, medium and long-term actions are needed, with genuine investment in order to be able to withdraw properly. This process does not mean that other operational methods have to be excluded. It should be seen as complementary. What is more, it must not lead to disengagement on the part of international humanitarian actors, but rather the rearrangement of programmes.

« Shifting of power... ». A shift in power between international and national actors should not be idealised. However, not idealizing does not mean not trying. Lack of access to populations, the limited results of humanitarian responses, the potentially negative effects of international aid on contexts and also the necessity of investing in disaster prevention and preparedness, all call for a collective response that is nationally based and internationally supported.

Dr. Edith Favoreu is Deputy Director and Head of the Learning Department, CERAH (Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action)

1 Remote control/remote management/remote support/remote partnership
2 The ideas and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author alone, and do not necessarily reflect those of CERAH.
Over the last two decades, protection has gained increasing prominence in humanitarian action. What factors account for it beyond the obvious concerns about civilian safety? This article attempts to critically examine the evolution of protection in the context of humanitarian action, and suggests three factors that may account for its expanded scope: changes to the concept of sovereignty after the cold war, the focus on the needs of internally displaced people and the emergence of global liberal governance. The article also critically reflects on the concept of protection, arguing that a disproportionate focus on external action risks undermining people’s agency.

Introduction

The transformation of humanitarian action in the 1990s resulted in a radical expansion of humanitarian activities. Having been palliative in nature, humanitarian action refashioned itself into a more preventive endeavour, and thus entered new political territory. The consequent ascendancy of human rights, coupled with a permissive environment after the cold war, led to a greater focus on protecting civilians caught up in conflicts. Humanitarian protection—understood here as activities undertaken by humanitarian actors aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of people in accordance with human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law—was not new, however. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had been mandated to get involved in protection activities since the Second World War under international humanitarian law (IHL) and refugee law, respectively. Nevertheless, several developments in the 1990s compelled numerous other humanitarian agencies to consider ways of enhancing civilian protection during wars. What were these developments and what factors account for such renewed emphasis on protection among humanitarian actors? This paper attempts to explain the evolution of protection in the context of humanitarian action during the 1990s. It also tries to place protection in the wider context, and understand similar concepts and norms conceived at the international level, with the objective of clearly distinguishing between these different strands.

The origins of humanitarian protection

Legal protection frameworks have been in place since the Second World War. In fact, the drive to institutionalise civilian immunity was already underway before the war broke out. It was led by the ICRC, which was concerned about the safety of civilians after the horrific loss of life during the First World War and the Spanish Civil War. A draft convention on civilian protection was prepared by 1934, but came into effect only after the Second World War. The Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of War was a watershed. It obliged warring parties to ensure the safety of persons not directly participating in hostilities, to allow free passage of food and medicines intended for civilians, and to uphold the rights of all people to receive news from families, among other things. A specific category of civilians – refugees – has also benefitted from legal protection for decades. Following on the heels of the Fourth Geneva Convention was the refugee protection framework, codified as the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951. A new protocol in 1967 extended the scope of the definition of refugees to include people fleeing persecution outside Europe.

The second thrust to strengthen humanitarian protection came in the 1990s. This was linked to wider geopolitical events. After the end of the cold war, when a spate of civil wars erupted, western states were forced to intervene militarily to protect people in the global South. These interventions, however, proved largely ineffective. Furthermore, the idea of external involvement in a country’s internal affairs met fierce resistance from advocates of sovereignty. Consequently, the interventionist logic of protection a-posteriori gradually gave way to an emphasis on prevention (Chandler, 2012). This emerging paradigm was captured in the concept of human security. Two major reports were instrumental in the elaboration of the concept: Agenda for Peace (1992) and the UNDP’s Human Development Report (1994). The release of these reports reoriented the security focus from states to individuals.

Human security however looked beyond physical violence. It also considered threats to livelihoods, health and environment (Tigerstrom, 2007:28). Canada, a vigorous promoter of the concept, opposed this broader focus. Instead, it chose to emphasise that human security consisted of “promoting safety for people by protecting them from threats of violence”. It incorporated this idea in its foreign policy, and included protection of civilians (PoC) in armed conflicts as one of its five priority themes. It also outlined the concept of PoC at the UN General Assembly in 1996. Although the legal conception of protection of civilians had already been enshrined in the Geneva Conventions since 1949, Canada advocated for a comprehensive approach, including not only respect for international human rights law and humanitarian law, but also support for peace operations, control of small arms proliferation and the accountability of war criminals and non-state actors. In 1999, Canada was instrumental in introducing the first resolution on protection of civilians in armed conflict at the Security Council.
Protection of civilians within the UN

The concept of PoC has come to be largely associated with the UN. It was institutionalised in 1999, with the adoption of two UN resolutions (1265, 1296). This followed the realisation that ensuring civilian security was an integral part of promoting international peace and security. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at the time famously called for a ‘culture of protection’, where governments, the private sector and international organisations “would display the necessary commitment to ensure rapid and decisive action in the face of crisis” (Vogt et al, 2008). The Security Council did not offer a clear definition of PoC because member states were reluctant to bind themselves to specific obligations (Stensland and Sending, 2008). However, there was consensus around five essential elements: safety of civilians, compliance with IHL, promoting humanitarian access, addressing impunity, and controlling the proliferation of small arms (Carvalho and Lie, 2011).

In recent years, UN peacekeeping operations have been increasingly mandated to protect civilians. According to Carvalho and Lie, OCHA represents the humanitarian segment of protection, while peacekeeping embodies the military dimension. They claim that this distinction has become blurred with the emergence of integrated missions. The involvement of peacekeepers in protecting civilians is a positive development, but has also posed challenges for humanitarian actors. It has created ambiguity about the roles of peacekeepers and humanitarians with regard to protection.

From the 1990’s onwards: A new phase in humanitarian protection

In parallel to the debates around PoC at the UN, humanitarian organisations also discussed protection from the late 1990s onward. In order to bring coherence and develop common standards among the growing number of organisations involved in protection, human rights and humanitarian actors decided to come together under the leadership of the ICRC. Several workshops were held between 1996 and 2000 to strengthen protection standards in war. They resulted in the adoption of a common definition of protection⁴, a protection framework⁵ (commonly referred to as the protection egg), and five recognised modes of action: persuasion, support, mobilisation, substitution, and denunciation.

Factors explaining the renewed emphasis on humanitarian protection

The 1990s were a turning point in the evolution of the concept of humanitarian protection. Previously debates had focused on the protection guaranteed by international humanitarian law and refugee law. The reasons why humanitarian organisations got involved in protection activities have not been adequately explored. The common explanation holds that a series of brutal civil wars, and the resulting inability of the international community to protect the victims, provoked humanitarians to take up the mantle to protect civilians. While partly true, this explanation does not take all the relevant factors into account. O’Callaghan and Pantuliano (2007) provide a more detailed explanation, and underline the following factors: the increase in civilian casualties; developments in the legal framework; a new economy of war; and a shift towards rights-based humanitarianism. In addition to those mentioned by O’Callaghan and Pantuliano, the literature highlights three more reasons for the increasing interest of humanitarian actors in protection programming.

The first of these is a change in the conception of sovereignty. Humanitarian action developed in conformity to state sovereignty. In fact, the principles of neutrality and impartiality were initially linked to principles of non-interference. Humanitarians were concerned with saving lives and refrained from getting embroiled in politics. One of the reasons was that many large organisations drew their mandate from states that had a clear interest in limiting the role of humanitarian action, especially in their internal affairs (Barnett, 2001). This was particularly true for the two prominent protection actors of the time: ICRC and UNHCR. But the idea of sovereignty changed after the cold war. States could only claim sovereignty as a right if they were fulfilling their responsibility to protect their citizens. Many humanitarian organisations were swept along by this tide, gradually moving from a needs-based to a rights-based approach, and began to engage with the political issues connected to crises. The Rwandan genocide eventually shamed them into action. Humanitarians felt they had to do more than just provide “a bed for the night”. Many claimed it was not possible to be neutral and impartial in the face of genocide. Furthermore, traditional humanitarian action was seen as contributing to war economies and prolonging conflicts (Curtis, 2001). Many agencies shifted towards a rights-based approach, with the exception of the ICRC and a few others who remained steadfast to needs-based humanitarian action.

The second reason for the increased interest in protection was the string of civil wars in the 1990s, which brought attention to the plight of people displaced within their own countries. While internal displacement was not a new phenomenon, it started to receive attention only after the cold war. The ideological conflict of the cold war provided states with reasons to support refugees. But with the end of the war, states started to favour their repatriation (Barnett, 2001). Similarly, other humanitarian actors shifted their work from the periphery of conflicts to the heart of crises (Terry, 2002: 13). As attention focused on IDPs caught up in civil wars, the gaps in their legal protection were revealed. In theory, IDPs were entitled to protection afforded by human rights and humanitarian law. But in situations of violence that did not amount to an armed conflict, and where states
did not fulfil their responsibilities, the legal gaps were striking, such as, for example, the right to the restitution of property lost during displacement. Subsequently, guiding principles on internal displacement were developed, though these were not binding for states. Leading voices at the time, such as Cohen and Deng, called on humanitarians to confront the protection challenges of IDPs, arguing that doing otherwise would undermine their assistance programmes. As a result of the greater emphasis on internal displacement at the global policy level, humanitarians increasingly devised programmes to address the specific needs of IDPs.

Finally, the third reason was the role of liberal thinking in redefining development. An increasing emphasis on the rights of individuals, based on the concept of “human security”, led to greater focus on the plight of civilians affected by civil wars. Some also argued that the concept of human security reflected the convergence between development and security policies (Duffield, 2008: 36). The underlying premise was that underdevelopment, as a global security threat, could jeopardise peace. The conflicts raging in different regions during the early 1990s were seen to be aggravating the consequences of underdevelopment. As a result, conflict prevention measures and peace building initiatives gained prominence. In “Agenda for Peace”, Boutros-Boutros Ghali insisted that a broad range of actors had to work together in order to eliminate the root causes of conflicts (Barnett, 2011: 168). Duffield has referred to this phenomenon, where a network of states and non-state actors work towards securing peace, as global liberal governance. However, the success of such top-down initiatives has been questioned. James Ferguson’s ethnography of development practices in Lesotho, for example, demonstrates how ideas and guidelines that shape liberal development interventions interact with complex social and cultural structures, often resulting in unintentional and counter-productive outcomes. Barnett agrees that there is a link between the global agenda to advance liberal peace and the motivation to protect civilians. He suggests, however, that this could merely have been the consequence of aid agencies tapping into additional resources made available by liberal states to combat insecurity. However, Barnett argues that not all agencies prioritise resources over identity. Some agencies, he claims, are more dependent on state resources than others and therefore are more prone to rallying the liberal peace building agenda (2009). Sreeram Chaulia (2011: 24), on the contrary, suggests that the way humanitarian actors think and act is determined both by ideas and by the power of donors. Most northern organisations are shaped by liberal values emphasising individual rights and economic freedom, but practical considerations of funds and access mean they are also influenced by donor priorities.

**2000: A critical turning point**

The emergence of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine (R2P) muddied the moral purity of protecting people. It politicised the concept of protection. The appropriation of the term “humanitarian” to describe military interventions aimed at protecting people created confusion around the roles of different actors (Biquet, 2002). R2P was conceived in the wake of the Rwandan genocide, where the international community was chastised for its nonchalance towards mass suffering. The doctrine signified an acceptance by states of their obligations to prevent future mass-atrocities. Furthermore, it re-conceptualised sovereignty around states’ responsibility to protect their citizens (Deng, 2005). In situations where a state failed to provide protection, the international community accepted to intervene in order to protect people from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. While these are arguably positive developments, they raise difficult questions. The events in Libya - where NATO intervened to ostensibly protect people but ended up being accused of regime change - showed just how complicated matters had become for humanitarian actors. What should their position be about such interventions? Condemning them would mean that they deny the existence of atrocities, but keeping silent would imply tacit approval. Humanitarians were inevitably worried about the challenges military interventions posed to their neutral and impartial action, and the resulting effect it could have on access.

Against this backdrop, the protection activism of the 1990s gave way to a resigned acceptance of the limited role humanitarians can play in protecting civilians. The adoption of protection language by a variety of actors, coupled with the practical difficulties of ensuring civilian safety in Sudan and Sri Lanka, contributed to this change. A growing number of people deny that humanitarians can play any protection role at all. Marc DuBois, for example, claims that humanitarian actors cannot protect civilians during violent crises. He argues that when people need protection most, security restrictions force humanitarians to leave. His views are backed up by events in Sri Lanka, where the UN left the town of Kilinochchi at the behest of the government, just when the fighting was entering a devastating phase.

© Brian Seko/UNHCR. Creative Commons
To protect, or not to protect: protection dilemmas

The motivation to protect civilians from mass atrocities has resulted in the development of several concepts all concerned with the safety of civilians — PoC, R2P, and human security. These were developed in the context of the savage wars of the 1990s and amidst severe criticism of the international community for its failure to take decisive measures to stop atrocities. The collapse of the cold war patronage networks meant that warring groups increasingly preyed on civilians to mobilise resources (Terry, 2002). In this context, the provision of mere material assistance came to be seen, at best, as insufficient, and at worst, as contributing to the violence. The tendency of western governments to use humanitarian aid as a substitute for political action added to this trend. Fiona Terry wryly noted that: “humanitarian action in the post-Cold War period has been transformed from a tool to pursue foreign policy objectives to a tool to avoid foreign policy engagement”. Confronted with this situation, several organisations, including Médecins Sans Frontières, appealed to the United Nations and western governments to stop violations against civilians including through military interventions, most notably in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

The militarisation of protection has had its pitfalls, however. As Vanessa Pupavac observes, humanitarian actors now paradoxically have to deal with the consequences of these developments and have to resist the trend towards militarisation in the “global war against terror”. She argues that by calling for military action, humanitarian actors have reinforced international inequalities. Challenging national sovereignty complements the dynamics of international politics and economics that undermine the equality of nation states. Discussions about protection rarely take into account the central role of states in guaranteeing the security of their citizens, and the risk that states will be weakened by an external intervention. Indeed, most debates focus on the role of external actors in providing protection to civilians in armed conflict. Tara MacCormack argues that even in situations where states conduct egregious acts against their own citizens, a political relationship exists between them (2008). Citizens have the possibility to gain power or change the political system. ‘Intervening agents’ risk undermining this relationship. They have no such links to civilians on whose behalf they intervene, and are therefore, not accountable to them (MacCormack, 2008).

Faced with the complexity of dealing with states, several humanitarian actors have tended to focus on community-based protection work. Protection crises are frequently characterised by a fractured relationship between the state and its citizens. Interventions must therefore be wary of making this relationship even more problematic. Recent efforts to support the self-protection strategies of communities are laudable. But if such strategies pit communities against the state, they risk creating more problems. Consider, for example, Paul D. William’s argument that “in some authoritarian states communities need to be made resilient precisely to defend themselves from the institutions of their own state”. A certain amount of caution therefore needs to be exercised here. Humanitarian interventions are limited in duration, and by ‘arming’ citizens against their own government, or supporting such strategies, humanitarians run the risk of further straining state-citizen relations, even though in the short term it may provide some degree of protection.

Finally, criticism of humanitarian protection has also come from gender and post-colonial approaches, which highlight the lack of agency of the protected. From a gender perspective, Iris Marion Young emphasises the masculine role of protection: “The role of the masculine protector puts those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in a subordinate position of dependence and obedience”. She argues that a similar relation can be traced in the current discourse on protection, where states mobilise fear and threat and assume a protectionist role towards their citizens. In colonial literature, protection has been viewed as a means to humanise colonisation. Its origin can be traced to the sixteenth century. Protection, for instance, figures in the discourse of Bartolomé De Las Casas, on whose recommendation the Spanish colonisers established protectors of Indians in South America. In the early nineteenth century, the British took up the idea and appointed protectors for their slave population in the Caribbean (Lester and Dussart, 2008). The role of the protector, however, was limited given that abuses were institutionalised in the form of slavery. In addition, the protector was supposed to familiarise the slave in the ways of the coloniser. The idea of the protector later evolved in the context of mass immigration of British settlers to Australia and New Zealand. It was formalised under the colonial administration, where an office for the protection of Aborigines was established. As opposition grew to the violent seizure of land by settlers, the colonial administration was forced to set up Protectorates of Aborigines in order “to render colonisation humane and controlled from the start” (Lester and Dussart, 2014:23).

The roots of humanitarian protection however go way beyond colonialism. The concept of protecting civilians through exemplary conduct in warfare finds expression in various cultures. Religious philosophy has played a significant role in the development of these ideas. In Hinduism, for instance, Manusmriti, an ancient text, lays down specific rules that
prohibit attacking non-military persons and objects (Sinha, 2005). Similarly, the church in France was instrumental in advocating for civilian immunity, when in 957 AD, Bishop Guy of Le Puy, frustrated by indiscriminate attacks on civilians, pleaded with the local knights to stop attacking unarmed civilians (Sim, 2003). The concept of distinction between combatants and non-combatants has been articulated in Islamic law too, according to scholar Muhamad Munir. And in Japan during the Edo period (1603–1867), the Bushido code of conduct, derived from Neoconfucian, Shinto and Buddhist thought, required warriors to be guardians of peace and stability (Yeophanton, 2014).

Conclusion

This paper highlights how debates about protection have been structured by the tension between a broader and a more limited role – between the need to do more and practical limitations. Due to the relentless toll of war on civilians, an increasingly diverse set of actors has been called on to protect them. But political interests and realities have brought complications. In an environment where protectors with diverse intentions proliferate, humanitarians find themselves struggling to provide safety, while having to zealously guard their neutral and independent space. In all these debates, the protected are consigned to the background, where they watch the futile attempts of their protectors.

Arjun Claire is a graduate of the Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH).

This article is based on research carried out as part of his Masters in Humanitarian Action at CERAH, available in full in English: http://www.cerahgeneve.ch/files/9014/5086/3388/Arjun _Claire__MAS_Dissertation_2014-15__Humanitarian_Protection__pdf.

The bibliographical references for this article are available at: http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/References_bibliographiques.pdf.

1 Not all humanitarian agencies embraced rights-based humanitarian action. In fact some such as Médecins Sans Frontières “gravitated towards a ‘pure’ humanitarianism” determined to keep politics out of humanitarian action (Barnett, 2009).
2 For Stensland and Sending (2008), the Canadian government’s PoC activism aimed to buttress its moral capital at a time when the country was crying for a seat at the Security Council. The analysis of such underlying motives, however, is beyond the scope of this study.
3 “All activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law”. This definition was later adopted by the IASC.
4 The protection framework consists of three activities: remedial, responsive and environment building.
Introduction

Humanitarian aid is principally funded by the member states of the OCDE’s Development Aid Committee (DAC) which currently includes the European Union and 28 states, most of them from the West. These donors financed 94% of humanitarian aid during the last decade and 90% ($16.8 million) in 2014.\(^1\)

However, among the contributing governments, non-Western donors are playing an increasingly important role. This essentially concerns two groups of countries: the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the Gulf States, which is understood as the six member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC): Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

The Gulf States currently contribute the most humanitarian aid among non-Western donors. Saudi Arabia was the biggest non-Western donor between 2000 and 2010, except in 2004 and 2009 when it was the United Arab Emirates. During that decade, the United Arab Emirates were the third biggest non-Western donor, Kuwait the fourth biggest, and Qatar the eighth biggest. Thus, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar are the four members of the GCC who are among the ten biggest non-Western donors who provide significant funding for humanitarian action.\(^2\) It is interesting to consider these four countries as a group, as they are all members of the GCC, and they share geographical, political, economic, cultural and religious features that give their way of operating and funding humanitarian aid common characteristics. They are all conservative monarchies, they share the same Arab and Sunni identity and their economic development is based on the exploitation of natural resources (petrol and gas).

And yet, the Gulf States are not per se emerging donors as they have been active donors since the discovery of oil and the establishment of their states in the 1960s and 70s, once they had gained independence from the British Empire. A World Bank report\(^3\) shows that between 1973 and 2008, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates contributed 1.5% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to external aid.

The first estimation of the financial contribution by CCG states to humanitarian aid (as opposed to development aid)\(^4\) since the 1970s is 120 billion dollars. No disaggregated estimation existed for humanitarian aid before 2000 when the FTS (Financial Tracking System) database was established by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The contributions from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait have grown from 1% of total global humanitarian contributions in 2000 to 7% in 2014. Over this period, the Gulf States have contributed 6.6 billion dollars, with Saudi Arabia the biggest contributor of the four, responsible for 55% of this figure (3.6 billion dollars), followed by the United Arab Emirates at 24% (1.5 billion dollars), Kuwait at 14% (922 million dollars) and Qatar at 7% (458 million dollars) (source: FTS).

This major contribution by the Gulf States to humanitarian action looks likely to continue in the medium and long term for a number of reasons. The first of these is that their motivation for funding humanitarian aid, which is both deeply rooted in Islam and strongly dependent on strategic interests linked to foreign policy, is durable in nature. Their desire to become involved in humanitarian aid in the long term has led to the implementation of two parallel strategies: on the one hand, taking part in the traditional humanitarian system; and on the other hand, creating their own institutional and operational system at the national and regional levels.

Their motivation for funding humanitarian aid, which is both deeply rooted in Islam and strongly dependent on strategic interests linked to foreign policy, is durable in nature. Their desire to become involved in humanitarian aid in the long term has led to the implementation of two parallel strategies: on the one hand, taking part in the traditional humanitarian system; and on the other hand, creating their own institutional and operational system at the national and regional levels.
The profound motives for funding humanitarian aid

Religion as a motive for funding humanitarian action

Humanitarian action is an essential part of Muslim religious practice and is rooted in Islamic law. It is a way of confirming one’s faith, removing one’s sins, gaining entry to Heaven and protecting oneself against misfortune. The funding of humanitarian action by believers is done via a number of types of donations, which can be either imposed or voluntary:

- **Zakat** is the third pillar of Islam, and is as important as the declaration of faith, prayer, fasting during Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Every Muslim has to redistribute 2.5% of their wealth to the poor because this spiritual obligation helps to promote a fairer society. In the Gulf States, Zakat is collected by state agencies who collect very large amounts of money each year. Between 20 and 60% of this is used for humanitarian action², notably to give food to the poor and provide orphans with assistance.

- **Sadaqa** is a form of voluntary charity that allows even larger amounts to be raised than through Zakat. This is encouraged, for example, during televised charity events, which are very popular in the Gulf States, and which are organized when there are humanitarian crises. Sadaqa is often used to build mosques.

- Islam also has a system known as **Kaffara** which makes it possible for a person who is unable to fast during Ramadan to compensate for this by feeding people who are in need or by paying for their meals.

- **Waqf** is a source of religious revenue: it consists of making an ongoing bequest to public, religious or charitable cause. The donation given in the form of usufruct becomes inalienable and produces dividends in the long term that are redistributed, for example, to build schools and hospitals.

- Lastly, as profit from usury, **Riba**, is not permitted by Islam, the interest from money is often redistributed to humanitarian projects.

In the Gulf States, the concept of humanitarian needs goes beyond the Western definition (access to food, water, healthcare, housing etc.) and includes spiritual needs, that is to say, everything a Muslim needs to fulfil their religious obligations. This is why humanitarian organisations from the Gulf also fund the construction of mosques and Koranic schools, engage in Da’wa (proselytism) through the distribution of copies of the Koran and seasonal activities such as the distribution of sheep for sacrifice during religious celebrations.

The religious notion of the **Umma**, which refers to the community of all Muslims, prioritises the distribution of aid to Muslims. However, though the data shows that contributions from the Gulf States do go primarily to Muslim countries (90% of funds going to fifteen countries all of which are Muslim according to the FTS), this is also because these countries have been the most affected by humanitarian crises. For 2013 alone, 75% of the people in the ten countries that received the most humanitarian aid were Muslim³.

Political and strategic interests

Internally, the Gulf States have a lot of migrant workers (85% of the population of the United Arab Emirates). They therefore fund certain humanitarian responses to ease the tensions caused by these people who often live in great poverty and who are from disaster-prone countries like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the Philippines. As a consequence, South Asia is the region that receives the second most humanitarian funding (12%) from the Gulf States after the Middle East (source: FTS). For example, the Qatari NGO, Reach Out To Asia (ROTA) was created in 2005 in order to provide assistance in the home countries of expatriates living in Qatar, 60% of whom are from Asia.

Regionally, external aid from the Gulf States is used to support Sunni movements (e.g. in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon) in order to contain the influence of their main competitor, Shiite Iran, and to maintain the stability of their monarchies.

This orientation was reinforced following the Arab Spring when, united by a deep fear of regional transformation, the Gulf States continued to provide external aid more to reinforce the stability of neighbouring monarchies than to meet the economic and social needs of the countries in transition. Thus, Tunisia only received loans of 504 million dollars and donations of 229 million dollars whereas Jordan and Morocco each received 5 billion dollars for development projects⁴. In the same way, after the February 2011 uprising, Bahrain received 10 billion dollars from the countries of the GCC to improve the well-being of its population (only one million people)⁵.

The aim of the Gulf States at the international level is to increase their influence and their recognition. To implement this strategy and build a “humanitarian” image, international humanitarian events are organised in the Arabian Peninsula and funding is provided for humanitarian responses.

The United Arab Emirates are certainly the most active country in this area. Since 2003, they have been organizing the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition (DIHAD), which is a major international conference on humanitarian and development aid. Also, a humanitarian logistics hub known as the “Dubai International Humanitarian City” has been created, which is exempt from all taxation and hosts nine United Nations agencies and more than 50 NGOs.

At the same time, funding of humanitarian crises has also increased the visibility of these countries on the international stage. Their strategy has consisted of making a
small number of large contributions which the recipient is asked to announce to the public. Many large, one-off contributions have thus been made since the 2000s, notably by Saudi Arabia which presents itself as the “Humanitarian kingdom”. In 2001, Saudi Arabia was the second biggest donor in the world, notably thanks to a contribution of 645 million dollars to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In 2008, it gave a large amount (339 million dollars) to the World Food Programme, and in 2014, it gave 500 million dollars to the United Nations operations in Iraq.

What is more, the Gulf States have understood that they can gain international recognition if they also fund non-Muslim countries. Humanitarian contributions are therefore used as a form of “soft power” to improve bilateral relations and build diplomatic ties beyond their traditional area of influence. This is the case, for example, with China which, without being a traditional beneficiary of external aid from the Gulf States, is a strategic partner and received 80 million dollars in aid following the 2008 earthquake. Another example is the 2010 crisis in Haiti. Saudi Arabia, which is an ally of the USA, was the biggest contributor to the Emergency Relief Fund (ERF), giving 50 million dollars.

Recently, in connection with its military intervention in Yemen, Saudi Arabia – which, at the same time, has been accused of serious violations of International Humanitarian Law10 – committed itself to funding the whole of the United Nations humanitarian appeal to the amount of 274 million dollars. This raises the question of whether this contribution is not an example of the “3D" strategy used by the United States in Afghanistan which consists of Diplomacy, Defence and Development (including humanitarian assistance) in order to “win over the hearts and minds" of a population that has been the victim of its bombs.

The Gulf States’ involvement with the traditional humanitarian system

Greater coordination with Western organisations

In keeping with their desire to take part in global governance, and rather than trying to change the structure of the existing system, the Gulf States are trying to increase their influence within the system. In order to do this, they are increasing their cooperation and coordination with Western donors even though questions of perception remain the main issue.

Indeed, the Gulf States consider that the international system has double standards in relation to religion, with humanitarian organisations accused of funding terrorism when they operate in Muslim countries, while Catholic organisations are exempt from such accusations and are able to conduct operations where they want. What is more, the United Nations are not seen as being very effective, with very high administrative costs, while Islamic finance limits administrative fees to 18%. Lastly, the rules and standards of the United Nations are perceived to be Western, and Arab countries not sufficiently represented. They consequently feel that it is the responsibility of Western countries to fund the United Nations.

Nevertheless, a change began in 2009, first of all in the area of development aid where dialogue was established between the DAC and Arab countries in order to improve cooperation. As for humanitarian aid, it was a conference organized by OCHA in Kuwait City in 2012 that led to open debate following decades of mistrust, during which it was recognised that there was a need to improve communication and coordination. To this end, a bilingual Arab-English internet portal (the Arab Humanitarian portal) was created to provide information about initiatives taken by the United Nations and the Gulf States. The Syrian crisis then saw the first ever operational coordination meetings between international organisations and organisations from the Middle East.

To date, the United Arab Emirates are the most involved in coordination bodies: it has been a member of the OCHA Donors Support Group since 2006, and that of the HCR since 2009. Since 1 July 2014, it has had the status of a “Participant" of the DAC and, as such, takes part in coordination meetings without being able to take part in formal decision-making.

Lastly, both the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are members of the Consultative Committee of the CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund) for 2015-2016.

A growing number of operational partnerships with Western actors

Numerous Western organisations have established offices in the Gulf States to increase their portfolio of donors. This approach, which is purely aimed at raising funds, has not been particularly fruitful, with only a few organisations obtaining funding. Until now, only Qatar and the United Arab Emirates appear to have funded Western NGOs, but there has been more cooperation in terms of operational partnerships. Indeed, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have both established close relations with Western actors in
the form of technical and operational partnerships. The Humanitarian Forum is another example of this shared desire to promote partnerships and facilitate cooperation between actors from the West and the Muslim world. Created in Great Britain in 2004, this is an international network that brings together Qatari and Kuwaiti agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international NGOs, Muslim donors and their Western counterparts.

**Increased funding of the United Nations**

Apart from 2001 and 2008 when Saudi Arabia made exceptionally high donations, the humanitarian contributions of the Gulf States rose steadily between 2000 and 2011. However, after 2012, their funding rose significantly to reach of a peak of 1.6 billion dollars in 2014, which is 8.4% of governmental contributions worldwide.

The United Nations was the main beneficiary of this increase, which was directly linked to the Syrian crisis. Out of a total of 1.8 billion dollars disbursed by the Gulf States for Syria from 2012 to 2014 – with Kuwait being the largest contributor at 633 million dollars – 41% was disbursed via the United Nations (source: FTS). This is mainly due to the fact that a bilateral channel is not an option in this context, given the Gulf States’ opposition to the Syrian government.

It should nevertheless be noted that between 2000 and 2014, with the exception of the annual contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the contributions to United Nations agencies were very irregular, despite being the main recipient of humanitarian funds from Gulf States (39%), ahead of bilateral aid to crisis-affected governments (26%). The World Food Programme (WFP) was the main beneficiary of funds from these countries at 14%, followed by the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) at 7% (source: FTS).

The large contributions to funding appeals by the United Nations for Iraq, Yemen and Syria are in keeping with this trend. However, the drop in the price of oil which began at the end of 2014 could affect the level of contributions from these countries in the medium term. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation created a department of humanitarian affairs in 2008 which is involved in policy development and facilitating dialogue between the NGOs from the fifty-seven member countries. Its significant contribution to the response to the famine in Somalia in 2011-2012 was recognized in a report by the Humanitarian Policy Group. In 2011, this department signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OCHA.

The League of Arab States, for its part, signed an MOU with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC). In 2014, it also set up an Arab Humanitarian Coordination Mechanism within its secretariat.

Though it has not yet created an institutional cooperation system, the Gulf Cooperation Council has set up a coordination committee of Red Cross Societies. It also is planning to open a crisis management centre in Kuwait to coordinate the activities of its member countries during disasters.

The Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is independent of the IFRC, brings together all the societies in the region once a year, and aims to promote a common position, such as the commitment to support the Palestinian people.

Finally, the Qatar Foreign Ministry has launched the “Hope For” project which aims to reinforce civil and military cooperation in the response to natural disasters. To do this, it plans to create centres of excellence all over the world which will exchange lessons and good practice.

The large contributions to funding appeals by the United Nations for Iraq, Yemen and Syria are in keeping with this trend. However, the drop in the price of oil which began at the end of 2014 could affect the level of contributions from these countries in the medium term. Indeed, certain analysts have established that despite the fact that their decisions to provide external aid are determined by strategic and political interests, the fact that the price of oil has fallen could nevertheless have an impact on their level of contributions.

**The Gulf States’ creation of their own humanitarian institutions**

**The creation of regional institutional coordination and operational cooperation mechanisms that promote their identity**

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation created a department of humanitarian affairs in 2008 which is involved in policy development and facilitating dialogue between the NGOs from the fifty-seven member countries. Its significant contribution to the response to the famine in Somalia in 2011-2012 was recognized in a report by the Humanitarian Policy Group. In 2011, this department signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OCHA.

The League of Arab States, for its part, signed an MOU with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC). In 2014, it also set up an Arab Humanitarian Coordination Mechanism within its secretariat.

Though it has not yet created an institutional cooperation system, the Gulf Cooperation Council has set up a coordination committee of Red Cross Societies. It also is planning to open a crisis management centre in Kuwait to coordinate the activities of its member countries during disasters.

The Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is independent of the IFRC, brings together all the societies in the region once a year, and aims to promote a common position, such as the commitment to support the Palestinian people.

Finally, the Qatar Foreign Ministry has launched the “Hope For” project which aims to reinforce civil and military cooperation in the response to natural disasters. To do this, it plans to create centres of excellence all over the world which will exchange lessons and good practice.

**The large contributions to funding appeals by the United Nations for Iraq, Yemen and Syria are in keeping with this trend. However, the drop in the price of oil which began at the end of 2014 could affect the level of contributions from these countries in the medium term.**

Following the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the fact that they were accused of financing terrorism, the Gulf States established counter-terrorism measures which increased government control over financial movements, notably over private funds. Thus, since 2003, Saudi NGOs (apart from the Saudi Red Crescent) are no longer allowed to send funds abroad, and since 2012, they can no longer collect public
funds, either via internet donations or outside mosques or other public places. In Qatar, national and international partners chosen by NGOs need to be validated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and also need to hold a license and be accredited before they can receive funding.

However, these new measures have not put an end to the accusations, and certain organisations from the Gulf have been accused of financing jihadist groups13. They are accused of providing material and financial support to jihadist organisations, thus allowing the jihadists to provide social services and humanitarian aid in order to increase their popularity and gain the support of populations.

Humanitarian contributions from governments, for their part, are closely managed by the ruling royal families. Funding decisions, which are often made in response to warnings from ambassadors in crisis-affected countries, are therefore generally very quick. However, not all promises made lead to concrete disbursements: between 2000 and 2014, 1.3 billion dollars that had been promised were not allocated (source: FTS) by the four countries, which raises the question of the reliability and predictability of their funding.

Until very recently, due to the absence of a dedicated centralized body, public humanitarian aid was managed by national agencies in charge of development aid and by different ministries, without coordination. In addition, the ruling families have created numerous foundations with social and humanitarian goals that play a central role in the political and economic policies of these states. As the members of the royal families contribute both privately through their foundations and in the name of the state due to their ministerial functions, this sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between public and private funds.

Finally, while in Kuwait state humanitarian contributions are managed by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and in Qatar they are managed via the Foreign Ministry’s International Development Department, there has recently been significant institutional progress in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In 2014 and 2015, the two countries created national institutions that are specifically dedicated to humanitarian affairs. The United Arab Emirates established the Humanitarian Aid Coordination Committee within the Ministry of International Cooperation and Development (MICAD) in May 2014. In Saudi Arabia, the King Salman Center (KSC) for Relief and Humanitarian Work was established in May 2015, at the initiative of the new king, with the objective of coordinating the humanitarian activities of the government and those of Saudi NGOs abroad. These recent initiatives both contribute to rationalizing humanitarian aid which had previously been managed in a disorganized manner, and are a means of keeping control over the sector by means of specialized bodies that are becoming increasingly professional.

Conclusion

This study shows that the Gulf States’ funding of humanitarian aid is a sustainable trend and that their contribution is growing both as donors and as actors due to their new institutional and operational bodies. Over and above an engagement that may seem circumstantial due to the current crises in the Middle East, the motives for funding and the structural organisation that is being put in place show that the contribution of these countries is likely to change traditional aid architecture. As a consequence, in order to develop the universal nature of humanitarian aid, there is an urgent need to understand these actors and to learn to work with them to ensure that aid is as effective as possible.

Céline Billat has worked for the HCR in Senegal, Chad, DRC and Yemen. This article is based on research carried out as part of her Masters in Humanitarian Action at the Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH), available in full in English: http://www.cerageneve.ch/files/17/45268/0956/BILLAT_Celine_-_MAS_Dissertation_CERAH_2015_-_20.11.2015.pdf

2 Oman and Bahrain are also members of the GCC but have not yet emerged as major donors on the humanitarian scene. They are therefore not included in the analysis in this article.
4 External aid specifically dedicated to funding humanitarian aid.
11 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (SHARP) et Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) combinés.
Towards genuine partnership with Haitian NGOs

On 12 January 2010, Haiti experienced one of the biggest disasters in its history. This was followed by the mass arrival of humanitarian actors of all kinds, from all over the world. American, European, religious and non-faith international NGOs, as well as numerous United Nations agencies organized and coordinated the humanitarian response. The failings of the humanitarian response in Haiti have been widely documented. One of these was the fact that Haitian civil society organisations were not sufficiently included despite already being present in the field to provide the victims of the earthquake with assistance, and despite their experience in dealing with the frequent crises that affect the island.

Why were these local stakeholders left out? This seems difficult to understand with hindsight, knowing that the participation of communities and civil society is recognized as being a determining factor for the quality and long-term sustainability of programmes. The answer is to be found in the inequality that exists between international and local Haitian organisations, in terms of power, and notably financial power. Thus, local NGOs, who were unable to take part in the Cluster meetings organized in the early months of the crisis because they were held in English, were sidelined and were unable to gain access to the majority of international funds.

The reason that is often given to justify this inequality is that local stakeholders did not have the capacity to absorb and manage the humanitarian funds. This is undoubtedly a valid reason. How can a local NGO whose annual budget rarely exceeds 50 000 USD suddenly be expected to manage millions? And this is without mentioning the procedures involved in responding to calls for proposals and in reporting that certain international donors impose, and which are sometimes very complicated.

The fact that local stakeholders were not taken into account in the humanitarian response in Haiti unfortunately (but quite naturally) caused frustration among the population, local and national authorities, and civil society, who, as a result, often ended up as observers of the reconstruction of their country.

However, following a great deal of criticism, the humanitarian community, including the United Nations, has made a great deal of effort in the last two years to include local stakeholders in the design and monitoring of their programmes. It is now generally recognized that Haitian civil society organisations are essential players due to their understanding of the cultural and social realities of communities, their legitimacy within communities and their experience. Many of the international NGOs who are still present in Haiti work with local structures, whether these are associations, the authorities or NGOs. Organisations like Christian Aid made the most of the partnerships they had established with Haitian NGOs and were able to implement sustainable programmes. In recent years, the involvement of civil society stakeholders in Haiti’s thematic working groups and in coordination structures like the CLIQ or the CCO has also considerably increased.

But do local stakeholders really play a bigger role in making decisions in terms of strategies, programmes or budgets? Were another disaster to take place, would the roles of local and international NGOs be distributed differently than in 2010? This is not certain. The argument would be put forward that local NGOs are development organisations and do not have the capacity to respond rapidly in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

What, then, is needed? First of all, time is needed to understand the specific characteristics of Haitian civil society and to identify areas where there is a need for capacity building. Genuine support should be provided, in the medium term, to build the capacity of local actors to access the financial and logistical means needed to respond to disasters, and to manage them in accordance with the demands of the sector. Despite the political crisis that the country is currently going through, the humanitarian situation in Haiti is calmer at the moment. It is important to take advantage of this period to establish genuine partnerships and transfer skills and technologies. Donors and United Nations
agencies no doubt also need to make their funding request and reporting mechanisms more flexible, as these are
difficult to understand for anyone not from the sector.

Haitian civil society is rich and varied. It has been mobilized independently of the international humanitarian sector
for years. There is great dynamism among structures such as the Plateforme de la Société Civile sur le Changement
Climatique² (PSC-CC), the Réseau National De Défense des Droits de l’Homme³ (RNDDH) and APROSIFA⁴ who have been
able to establish strong links with the communities they work with, and have sometimes developed coordination and
evaluation mechanisms that are more effective than international structures. It would be a shame not to take
advantage of these resources to avoid the errors of the past and ensure that programmes are sustainable.

Above all, there is a need for a paradigm shift within the international humanitarian community, which tends to see
local actors as intermediaries that they are forced to work with, rather than as stakeholders who can bring genuine
added value to their programmes.

Prosperity Raymond, President of CLIO (Cadre de Liaison Inter Organisation)
and representative of Christian Aid in the Caribbean.

¹ Frédéric Thomas, L’échec humanitaire : le cas haïtien, Cetri/ Couleur Lires, 2013. Répondre aux crises : L’AFD, la Fondation de France et le financement des
ONG en Haïti après le Séisme, 2015: http://www.afd.fr/webdav/site/afd/shared/PUBLICATIONS/RECHERCHE/Evaluations/Evaluations-
conjointes/Evaluation%20conjoncte%20Ha%C3%A9%20financement%20reconstruction%20post-s%C3%A9isme.pdf
² http://pscchaiti.org/
³ http://rnddh.org/
⁴ http://www.aprosifa.org/
Aid and Quality

Disintermediation - the future of Aid in a Digital world?

Ian Gray

The upcoming World Humanitarian Summit is an attempt to bring change to the humanitarian system. However, with or without the WHS, the foundations for disruptive change are already being laid. What are these foundations, and how will they change the current models of humanitarian response?

What is Disruptive Digital Disintermediation?

I recently received a tweeted picture of a presentation that was being given by IBM to Humanitarian Aid workers. It listed a number of businesses that were disrupting and digitally disintermediating different industries. It listed Uber (Taxi industry), AirBnB (Hotel industry), Skype (Telco industry), Alibaba (Retail industry), Netflix (Cinema) amongst others. The inference was that the humanitarian industry itself could be disrupted and disintermediated. But can it?

So what is disintermediation? It is effectively about ‘cutting out the middlemen;’ the intermediaries in a value chain. Humanitarian Organisations are invariably ‘middlemen,’ transferring value from one entity (donors and supporters) to another (Disaster Affected Communities). This is most often in the form of money, but it is also in ‘know how,’ access to networks and knowledge and brokering. Digital disintermediation is cutting out the ‘middlemen’ through the use of digital technologies.

And what of ‘Disruption?’ The use of the term ‘disruption’ in the private sector was brought to the world’s consciousness by Clayton Christensen of Harvard Business School. He advanced the term in a seminal article ‘Disruptive technologies: Catching the wave’ in the Harvard Business Review in 1995, which was followed by his book called ‘The Innovator’s Dilemma’ in 1997. In these works, Christensen outlined a theory based on examples of new innovative businesses that have disrupted the more traditional players in each industry. The question that remains is whether the Humanitarian sector is one of those traditional ‘industries’ that is likely to see disruptive innovation, particularly in the form of digital disintermediation; what we will refer to as D3 (Disruptive Digital Disintermediation).

I often use the phrase ‘If you can digitise it, you can disintermediate it,’ and although overly simplistic, it is a good rule of thumb. An equally simplistic heuristic is to view humanitarian response as covering three areas; People, Things and Money. It can therefore be useful to use this oversimplification in order to highlight how the building blocks of D3 are already being built for each of these areas.

People

A surprising amount of people’s work can be digitised. An example is, the development of knowledge management platforms that distribute know how to anybody who has access to them, such as the Knowledge Point platform that is multi-agency and allows people to access technical expertise that is not readily at hand. Information management and analysis through context awareness platforms and remote situation rooms is another area where the information that people collect on the ground can be mixed with other data from social media and on the web and then mapped to provide a rich picture of what is happening in any given context. Even more mundane tasks that have traditionally been carried out in the context where a disaster has happened can be carried out by people thousands of miles away using agencies’ own digital systems, or external digital platforms such as Crowdflower and Samasource for micro-tasking. An example of voluntary micro-tasking is the Digital Humanitarian Network who work as part of crisis mappers to map information after the onset of an emergency. Once a process or piece of knowledge has been digitised, moving them around the world becomes possible, allowing people on the other side of the world from a disaster to be working on fundamental aspects of delivering the response that were traditionally carried out in the disaster setting, but in reality do not require someone with a strong understanding of the context to perform.

In a way, these are incremental improvements on existing ways of doing things. What is more disruptive, is the use of digital tools to enable peer-to-peer humanitarian response. The large penetration of social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, in conjunction with the ubiquity of search engines like Google, has meant that, where there has been widespread access to these platforms, affected communities and their social networks (family, friends, diaspora), have been able to express needs, and respond to them completely independently of any centralised coordinating mechanism, or traditional humanitarian actors. The first significant instance of this trend was in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010, while Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda saw this taken to another level.

Over the past 5 years or so, Google, Facebook and others have looked at how their tools could be better optimised for such peer-to-peer support, with the development of software such as Google’s ‘person finder’ which is designed to assist people to locate each other in the aftermath of an
emergency. This digital enabling of self-organisation between those requiring assistance and those wishing to offer help creates a strong platform for disintermediation of the current humanitarian system.

We are only at the start of the use of digital platforms and social media for peer-to-peer humanitarian response. This type of response, where individuals can show solidarity to their fellow citizens in disaster-prone middle-income countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and even less-well-developed countries such as Kenya and Nigeria, has huge potential. The use of existing platforms and concepts such as Freecycle (for donating material relief), Uber (for transporting material relief and human assistance), and AirBnB (for providing shelter to displaced people) are just some of the ways that Disruptive Digital Disintermediation can occur in the humanitarian industry. This creates huge opportunities for individual solidarity as well as numerous inherent risks.

**Things**

A large part of humanitarian response has traditionally been the transfer of non-food items to disaster-affected communities. There are numerous types of non-food items that people require in the aftermath of a disaster, including shelter materials, cookware, blankets, buckets etc. with the majority of goods distributed being held in large warehouses in hubs across the globe, with most humanitarian agencies having supply chain management and logistics functions, and warehouses with lots of ‘kits’ in them.

A new Disruptive Digital Disintermediation phenomenon is occurring that will have a profound impact on these supply chains and the provision of ‘things’ in humanitarian settings. We currently stand at the threshold of what is being dubbed the fourth industrial revolution. The third industrial revolution has been the process of digitising physical goods, systems and processes to make them more efficient, scalable and accessible. The Fourth Industrial revolution will see this process go almost full circle, in that the digitised world can now be used to control and make things in the physical world through the internet of things, physical objects with embedded technology that enable them to connect to each other through the internet and exchange data, and new maker technologies.

The most familiar and exciting of these maker technologies is digital 3D printing. This is the ability to design physical products yourself using software and then print them out yourself using a 3D printer. Most of this is currently on a small scale, but the first 3D printed house has been made, and it is being used for car parts. The exciting thing about this for humanitarian and development agencies is that manufacturing production can become hyper-localised.

But what does this mean for humanitarian work? 3D printing has already been trialled in a number of emergencies through organisations like ‘Field Ready’. They started their work in Haiti, using 3D printing to create much needed umbilical cord clamps for maternity units. By being co-located with the health staff they could rapidly and iteratively improve their design, leading to a product that was fit for purpose in a timeframe that would be impossible to achieve using traditional manufacturing and supply chain processes. Along with 3D printing, other maker technologies, such as extruders and laser cutting, are capable of manufacturing ‘things’ that disaster-affected communities need.

Although these approaches are in their infancy, and can only currently produce small items quite slowly, the next 5-10 years will see this situation change dramatically. The two main constraints on 3D printing for humanitarian needs currently are the cost, and the size and volume of products that can be printed quickly. The first of these constraints will see a revolution in the coming years as some of the materials and printer technologies start to come ‘off patent’. This will enable non-proprietary generic materials for printing to be produced, and cheaper printers to be made, leading to a significant reduction in cost. Volume is a more difficult challenge to crack, but strides are also being made to address this issue.

By investing in the capacity of local micro-enterprises and small businesses to produce these goods, the building blocks for the disruptive digital disintermediation of ‘things’ are already in place. In the future, large logistics functions, supply chains and stockpiling of goods in global distribution centres will be more of a last resort than the first choice.

**Money**

The digitisation of money in humanitarian response is well documented and has some momentum behind it, with the results of the recent High-level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers’ work calling for an increase in the use of this mechanism. However, this approach is not yet disrupting the sector, in fact only 6% of all humanitarian financing is delivered to affected communities through cash transfers. This is despite the growing evidence of the powerful impact of unconditional cash transfers for vulnerable and disaster-affected communities. A number of agencies are taking cash transfers and their disruptive capability seriously. The World Food Programme is increasingly turning its
programming to cash and vouchers, as they understand that the advent of large-scale unconditional cash transfers seriously threatens their current business model.

The proliferation of mobile phones and mobile money means that in the future, the vast majority of these types of transfers will happen digitally. Not only is it the best methodology in the right conditions, but it is also the methodology that is most scalable. The disintermediating implications of large-scale digital cash transfers are clear. It creates the potential for mass public and institutional giving directly to disaster-affected populations, via platforms like GiveDirectly. The role of traditional humanitarian actors in this situation will need to be repurposed, to focus on critical areas such as inclusion, targeting and verification, market analysis and accountability mechanisms. The full implication of large-scale, unconditional cash transfers means that the humanitarian aid industry, in whatever guise it will continue to exist, will need to turn from a supply-driven system, that is responding to ‘need,’ to a demand-driven system, that is responding to people being able to ‘choose’ what goods and services they are willing to pay for. Humanitarian disasters are complex, and large-scale, digital cash transfers will not always be the most appropriate solution. However, they will become the default rather than the exception.

Digital cash transfers are not the end of the road for how digital disruptive disintermediation could affect the humanitarian sector. Cryptocurrencies, such as the Bitcoin digital currency, have shown that there is the opportunity to create value that people can exchange for goods and services. The simplest way to explain cryptocurrencies is that the only reason money works is that there is trust in the Central Bank of the country to guarantee its value. This guarantee means that you can exchange this money for goods and services, knowing that the person you are buying them from also trusts the ‘value’ of the money you are giving them. The key term is trust. If everyone involved in a transaction trusts a cryptocurrency, then it has value that you can trade for goods and services. The potential for cryptocurrencies in the humanitarian sector is already being investigated. Paul Currion wrote about this last year, outlining how he feels that ‘AidCoin’ could be used, and it’s potential benefits for accountability, efficiency and incentives.

Cryptocurrencies bypass the traditional ‘pipes’ through which money is currently transferred around the world. These pipes are the bank accounts and transfer mechanisms that are controlled by established financial institutions who have a strong influence over the regulatory framework for these financial flows, but are also subject to foreign policy restrictions in areas such as anti-terror financing regulations. Those agencies who are currently working on the Syria crisis will understand the implications of these controls on transferring money to their humanitarian responses and partners in that country. In effect, being able to transfer funds using a cryptocurrency means that agencies would be able to bypass the current restrictive, risk-averse, costly and overly bureaucratic ‘financial pipes,’ particularly if there is transparency built into the currencies that allows financial tracking, similarly to what Currion outlines in his article. Therefore, in the coming decades, agencies faced with a similar set of circumstances as they currently face in Syria with money transfers, will not just be exploring Hawala systems as an alternative, but also cryptocurrencies.

Digital Ecosystems

No single product or solution enables digital disintermediation. Such disintermediation happens when a number of factors are aligned, connected and enabling each other, thereby providing the ecosystem for disruption. The more layers and the denser this ecosystem is, the more chance there is for disruption.

For example, humanitarian cash transfers using MPesa, a technology for transferring money between mobile phones, could not have occurred without serious investment by donors into the East African Mobile Phone Networks, the mass availability and penetration of mobile phones in the Kenyan market and the weak power of the financial institutions in Kenya to establish regulations to challenge this disruptive innovation.

Ten years ago, the idea of East Africa being at the vanguard of mobile money would have seemed fanciful, however due to the right ecosystem and enablers (or lack of blocklers) being in place, that is what it has become. Those looking to develop resilience strategies in disaster prone countries should be mapping the digital ecosystem and the enabling environment in order to anticipate how, and where digital disruptive innovation could increase resilience, including the local response capacity of affected communities and countries.
So what does this all mean for humanitarians?

It is clear that much of the work that Humanitarian Agencies carry out could potentially be subject to Disruptive Digital Disintermediation. It will not be a uniform or quick process, but the journey has already started. If you work for a humanitarian agency, then you need to seriously think about the opportunities and threats that Disruptive Digital Disintermediation poses for the communities you seek to assist, and for how your organisation currently works. Here is a small sample of some of the most pertinent of these.

Opportunities

1. Increasing choice and dignity for disaster-affected communities regarding the goods and services they can access from an increasing number of actors.
2. Turning ‘need’ into ‘effective demand’ through the use of digital cash transfers
3. Building local capacity; of makers to be part of the response, and for local populations to self-organise.
4. Reducing cost and inefficiency of bloated supply chains and inefficient bureaucracies
5. Enabling solidarity by providing multiple platforms and ways of assisting and asking for assistance.
6. Enabling quicker and better knowledge transfer to improve every sector, including, health, education, WASH and protection programmes.

Threats

1. Further erosion of humanitarian principles as assistance is provided by multiple actors who are not humanitarian, and aid is provided based on factors other than need.
2. Marketising of a public good, leading to the potential corporatisation of humanitarian aid.
3. Digital exclusion could lead to increased vulnerability of those who do not have access to mobile phones and the internet, or the skills and abilities to use them.
4. Quality of response could deteriorate as guidelines such as the Core Humanitarian Standard are not adhered to by new actors and individuals
5. Exacerbating conflict and increasing protection issues for affected people where information and data become ‘weaponised’ by parties to the conflict.

However, thinking about these opportunities and threats is not sufficient. Starting to build capabilities in your organisation to harness new technologies and approaches is critical in order to improve your humanitarian work and ensure that your organisation is fit for the future of humanitarian response.

Ian Gray is the Founder of Gray Dot Catalyst, a consultancy that works in the areas of Strategy, Innovation and Partnering.

5 http://www.crowdfower.com (accessed 13 March 2016)
6 http://www.samasource.org (accessed 13 March 2016)
7 http://digitalhumanitarians.com (accessed 13 March 2016)
8 https://google.org/personfinder/global/home.html (accessed 13 March 2016)
9 http://www.freecycle.org (accessed 13 March 2016)
10 https://www.uber.com (accessed 13 March 2016)
11 https://www.airbnb.co.uk (accessed 13 March 2016)
12 Beyond the scope of this article due to space constraints and the fact that it is not as directly disintermediating as other areas, is the power of digital tools to assist communities to hold duty bearers and powerful organisations to account. Digital tools are increasing the democratic and consumer power of many affected communities, who are able to use them to lift up their voices and stories to influence decision makers and the local and global public.
16 http://www.fieldready.org (accessed 13 March 2016)
18 Ibid., pp. 6 & 13.
20 Voir https://medium.com/@paulcurrinn/introduction-513b66d92d#e7a1h6vvd (accessed 13 March 2016)
Nepal earthquake: a rapid review of the response and a few lessons learnt

François Grünwald & Anne Burlat

On 25 April 2015, Nepal was hit by an earthquake of 7.8 magnitude, its epicentre located 81 km North-West of the capital, which affected rural areas, towns and certain neighbourhoods of Kathmandu. Aftershocks continued for several months. In total, an estimated 8 million people were affected. Even though Nepal was one of the first countries in South Asia to establish laws and policies in the area of disaster management, numerous factors make the response to this type of disaster complex. This article describes some of the characteristics of the operational context and the response, a major concern of the aid sector having been to avoid the errors of the Haiti earthquake response. It presents the lessons learned, and the areas to improve and anticipate in managing similar disasters in the future.

Nepal’s risk profile

Nepal is one of the 20 most disaster-prone countries in the world and has gone through many crises in the last 20 years, including a bloody civil war, and regular disasters of different kinds (floods, landslides, earthquakes, windstorms, hailstorms, fire, glacial lake outburst flood (GLOFs) and avalanches). Out of 200 countries, Nepal ranks 11th and 30th, respectively, with regard to relative vulnerability to earthquakes and floods (UNDP/BCPR, 2004). The physical vulnerability of Nepal is very high, with most buildings and infrastructures built without reference to hazard-resistant technology.

Kathmandu, the most populated district in Nepal, has been the subject of most attention in terms of “earthquake preparedness” for many years. Out of 21 cities worldwide that lie in similar seismic zones, Kathmandu is the most at risk in terms of impact on people. Moreover, rapid, haphazard urban development, including non-compliance with the building code, the failure to use qualified engineers or trained builders, the encroachment of buildings into open spaces and water table depletion, are increasing vulnerability at a significant rate. Kathmandu’s critical infrastructure and essential services are also extremely vulnerable.

However, due to its position on the slopes of the Himalayas, rural Nepal has also been a priority for the disaster risk reduction community, with several donors (ECHO, DFID, OFDA, etc.) investing massive amounts of resources in the development of risk reduction and management capacities, including through a flagship programme, the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC), bringing together UN agencies and other DRR stakeholders1 to work on earthquake and flood preparedness. Specific activities have been carried out to make the health system resilient to shocks and able to remain operational to deliver health services of all kinds after a high impact disaster. The programmes implemented have involved both rural and urban CBDRR and a number of specific programmes supported by USAID, DFID and DG ECHO have aimed to ensure that health services will function in the event of a high-impact earthquake both in the Kathmandu Valley and in other parts of the country.

Nepal was one of the first countries in South Asia to establish disaster risk management policies and laws through the 1982 Natural Calamity (Relief) Act. This document formalizes disaster response as a responsibility of the government to provide relief to the victims of disasters, and it designates authorities at the centre and district levels to coordinate the rescue and relief efforts of various response agencies. However, the experience of the past three decades has shown that this structure is only capable of coordinating small to medium level disasters.

Learning from the devastating 1988 Udayapur earthquake, the Nepali Government began drawing up the Nepal National Building Code, which was finally completed in 1994, and carried out several studies. The Building Code that was developed incorporated provisions for making buildings earthquake-resistant, and addressed the problems not only of buildings designed by engineers but also of houses in rural, semi-urban and urban areas that are mostly constructed without input from staff qualified in para-seismic construction. However, the building code was not enforced immediately. The Government only decided to make compliance with the building code mandatory in all government buildings in 2003 and encouraged its implementation in all municipal areas. It is widely recognized that it is not yet enforced by municipalities who do not have the capacity to do so.

The earthquake

On Saturday 25 April, around mid-day, Nepal was struck by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake with the epicentre located 81 km northwest of the Nepali capital Kathmandu at a depth of 15km. This was not the “big one” that people feared, and affected rural areas more than urban ones. Luckily, most people were at home in the city and were able to escape from their houses. Many people stayed outside in open spaces for a few nights, but facilities set up in fields by IOM and OXFAM were underused. There was less destruction in the Kathmandu valley than had been feared, and most people preferred to stay in their neighbourhoods to protect their belongings and remain with their friends and relatives.

After a series of aftershocks, another significant tremor of 7.3 magnitude affected another area west of Kathmandu on 12 May 2015. This caused further damage, and increased

Humanitarian Aid on the move

Review n°17
levels of fear and anxiety. Aftershocks continued for many months. It is estimated that around eight million people have been affected overall.

Luckily, the airport was unaffected and remained operational, but was rapidly congested. Most of the critical infrastructures of the city remained more or less functional, including telecommunications, electricity, and water, with only short disruptions. There were no major fires, despite the fact that these are often caused by earthquakes in urban settings.

As of 3 June 2015, the Government of Nepal (GoN) reported a total of 505,745 houses destroyed and 279,330 houses damaged by earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May. 8,702 people were killed and thousands injured. An estimated 2.8 million people are still in need of humanitarian assistance.

It is important to clarify some salient features of the situation:

• April-May was not a cold period, although weather was an issue for the high altitude villages that were affected;
• The events took place before the rainy season as the area was still relatively easy. The transportation of people and goods became much more complicated when the monsoon rains started; there were frequent landslides in areas where the geological substratum had been weakened by the series of tremors;
• The majority of people tried to avoid staying too long in tents in the camps and, as soon as they could, they moved to find shelter with relatives. Very few camps were established in the districts although groups of temporary shelters were erected, but in most instances these were located very close to the former houses if not on the same sites;
• The situation became much more complicated when the political situation at the Indian border made it difficult to import goods. Fuel and many priority consumer goods are now in very short supply;
• Transporting aid and reconstruction materials, and travelling to and from the field for staff rotation and monitoring became contingent on the capacity to access black market fuel…;
• Several political events took place during the post-earthquake period and contributed to slowing down key processes, such as the creation of the National Reconstruction Authority, the promulgation of the reconstruction code, etc.;
• The earthquakes took place while the harvest was in granaries and seeds were being stored in houses. Due to the destruction in rural areas, many agricultural assets were lost.

The initial response to the 2015 earthquakes: successes and shortcomings

The national response

Despite its many structural and institutional weaknesses and limited means, the Government of Nepal reacted relatively swiftly. The fact that the earthquake took place at mid-day on a Saturday, during the only day off of the week, meant that all offices were closed and key staff involved in the response had to rush to their work place. The national institutions reacted as well as they could in this context, with the immediate activation of the NEOC (National Emergency Operation Centre) and the mobilization of the Nepali Armed Forces (which include “special response teams”) and the Nepali Red Cross. The disaster mainly affected rural areas, though several urban centres, including Kathmandu itself, were also seriously affected, and there were several aftershocks, a particularly strong one taking place in a different region. This situation continued after the second significant aftershock in the Sindhupalchok area. To respond to this situation, the government mobilized its full logistical capacity, including the fleet of military helicopters to deploy national staff (and soon international teams) to remote areas. However, many areas remained accessible only on foot due to the large number of landslides caused by the weakened geological strata.

The strong institutional position of the district authorities helped with regard to the transfer of information to the central level, and by mid-May, the Government had announced that 14 of the 75 Nepali districts had been severely impacted. However, the engagement of Chief District Officers and Local Development Officers (who respectively report to the MoFALD and the MoHA) was uneven, as was their internal capacity to coordinate the aid system. They nevertheless played a key role in the humanitarian response and recovery phases.

As an auxiliary to the public authorities, the Nepali Red Cross Society (NRCS) rapidly activated its Emergency Operation Centre, mobilized its resources, including many volunteers in the district chapters and branches. Light USAR teams present in the different branches and chapters of the NRCS were mobilized in the afternoon of the 25th April and started to work immediately.

The government established a system for allocating financial assistance to earthquake victims, so that they could start rebuilding basic facilities. This initial cash grant allowed many affected families to repay their debts.
The international response

One principal concern of the aid community was to not repeat the mistakes made in Haiti after the earthquake (the phrase, “Haiti is the Bogey man”, was frequently heard2).

The search and rescue response

UNDAC rapidly deployed a strong contingent via the Virtual-OSOCC on the GDACS website (OCHA) and established an OSOCC in Kathmandu, a Reception and Dispatch Center (RDC) at the airport and a Base of Operations (BoO) to coordinate logistics for field displacements. Many USAR teams arrived in the country in the days after the earthquake with varied effectiveness and impact as shown by the following data obtained from the NEOC: 34 teams, including more than 20 canine teams, were deployed at significant cost; 149 dead bodies were recovered and only 16 survivors were found. On 27 April, the GoN decided that there were enough in-country SAR teams to meet the remaining needs and announced the end of the international USAR phase on 3 May. The GoN also asked all foreign USAR teams to leave the country as it began the transition from relief to early recovery activities. No additional international teams were requested to respond to the May aftershock as a certain number teams were still present in the country.

The health response

WHO called for assistance and many countries and organizations sent Foreign Medical Teams (FMT) to support Nepal with medical services such as surgery, mobile clinics, orthopaedics, gynaecology, obstetrics, and psychiatry. Very rapidly, the FMTs in Kathmandu realized that the significant and relatively well-prepared national health capacity in Kathmandu was able to cope with the needs, while there were far greater needs in rural areas. Despite the efforts of the HEOC, coordinating health actors in the field was much more complicated. Much of the response in rural areas was limited to places that were easily accessible and this sometimes led to saturation and duplication, while many areas in need did not receive any assistance. Some villages were visited by a number of different evaluation teams, sometimes even three health assessment teams, who had not coordinated their visits.

Shelters and NFI

With many houses completely or partly destroyed and the monsoon season arriving fast, the distribution of basic shelter materials and non-food items (NFI) was seen as a priority. The initial idea was to skip the tarpaulin phase and to move straight to the distribution of Corrugated Iron Sheets (CGIS) to limit complex and time-consuming distributions and related processes (identification, recording, targeting, distribution, post-distribution monitoring). Yet due to the scarcity of local stocks and problems in negotiating tax-free CGIS imports with the GoN, aid agencies had to resort to multiple tarpaulin distributions, causing delays, additional costs, and a lot of frustration on the part of the population. NFI distributions were also delayed by airport congestion, customs clearance difficulties in Nepal, and delays in crossing the border from India. Emergency prepositioned stocks (NFI, Wash, tarpaulins) were rapidly dispatched to the 14 open spaces that had been identified and where part of the population stayed for the first few nights.

Food security and economic security

Food security was assessed as being relatively precarious in several areas. The FAO and several NGOs provided assistance to families who had lost draft animals, female buffaloes, seeds and equipment. While food aid was widely used for emergency relief, there was also a large cash-based response. This usually took the form of unconditional cash transfers, with people able to use the cash as they wanted.

Debris removal

Proper debris removal is essential for the return to a certain level of normality, and first of all, to allow people to move around. In rural areas this was relatively simple, as the quantity of debris was relatively small (when there was no additional debris caused by a landslide) and could be stored nearby, though there was some added difficulty due to the fact that many areas were sloped. In addition, temporary shelters were often constructed near the destroyed houses, and debris was initially left in the nearby rice fields. In urban centres, the quantity of debris was much higher; transportation and storage was more complex and there were more technical issues involved. As a result, it took a long time and many areas were still not cleared months after the tremors. Demolition of badly damaged houses and debris removal are dangerous jobs, and thus require care and supervision. The whole chain has to be considered as a comprehensive system, with different chains of actions: on-site debris removal to the primary point of deposit, then transportation to a secondary storage point and then on to the final point of storage would have been the normal course of events. This was made very difficult and costly by the topography and the frequent disruption of transportation due to landslides. When feasible, on-site utilization (land stabilization, terracing, road repairs, etc.), remains a very good option.
International Coordination

The OCHA office in Nepal had closed some months before the earthquake and it was not reopened immediately after 25th April. Instead, a strong surge capacity was deployed from the OCHA Bangkok Regional office to support the office of the RC- HC. Three hubs were opened, and were then closed at the end of September, five months after the earthquake. After the Government decreed that the humanitarian period was over, OCHA closed its office at the end of 2015, when the situation remained highly precarious and unpredictable.

The transition to development

On 25th June, the Prime Minister announced the government’s decision to establish “a high level National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) under the Prime Minister for carrying out the tasks of sustained, durable and planned reconstruction”. The Government of Nepal declared that the humanitarian phase was over and recovery funds would be managed through the Ministries. Many donors, UN agencies and NGOs did not fully agree with this process, due to the risks in terms of aid integrity, and are still waiting for operational policies to be formulated and reconstruction procedures to be finalized, in particular in the housing sector.

The transition to recovery has been difficult due to the problems caused by the political situation in Nepal. The constitutional reform towards federalism that was implemented led to heated debate about the number of new entities to be created. This led to tension at the Indian- Nepali border in the Madesh territory in Terai. As a result it became difficult to import consumer goods, food items and fuel from neighbouring India. This led to a sharp increase in the price of construction materials and transportation, making reconstruction extremely costly for individuals and aid agencies. 8 months after the earthquake, many remote areas were still in ruins or had been rebuilt in a very rudimentary manner as the people living there could not afford to “build back safer”.

Lessons learnt and areas to be improved

Clarify the policies and roles of the line ministries

With the Disaster Management Act not yet approved by the Assembly, the legal framework for national and international organisations remained rather weak, and ad-hoc solutions had to be found all the time. This led to difficulties in the management of the response and led to a lot of different implementation methods running in parallel, which created problems.

• Therefore, the new Disaster Management Act needs to be adopted rapidly as it will fill the gap in policy definition, and in terms of preparing and supervising the implementation of guidelines. Policies should be revised regularly to make them as practical as possible.

Improve communication with the affected population

In Nepal, where the political context is very complex and is still affected by the decade of civil war and the complexity of the peace process, aid delivery has been affected a great deal by political factors. Aid actors and donors may see targeting as a virtuous process, but in Nepal, it is, at best, socially rejected, and, at worst, manipulated for political gain or to favour a particular political or ethnic faction. It is necessary either to implement an extremely complex, and often costly and time-consuming procedure, or to engage in extensive and in-depth dialogue with local opinion makers, social leaders and local activists to defuse any potential time bomb linked to unaccepted targeting systems. The affected population were insufficiently informed about what they could expect from aid agencies, where they could get relief and medical assistance, etc. Although agencies started to use social media, local radio and other mechanisms to communicate with the affected population, many of the interviewees felt that these had been insufficiently used to give information about programmes, explain selection procedures, counteract rumours, and prevent political manipulation.

• Investing in communication to establish more active dialogue with the affected populations remains a priority.

Develop a building code for rural housing

While urban construction is largely standardized, using concrete beams, cement blocks and special retrofitting techniques which incorporate existing para-seismic technologies, in rural areas, the existing building code is not adequately implemented and there are a lot of self-built houses. As a result, there was a lot of damage and a high number of casualties in the villages. In addition, many areas were already prone to landslides and this has been made worse by the 2015 tremors.

• It is essential to adjust the Building Code to rural settings and ensure that all building codes are implemented in urban, peri-urban and rural areas.
Strengthen national search and rescue capacity

In large-scale urban disasters, a key factor of a successful emergency response is how fast you are able to get people out of the rubble.

- The development and strengthening of national rescue and relief capacity should be made a priority. The Nepalese army, police and fire brigades should be trained so that they can act as a middle level rescue capacity.

Improve coordination of international relief support during the early phase

The first few days after a disaster are often very complicated with the arrival of many relief teams and organizations who are not necessarily well equipped or prepared. It is often difficult for the national authorities to know what and how much to expect from these organisations.

- When Nepal requests international support, it is important to ensure that incoming actors have a much better understanding of the context and existing needs, as well as the gaps that need to be filled in order to orient the flow of aid towards where it is actually needed.

There was little coordination of the items provided to disaster victims, and many private organizations brought inappropriate items.

- The list of items to be provided to disaster victims should be decided in advance, in a coordinated manner by all stakeholders. Tax deduction procedures should be designed accordingly.

Enhance access to remote areas

As the earthquake affected mountainous and hilly regions, there was great demand for helicopters. The national army provided theirs and all other options were used. India, China and the US provided a few, but not enough. Due to high altitudes, difficult terrain and bad weather, many helicopters could not be mobilized effectively. In many remote Village Development Committees (VDCs), it was very difficult to evacuate the wounded and provide relief.

- Helipads should be identified and marked at an early stage at the village and district levels. The army and police should have a sufficient number of helicopters. The MOHP/NEOC should also have their own flying capacity.

Improve the management of internal displacements

Many people were displaced within or outside their district of origin. This created some difficulties in terms of relief allocation. In addition, in the Kathmandu valley, people took shelter in a number of different locations in fear of additional aftershocks. It was very difficult to find these people and provide them with assistance.

- It is very important to find ways to improve the management of IDPs.

Debris removal and management

Debris management was difficult in both rural and urban areas. Many houses were weakened structurally, and they had to be destroyed. Rubble clearing required a lot of equipment and heavy machinery, and will take a long time in rural areas and in parts of Kathmandu.

- Policy decisions will have to be made in relation to all the weakened and dangerous buildings that need to be demolished and the debris that needs to be removed.

Improve communication with the affected population

The call centre established in the Ministry of Information and Communication (call 1234) was widely used.

- This system should also be put in place at the NEOC and HEOC and made more widely known amongst the public.

Improve the national capacity for information and data management

Due to the geographical complexity of the terrain, many VDCs and DDCs were not fully taken into account.

- There should be a strong information management system available at the NEOC, and it should be easily accessible by the national disaster centre.

Victim identification, follow up and long-term assistance requires proper data management and is always a challenge following a large-scale disaster. An open system that can be used by all agencies, and that can be properly monitored and adjusted is needed. One solution would be a non-duplicable Victim ID system.

- A Victim ID Card system should be put in place.

François Grünewald, Executive director, Groupe URD, & Anne Burlat, Housing and Urban Specialist, Groupe URD.

* This article is based on a document that presents a summary of the lessons learnt from Groupe URD’s work in Nepal following the 2015 earthquake, which were presented in conferences in Brussels and Paris on 21 & 25 April 2016.

1 For more, see: F. Grünewald & S. Carpenter; 2014; Urban Disaster preparedness in Kathmandu, Nepal; British Red Cross and Groupe URD.

2 Meaning that the difficulties and mistakes made during the Haiti earthquake response had to be avoided at all costs.
Localising humanitarian response

Supporting local actors

**World Disasters Report: Focus on local actors, the key to humanitarian effectiveness**  
IFRC, octobre 2015, 270 p.

Local actors are often the most effective in conducting humanitarian operations. However, despite their critical role, they struggle to attract the funding and support they need. The 2015 World Disasters Report examines the complexities and challenges local actors face in scaling-up and sustaining their humanitarian response. Although widely recognized, the effectiveness of local or national humanitarian organizations is not reflected in humanitarian financing trends. The Report found, for example, that of the total funding given to international, regional, national and local NGOs over 2010 and 2014, only 1.6 per cent of these funds were channelled directly to what were qualified as national and local NGOs.


**A More Dignified and Equitable Humanitarian System: How to Truly Localize Aid**  
Paper prepared by Adeso on behalf of southern NGO network members, 2015, 7 p.

This position paper was drawn up by a group of local, regional and national NGOs from the Global South with the objective of establishing a network of Southern NGOs and changing the humanitarian system by genuinely placing local people at its centre. It suggests four main reforms to promote a more effective partnership between local organisations and the international humanitarian system.


**Rhetoric or reality? Putting affected people at the centre of humanitarian action**  
Dayna Brown, Antonio Donini, ALNAP Study, ALNAP/ODI, octobre 2014, 88 P.

This study focuses on the discussions that took place at the 29th annual ALNAP meeting where the theme was the involvement of crisis-affected people in humanitarian action. The participants addressed issues of engagement, accountability and participation, and all agreed that the question of “how” to involve people is often covered, but the reasons “why” they should be involved are not sufficiently addressed. The meeting also insisted on the importance of being more attentive to the different stakeholders concerned, such as local organisations, civil society, and states.

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ALNAP-rhetoric-or-reality-study.pdf

**Local Partnerships: a guide for partnering with civil society, business and government groups**  

This practical guide from Mercy Corps presents the different types of partnerships that can be put in place in countries where NGOs are operating; with civil society, local governments, the private sector, different networks, etc. It also presents tools for building partnerships, and for monitoring, evaluating and supporting them, their impacts and the benefits of these partnerships.

https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/mclocalpartnershipsguide.pdf
The Participation Handbook for humanitarian field workers contains detailed practical advice on the participation of affected people in humanitarian action. It has three sections: Developing a participatory approach (main issues, key factors, building mutual respect, communication methods and advice on reviewing your approach); Implementing your participatory approach at every stage of the project cycle (initial assessment, project design, implementation, monitoring and final evaluation); A list of tools and additional resources (books, internet sites, etc.).


Based on case studies in countries that have been through serious crises and have subsequently gone through reconstruction, the authors look at the role of the humanitarian sector in relation to that of local public authorities, and the affected population. In order to understand the participation of local people it is necessary to look at 'how', 'when' and 'with whom' participation takes place. The cases of Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Colombia provide a variety of contexts in which beneficiaries participated in different ways.

http://www.urd.org/Beneficiaires-ou-partenaires-quels

This paper examines how the governments of El Salvador, Mozambique, Indonesia and the Philippines have strengthened their countries' disaster management systems. It analyzes what stimulated the assumption of leadership, how the systems have been strengthened, and how national and international actors contributed to changes.

http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/TUFTS_13118_Humanitarian_response_V3print.pdf

This report summarises the experiences and analyses of nearly 6000 people in 20 countries receiving aid, and the thoughts of humanitarian workers about the effectiveness of international aid. It underlines the fact that beneficiaries of aid do not necessarily want to receive more aid, but more effective aid, that takes their opinions into account more in terms of decisions and the implementation of aid. They generally think that the international aid system provides solutions developed in donor countries, without in-depth understanding of the local context and without consulting the affected people. Indeed, the latter want international aid to be more collaborative.


This report looks at the relations between local and international organisations in Syria, relations that are often tense due to problems of security and access to beneficiaries. Poor communication has sometimes led NGOs to carry out superfluous, parallel operations, and compete for funding from donors, in an atmosphere of distrust that has a negative effect on the aid provided.

Missed again: Making space for partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response
A Featherstone, Actionaid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund, septembre 2014, 44 P.

The importance of partnerships in humanitarian action is now widely recognized and promoted in every manual and guide produced for the sector. Putting this into practice in the field, however, is much more difficult. This study looks at the difficult issue of humanitarian partnerships, focusing on the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Having described the context of the humanitarian response (the role of the government, civil society, NGOs, and humanitarian networks), the report then analyses the effectiveness of partnerships and the role of national organisations in the coordination and funding of the response. In the conclusion, the authors underline the importance of partnerships in humanitarian response and the failure to apply past lessons, before outlining challenges for the future.
http://www.alnap.org/resource/12912

Remote management of crises in insecure contexts

Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE), Improving the evidence base on delivering aid in highly insecure environments, Summary Inception Report

Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) is a three-year programme of applied research on maintaining humanitarian access in the world’s most challenging operational contexts. The overall goal of the programme is to contribute to solutions for providing effective and accountable humanitarian action amid high levels of insecurity. This will be achieved through improving the evidence base with primary research and producing new practical guidance.

The research programme will be implemented through three linked components:
1) access: quantifying and mapping humanitarian coverage in relation to security conditions;
2) effectiveness: identifying the key determinants for enabling quality aid interventions amid insecurity; and
3) monitoring and evaluation: providing practical lessons and guidance for improved learning and accountability in the most challenging environments.
http://www.save.gppi.net/home/

Once removed: Lessons and challenges in remote management of humanitarian operations for insecure areas

This study focused on the case of Afghanistan to examine remote management as it is currently being practiced by aid agencies in the field. The team complemented findings from field research in Afghanistan with desk-based research on other high-risk operational settings, including Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Sudan, for the purposes of comparison. The authors analyse the benefits, risks, consequences for programme quality, the involvement of workers and local partners, as well as relations with donors in this type of operation. The report concludes with a number of practical recommendations for improving remote management.

Funding of local NGOs

Too important to fail – adressing the humanitarian financial gap

This report is the result of seven months of work by nine independent experts who have been given the task by the UN Secretary General of finding solutions for the widening gap between humanitarian needs and the funds that are available. The report is centred on the idea of a “Grand Bargain” that will establish improved methods of collaboration between donors, United Nations agencies and other humanitarian stakeholders. The recommendations highlight the need for more sustained dialogue with local and national actors and the need to lighten bureaucracy and reduce inefficiencies in order to reduce costs. They also call for greater collaboration between the humanitarian and development sectors, and a greater focus on crisis prevention and disaster risk reduction.
**Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking beyond the crisis**
CAFOD, FAO, World Vision, mai 2015, 52 P.

This report is the result of an initiative led by a number of NGOs and international bodies (with support from Groupe URD) that looked at the future of humanitarian financing. It argues in favour of a fundamental change to the humanitarian model whereby local stakeholders would respond to the majority of needs during a crisis and international operations would no longer be indispensable. For this to happen, the authors argue that a much wider variety of donors is needed to cover the cost of managing risks and responding to crises, and that there needs to be shared responsibility for post-emergency needs.

[https://futurehumanitarianfinancing.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/fhf_main_report-2.pdf](https://futurehumanitarianfinancing.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/fhf_main_report-2.pdf)

Consult the full bibliography on the Groupe URD website:
http://www.urd.org/Bibliography-on-Localising

---

**Events**

**ICT4D 2016, 16-19 May, Nairobi (Kenya)**

The ICT4D Conference is being held in Nairobi this year, on 16-19 May. This event is organized annually by a consortium of 9 organisations involved in humanitarian action, development, and information and communication technologies (ICTs). The 4-day event will include conferences, workshops, training sessions and exhibitions.

This year, the ICT4D will focus on information and communication technologies that have an impact on the aid sector; on government strategies in this area in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals; the convergence between institutional strategies and the objectives and strategies of private stakeholders and civil society; and lastly, types of partnership and economic models that have had promising results for this type of technical solution.

**Further information at:** [http://www.ict4dconference.org/about/](http://www.ict4dconference.org/about/)

**Bonn Climate Change Conference, 16-26 May 2016 (Germany)**

This conference will see the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement of December 2015.

[https://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn_may_2016/meeting/9413.php](https://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn_may_2016/meeting/9413.php)

**6th edition of the Salon des Solidarités, 19-21 May 2016, Paris (France)**

La 6th edition of the Salon des Solidarités will be taking place on 19-21 May 2016, at the Parc des Expositions in Paris (Porte de Versailles - Hall 2.1). This event takes place every two years, and features organisations and important figures from the aid sector, from France, Europe and beyond. The 6th edition includes:

- Plenary conferences with well-known speakers + Training sessions for professionals.
- 3 thematic spaces and 11 thematic villages with round tables and workshops.
- 3 competitions with prizes to be won + Fun activities, projections, interactive games, etc.
- 250 French and European exhibitors from the different aid sectors + 22 000 expected visitors (more than 20 000 in 2014).

One day will be specifically dedicated to professionals (Thursday 19 May 2016); the other two will be open to the general public.

**More information at:** [http://www.salondessolidarites.org/](http://www.salondessolidarites.org/)

**World Humanitarian Summit, 23-24 May 2016, Istanbul (Turkey)**

The first World Humanitarian Summit will be held on 23-24 May 2016. This event will bring together governments, humanitarian organisations, people affected by humanitarian crises and new partners, including the private sector, to find solutions to the most pressing challenges for the humanitarian sector and establish a programme for humanitarian action in the future. Unprecedented global consultation has taken place in preparation for this event (thematic and regional working
groups) since 2014. Around one hundred side events will be held in parallel to the official conferences and negotiations, one of which, on aid quality, will be facilitated by Groupe URD and its partners from the Core Humanitarian Standard project (CHS). The open source software, Sigmah, which is the result of a collective project facilitated by Groupe URD, will be presented at the “Innovation Marketplace”.

More information at: https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/

“An introduction to Sigmah”, 13 June 2016, in partnership with Coordination SUD, Paris (France)

On 13 June, the training course, “An introduction to Sigmah – Information Management and Quality in International Aid Organisations” will be held in Paris. This training course is jointly organized by Groupe URD and Coordination SUD.

For more information and to register, go to: http://wwwCOORDINATIONSUD.ORG/FORMATION/INITIATION-AU-LOGICIEL-SIGMAH/

Are you interested in a Sigmah training course but not based in or around Paris? Contact your national coordination platform to organize a course near you. Alternatively, you can fill in the following form “Sigmah pops up at home!” to tell us where you would like a course to be organised in the future!

The Aid & Development Asia Summit 2016, 21-22 June, Bangkok (Thailand)

This summit will look at how collaboration and technological innovation can improve aid delivery and development in the Asia-Pacific region. It will bring together UN and government agencies, development banks, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. It is a unique opportunity for trans-disciplinary discussions and cross-sector networking. This year the main themes will include resilience to disasters and climate change, enabling quicker and better disaster response, and ensuring more effective aid delivery and community engagement.

More information at: http://www.asia.aidforum.org/

Resilient Cities 2016, 6-8 July 2016, Bonn (Germany)

The 7th World Forum on urban resilience and climate change adaptation will bring together around 400 experts to discuss issues related to urban resilience: current strategies and strategies to be developed, funding, partnerships, governance, infrastructure, etc.

More information: http://resilientcities2016.iclei.org/about/

Convergences World Forum, 5-7 September 2016, Paris (France)

The 9th edition of the Convergences World Forum, “Inventing Tomorrow's Sustainable Cities and Territories”, will take place on 5-7 September 2016 in Paris. This 3-day conference will include around 50 events, 350 speakers and 8000 experts. The guiding objective of this edition is “Let’s build together a “Zero Exclusion, Zero Carbon, Zero Poverty” world”. The three main themes that will be explored by stakeholders and experts from the private, public and aid sectors are: Towards sustainable cities and territories / Meeting the new Sustainable Development Goals / An economy serving the Common Good.

More information at: http://www.convergences.org/

2016 International Conference on Sustainable Development, 21-22 September, New York (USA)

The aim of the conference is to identify and share practical, evidence-based solutions that can support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local and national levels. Among the issues that participants will be discussing are: agriculture, food security and nutrition, disaster resilience and adaptation, and low-carbon urban development.

More information at: http://ic-sd.org/

Habitat III Conference, 17-20 October 2016, Quito (Equator)

Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. The United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the Habitat III Conference to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization, and to focus on the implementation of a New Urban Agenda. The objectives of the Conference are to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assess accomplishments to date, address poverty and identify and address new and emerging challenges.

More information at: https://www.habitat3.org/
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 people.

Further information:
www.urd.org

Humanitarian Aid on the move

Humanitarian Aid on the move - a bilingual biannual review - aims to share the results of work on important issues currently facing the sector. We regularly invite external contributors and provide links to other publications. To propose an article, contact Jeanne Taisson: jtaisson@urd.org

Further reading on certain topics and full articles by the authors can be found on the Groupe URD website:
www.urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move

Contacts

To receive the online version:
www.urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move

To propose an article:
Contact Jeanne Taisson
jtaisson@urd.org

Produced with support from:

af

Rhône-Alpes

Director: François Grünwald
Editorial board: François Grünwald, Véronique de Geoffroy, Jeanne Taisson
Editorial Secretary: Jeanne Taisson
Translation: Etienne Sutherland

Printed by: Transcopy
Design by: Concept image

ISSN : 2261-7132
Legal deposit: September 2012

Humanitarian Aid on the move
Review n°17