Editorial

This year is the 150th anniversary of the battle of Solferino. It was the suffering witnessed at that battle which gave rise to an idea which, for many, has brought a little light to counter the darkness of war. This idea - that the wounded should be provided with protection - subsequently grew to incorporate the protection of prisoners and civilians in conflict situations. It led to the elaboration of a corpus of rules for the conduct of hostilities which attempt to preserve a modicum of humanity amid the unspeakable horrors of war. A century and a half after the publication of 'A Memory of Solferino', Henri Dunant's original idea is still as important as it ever was.

Recent events, however, have shown how complex the issue of protecting conflict victims can be. Having remained powerless in the face of repeated violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in places like Gaza or the less visible conflict in RDC, humanitarian actors are trying to find new ways of reacting. Meanwhile, the expulsion of NGOs from Darfur following the issuing of an arrest warrant for Omar al Bashir by the International Criminal Court has shown that the time for justice does not necessarily coincide with the time for humanitarian action.

There is an urgent need to clarify roles and responsibilities, to re-affirm the front-line role of signatory states in the application of IHL and to promote diplomatic efforts to ensure the protection of civilian populations while protecting humanitarian space. President Obama's decision to close Guantanamo prison, which has become the symbol of the Bush administration's violations of Human Rights and IHL, has shown how action can lead to positive change.

Véronique de Geoffroy

Contents

- Humanitarian space
  - Protection: the new humanitarian fig-leaf
  - Is universal jurisdiction the way forward to end Israel's impunity?
- Point of view
- Crises and vulnerabilities
  - For an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to nutrition
  - Protection challenges in a legal vacuum - the case of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon
- Aid & Quality
  - What is evaluation for? The missing links in the evolution of humanitarian actors
  - Building a quality framework: issues and challenges
- Bibliography
- Events
Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) thinking has filtered into humanitarian action over the past decade. In tangible fashion, this shift has provided guidance and standards for aid itself. Beneficiaries become something greater than populations who need assistance – they become individuals possessing rights. The HRBA thus transforms wants/desires of people in crisis into societal obligations to respond. Humanitarian organizations have internalized this obligation to respond in a variety of ways. Importantly, HRBA has prompted and reinforced the shift in humanitarian action away from pure delivery of assistance to the inclusion of protection activities. Further, HRBA thinking has stimulated an increasing integration of human rights frameworks, focus and activities into humanitarian action.

The Four Delusions of Humanitarian Protection

Over the past decade, “protection” has grown from specialized function to jargon champion in humanitarian circles. The progressive abandonment of the relief-only paradigm, or rather the progressive expansion of the relief-protection paradigm beyond the towers of the protection-mandated entities (ICRC, UNICEF and UNHCR), filled an appalling gap. The struggle to prevent what some labelled the “well fed dead” or “well-fed raped” should certainly elicit our welcome. But Darfur and other violent crises remain nasty and brutish, even for those living in relatively stable camp settings, raising questions about the protection role played by humanitarians.

**Delusion 1: The “protection gap” is the problem**

It is not the lack of protection activities or legal protections, it is the surplus of violence that should be fingered as the primary problem. The humanitarian obsession with protection reflects the degree to which we define the external environment through *our* activities. Protection gap has become a euphemism. Darfur is the first emergency to be labelled a ‘protection crisis.’ In terms of the responsibility to know our limits, perhaps the first limit is hence the realization that with important (though comparatively insignificant) exceptions, protection (in the sense of providing physical safety) of civilians during periods of violent crisis is not our job.

**Delusion 2: The humanitarian community is able to provide meaningful protection**

Some NGO protection activities or the many excellent suggestions and guidance that fill books deserve praise and incorporation into our daily activities. But we seem to have lost sight of the meaning of these actions, or more importantly the meaning of the word we use to describe them.

“[…] a new determination to develop truly practical programming that protects people from all forms of violation, exploitation, and abuse during war and disaster has emerged in recent years.”

That seems fairly ambitious – somewhere on the scale of bringing peace, harmony and prosperity to all the people on Earth. Do we humanitarians really believe we can achieve anything approaching such a goal? The point is not to belittle the work done by humanitarian workers when it comes to protection, but to recognize its obvious limits. When humanitarians talk about protection activities, they are talking about documentation, training, awareness raising, and well-worn models such as building latrines in a safe area.

**Delusion 3: The public’s belief that somebody is at the front lines, making people safe**

Diminishing the luster of aid itself – promoting the message that aid is not a solution to the problem – is an inherent source of consternation for the providers of aid. Institutional donors do not broadcast the fact that their funding purchases band-aids, not cures. Nor do we humanitarians earnestly wish the public to realize this inherent limitation. Certainly western governments do not wish for their publics to be critical of the superficiality of their aid-only efforts. The public feels good about funding protection work – drawn to the idea of protecting people and blissfully unaware that their contributions go to bridging the coverage gap. Donor governments are able to brag about the protection work they are doing, satisfying constituents who would call for more than throwing food at the problem. They are able to replace the use of military or diplomatic force in defense of people’s lives with funding a civilian protection bureaucracy to defend rights. Important? Yes. Positive impact? Yes. Incomplete? Certainly. Dishonest? Absolutely

**Delusion 4: Integrity is the only thing at stake**

One result is an increasing absence of aid organizations delivering aid, instead seemingly satisfied to engage in protection work. As one member of a prominent international NGO said regarding their performance in Darfur at the peak
of the humanitarian upsurge (late 2004, 2005): “We’ve got more protection officers in Darfur than water and sanitation engineers.”

Governments not especially friendly to the presence of humanitarians have also noticed. When the author was defending an MSF report to Sudanese authorities, they charged that the only reason for this public reporting was to increase donations. It should be clear that the perception that humanitarians are busy making noise for their own financial gain endangers their presence (relationship with authorities) and undercuts the power of the protective message. Such accusations will never disappear. But a far more serious threat is posed by the fact that the Sudanese government’s suspicions, viewed more generally, may not be entirely unfounded.

There is a great risk to humanitarian access to populations in crisis from the linkage between protection activities and their potential to embarrass governments or directly threaten the interests of individuals within those governments. Obviously, engaging in protection work involves a careful analysis of the potential backlash.

Steps forward

The primary purpose of this paper is to highlight issues, rather than propose solutions. The accusation above is that these deviations begin as conscious detours, but have then settled into a paradigmatic framework for humanitarian action. While there may be some cynical manipulation, the more frightening prospect is that actual delusions have evolved.

That said, there are steps to be taken. As a preliminary exercise, aid and assistance must return as the foundation of protection work, not as its cover, excuse or afterthought.

Furthermore, humanitarians must enlarge upon the necessity of protection activities to meet a high standard of defensibility vis-à-vis any party able to block access or retaliate directly against people. Both in terms of practice and conceptualization, we must practice protection work in a manner that protects the integrity of the work: gaining acceptance for advocacy, preventing harm from negative backlash, and ensuring effectiveness. After ensuring the integrity of the work, advocacy initiatives must be developed and implemented with regard to three axes of defensibility – content, strategy, and process/method. We move instead to the realm of HRBA-thinking not having supplemented the delivery of lifesaving assistance, but having supplanted it. Worse still, the buzz and sloppy practices around humanitarian protection may attract strategic countermeasures by those from whom people need protection, leading to even less space in which to deliver assistance.

While NGOs and governments pat themselves on the back for the launch and hypergrowth of the humanitarian protection establishment, the violence against people maintains its own forward momentum, for the most part indifferent to our efforts. We should not abandon our work, but we need to be responsible about the limits of humanitarian protection. First, we should stop lamenting the protection gap as if it were the real problem. Second, we need to put institutional interests aside and practice aid/protection for the sake of the beneficiaries. If not, we will long for the days of the well-fed dead and rue the upsurge of the well-documented sick (well-interviewed, well-analyzed, etc. as well) or, worse still (given the limitations of humanitarian protection), the well-documented sick and dead.

We humanitarians need to be honest about what we call protection. Limited risk reduction or raising awareness should not be branded as “protection” activities when we know the word conveys so much more to the public. That is false advertising; we humanitarians have placed the shiny wrapper of protection on our work and sold it to a public unable to look inside the box. The protection in the box we sell is not the protection stuff people in Darfur or D.R. Congo so desperately need.

Marc DuBois
Executive Director,
Médecins Sans Frontières – UK

Prior to his present position, the author spent seven years in MSF directly supporting testimonial activities – bearing witness, advocacy and reporting. He confesses to being a chief perpetrator of humanitarian protection. The ideas and opinions set forth in this paper are solely those of the author, and should not be imputed to his employer. Substantial portions of this paper have been published previously by MSF (See DuBois, M. 2007 Protection: The New Humanitarian Fig Leaf. Dialogues. (4). MSF UK: London) and presented during the world Conference on Humanitarian Studies (Groningen, 4-8 February 2009).

With more and more reports of crimes committed by the Israeli army during the recent occupation of Gaza, it is important to take a step back and study the various legal options available to prevent actions of this kind going unpunished once again.

The military operations in the Gaza Strip and the clear evidence of violations of International Humanitarian Law, and consequently, of war crimes, have sparked a debate about international legal responsibilities and the possibility of instituting legal proceedings. Success is far from guaranteed, but we should not forget that the road to universal criminal justice is long and tortuous (Pinochet and Milosevic never imagined that they could be tried for their crimes) and that these initiatives are very recent.

First of all, there is abundant proof of war crimes. This means there is a legal basis on which proceedings can be instituted. Deliberate targeting of civilians, of UN buildings, of ambulances, members of the Red Crescent and other NGOs and the use of weapons such as white phosphorous shells, to mention only the most obvious examples, are all serious violations of the Geneva conventions, and should, at the very least, be investigated. But this said…who should instigate these proceedings. What body is qualified to deal with this issue? Who would be willing to take on this task? A few weeks ago, Richard Falk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories declared that the proof of violations of International Humanitarian Law was so overwhelming that they should be the object of an independent investigation. Falk, who can not be accused of anti-semitism because he is Jewish, has also asked the international community to instigate sanctions immediately. Even the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon has asked that Israel should appear before the legal authorities…without specifying which authorities. But at least things seem to be moving in the right direction.

Procurator Moreno Ocampo has stated that the ICC is not qualified to deal with this question as Israel is not a State Party to the Rome Statute and no procedure has yet been launched to involve the ICC (the UN Security Council could ask the procurator to take up the case). However, alternatives do exist. The first of these, a rather original and audacious idea, would be to investigate Israeli soldiers with dual nationality, where the other nation is a signatory of the ICC, which would mean that the soldiers were under the court’s jurisdiction. Even though this may appear complicated and there are no precedents, it would provide human rights organisations with a new way of raising awareness about events in Gaza. It would be a way of applying pressure to make sure criminal acts were investigated.

In a similar vain, a number of Latin American countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela have announced that they were instigating proceedings with the ICC against Israel for crimes against humanity in accordance with article 14 of the Rome Statute which states the following: “A State Party may refer to the Prosecutor a situation in which one or more crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court appear to have been committed requesting the Prosecutor to investigate the situation for the purpose of determining whether one or more specific persons should be charged with the commission of such crimes.” It is not likely that this initiative will be successful. It is more political than legal and is primarily a way of denouncing what has taken place.

Another option linked to the ICC would be to put pressure on members of the Security Council to ask the Procurator to launch an investigation. At best, this would be an opportunity for the new US administration to show how different its approach to Israel is going to be and would prompt interesting debates within the Council. However, this too would remain more political than legal.

Finally, the Security Council could create an ad hoc tribunal as was created for Rwanda and ex-Yugoslavia, but this is very unlikely as the work carried out by the ICC aims precisely to avoid the creation of ad hoc tribunals.

Other approaches are possible via the United Nations. The first of these would be an official condemnation by the Human Rights Council, which does not have any legal jurisdiction but this would add weight to other initiatives (incidentally, this would also help to justify the creation of a body which replaced the Commission on Human Rights, but which, so far, has done very little). For example, such a condemnation would increase the possibility of action on the part of the International Court of Justice which, in a famous advisory opinion, condemned the illegality of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Proceedings could also be instigated unilaterally as was done by Belgium a few years ago against Ariel Sharon for the Sabra and Shatila massacre. The Spanish High Court recently launched a war crimes investigation into the actions of seven Israelis during a bombing by Israel in 2002 which targeted a Hamas leader and killed 14 Palestinian civilians. Such an initiative would be difficult to repeat be-
cause the case would be suspended if Israel decided to investigate the events in Israel. However, universal jurisdiction, which is not dependent on the political will of governments but on the rule of law and the independence of the justice system, would appear to be the most promising option for human rights organisations, who compile data so that Israel does not go unpunished once again.

These different initiatives have not yet been consolidated but coalitions of NGOs are beginning to appear in a number of countries. Finally, another possibility would be to go through the Israeli justice system. A group of human rights organisations recently addressed a letter to the Israeli Attorney General, Menachem Mazuz, demanding that excesses committed against civilians during ‘Operation Cast Lead’ should be (re)investigated and asking for the creation of an independent and impartial investigation mechanism.

This rapid tour of the various legal options available to investigate and, if appropriate, sanction war crimes committed in Gaza, shows that, though limited, some possibilities do exist. Whether or not they are used is a question of political will.

---

**Point of view**

**The war in Afghanistan will not be won by force**

François Grunewald

Afghanistan has returned to the heart of international questions, particularly concerning debates during NATO’s 60th anniversary celebrations in Strasbourg. Despite this, at the time where the American approach seems finally to evolve but where the Taliban declare war on ONGs and the situation in Pakistan degrades in a disquieting manner, the humanitarian space in Afghanistan is more reduced than ever. There is a need to re-analyse the wars that have been fought in this country by foreign powers, the attitude of the USA since 1980, the reality of the Taliban and how they should be dealt with. NGOs have been calling for renewed debate about these issues for some years and this appears to be taking place on both sides of the Atlantic.

Afghanistan is no doubt the context in which US strategists have committed the second-most errors after Vietnam. During the war against the Soviet Union, the CIA provided arms and money to the most fundamentalist groups within the Peshawar Resistance. These same groups laid siege to Kabul between 1994 and 1996 and are laying siege once again alongside the Taliban. Less fundamentalist factions of the Resistance, such as those linked to Massoud, were neglected. During this period, Bin Laden was not considered a threat but an asset in the war against the USSR, due to Saudi support. The US strategy, based on the precept ‘the enemies of my enemies are my friends’, sowed the seeds of the present situation. It is important to remember that the USA was initially very tolerant towards the Taliban, who were supposed to be firmly under the control of the intelligence services in Pakistan. From 1996, when the Taliban were in power, the oil company UNOCAL, close to Dick Cheney, began negotiations to build a pipeline across Afghanistan. At the time, human rights and the position of women were neither part of the deal nor part of the US position.

After September 11, the regime which had given sanctuary to the orchestrator of the attacks had to be punished. This war of revenge was then transformed into a virtuous ‘state-building’ strategy. But further errors were made. The first of these was the tactical choice to use the most sophisticated means of modern warfare, which have shown their limits. For example, to avoid messages being intercepted they are sent by donkey. More and more tragic Coalition blunders with civilian victims have spread hatred.

The second error was Guantanamo and the special justice system which was contrary to International Humanitarian Law. How can the Taliban be asked to respect the Law of War if the major Western armies do not respect it? The third error was the adoption of the civil-military strategy based on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) which have blurred the lines between civilian humanitarian and development action and military action, with its unsuccessful ‘peace-keeping’ operations. NGOs have often expressed concern about the PRTs, but their warnings have fallen on deaf ears.

The fourth error has been to equate the Taliban and terrorism. The Taliban movement was created in 1994 under the impulsion of the Pakistani government who were worried that Afghanistan would demand a renegotiation of the Durand line, the border between the two countries. It was formed by students from the madrasas of Quetta and Peshawar. After the years of civil war and the lawless and faithless rule of the Warlords, they were often well received, even if their very strict interpretation of Islam was not always understood in Sufi-dominated areas, nor appreciated even in Pashtu areas where tribal identities are strong and resistant to central authority of any kind. The conflict in Iraq opened the door to new forms of Jihad. Terrorist methods such as suicide bombing (in Kandahar and Kabul) and throat-cutting, which are totally foreign to Afghan culture, were imported as a result. Such practices are as much in contradiction to the culture and values of Afghanistan, the Pashtun code of honour and Islam as they are to those of the West.
After so many errors, and with NATO’s military strategy getting deeper into trouble every day, it is time to recognise that the war in Afghanistan will not be won by force. The latest statements by President Karzai, Bernard Kouchner, General Petraeus, chief of US Central Command and President Obama all seem to show that there is a gradual return to fundamentals – the idea that negotiations are necessary and that they need to be conducted without preconceptions which distort debates and hamper the possibility of a breakthrough. Humanitarian actors need to re-establish confidence in humanitarian action so that people understand and respect what it is and the fact that humanitarian principles can be found in the Koran and Islamic teachings as well as in IHL. This will not be easy, but it is important that new approaches are found to meet the current challenges in Afghanistan, this magnificent and rebellious country where one of the first pages of the humanitarian story was written 30 years ago this year.

François Grunewald, General Director of Groupe URD, has conducted many research and evaluation missions in Afghanistan since 1986.


2 See the work of Canadian NGOs in 2005, the work of the British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) and that of the platform of French NGOs which organised the Conference on the reconstruction of Afghanistan on 22 May 2008 just before the Paris Conference on Afghanistan in June.

Crises and vulnerabilities

For an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to nutrition in emergency, rehabilitation and development programmes: some tools and food for thought

Though nutrition is mostly associated with famine situations and overt starvation, it can actually play a central role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of relief, rehabilitation and development programmes, even when malnutrition seems invisible. Nutrition consists in much more than food or nutritional supplement distributions; rather, it can be the key to integrated, multi-sectoral and people-centered interventions.

Introduction

A child is sitting on the ground, his little arms and legs are thinner than sticks and dangle in the dust; his stomach is swollen and his gaze empty. He is held up by his mother, whose eyes are shadowed by anxiety and shame: she has not been able to feed her child. A starved child and a desperate mother: such is the face of humanitarian aid; acute malnutrition rates: the ultimate signal that will trigger—or not—a large scale aid operation; the therapeutic feeding centre: the centre stage of humanitarian action, where the child is saved and the mother alleviated of her pain. For the general public, nutrition has almost unwillingly become the emblem of the tragedy and miracle of humanitarian aid.

But beyond this quasi mythical role, characteristic of situations of extreme misery, would nutrition not have a more modest, though more central, contribution to make to relief, rehabilitation and development projects? Could it not be a key to population-centred programming and implementation? Severe acute malnutrition is only the tip of the iceberg: although it affects “only” 0.1 to maximum 6% of children under 5 years in crisis situations, 5 to 20% (and up to 25%) of children suffer from moderate acute malnutrition, and more than half are chronically malnourished (stunted). In addition, a majority of children, adolescents and adults suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, which increase vulnerability to disease and undermine their learning and work capacities. Nutrition is thus a basic need, at the heart of crisis-affected populations’ other multiple needs, even when it seems invisible.

Far from being the private domain of a handful of experts, nutrition is a discipline which can provide tools to each aid worker, whether she or he be a water engineer, an agronomist, a nurse, a sociologist, a logistician, a head of mission, or a desk officer. Nobody can fight malnutrition alone, but each and every one has a role to play in preventing this starved child and mother from requiring the ultimate ‘solution’: treatment for severe acute malnutrition. Or, if the latter is inevitable, all should be done to avoid them returning a few months later, and to prevent the smaller brother or sister from following the same path as the eldest. How? This article attempts to propose some food for thought...
**Nutrition in strategic planning: more than a sector, a common objective, a bridge between sectors**

The reasons that can lead a child or adult to require therapeutic care (whether centre or home-based) are complex and vary from one situation to another. Collapse of livelihoods; lack of drinking water and poor hygiene; diarrhea, parasite infections, measles or AIDS epidemics; drought; loss of harvests or livestock; population displacements leading to a collapse of social networks; psychological trauma; local beliefs and practices that undermine good health and nutrition practices… These are some of the numerous causes which can determine the nutritional status of a family and its individual members. Any stakeholder aiming to treat or prevent malnutrition needs to understand the direct and underlying causes of malnutrition. Failing to do so can only undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of an intervention.

The conceptual framework of malnutrition (see graph 1), elaborated in the early 1990’s proposes a multi-sectoral analysis of malnutrition causes, which can guide assessments, project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A simple tool can support such analysis: building causal frameworks of malnutrition using simple visualisation techniques (e.g. problem and solution trees). This exercise invites participants to conduct a comprehensive analysis of population’s needs, whether they be related to agriculture, access to safe water, education, health, social relations (in particular gender issues). Doing this exercise with a multi-disciplinary team familiar with the local context (starting with the national team) will greatly enhance the quality of the analysis.

---

**Conceptual framework of Malnutrition**

(Adapted from UNICEF, 1992)

- Malnutrition
  - Insufficient dietary intake
  - Inadequate maternal and child care
  - Insufficient health services & unhealthy environment

- Disease
  - Local priorities

- Results
  - Immediate causes (individual level)
  - Underlying causes (family and community levels)

- Basic causes
  - Formal and informal infrastructure
  - Political ideology

- Resources: human, structural, financial

---

**What is a nutrition programme? For a diversity of approaches**

Advocating the use of nutrition as a common objective for diverse technical interventions can lead to the necessity to define what a nutrition programme is. In humanitarian action, it is common to consider nutrition programmes as consisting of food distributions (family rations or supplementary rations for children suffering from moderate acute malnutrition), treatment of acute malnutrition (feeding centres, community-based management of acute malnutrition), or distributions of nutrient-rich supplements (biscuits, Ready to Use Foods (RUFs), multi-micro-nutrients etc.). Although these interventions are clearly relevant in certain contexts and must be part of aid workers’ “nutrition toolbox”, most nutritionists are uncomfortable with a narrow definition of nutrition programmes that would be limited to these types of interventions, for several reasons, listed below. A nutrition programme can, on the contrary, include a wide range of activities involving education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, psychology, or many other areas of expertise. The choice of activities will depend on the causes of malnutrition in a given situation, as illustrated in the examples that follow.
- Food distribution programmes (regardless of the ration or product used) are not systematically relevant to address malnutrition problems. For example, according to Therapeutic Feeding Unit registers in Afghanistan, around 40% of patients are below 6 months, which implies that many cases of malnutrition are due to breastfeeding problems, which are in turn related to psychological problems amongst mothers that have been traumatised by the war or cultural pressures. Other noteworthy factor: admission rates in feeding centres increase significantly during the summer, when diarrhoea rates are the highest. The main nutrition programmes implemented in such contexts are psycho-social support to mothers and breastfeeding counselling and promotion (combining health facility-based interventions with media campaigns and community support groups), as well as water and sanitation programmes.

- There is a tendency to confuse the nutrition products and the intervention within which they are used. The growing enthusiasm for ready to use, factory-processed nutrition products should not be called into question, as these products are certainly effective and increase the range of treatment options (notably for home-based treatments). However, the products per se do not constitute the treatment. It is regrettable that a recent study on the effectiveness of Ready to Used Foods in Niger was biased by its design: the control group with which the treatment group was compared did not receive any treatment. This study overshadows the fact that other projects, before the invention of therapeutic products, were also successful in addressing severe acute malnutrition, including with local foods. The treatment of severe or moderate acute malnutrition does not depend only on the product, but on the intervention as a whole. This confusion unfortunately leads to poor intervention practices, such as poorly supervised distributions of Ready to Use Foods (including therapeutic foods), which, in the absence of medical follow-up, nutrition education and support to mothers, can only lead to a significant waste of resources, given the considerable price of these products.

- Food distributions correspond to treatment interventions, and it is important to combine treatment with prevention measures, in order to ensure programmes’ effectiveness and sustainability. For example, again in Afghanistan (though this problem is common in many other contexts), poor infant and young child feeding practices are a major cause of malnutrition. Complementary foods are introduced too late, feeds are insufficiently frequent, and porridges are too diluted to meet children’s nutritional needs. Household poverty certainly limits the availability of food, but it is nevertheless most often possible to improve the use of available resources. FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture have therefore developed improved local recipes and are integrating cooking demonstrations in health, agricultural, and education projects in partnership with numerous NGOs. These institutions are lobbying for cooking demonstrations using local foods to be included in therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes, in order to help mothers prevent their child’s relapse or other cases of malnutrition in their family, while also improving the food security of the household as a whole.

This approach is challenged by certain organisations’ conceptualization of “emergencies” and what should be done in such situations. Building on the example cited above, an organisation working in an extremely poor and drought-prone region of Afghanistan, integrated cooking demonstrations in its food security programmes (punctual food aid completed by vegetable gardening). The demonstrations had such success that the local teams had organised around 200 demonstrations over 4 months. As reports came in of an impending drought, the organisation’s head-quarter suggested it may be best to stop the demonstrations because they were “a development intervention” whereas now the situation was an “emergency”. This suggestion was surprising for the field teams (in particular Afghan) because what the person in headquarters was calling an “emergency” was a structural problem, which the populations were experiencing since decades. Community members’ interest in the vegetable gardens and cooking demonstrations was a reflection that these activities provided them with tools and skills they could use for generations to come, whereas a food distribution would help them temporarily cope with one shock amongst many others.

Food distribution programmes raise the difficult question of sustainability and cost-effectiveness. Some organisations are lobbying for Ready to Use Foods to be part of WHO’s list of essential medicines. This raises difficult public health questions for developing countries whose health budget is limited. This is particularly the case for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition: a 10kg child treated with Plumpy’Nut requires about 90 sachets, for a total cost of over $30, to which the logistics, transport and medical staff costs must be added (reaching $80/child or more depending on the context). Cases of severe acute malnutrition range from 0.2% to 6% (in extreme situations) of children under 5, which implies investing a large part of the health budget for treating a small minority of patients. Furthermore, prevention activities, such as breastfeeding and complementary feeding counselling, iron and vitamin A supplementation can benefit the vast majority (if not all) children, for a much more affordable cost. Finally, these interventions have the advantage of being more easily replicated and sustained by families and local institutions.
compared to the distribution of expensive factory processed products (whether they be produced in Europe or locally).

- Limiting the treatment and prevention of malnutrition to distributions of specialised products can **contribute to the notion that malnutrition is a disease**, to be treated with medicine, whereas its causes are most often economic, social and political. Considering malnutrition essentially as a disease has negative impacts at two levels: at the political level, this can allow **government representatives to shirk away from their responsibilities** (in terms of human rights) for ensuring that the population has access to healthy food and decent living conditions. At the family level, this can **dis-empower mothers**, by giving them the wrong impression that they need specialised products (to which they do not, in most cases, have access) to feed their child well, thereby discouraging them from taking other measures that are within their reach.

**Conclusion: for locally specific, creative and people-centred approaches**

The debate that has emerged around therapeutic and now supplementary nutrition products raises difficult questions. Those lobbying for a wider distribution of these products state that other prevention and treatment measures have demonstrated their lack of effectiveness. They refute the question of costs to public health systems, indicating that the cost of a healthy diet is unaffordable by poor households. They place the debate at an ethical level, referring to the obligation of saving lives. While these arguments can hardly be refuted, and though it is always difficult to place a price on a saved life, we cannot forget that these proposed interventions are **treatments**. The analysis of malnutrition causes demonstrates that the problem is by definition complex and multi-sectoral and that a medical response will never suffice. Human Rights advocates also emphasize that the Right to Food entails the right to feed oneself with dignity, according to one’s cultural practices and tastes, and **without depending on food assistance**. Nutrition programmes must seek to achieve this objective.

We cannot afford to structure the debate as an opposition between different types of interventions, or between treatment and prevention. Both are obviously essential. Similarly, we cannot polarize the debate by focusing excessively on one type of intervention, which has the negative impact of biasing funding allocations and leaving other essential actions unfunded. Finally, it is essential to ensure that short-term interventions (e.g. the distribution of products which are either unavailable locally or are too expensive for local populations) do not undermine longer-term interventions based on community mobilization and improved utilization of local resources. Short-term relief interventions should rather be used to mobilize funding to reach the ‘unreached’ and lay foundations for longer-term interventions (c.f. current initiatives coupling supplementary rations with cash / voucher distributions, and other livelihoods interventions).

In any case, the relevance and selection of nutrition interventions need to be determined locally, on the basis of an analysis of malnutrition causes by population group. Numerous evaluations have demonstrated time and time again that successful nutrition programmes have the following characteristics: they are participatory, multi-sectoral, based on analysis of local needs, contribute to food and income diversification (particularly for women), have strong education components (in particular on nutrition, health, and hygiene), and are implemented with a strong involvement of women. This suggests that everybody has a role to play in the fight against malnutrition, that nobody can take on the task alone, and that a tool box furnished with creative, diverse and locally adapted interventions will be the best weapon of a multi-disciplinary team gathered around a common objective.

*Charlotte Dufour*

Charlotte Dufour has been working on nutrition, food security and livelihoods, in crisis and post-crisis situations since 1999. She has worked with Action Contre la Faim, Groupe URD, the FAO and the Ministries of Agriculture and of Public Health in Afghanistan. She currently works as an independent consultant.

1 C.f. also A Guide to Nutritional Assessment, by Ivan Béghin, 1988, WHO.

2 C.f. the Public Nutrition approach, notably promoted by Tufts University.

3 Such as Plumpy'Nut ©, Plumpy'Dos ©, BP100 © and Sprinkles ©.

4 C.f. Vandana Prasad in Social Medicine, vol4, nb1, 2009 in India.

5 See www.nutriset.fr.

6 In comparison, the Afghan public health budget is based on an estimated cost of delivery of basic medical services of $4.5/capita/year, due to budget constraints (although the country benefits from significant foreign aid).

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not enjoy international and national protection as they should do. They live in enclaves outside the Lebanese rule of law. Practices in the refugee camps are regulated by traditions, abuse of power is common and local practices may be contrary to the needs of victims. Despite 60 years of Palestinian refugee presence and international assistance in Lebanon, refugee camp organisation and dynamics are poorly documented. The present abstract highlights the situation in refugee camps outside Lebanese State control and looks at some practices in contradiction with international conventions protecting refugees and children.

An estimated 300,000 refugees living in Lebanon find themselves in an equivocal situation. As Palestinian refugees they do not benefit from the protection other refugees receive from international organs.

Although Palestinians who fled Palestine in 1948 due to the conflict were identified as refugees, they were excluded from the 1951 refugee convention. In Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, West Bank and Gaza Strip specific agencies were created for the provision of assistance (UNRWA) and protection (UNCCP) though by the mid 1950s, the latter limited its intervention to property issues and nowadays is no longer operational.

In theory, the Lebanese authorities are supposed to bear the responsibility for and to ensure the protection of Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon but in practice the authorities have rarely acknowledged this responsibility. The Lebanese State provides no basic services for Palestinian refugees and their rights in Lebanon have always been very restricted. Apart from residency rights, they are denied social and economic rights and are considered to be foreigners. Palestinian refugees are severely restricted from access to work and possession of property.

Although the Lebanese legislation is very restrictive towards Palestinian refugees, the Lebanese authorities have granted Palestinian refugees significant autonomy over the refugee camps located within Lebanon; to the extent that they can be compared de facto to extraterritorial entities.

This situation is the result of the complex history of the Arab struggle against Israel and the presence of Palestinian armed groups in Lebanon reflected in the status quo reached with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and its military apparatus at the end of the 1960s.

In practice, Palestinian camps are outside Lebanese jurisdiction. There are no representatives of the Lebanese authority in the refugee camps and Lebanese police, security and military forces do not enter the camps where security is ensured by the Palestinians themselves. Palestinian camps are considered havens for outlaws and people wanted by the Lebanese authorities.

In the camps, local institutions replace Lebanese law and have their own “legislation” and practices based on traditional grounds and religious or individual interpretations rather than on the rule of law. Three main layers of authority govern the camps: the Political factions; Popular Committees and Security Committees; religious leaders, Sheikhs or Imams have great influence and are often consulted for civil affairs.

Security Committee representatives are the police guards of the camps. They are security officers for whom there are no protocols or written procedures. Their methods of investigation and the way they deal with convicts are based on customary practice and do not take into consideration issues such as human rights, the rights of children or good police practices. Most Security Committees have “jails” where delinquents are held in custody until they confess and agreement is reached between the parties involved. Jail cells or custody rooms vary from camp to camp but they have very basic facilities.

From the age of 14, children are often considered to be adults and therefore detained with and treated in the same way as other adults. The use of physical violence against detainees, including children, is normal practice which is in contradiction with international standards and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**The case of Ahmad** – In October 2008, Ahmad, a 12-13 year-old boy was arrested by the security committee in Beddawi camp for multiple robberies and put in the “jail” of the camp security office. The camp security office has a single cell consisting of a room of one meter by two with no furniture, mattress or blanket except for a thin piece of old sponge. “We beat the boy in order to get his confession and when he had confessed all his robberies, we beat him again in order to punish him” said one of the guards. He got a two-week sentence in the cell and was then released when his family offered to compensate for the robberies.

No systematic social mechanism exists for the follow up of children and juveniles in conflict with the law in the camps. In Ahmad’s case in the Beddawi camp, no referral was set up with security committees in order to take care of him, provide psychological support and assistance or to accompany him with alternative training, guidance or mediation with the family.

Palestinian camps are typical of many traditional contexts, where the community at large, individuals and security officials may favor negotiation and compromise “the family way”, as the appropriate ways to settle crimes, abuses and...
violence against women or children. This leads to situations in which community peace is often deemed more important than the offense, and where agreements are often reached with financial compensations, disregarding the interest of the victims, with impunity for perpetrators by tacit social consensus. The abuse of women and children is often considered a family matter or a matter of dishonour for the family or the community and therefore hidden or treated in a traditional way.

NGOs and practitioners in the field are confronted with complex protection cases and dilemmas. Social workers are often on the front line in dealing with protection issues. Confronting protection cases such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or rape which are taboos in Palestinian culture, or affect community cohesion and leadership, may place the victim and the NGOs involved in difficult situations where there are new risks. NGOs are often in a dilemma about how to protect children against abuses and at the same time protect NGO staff from retaliation and community reaction.

The case of Sahra – Sahra is a 14 year-old girl who lives in a refugee camp in Beirut. While participating in psychosocial activities at an NGO centre, she revealed to a social worker that her father had been abusing her for many years and asked for assistance. The NGO representative tried to involve other NGOs, consulted the Popular Committee and the security committee and even the Imam of the Mosque but no one wanted to receive the complaint or to act as the father was a well-known security leader from a political faction. The mother asked the NGO to help her to find a surgeon who could “restore the virginity” of her daughter to be able to marry the girl to a man in his 50s.

In the camps, there is a vacuum regarding knowledge about children’s rights and widespread support for traditional practices, or practices people think are beneficial to the child although in contradiction with international standards such as the practice of using violence to punish a child, forced child marriage, child labour, placing juveniles in custody or using violence for those in conflict with the “law”. Even NGOs mediating in child abuse cases may opt for traditional responses as the most adequate protection measures depending on the context.

The case of Samira / Protection measures – Samira lives in a refugee camp in Sour. Her family are among the most vulnerable people there, with a mentally disabled father and a mother who does not live with the family. At the age of 14, Samira was abused by a 27-year-old man and became pregnant. The young man tried to avoid taking responsibility for his actions by offering financial compensation to the father. This would have left Samira with the choice of illegal and unsafe abortion or exclusion from her community and stigmatization for having a baby without being married and all the legal difficulties this would entail. Representatives of an NGO mediated with the father and involved community leaders to put pressure on the young man to marry Samira as a protection measure for the girl and for the baby. Since, the couple has moved out of the camp and is now living in another region.

Behaviour and practices of this kind are very hard to change and require open dialogue with communities. Most parents do not have the necessary guidance and information on child issues and the spreading of information is essential for change.

More field protection is needed and awareness should be raised about child rights with the aim of reaching agreement on a child regulation charter with “local authorities” in the camps, but little can be achieved if political leaders are not committed to change. Palestinian refugees’ isolation from Lebanese society should end in order to restore their rights under Lebanese law.

International organisations as well as civil society and national NGOs, have a major role to play in ensuring Palestinian refugees receive the protection they deserve, but better knowledge of camp dynamics, social structures and practices is needed in order to define a protective environment framework and adapt protection interventions.

Alain Robyns

2 Ref to UNIFEM documents in transition societies versus traditional contexts “Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Post Conflict Societies”.
4 Ref to Sari Hanafi’s numerous articles and research on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.
Gradually, humanitarian actors have come to accept the idea of having their work evaluated, with the aim of learning and improving practices. Unfortunately we do not always check whether this aim has been achieved. What are the “missing links” which need to be added in terms of practice so that the evaluation process delivers the desired results?

There is a general consensus today within the humanitarian sector that evaluations are important opportunities to learn and move forward rather than to appraise and sanction. In little over a decade, there has been a significant change in the practices of humanitarian operators and donors who now almost systematically include an evaluation during or at the end of a programme. Progress has, therefore, been made.

The ALNAP network has played an important role in bringing about this change by promoting the concept of evaluation, providing specialist knowledge and training and assessing the quality of evaluation reports through meta-evaluation. Donors (such as DG ECHO), institutions like HCR and World Vision (who pioneered the After Action Review) and various research and evaluation teams like Groupe URD have also played a part in developing new methods and approaches to evaluation which aim to meet needs on the ground more effectively. Groupe URD conducted the first real-time evaluation in 1998 following Hurricane Mitch, ran an ‘Observatory of practices’ in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2008 and is currently setting up another in Chad.

However, even if there has been an increase in the number of evaluations carried out and approaches adopted, according to ALNAP the quality of these evaluations still often leaves a lot to be desired (see the meta-evaluations regularly published on the ALNAP website www.alnap.org). Even more worrying is that evaluation has not changed practices as much as was initially hoped by those who promoted its systematic use: “evaluation and the identification of lessons has not led to the system-wide improvements in performance anticipated in 1997...”.

One may therefore ask oneself how effective “evaluation” is as a tool. Do evaluations really help to learn and change? There is a risk that evaluations simply become a ritual, a question of regulations, imposed by donors or decision-makers of various kinds in the interests of transparency and political correctness, but without any real impact on humanitarian practice. What changes need to take place to make evaluations genuine tools for change? What are the missing links which would help to explain why evaluations have had such a limited impact on the service delivered to beneficiaries?

An initial analysis of what these missing links might be is summarised in the diagram below. It shows the different stages of the evaluation process, from the commissioning of the evaluation to the point when the service delivered is improved. It presents two “missing links” in this cycle.

The evaluation process is complex and full of pitfalls for the novice. But one can learn - accessible methods do exist. However, certain points are often overlooked because they come after the evaluation itself. These are nevertheless pivotal if institutions or programmes are to improve the service they provide to beneficiaries.

The first point, knowledge management, is the transformation of key information from the evaluation into information that is shared within the institution.

The second point, the Quality method, is the transformation of this key information into changes in practice. Let us now look at these two missing links in more detail.

The first missing link - Knowledge management

Knowledge Management can be defined as the formalisation/structuring and sharing of information (or knowledge or experience, etc.). Information which is held by one person or a group of people is made available within the organisation in a regular and structured manner. In all human activities, and in particular in companies, no matter what their status or their function, knowledge management is
fundamental. It is through knowledge management that know-how is transmitted, that the organisation evolves and the quality of the goods and services improves.

Knowledge management is made difficult by inertia and resistance to change. A genuine commitment on the part of the company needs to be made. Knowledge management specialists need to be hired (with expertise in the relevant field, in the sociology of organisations and with pedagogical and diplomatic skills etc.) and significant investment is required, both in terms of money (in France in 2004, companies spent 9.5 billion Euros or 3% of the wage bill on training) and time. A culture of progress needs to be developed throughout the organisation and the commitment needs to be constantly renewed.

In businesses, this question is vital to ensure their survival and development in a highly competitive market where the client can choose to change supplier at any time. Consequently, knowledge management is generally done well in the business sector. Indeed, intranet and other ‘Knowledge Management’ tools are currently flourishing.

In ‘social’ organisations, such as in the humanitarian sector, knowledge management is just as important, but it is often overlooked.
- The high staff turnover particularly amongst field workers does not allow experience to be built up about particular contexts;
- Despite the fact that this high turnover allows the rapid acquisition of experience, with field workers switching rapidly from one agency to another, this only takes place at an individual rather than an institutional level;
- The question of knowledge management is rarely a priority in the Human Resource policies of operational or donor agencies.

This leaves only institutional or individual principles which might push an organisation to engage in regular and continuous learning with the aim of improving practices. But the dominant principles in the humanitarian sector favour action over reflection and learning – “there is an emergency, therefore it is urgent to take action”.

These difficulties, which are specific to the humanitarian sector, make research into and application of knowledge management all the more important and particularly concerning knowledge which has come from an evaluation. Tools do exist, both in terms of access to information at the international level (there is a growing number of websites dedicated to the humanitarian sector) and in terms of management itself (intranet, virtual or CD Rom libraries).

But this is nothing without the ‘political’ decision to invest the necessary resources into developing the relevant mechanisms for each organisation and giving staff the time to appropriate this knowledge (time to read, to attend seminars, training, etc.).

It can never be repeated too often: much less time is needed to understand and remain informed about developments in the sector than is needed to repair errors made through lack of knowledge or the non-application of lessons already learned.

The second missing link - Implementation of a Quality method

We have all learned, and sometimes with painful results, that simply having a new piece of information or a new tool does not mean that we can use it effectively. We also need instructions for using it. The more complex the task and the greater the number of different actors involved, the greater it becomes necessary to have a method in addition to technical understanding of the tool. By ‘method’ we mean a tool and instructions for using it, a reasoned approach where production is organised on the basis of rules and principles.

For around fifty years, in companies all over the world, increased complexity in the production of goods and services, the search for effectiveness and efficiency, and market demands for Quality have progressively led to the implementation of Quality methods.

Initially, Quality control methods were used. With these, the product is checked during or at the end of the production line. This did not prevent the production of defective products, at least up to a certain stage in the process. This wasted time, materials and money and led to a loss of confidence.

Quality control was succeeded by ‘Quality Assurance’ which makes it possible to avoid problems throughout the production process. This is now the most widely used Quality method in the world.

In the humanitarian sector, with the growing complexity of operational situations, the wide variety of operational fields and the related expertise needed to provide assistance, regular updating of technical knowledge (knowledge management) is essential. But without a Quality assurance method, the application of this knowledge will only bring mediocre results. Yet very few in the sector are familiar with these methods. The pressure to deliver quality is still too weak in this sector where regulation and market forces do not exist, where there is an imbalance between the information that is available to operators and beneficiaries and where beneficiaries do not have a choice.

Ideally, in the future – sooner rather than later - each humanitarian worker should have two areas of expertise: their principal expertise (technical, management, finance, logistics, etc.) and expertise in Quality Assurance.

Conclusion

In the introduction, the question was asked about whether evaluations could be a source of learning and change. The two missing links that have been described no doubt go some way towards answering this question.

Groupe URD has been working on the issues of Quality Management for 10 years and will increasingly focus on Knowledge Management. However, it remains to be seen whether humanitarian actors will give themselves the means to change and whether donors will be able to support the supplementary effort needed to implement evaluation recommendations.

If nothing is done, all the time, energy and money that have gone into evaluations will have been for nothing.
Worse still, the hopes of progress that evaluations gave rise to will be dashed for a long time to come.

Hugues Maury

Hugues Maury is a paediatrician and public health expert. He has worked with Groupe URD as a consultant for a number of years. He was co-director of the Quality project and is now involved in activities to do with organisational support and the adoption of quality approaches.

Building a quality framework: issues and challenges

This article is based on Groupe URD’s experience developing the Quality COMPAS and the M&E system for the Working Group on Early Recovery in Myanmar as well as evaluations and methodological support that it has been involved in. It outlines the main issues and the key steps involved in developing a quality reference framework for the humanitarian sector.

The DAC quality reference framework was designed by donors in the early 1990s to be used in the evaluation of development aid. With regard to humanitarian aid, a body of work has been undertaken over the last few years concerning evaluation and Quality. However, very little work has been done on the use of a quality reference framework for project management.

The notion of Quality itself is rarely defined. The same can be said of the concept of ‘Accountability’, which needs to be defined more clearly if it is to be anything more than a buzzword (Stobbaerts et al, 2008). A universal definition of Quality has been established by ISO, which describes it as ‘the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear on its ability to satisfy stated and implied need’ (ISO 8402:1986). This definition states that the word ‘quality’ only makes sense in reference to a whole range of characteristics specific to a certain product or a service.

Based on Groupe URD’s experience with humanitarian actors from different sectors, this article discusses the issues at stake in clearly defining the quality of humanitarian action, using a reference framework made up of criteria. It then suggests what the key stages should be in developing a quality reference framework, highlighting the similarities and differences between some existing frameworks.

The challenges of defining a quality framework for humanitarian aid

Linking indicators to criteria

‘Measuring an increase in the number of visits to prisoners may imply either that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is carrying out more operations than be-

Measuring beyond effectiveness - the need for a comprehensive set of indicators and criteria

Often, both humanitarian organisations and donors focus on results indicators, which are quantifiable and easily verifiable. This approach, anchored in the logical framework approach, can lead to misinterpretation and difficulties when managing humanitarian projects. The performance of a humanitarian project is not necessarily questionable just because it does not produce any verifiable or quantifiable results. Hoffman, et al. (2004) argue that ‘within the humanitarian sector, a focus on measurement could reduce operational effectiveness and lead to the neglect of issues such as protection and dignity because they are difficult to measure. Focusing on what is measurable risks reducing humanitarian aid to a technical question of delivery, rather than a principled endeavour in which the process as well as the outcome is important’.

We need to work with a whole range of indicators, linked not only to impact and results, but also to structure and to processes. The following 3 groups of criteria: impact and results criteria, structure criteria, and process criteria, are used in other sectors, such as the healthcare sector, to define the quality of a service or product (Donabedian, 1988). These same criteria were used to develop the reference framework of the Quality COMPAS and to design an M&E system for the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) in Myanmar.

Defining who is the final client of aid operations

In order to elaborate a quality reference framework we need to define who the ‘final client’ of the product or service in question is. This is true for the ISO method and qual-


2 See : www.compasqualite.org
ity approaches in general. However, for humanitarian actors, this leads to a number of complex questions. Are the beneficiaries of aid the final clients? If yes, can they be described as final clients in the same way as those who pay for a product or service? What about donors? Can they too be considered to be ‘clients’ in so far as they finance aid and are able to sanction bad quality? These questions need to be tackled to define a reference framework.

A universal reference framework and contextualised indicators

Is it possible to develop a universally-applicable quality framework? The DAC and COMPAS reference frameworks have shown that it is possible to use the same series of criteria for different contexts or different types of programmes. Having universal criteria allows one to cross-analyse a number of programmes (in the same zone, by the same agency) or even compare the response from one zone to another. Comparative analysis methods from the Social Sciences are particularly effective for comparisons of this kind. These involve analysing the response in terms of the constraints and opportunities in each context. These comparisons can therefore use criteria but on no account should they use standards (a fixed value of a given indicator). Each situation is different, with its own opportunities and constraints, and each organisation has its particular areas of expertise, skills and limits.

How is a quality reference framework developed?

An inclusive process to achieve a common understanding of quality

Quality takes different forms according to the specific needs in any given context, and depends on various factors such as culture, environment and standards of living. It can also be approached from different perspectives and is therefore dependent on a comprehensive understanding of needs. The first step in the development of the Quality COMPAS method was an examination and analysis of what humanitarian actors considered quality to be in a variety of contexts. Therefore, a diversity of points of view from different stakeholders in the field - international organisations, international NGOs as well as local NGOs, donors, local authorities and also affected populations - were collected during participatory interviews. Even though combining the points of views of so many different actors was not an easy task, this is what made the final quality framework both valuable and relevant.

Using sentences rather than words

The 7 DAC criteria - relevance/appropriateness, coverage, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence – are the most widely known criteria. However, their use seems to be most problematic in many cases. In particular, the fact that the criteria are represented by single words often leads to misunderstanding and misinterpretation regarding their meaning. Therefore, the DAC criteria are perceived by the majority of humanitarian actors as only being useful to evaluators who are experienced and highly-trained. This runs counter to the idea that a quality framework is a set of common values which are widely shared between stakeholders. To overcome these difficulties, another option was explored in the health sector. Hospitals in Quebec phrased their quality criteria using full sentences instead of words. Building on this experience, the quality criteria in the Quality COMPAS method take the form of short sentences and each criterion tackles one single aspect of humanitarian aid. This approach allows the criterion to be understood quickly and easily by all the stakeholders, from field staff to experienced evaluators. The same approach with sentences was applied when designing the quality framework for early recovery interventions in the post-Nargis context.

Typology of indicators to measure criteria

There is a wide range of indicators that can be used to measure criteria.

A typology is presented in the next table (see page 16).

Conclusion: The notion of ‘collective responsibility’ – myth or reality?

The DAC reference framework has been useful, but it needs to be revised both to respond more effectively to new issues and initiatives in the sector, and to make it a genuine management tool for organisations. Such a change will only happen if humanitarian actors begin to address this issue. The idea of creating a collectively accountable system is central to the reform of the United Nations’ humanitarian system. It will be impossible to pull off such a feat without a concerted effort to establish common values which are then inscribed in a collectively used quality reference framework.

Véronique de Geoffroy
Domitille Kauffmann
Groupe URD
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology of Criteria</th>
<th>Typology of Indicators</th>
<th>Sorts of Indicators</th>
<th>Typology of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results and Impact</td>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative to the relevance of the aid provided the degree to which objectives have been met and the effects of the humanitarian response in the mid and long term.</td>
<td>Measurement of the products, capital goods (i.e. tools) and services which result from an intervention including changes resulting from the intervention</td>
<td>Can be counted (number of, % of, degree of, etc.)</td>
<td>Fixed value that often implies the comparison with a baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measurement of the likely or achieved medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs</td>
<td>Can not be counted (yes/no, colour, degree of satisfaction, seriousness, etc.)</td>
<td>Tracking how a given indicator evolves during implementation of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measurement of the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended</td>
<td></td>
<td>Used with qualitative indicators. For example, it gives the desired degree of beneficiary satisfaction for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td>Incidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measurement of the type of activities, methods, techniques and approaches that are applied during project implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td>The frequency and seriousness of the event. For instance, different colours can be used according to how serious the event is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Humanitarian aid has had to face numerous changes since the beginning of the 21st century and the idea of including the protection of civilians in humanitarian policy has begun to gain momentum. This guide, which is aimed at aid agencies, provides advice about security and the protection of victims of violence.

**Enhancing protection : For civilians in armed conflict and other situations of violence**

Geneva : ICRC, 2008, 80 P.

Aimed at NGOs and Human Rights organisations, this document shares the ICRC’s experience and know-how in matters of IHL and more particularly the protection of civilians in conflicts and other violent situations.

**Growing the sheltering tree: Protecting rights through humanitarian action**


Revised and expanded third edition. Alphabetical index by theme and by signatory state. Bibliography, sitography and coordinates of international organisations.

This dictionary provides legal definitions of 300 concepts from humanitarian law: war crimes, International Criminal Court, victims, refugees, terrorism, famine, genocide, children... It is aimed at humanitarians and all those interested in the field of conflict. It presents the international legal framework which regulates the management of crisis situations and the related operational principles.

**Assistance and protection in a complex emergency environment : an impossible challenge ?**


Somalia has the unfortunate record of having the most IDPs in the world who have fled conflict situations. The United Nations estimates that 60% of the population of the Somali capital are displaced persons living in extremely precarious conditions. Conflicts close to the capital have limited relief to food aid which is delivered through local partners. 2 million people are dependent on aid, but the context has prevented NGOs from establishing themselves and doing their work.

Between humanitarian advocacy, which involves raising the alarm about violent and dangerous situations, and legal advocacy, which consists of contributing to the judgement of an individual, the author attempts to provide definitions, provide bearings and establish what the responsibilities of humanitarian organisations are in relation to victims and in relation to the courts. Contrary to popular opinion, humanitarian organisations are not obliged to cooperate with international courts. But should they choose not to? This, at least, would prevent the pursuit of international justice from limiting relief organisations’ access to victims and from increasing the risks of humanitarian field workers being targeted.

Download: http://www.msf.fr/drive/8a7b6ed244b878018939536b11b477b0.pdf (last visited 9 March 2009)

---

**International criminal justice and humanitarian action : the debate on video**

ICRC (5 à 7) debate

Video of the fourth debate in the ICRC’s “5 à 7” series which took place on 27 November 2008, on the compatibility between international criminal justice and humanitarian action.


---

**MSF et la protection : une question réglée ? : Discours et pratiques autours de la « protection des civils »**

CRASH FONDATION ; Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2008. 148 P.

SOUSSAN, Judith

There is currently some confusion about the idea of ‘protection’ within MSF. For some it is obvious and necessary while for others it is a suspect notion. Positions are taken but there is no real debate. And yet we must talk about protection if we are to establish what our responsibility and role should be with regard to violence, alongside healthcare. Has this question been resolved once and for all at MSF?

Download: http://www.msf.fr/drive/97590daa8b1b115332a0d77bc14d9113.pdf (last visited 9 March 2009)
**Events**

**Groupe URD is launching a new programme in Eastern Chad to support collective learning and improve the quality of the humanitarian response in the region.**

On the strength of its past experience (heading the Mitch task force from 1998 to 2001, running its observatory in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2008, etc.) Groupe URD is setting up an observatory to support aid agencies in their response to the crisis in Chad (and possibly, at a later stage, in neighbouring countries – Sudan, Central African Republic). The objective of the observatory is to facilitate learning and help agencies to improve the quality of their practices via existing collective dynamics.

Collective learning will take place through:
- Iterative Evaluations with Mini Seminars (EIMS);
- Sharing of knowledge from particular areas of research.

The first phase, which is currently being launched, is planned for an 8-month period (March to October 2009). It will look specifically at the following sectors/themes in Eastern Chad:
- Water and sanitation;
- Food security and, in particular, the monitoring of economic urbanisation dynamics in and around camps;
- Protection;
- Reducing the environmental footprint of aid.

Two cross-cutting themes for the programme are Quality Assurance and LRRD.

Contact: Olivia Collins, ocollins@urd.org
Tél: +235 362 67 76

**ISCRAM 2009 Conference (International Community on information systems for crisis response and management).**

The International Community on information systems for crisis response and management (ISCRAM) is holding its 5th annual conference at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) from 10th to 13th May 2009. ISCRAM is a community of more than 1800 people who work on and promote the development of information systems for crisis response and management.

Groupe URD will be taking part in a workshop to present the Dynamic COMPAS information management software, which is based on the Quality COMPAS quality assurance method (http://www.compasqualite.org/)

For more information about this event and to register go to: http://www.iscram.org/

**Training courses on the COMPAS method, the quality assurance approach developed by Groupe URD.**

For the first time, COMPAS training is heading for Latin America, where a course will take place in Colombia.

From 21st to 24th April 2009 Groupe URD will be running the course in partnership with IECAH (Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action) at the headquarters of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) in Bogota.

The ‘Quality management of humanitarian projects’ course introduces participants to the concept of Quality in humanitarian aid, provides an overview of the Dynamic COMPAS software and presents the fundamental principles of project management using the Quality COMPAS. A case study helps participants to work on the different phases of the project cycle – initial assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation.

For further information, please contact: sede[at]iecah.org
To register online (in Spanish):
http://www.iecah.org/novedad.php?id=49

For those who wish to take their training further and become quality management trainers themselves, a training of trainers module now exists. The first session will be in French and will take place from 15th to 19th June 2009. Participants will learn to organise and run a ‘Quality management of humanitarian projects’ course and to give it a personal touch by using their own examples.

Participants should already have done the ‘Quality management’ course and should be familiar with using the Dynamic COMPAS. They will also be expected to make a serious commitment to giving the course themselves in the future.

If interested, please contact Pierre Brunet: pbrunet[at]urd.org

---

Humanitarian Aid on the move

The Transatlantic Dialogues on Humanitarian Action are designed to promote transatlantic dialogue on humanitarian action by bringing together professionals focusing on these issues. Throughout the duration of the “Raising the BAR Project”, the Berlin based Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI) and Groupe URD organize and take part in different fora for the discussion of both research results as well as key themes in the current debate on humanitarian aid. The next event will take place on June, the 8th, 2009 in Brussels.

More on the programme can be found at: http://www.disastergovernance.net/events/

Training: Evaluating the quality of humanitarian projects (Plaisians, 22 - 26 June 2009)

The complex issues of evaluation and quality with regard to humanitarian action have recently become the subject of international debate. But despite the fact that there are ever greater demands for better quality programmes and pressure from donors for greater transparency, evaluation has not yet become a mainstream practice in humanitarian action. Too often, evaluations are still thought of as a form of audit, inspection or assessment of individual performance. It is time to correct this misunderstanding and to make the evaluation of projects and programmes an integral part of humanitarian culture in order to genuinely improve aid practices.

For this to happen, tools and methods need to be developed and made available throughout the sector. Groupe URD is an active member of the ALNAP international network which has been working on this issue for a number of years. A training course on "Evaluating the quality of humanitarian projects" will take place from 22nd to 26th June 2009 at Groupe URD’s headquarters in Plaisians (Drôme Provençale, south of France). Over the four days, participants will learn about the principles behind the concept of quality in humanitarian action and the issues and techniques involved in conducting evaluations. The course is based around a case study which allows theory to be applied in practice.

For further information and to register, please contact Pierre Brunet: pbrunet[at]urd.org

The 5th Urban Research Symposium, from 28th to 30th June 2009, Marseille.

The 5th Urban Research Symposium, sponsored by the World Bank and a large spectrum of partners, will be held in Marseille, from 28th to 30th June 2009. The topic will be Cities and Climate Change: Responding to an Urgent Agenda.

This three-day conference will cover numerous research topics such as: the impacts of the growth of cities on climate change and the ability of cities to adapt; measuring and anticipating the consequences of climate change on human establishments, the quality of life of city-dwellers and local and regional economies; social aspects of climate change - understanding and reducing the vulnerability of urban communities, etc.

For more information and to register: http://www.urs2009.net/
For extended articles and a bibliography go to:

www.urd.org/newsletter
Groupe URD

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

Further information:
www.urd.org
www.compasqualite.org

Humanitarian Aid on the move

Humanitarian Aid on the Move – a quarterly, trilingual e-newsletter – aims to share the results of work on important issues currently facing the sector. We will regularly invite external contributors and provide links to other publications. Please contact us if you would like to propose an article.

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

Contacts

To subscribe to the e-newsletter:
http://www.urd.org/newsletter

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