Hope amid the crises

Recently, good news has been in short supply. Journalists and civil society leaders continue to disappear or to be assassinated in the Russian Federation, the situation in the Caucasus remains explosive both in the north (Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia) and the south (Georgia and Nagorny-Kabarak). The crises in Darfur, Somalia and the DRC drag on. More and more often, humanitarians are denied access to populations in distress, and at the same time, they are increasingly the target of violence and banditry, making their work increasingly dangerous.

Of course, all is not completely without hope. Although the return of El Nino in the southern hemisphere is due to bring flooding and hurricanes to South America and drought to the Southeast Asian peninsulas, disaster preparation plans are being put in place, something which simply did not happen ten years ago. And though stability remains an ongoing challenge in Afghanistan, elections were able to take place there despite the violence and intimidation. With other dangers on the horizon, like the SARS and H1N1 epidemics, the impacts of climate change and the global economic crisis, which is already undermining resilience and international solidarity, one might be tempted to simply give up. Alternatively, we can put our shoulders to the wheel and resist. The humanitarian sector has always been dynamic and capable of adapting itself. Humanitarian Aid on the Move aims to reflect this multi-faceted quality, and is grounded in the idea that collective progress will only come as a result of individual progress.
Saudi Arabia was the third biggest humanitarian donor after the United States and the European Commission in 2008. Yet the international aid system has been - and continues to be - structured in mainly Western forums. So-called “emerging” donors are rarely involved in coordination mechanisms. In order to involve them more, it is crucial to reach better understanding of their role, their values and their specific characteristics.

This article is the executive summary of a study financed by the French Foreign Ministry’s Centre de Crise and carried out by Groupe URD. The complete report will be published at a later date.

The Gulf States have recently become more active in the humanitarian domain, increasing the amount of funding that they give to humanitarian aid and becoming more involved in international debates. Governmental bodies for emergency relief have been created, the implementation of aid has been improved (e.g. creation of the Humanitarian City in Dubai), debate on humanitarian issues has been encouraged, donations to United Nations agencies have been increased and international conferences like the DIHAD have been held. Saudi Arabia was the third biggest humanitarian donor after the United States and the European Commission in 2008.

However, recent crises like the crisis in Lebanon in 2006 have highlighted how little Arab donors are integrated into international coordination mechanisms. In general, the international aid system has been and continues to be shaped principally in Western forums. This reinforces the perception that humanitarian aid is based on Western rather than universal values. It is therefore crucial to reach better understanding of the role, values and specific characteristics of these actors so that they can be integrated more into coordination mechanisms.

Data about funds allocated by the Gulf States and the types of aid supported is hard to come by. But, in order to monitor the humanitarian aid system and make dialogue easier, it is important to know about and take into account certain specific characteristics of humanitarian aid in the Gulf States, and more generally in the Muslim world.

Islam encourages the giving of charitable donations. A considerable amount is given by businesses and individuals to charitable works and Islamic aid. These funds go primarily to conflict or natural disaster contexts in the Middle East, such as Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen. They are allocated on the basis of religious and geographical proximity, for aid programmes which target Muslim communities in nearby regions.

Certain actors provide humanitarian aid coupled with religious programmes for Muslim communities. It is not always easy to distinguish between relief, humanitarian aid and religious activities. Some believe that the origin of these funds needs to be clarified as it influences the content of aid. This question is currently one of the central issues being discussed by actors from the Muslim world. Having begun as charitable action, aid in the Gulf States is becoming increasingly professionalised, following the example of humanitarian organisations elsewhere, while preserving religious values.

From the 1990s, certain Islamic organisations such as Islamic Relief-UK or Muslim Aid distanced themselves from militant activity and became more professional. The development of these new organisations gradually prompted a debate about what constituted Islamic humanitarian aid and how it should be defined.

9/11 had a major impact on all Islamic organisations. Following the attacks on New York and Washington, many organisations were accused of supporting terrorism and were blacklisted by the United States Treasury, the United Nations Security Council and the Council of Europe. All the Gulf States subsequently adopted very strict rules regarding fund transfers to foreign countries which now require authorisation and have to be screened. The ongoing issue of greater transparency concerning the considerable sums the public donates through religious donations and public events is bringing about changes in practices. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 also made it necessary to establish dialogue and understanding to counter the stigmatisation that Islamic organisations were being subjected to. The Humanitarian Forum, created under the aegis of Islamic Relief UK in 2004 promotes dialogue and mutual understanding, improved transparency and humanitarian principles.

The reorganisation of public sector humanitarian aid in the Gulf States and the changes currently taking
place are genuine opportunities. These should lead to greater clarity about humanitarian aid in these countries, better internal coordination of the various public and private initiatives and, as a consequence, better coordination with the international system.

The different foundations, NGOs and Red Crescent Societies in these countries, both donors and operators, are important actors with sometimes considerable budgets. Many actors in the Gulf States would like closer links with the international humanitarian community and express the need for experience sharing and capacity building.

Partnerships are currently being tested between states and organisations from the Gulf and international humanitarian agencies (UN agencies and NGOs), and big international NGOs like NRC, OXFAM and CARE have established partnerships with foundations. The nomination of a Saudi national, Abdul Aziz Muhammad Arrukban, as a special humanitarian envoy of the UN secretary-general, responsible for humanitarian issues in the Middle East, is a positive development which should improve dialogue between Gulf State governments and UN agencies.

The changes which are taking place bring challenges. Over and above questions of funding, what is at stake is the possibility of building bridges between two aid cultures. The Gulf States’ greater openness and keenness to take part in humanitarian debates and coordination forums represent an opportunity not to be missed to ensure that humanitarian principles continue to be universally recognised.

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1 Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition, which takes place in Dubai every April.
4 Current members include: British Red Cross; Department for International Development (UK); International Islamic Charitable Organization (Kuwait); Islamic Relief Worldwide; IHH (Turkey); EMDAD; Mercy Corps; Muhammadiyah Foundation (Indonesia); National Rural Support Programme (Pakistan); Neareast Foundation; Qatar Charitable Organisation; Qatar Red Crescent Society; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; World Assembly of Muslim Youth. Standing Invitees: UK Charity Commission, ICVA, ICRC, IFRC, OCHA (no French NGOs).

What level of information exchange should there be between humanitarians and the military?

The number of civilian humanitarian actors – both NGOs and state and multi-state bodies - has exploded. Increasingly, these organisations find themselves side by side with military forces in the field. This cohabitation is not always easy and various guidelines, references and doctrines have been drawn up to make relations less conflictual, such as the Oslo guidelines and the CIMIC doctrine, which attempt to clarify the different roles and mandates of humanitarian and military actors. The issue of information exchange between these two parties continues to be a subject of debate.

Based on a study on Civil-Military relations carried out for the French Ministry of Defence’s Strategic Affairs Delegation.

With the end of the Cold War, the advent of the Global War on Terror and the increase in the number of large-scale natural disasters, there has been an increase in the number and variety of external military interventions - peace enforcement, peacekeeping, security operations and operations following natural disasters.

For certain armies, the distinction between the two is clear – the military are not humanitarians. For them, civilian action is only ever carried out when it is in the interests of the troops deployed. For others, things are less clear-cut, both in the language used and in actions carried out. There are more and more Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), which have a very limited humanitarian impact, but blur the distinction between humanitarians and the military. The clearest example of this hijacking of civilian action by military forces is the PRTs in Afghanistan. These have been the subject of a series of damning reports, including some by British researchers and American universities.

The exchange of information involves a certain amount of risk. It does take place when there is a clear line between information exchange and military intelligence. A large number of platforms now exist for humanitarians and the military to meet and exchange...
views. These platforms have different objectives such as security, International Humanitarian Law or the needs of affected populations.

Access to and sharing of information is often a key element in civil-military relations, as this is central to political, strategic and operational decisions. This involves three main questions: why exchange information, with whom and how?

Why: Communicating information to political authorities, either publicly or confidentially is an inherent part of advocacy activities. This is done to influence political and military decision-makers. A number of major military interventions were launched following advocacy of this kind, such as the EUFOR in Chad, in response to appeals on the part of OXFAM and the HCR. But information exchange can also be part of security management. Although the military often give minimal information, using the justification that the information they have is “classified”, sometimes leaving humanitarian actors in high risk situations, it is clear that their knowledge of the field and their intelligence systems provide them with important information for the security of teams on the ground: the movement of troops, ongoing combat, etc. For everyone involved, and particularly for humanitarians, sharing information remains a sensitive issue. Before doing so, the risks involved for the different stakeholders (local population, volunteers in the field and the information sources themselves) need to be given serious consideration.

Who with and how? Due to the sensitivity of information exchange, it is important that it should take place in a very structured context, with clear rules and limits which are understood by everyone involved. For information to flow between humanitarian and military organisations a strategic approach is needed, using mechanisms which have a certain amount of flexibility in relation to different contexts and adapted to different levels of interaction between specific institutions depending on the context and the international environment. The Hippocratic aphorism “primum non nocere” should be the basic rule.

Clarifying the relationship between crisis management and humanitarian action:

Different countries and institutions have different approaches to military intervention for crisis management purposes. This creates potentially dangerous confusion between crisis management and humanitarian action. The interaction between civil and military organisations tends to be opportunistic and sometimes competitive. The rules for such interaction and for the management of information between them should be clarified, as should the roles, responsibilities, means and limits of the different actors involved. Humanitarian law and humanitarian principles should necessarily be at the centre of these considerations. In this context, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid is a step in the right direction. It allows the presence, the means and the weight of the humanitarian sector in relation to future crisis management mechanisms to be clarified, and allows humanitarian presence and civilian capacity in the field to be strengthened. On the other hand, there is growing concern about the direction that NATO and the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) are taking in this respect. The instrumentalisation of civilian affairs in general and of the humanitarian sector in particular appears to be increasingly common within these two institutions.

In this context, one of the most promising ideas is to create civil interfaces within NGOs and UN agencies to counterbalance the NATO CIMIC teams or those in UN military operations. In order to establish a framework, without reducing access to the necessary information, existing mechanisms for information exchange should be better known by all stakeholders, including the CIMIC teams. OCHA’s civil-military offices and the Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs) should be contacted more systematically in order to avoid the problems caused by the military seeking out information through informal channels. Other interface mechanisms exist, such as NGOs which specialise in security (ANSO).

Civil-military relations in general and the exchange of information between humanitarian and military organisations in particular should only take place within a legal framework, with clarified principles and mandates. The relatively simple contexts of natural or technological disasters and the much more complex and sensitive situations which come with conflicts require different approaches. IHL and other legal references or guidelines (Oslo guidelines) provide a system which can guide reflection, make the clarification of mandates easier and help to define areas of compatibility and incompatibility. Missions like EUFOR and MINURCAT in Chad are more complex. They do not have peace enforcement or peacekeeping man-
A specifically European approach to CIMIC does exist, which promotes the clarification of roles and precise limits within which interaction should take place, particularly the exchange of information between military and humanitarian organisations, whereas the trend internationally is towards greater integration of the military, humanitarian and diplomatic sectors.

Despite the fact that the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid is consistent with this European approach, it is now being challenged with the construction of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and the strategic revision of NATO and UN doctrines. The European Union should promote the position outlined in the Consensus in its dealings with NATO and the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

This is essential to prevent mechanisms for crisis management and exchange between humanitarian and military organisations from becoming a means of instrumentalising humanitarian action, reducing humanitarian space and weakening the principles of IHL.

François Grunewald
Groupe URD

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**Different types of interaction and information exchange depending on the stage of an operation and the location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage and Location of the Exchange</th>
<th>At Headquarters</th>
<th>In the Field</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the situation</td>
<td>In the context of a crisis management mechanism, information exchange should be improved concerning security, the comprehension of contexts and the needs of the population.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning operations</td>
<td>Exchange should be increased to ensure that the humanitarian imperative is taken into account in military planning (HQ or crisis management mechanism).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting operations</td>
<td>In the context of crisis management, exchange about how the security situation and humanitarian needs are evolving should be better organised.</td>
<td>Direct exchange should not become the norm. Publicly available information should be used as much as possible and information should be supplied to the appropriate and legitimate coordination mechanisms (national structures, OCHA civil-military offices, HiC, etc.).</td>
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The need to reassess practices and build real partnerships

More than a billion people have already been affected by the financial, economic, social and environmental crises. Rights, obligations and values are in decline at every level – individual, collective, local and global. In such a context, international solidarity is more important than ever.

And yet, the truth is that the humanitarian sector I learned about in school, which swapped its rucksack for a big 4-wheel drive and tonnes of UN rice, has not lived up to expectations. Instead, it seems to be becoming an auxiliary of its donors, who are themselves dependent on politicians and strategic international choices. There is therefore a need to reassess the practices that NGOs from the North adopt in the South and the policies that underlie these.

To not do so, is to run the risk of seeing what confidence remains in civil society in the North and the South crumble away. It is no coincidence that, as doubts have grown, the concept of Quality in humanitarian action has attracted more and more interest. A Quality approach is a way for humanitarian actors to look at the mistakes of the past and address the gap which exists between their values and their practices.

But before we can properly assess humanitarian practices, we need to invite actors from the South to join us at the table. They have essential knowledge of concrete situations and views on how aid should be provided. We need to establish real partnerships with civil society in the South to fight vulnerability and poverty. It seems clear that working with civil society in the South is both ethical and will improve the service we provide. And working with civil society in the South will give our arguments greater weight with politicians.

Our western view of ‘saving’ the world needs to change. Before trying to do good, we need to listen to civil society in the South. Together, we may be able to find viable alternatives.

According to Sophia Mappa, president of Le Forum de Delphes, more and more programmes are being run in the South by western organisations, without any specific request having been made for them. In her opinion, this is why there are so many unsuccessful development programmes. This failure to think before we act only creates frustration. “This vicious circle is no doubt the result of the western psyche: the guilt and narcissism of the donor and the affirmation of his power over populations who exist only in terms of need. The difference of the Other is not used as a mirror to help the West understand itself, but rather as a pretext to avoid thinking about itself”¹. In partnerships between actors, it is the same thing. Coordination mechanisms and meetings between partners tend to be dominated by international actors, often excluding national organisations and/or bodies representing the affected community. The term “capacity building”, which is currently used a great deal, implies that there is imbalance between the two partners, with one providing support and the other needing to be strengthened.

Is it possible to talk of fighting effectively against poverty when we do not know how it is perceived and managed by those who are experiencing it?

We turn up, proclaiming our pre-conceived ideas and our universal values of solidarity, despite the fact that in our own countries, solidarity, democracy and governance are not in great shape. We project on others an ideal that does not exist in our own countries while sidelining humanitarian actors from the South who are in the best position to bring change and whose legitimate role it is to do so. It is time to recognise that crisis-affected people should be in control of their own destiny.

¹ Le savoir occidental au défi des cultures africaines, Sophia MAPPAG, Karthala, Paris, 2005.
On a more positive note, a large number of tools and structures have been developed at the international level to address this need for ethics and quality which is grounded in the founding principles of humanitarian action. This clearly shows that, on the basis of common values and principles, there is a growing commitment to assistance which is respectful of local people and solidarity mechanisms.

But despite these new developments and the new alliances which are beginning to appear (particularly during World Social Forums), the synergy between actors from the North and South remains fragile and establishing the “right” kind of partnership is proving to be very complex in practice.

Our cultures are different, as is the way that we function and manage different situations. Are we betraying our own values by not imposing them? Evidently not. There is room for manoeuvre between being “paralysed” by complexity and surrendering one’s principles. Through exchange and pedagogy, collective approaches can be established which are accepted by all parties. From this point of view, NGOs from the South also have their responsibilities. They need to organise and assert themselves to defend what they believe to be right. We now know that no one has the solution but everyone has the keys.

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“Les humanitaires doivent conserver leur liberté et leur indépendance, d’action comme la parole. Aujourd’hui, demain, plus encore, ils sont et seront présents ailleurs, sur tous les continents, auprès de peuples qui les regardent et les jugent. Le pire serait qu’à leurs yeux les droits de l’homme et ceux qui les défendent n’apparaissent un jour que comme l’une des faces de l’Occident, l’auxiliaire de ses armes et le masque de ces intérêts.”

Des choix difficiles, les dilemmes moraux de l’humanitaire, sous la direction de J. MOORE.
Crises and vulnerabilities

Crises, conflicts over resources and the environment

Florence Gibert / François Grunewald

At a time when environmental issues are at the centre of international debates, more than ever, the relationship between natural resource scarcity and conflict, the ecological repercussions of conflict and the environmental impact of humanitarian aid should be the object of analysis and should be a major preoccupation of humanitarian actors.

Natural resources and conflict

Conflict studies have highlighted the crucial role that access to resources plays in causing and maintaining conflicts. Recent crises are no exception to this rule. Behind modern conflicts, we often find the same causes that were behind wars centuries ago. In the Middle East, water was a factor of war in Mesopotamia and is one of the keys to the conflict over the Golan Heights (involving Syria, Israel and Jordan) and the Palestinian crisis.

In Africa, along the Sahel-Saharan fringe, from the Senegalese coast to the regions surrounding Somalia, there is a close correlation between conflict and rainfall. There is competition over land for grazing in pastoral areas and, further south, conflict between farmers and pastoral communities. The clan war in Somalia has many of the characteristics of a war over water and water points. The only difference is the recent addition of a “religious” factor. The fact that the UN has not been successful is due in large part to its lack of understanding of this central point. In Rwanda and Burundi, access to agricultural land has been a major source of conflict for a long time. The crises in these countries are primarily those of peasant farmers caught up in conflicts over land and the unequal distribution of coffee profits. Conflicts between communities in Eastern Chad are also linked to agricultural land and pasture. The casus belli in Darfur is not so much ethnic rivalry but competition for the region’s land and resources, all of which has been exploited and manipulated for political interest.

Though certain of these conflicts may have been presented from political and diplomatic angles, particularly in relation to the Cold War and international negotiations, this does not change the fact that gaining access to limited resources is sufficiently important to make people take up arms. In weakened states, parties to a conflict can also be manipulated by a third party which wants to gain access to resources. Rare minerals are among the resources which have been the source of conflict, such as coltan, which is needed to make electronic equipment (DRC), and diamonds (Sierra Leone and Liberia). And, of course, there is oil (Iraq and Kuwait). Competition to control the marketing channels for these raw materials is also a major source of international tension and conflict, as we have learned from the crises in Georgia (Abkhazia and Ossetia), Nagorny Karaback and the various crises which have brought bloodshed to Afghanistan since 1994 due to the desire to allow pipelines bring oil from the Caspian to the ports of Pakistan via the Afghan plains. The distribution of profits from these resources is highly explosive, as we have seen in Nigeria, Kurdistan, Niger and in the fragility of the ceasefire between South and North Sudan. The wars in all these countries smell very strongly of oil money.

The environmental impact of conflict

War causes destruction of many different kinds: the logistics of war and the intensive use of vehicles disfigure the landscape; combat and bombing leads to the destruction of both natural and built environments; weapons create large quantities of waste and pollute the atmosphere; water is polluted by corpses and toxic substances; anti-personnel mines and radiation lead to long-term sterilisation of the environment; armed factions take refuge in national parks where they eat bush meat, etc.

Protecting the environment during armed conflict is not a new issue. For example, customary law in many cultures decrees that water points should be respected. The environment itself is protected under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) (1st additional protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, art. 35-3 and 55), and it is also considered essential to the survival of a civilian population (1st protocol, art. 54 and 2nd protocol, art. 14).

The Geneva conventions are complemented by other international conventions:
- The ENMOD Convention, adopted on 10 December 1976, of which the UN is the depository, aims to prevent the environment being used as an instrument of war.
- Non-conventional arms treaties; the banned use of asphyxiating or toxic gas or bacteriological weapons; the Biological Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological weapons, etc.

During the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio (Earth Summit) in 1992, Maurice Strong, the conference Secretary-General, denounced the impact of conflict: “War and the preparation for war constitute one of the main sources of damage to the environment and should be the object of greater responsibility and rigorous control”. Some of the environmental damage caused by war is clearly caused by the non-application of IHL.

**The damage that can be caused by humanitarian assistance**

Though the environmental component of International Humanitarian Law, which has a preventative role in the mid and short term, should continue to be developed, other challenges have also become apparent. Like all human activity, assisting the victims of conflict can itself have a damaging effect. In emergency situations, where there is a need to respond to vital needs, operations are limited to relief programmes which do not take long term consequences into account. Each programme which is implemented uses up resources and produces pollution. Refugee and IDP camps can cause great damage to the environment.

Applying the Hippocratic idea of ‘doing no harm’ to humanitarian assistance implies adopting an environmental approach to programmes. A code of conduct for NGOs was promulgated at the Earth Summit in 1992. It included the following points:

> “NGOs should endeavour to enhance the total environment — physical, biological and human”
> “Northern NGOs in their host country should live in an appropriate comparative level as counterpart NGOs, not in expatriate style”
> “Northern NGOs should campaign for sustainable life-styles based on their own local resources as much as possible, and paying fair (ecological) prices for imported products”

There is still a long way to go before these principles are applied in the field. It should be pointed out that, through the influence they can have on the content of programmes, donors also play an important role in the preservation of the environment.

**The key environmental issues in post-conflict contexts: surviving in a damaged ecosystem**

When war ends, regeneration and the first steps of social, economic and environmental reconstruction are riddled with complications. A great number of environmental problems can exist, such as the damage caused by bombs and tanks, the devastation brought to ecosystems by chemical weapons, the pollution of water by corpses or the non-maintenance of supply networks, rural areas covered in mines, the exhaustion of timber reserves, the effects of mining activities and the damage to soil caused by security fences. Ecosystems damaged by war can take many years to recover.

What is more, in the aftermath of war, people may adopt survival strategies which accelerate the destruction of the environment (systematic felling of timber as a source of revenue, cultivation of very marginal land, reduction of the periods when land lays fallow, which reduces its fertility and resistance to erosion, etc.). The impoverishment of people in conflict zones often goes hand in hand with the deterioration of the environment.

When the environment is deteriorated to such an extent that it is no longer possible to obtain means of subsistence or to live a normal life, people move out of the affected areas, adding to the number of “environmental refugees”. This is the term used to describe those who have been forced to leave their homes due to the deterioration of their environment, whether this is because of war, unsustainable practices or climate change. It is difficult to establish how many of these currently exist. Their legal status is problematic as they are not covered by the definition of political refugees which appears in the 1951 Geneva Convention. They therefore do not qualify for the aid and protection which political refugees receive. “Ecological IDPs” are taken into account even less and their numbers are due to increase in places like the Asian deltas, coastal areas and islands.

How should these issues be dealt with? What solutions have already been tested and what new options are there to explore? The role of NGOs in difficult post-conflict contexts is particularly important as states are not always able to conduct studies and implement actions to protect biodiversity. Post-conflict environmental projects can build confidence and lead to bilateral and regional peace. In contexts where other subjects are too sensitive to discuss, the environment can be an “ice-breaker”. Furthermore, environmental projects help not to repeat the errors of the past.
Post-conflict situations often have both similarities and differences compared to the situations which existed before the crisis. The redistribution of the cards after a conflict may have affected social stratification, the role of women and the policies of decision-making bodies. This can create “entry points” to tackle major environmental challenges. Even though in certain contexts, some may feel that there are more pressing priorities, these are opportunities which should not be missed.

Protocol 1. Article 35 – Basic rules. 3°: It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment. Article 55 - Protection of the natural environment. 1° Care shall be taken in warfare to protect the natural environment against widespread, long-term and severe damage. This protection includes a prohibition of the use of methods or means of warfare which are intended or may be expected to cause such damage to the natural environment and thereby to prejudice the health or survival of the population. 2. Attacks against the natural environment by way of reprisals are prohibited.

Protocol 2. Article 14. - Protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. Starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited. It is therefore prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population such as foodstuffs, crops, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works.

1 Protocol 1. Article 35 – Basic rules. 3°: It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment. Article 55 - Protection of the natural environment. 1° Care shall be taken in warfare to protect the natural environment against widespread, long-term and severe damage. This protection includes a prohibition of the use of methods or means of warfare which are intended or may be expected to cause such damage to the natural environment and thereby to prejudice the health or survival of the population. 2. Attacks against the natural environment by way of reprisals are prohibited.

2 Article 1 : Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having widespread, longlasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to any other State Party.

3 See Florence Gibert, It is time for Aid to go green, in Humanitarian Aid on the Move n°1, December 2008. These issues will be the subject of the Autumn School on Humanitarian Aid organised by Groupe URD in September 2009.


5 Article 1 : A refugee is a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

Burning oil wells in kuwait
The humanitarian situation in Eastern Chad raises a number of important questions concerning issues such as humanitarian space, coordination and adapting aid to a number of co-existing situations. Some innovative approaches are currently being explored to improve the quality of the humanitarian response in relation to the environment, water and sanitation and food security/economic dynamics.

Humanitarian agencies in Chad are currently faced with a number of challenges:
- permanent instability;
- the coexistence of different types of situation requiring different forms of humanitarian intervention (refugees, IDPs, resident populations);
- running projects which promote self-reliance and support income-generating activities is particularly difficult with certain population groups and in certain regions;
- coordination of humanitarian action.

In order to strengthen the capacity to conduct in-depth and continuous analysis of the context and improve the quality of aid response, Groupe URD is setting up the “Observatory of Aid Practices in Chad” (l’Observatoire des Pratiques de l’Aide au Tchad – OPAT), an innovative collective learning programme. The first phase of OPAT is the “Programme to Support Collective Learning and Improve the Quality of the Humanitarian Response in Eastern Chad”, which will last 8 months, from March to October 2009.

The observatory has identified a certain number of critical points in the provision of aid in Eastern Chad.

**Natural resource management and the environmental impact of humanitarian programmes**

Agencies are aware that, in addition to the humanitarian emergency, there is now an ecological emergency in Eastern Chad. In certain areas there is no longer enough wood for kilometres around the camps, the soil is no longer suitable for cultivation and there is not enough water to cover needs. Humanitarian actors have begun to understand the importance of taking the environment into account in their programmes.

Some agencies have begun to take measures to reduce the environmental impact of their activities (improved stoves), have begun to run environmental rehabilitation programmes (nurseries and distribution of plants, access restriction, etc.) and are looking into new methodological and technical solutions. However, there are still too few initiatives of this kind. There are a number of areas where the environmental impact of programmes in Eastern Chad can be improved.

The most urgent problem is the reduction of timber resources. All alternatives to wood need to be explored: solar cookers, timberless construction techniques (Nubian vaults, dome-roofed houses, etc.), and the related techniques of compressed earth bricks and using cow dung as fuel to fire bricks. In addition to alternatives to timber, the feasibility and suitability of alternative energy sources to oil need to be studied for community buildings and NGO bases, such as the production of methane gas using organic waste (septic tanks) and the production of electricity using solar and wind power.

Existing initiatives to reduce the impact of programmes should be further developed and shared (techniques which make it possible to avoid using fuels or chemicals such as rope pumps and sand filters, or techniques which re-use ‘waste’, such as composting). Two other areas – agro-ecological principles and the recycling of excreta – should also be explored.

In a humanitarian crisis situation, it is demand (that is to say, people’s needs) rather than availability which determines how much of a natural resource will be used. It is therefore important that humanitarian agencies know whether a natural resource is being used sustainably. If refugee camps and IDP sites are causing a resource to be used in an unsustainable way, it is necessary to conduct mitigation activities. Three approaches can be adopted: optimal use of the resource, substitution of the resource and renewal of stocks. These three approaches can, and sometimes need to be combined. These activities should be implemented as soon as possible: delaying their implementation makes it more difficult to meet people’s needs and may make expensive rehabilitation activi-
ties necessary. It is interesting to note that the camps and sites in Eastern Chad are spread along a climatic gradient – the further north one travels, the more fragile the environment becomes (desert). The current situation in the North East resembles the situation that will exist in the South East in a number of years and therefore is a test case. Over and above what is done by humanitarian agencies, reforestation of large areas will be necessary in order to protect and rehabilitate the environment.

**Water and sanitation in Eastern Chad**

All actors involved in the water and sanitation sector in Eastern Chad agree that the emergency response is no longer appropriate due to the protracted nature of the crisis and certain agencies have begun to adapt their approach accordingly. The duration and complexity of the crisis has made it necessary to move towards techniques and organisational methods which make the population less dependent on external aid. This will require greater interaction with Chadian institutions.

The participation of the affected population and their involvement in managing water systems depends on the quality of dialogue and the interaction that takes place with external actors. Compared to “hard” activities which involve the construction of hydraulic systems, there are currently very few “soft” activities such as awareness-raising, social organisation (committees or other types of management) and capacity building.

Though “sanitation” is a component of operations in most areas, there is a regrettable lack of innovation. Alternatives to “pit latrines” need to be explored (emptiable, compost and dehydration latrines, urine diversion, arborloo, etc.). The experiments currently being carried out with emptiable latrines in refugee camps around Farchana deserve to be followed closely.

**Economic dynamics and food security in Eastern Chad**

Though there is a growing number of livelihood support projects in refugee camps, their impact is still weak. A certain number of factors make it particularly difficult to support the economic activities of Sudanese refugees and IDPs in Eastern Chad – there is very little land which can be cultivated around the refugee camps and IDP sites and relations between refugees, IDPs and local people are difficult both in terms of collaboration and acceptance. As refugees currently receive full assistance, there is little motivation for them to take part in economic activities. IDPs, on the other hand, receive much less assistance, and remain much more motivated.

The future of refugees and IDPs in Chad depends on how the situation in Darfur and within Chad evolves. Though, for the moment, there is little chance of refugees returning to Darfur, a small number of refugees have returned to their villages in certain parts of Eastern Chad such as Kerfi, Louboutigüé, Koukou and Am Timan. Generally, this remains the exception. Some people go back and forth from the camps to their villages when possible, depending on crop calendars, but the conditions are not yet in place for long-term returns. If security conditions were to gradually improve, either due to the MINURCAT or through inter-community dialogue, these voluntary returns would merit greater support. But the troubles which took place during May 2009 have shown that the situation has not yet improved sufficiently. Only the arrival of the rainy season and more water in the “wadis” restores a certain level of calm. As there is a risk that, in the long term, the displaced will settle around the larger villages in Eastern Chad – a process which would be difficult to reverse - the Chadian authorities are looking at the possibility of “villagisation”. It is important to ensure that this will be a voluntary process and that it takes place in the best possible conditions.

**To conclude**

With the establishment of the MINURCAT, which has replaced EUFOR, Eastern Chad is entering a new phase, which will be both complex and difficult. It will be important to follow events as they unfold and ensure that lessons are learned and applied…

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1. Since 2003, the conflicts in Darfur and the Central African Republic have led to the presence of around 260000 Sudanese and 60000 Central African Republic refugees in Chad. Since 2005, internal ethnic conflict and attacks by Sudanese groups near the border in Eastern Chad have caused displacement within the Chadian population. Close to 170 000 people are currently living in IDP sites. Since 2007, some IDPs have returned to their villages in certain zones such as Koukou, Kerfi and Am Timan.

2. Solar cookers are distributed in the camps of Iridimi, Touloum and Ouré Cassoni, which are in some of the most arid regions of Eastern Chad, by a Chadian NGO, *Tchad Solaire*.

3. For timber, improved stoves (optimisation), solar cookers (replacement) or reforestation (renewal). For water, drip irrigation (optimisation), rainwater harvesting (replacement) or stone rows (renewal).
This study is an assessment of humanitarian house construction in Aceh following the tsunami of 2004. It includes a description of the projects carried out, a study of the level of appropriation of the houses by the beneficiaries and an appreciation of the consequences that this vast construction campaign will have on the region.

Introduction: two architects appraise the quality of the reconstruction

According to the figures of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR) of Aceh and Nias, 140,300 houses have been built in Aceh in the last four years. This is the achievement of 127 International NGOs that have been involved in the reconstruction effort in Aceh, the northern province of the island of Sumatra, part of Indonesia, and the region most badly affected by the 2004 tsunami. Five years on, the last reconstruction programmes are coming to an end and the NGOs are pulling out. With an unprecedented event of this kind and the scale of the post-emergency reconstruction that has taken place, it seemed important to look at the quality and durability of the work that the international aid community had carried out. Never before had humanitarian programmes involved so much construction. In this respect, it seemed appropriate that two architects should give their opinion about these programmes. This article summarises the results of research carried out between mid-2008 and mid-2009, and deals with construction, but also other architectural issues such as fitness for habitation, appropriation and local integration.

The tsunami and the unprecedented mobilisation of international aid that followed made the news around the world, but less is known about the context in which the reconstruction took place. The tsunami brought a fragile period of peace to Aceh following thirty years of conflict between the separatists of the GAM and the national government. The population is still devastated after years of curfews, racketeering and indiscriminate repression, having been caught between the rebels and the national army and constantly suspected of supporting the opposing camp. The people of Aceh consider the tsunami to be the disaster which brought peace, but the development opportunities that it created seem to have been compromised by the numerous after-effects of the conflict. This raises the question of how well the international aid community took the reality of the context into account.

Reconstruction designs: disappointing permanent housing, compensated for by the construction of extensions

Despite the large number of houses built and the many different programmes, the resulting landscape is very monotonous. Housing programmes were actually very similar. For the majority of NGOs who built houses, the priority was to build high quality constructions quickly. There seems to have been an obsession with building quickly, which was no doubt accentuated by media pressure. However, this meant that less time was given to the design process, consultation and the gathering of data about beneficiaries. This had serious consequences for the overall quality of the houses and how they were received.

Uniform solutions due to a single, minimal model

The BRR recommended that houses should be 36 m² minimum. The majority of NGOs adapted their basic plans accordingly to build houses with a main room, two bedrooms and a bathroom and toilet at the back with outside access. The quality of the constructions varies from programme to programme, but the living space is always restricted and unoriginal. The overriding impression is one of mediocrity and uniformity. However, beneficiaries and contexts vary a great deal. Beneficiaries vary in terms of social class, income, profession and family size. Contexts can be urban or rural, can be conflict zones and can vary in terms of isolation and availability of work. It is interesting to observe that the basic model given to everyone was received differently depending on the context.

Poor people in rural areas found that there was a real improvement in their living conditions compared to the wooden houses without sanitation where they had lived before. In general, the houses were therefore very well received in these areas. This is evident in work that the people have done on their houses (paintwork, ceramic work, changes made to doors and windows) and the care taken in gardens (fences, flowers, paths).

In contrast, in an urban context such as Banda Aceh, wealthier beneficiaries often do not live in the houses provided by the NGOs because they are too small. This can be seen on the roads leading away from the
town as you drive through a desolate landscape formed by hundreds of empty, abandoned houses. The owners have left to live elsewhere or have built new homes on other land and rent out the houses that they were given by the NGO.

Flexible thinking

Whether or not to include washrooms, shower rooms and particularly kitchens, their position in the house and their size are important issues with regard to responding appropriately to beneficiaries’ needs and habits. The only satisfactory solution that was observed was a pre-equipped exterior space which was covered but not closed and could be partitioned by the families according to their needs. This approach could be used for the house as a whole. It seems more appropriate to provide open spaces which can be modified and transformed rather than closed and rigid boxes. Though the scale of needs meant that adapting the architectural response to each family was unrealistic, perhaps the problem should have been turned around. It might have been better to provide “unfinished” (which does not mean uninhabitable) houses, which can be added to, appropriated and developed. This is why the houses on stilts were so successful. The space underneath them can be easily partitioned for various uses according to the needs of each family. Choosing to go down this road would mean concentrating on the technical and architectural issues involved in responding to essential needs (access to water, electricity and sanitation) and designing high quality modular structures. Depending on the implication of the occupants and their construction skills, they would be able to appropriate the house and make it evolve...

Reconstruction sites: lack of planning both when there was relocation and when buildings were rebuilt on the same site.

Building an extension can transform a house to make it more adapted to a family’s needs. However, there is one area where it is difficult to take action to make improvements or repair the mistakes of the past, namely, the choice of a site and the provision of services...

Relocation: opening the door to future social, economic and natural crises

Should buildings have been rebuilt in the same place or should they have been relocated? Though BRR initially implemented a buffer zone of 2 km where there was to be no construction, this idea was quickly abandoned due to the difficulty of finding land for the thousands of people whose land had been destroyed by the sea. Certain communities were given new homes in the same place, others were split up and scattered according to land availability. Official policy was that the acquisition of this land (922 ha) was to be part of a broader regional development plan.

But, despite all this, the location of certain settlements remains difficult to understand: Neuheun (Aceh Besar) is situated on a steep slope and is a long way from any industrial zones. Ujung Segundur (Sabang) is a long way from the nearest village and is very difficult to get to, and finally Blang Beurangan, which is supposed to be a neighbourhood of Meulaboh, is located eight kilometres from the town, in the middle of a flood zone. It appears that the choice of land was limited and decisions were made on the basis of economic rather than development considerations. Several of these villages are partly uninhabited and their future is uncertain: will they be invested by new occupants or will they become ghost villages?

Urban development compromised by a lack of coherence in the reconstruction

It is striking to see that everything has been rebuilt exactly as it was before. The former layout of roads has been reproduced and when relocation took place, poor pieces of land were simply organised on a grid. Any attempts to apply urban planning principles finally came to nothing. Meuraxa in Banda Aceh is perhaps the most successfully completed neighbourhood, with its broad, impeccable roads and drainage and where every house has access to electricity. However, the provision of potable water remains a problem (many...
beneficiaries are obliged to buy bottled water), there is no waste management, no public transport and there are very few shops. The fact that it is very close to the centre of Banda Aceh is a definite advantage and the people who live there have begun to appropriate the neighbourhood. But what will happen in the isolated housing estates, where there are already a number of problems with the water supply and poor drainage. These pockets of new houses need to establish links with the existing infrastructure. The massive reconstruction which has taken place has been a missed opportunity to plan an environment that was healthier (access to potable water, waste management), more sustainable (recycling, parks) and more egalitarian (public spaces, public transport, economic networks).

**Reconstruction phases: the difficult transition from the emergency to the development phase.**

We have seen the complexity of the issues involved in the reconstruction of houses in Aceh after the tsunami. Observation and analysis of the different constructions raised the question of the planning which took place in the transition from the emergency to the development phase.

How long should people stay in transitional housing?

In preparation for what?

The passage from the emergency phase to the development phase was difficult. The use of transitional housing is symbolic of this difficulty. When a family has to wait for a long time before gaining access to a house, tents can be replaced by temporary housing. There are two essential factors to ensure that temporary housing programmes are appropriate. The right logistical conditions need to be in place to very quickly distribute and construct (or assemble) a large number of these shelters and there needs to be coherence between such a programme and other operations with longer term objectives. The pre-fabricated and easily dismantled shelters distributed by the IFRC are a good example. These shelters are on stilts, so are raised off the ground and provide 25 m² of habitable space. The living conditions in these shelters are acceptable and it is possible for families to stay in them for a certain amount of time. Ideally, this time should be used productively to think about the permanent housing and the environment which will eventually replace the temporary shelters, but this was not done during the post-tsunami reconstruction process.

In Aceh, this period was used to resolve problems regarding beneficiary lists, the supply of materials and disputes with the construction companies. It was therefore used to rectify all the errors which resulted from over-hasty decisions made during the emergency phase. Questions therefore remain about the quality of the analysis that pre-figured these programmes and how well the transition phase from an emergency to a development situation was taken into account.

The ambiguous discretion of the international aid community with regard to contexts and development needs

Another problematic issue with the reconstruction is that it has not brought any economic benefits to the Aceh region. Financial aid programmes have had very little impact on household income. There have been very few, if any, businesses created, very few people have been trained in new skills, no new economic niches have been created… According to the ACARP study, 70% of those who received a house stated that their current income was below or equal to their income before the tsunami (that is to say, during the conflict...). What is more, even though there was a boom in the building industry, the people of Aceh did not benefit from it. In Aceh, there are very few skilled people, the population is no longer used to doing daily work and there is little entrepreneurial spirit (all of which can be explained, to a great extent, by thirty years of conflict). As a result, labour and companies from Medan and Jakarta were brought in to do the work instead. An estimated 60% of funds left the region each year, but such a high percentage is also due to the widespread corruption in Indonesia, which has a negative effect on any initiative. NGOs and international organisations appear to have been in denial about the context, remaining blinkered and refusing to understand the painful post-conflict situation which now hangs over any development options (a position which was appreciated by the Indonesian government which was very anxious not to let the international community become involved in these sensitive internal affairs).

This was no emergency operation - the scale of the reconstruction was such that it implied a much longer operation, which inevitably raised issues related to development, because the construction of houses is directly related to living conditions, to towns and to the environment, and therefore is political. The international aid community hid behind an obligation to remain discreet (not checking beneficiary lists), was often opportunistic (using the black market to get wood) and was limited by its own objectives (turning a blind eye to the gulf and the bitterness that grew be-
tween the victims of the tsunami and the victims of the conflict...). The impact of its programmes was often limited (financial aid) and was sometimes disastrous (reconstruction of villages in flood zones, without access to potable water).

**Who has benefited from the reconstruction aid?**

Many errors were made regarding the link between the emergency and development phases. Ineffective programmes were implemented because the region’s economic and political context was not taken into account. Thousands of houses were built without a concerted urban planning strategy, without taking into account the issues of water supply, waste management or public transport. However, though some of the houses and programmes have been of no use to the original beneficiaries, in certain areas new occupants are arriving to take advantage of the housing boom. This is the case for a large number of neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Banda Aceh, where the tsunami houses are rented to families from Sumatra and elsewhere. It is reassuring to see that, despite all the imperfections and errors, the town is coming to life. To judge the long-term effects of certain projects a further visit would be useful in a few years, in order to observe mobility, economic initiatives and improvements in transport and water supply systems.

Nonetheless, questions still need to be asked about the responsibility of international organisations and NGOs in not taking into account the post-conflict context. The very corrupt economic and political elite which runs the country gained a great deal from the money that the tsunami brought, thus increasing their power even further. The academic and political analyst, George Junus Aditjondro, has made the following terrible observation: that it is the elite that has benefited from the reconstruction and that it has even permitted the former leadership of GAM to form a new elite.

As for the poorest people, who have been victims of both the conflict and the tsunami, their standard of living has not been improved. This shows all the complexity and ambiguity of the humanitarian system: local programmes targeting the poorest and most fragile people which end up having political and economic repercussions nationally and benefitting a completely different section of the population.

Particularly when running construction programmes, international aid agencies need to be aware of the impact their programmes will have and must accept their responsibility in choosing the direction in which a region will develop. Perhaps they need to abandon their declared (and unrealistic) neutrality and use their power to further noble causes such as sustainable urban development which respects the environment and provides everyone with decent living conditions.

1 BRR was a temporary body created by the Indonesian government on 16 April 2005. Its mandate was to coordinate rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts following the tsunami in Aceh and Nias. In the last four years, the BRR coordinated more than 500 organisations, which ran more than 12 000 projects. The activities of the BRR officially ended on 16 April 2009.

2 A peace agreement was signed on 15 August 2005.

3 Acehnese separatist movement which fought the national government between 1976 and 2005.

4 The Up Link houses in Ulee Lheue, a neighbourhood in the port of Banda Aceh, are the most successful example of these.

5 It was decided to give each tenant 100 m² of land and each landowner 200m², regardless of the original area they had had.

6 It should be pointed out that the tsunami caused a considerable amount of displacement and that population movement is common in Aceh, particularly due to the conflict.

7 International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.


Using geomatics to increase the exchange of information between humanitarians – an idea worth looking into

Yves Lacoste said that geography was primarily used to make war. Though this may be the case, information management and different types of maps also allow better coordination and better monitoring, both within and between organisations. Using a holistic approach, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be used throughout the project cycle, during the initial assessment, the analysis of zones and the supplying and sharing of information. As a tool, GIS can be applied to humanitarian issues, such as risk management, security, project monitoring, population movements and WASH.

Geomatics: some useful tools

The word “geomatics” has not yet entered common usage and may not be to everyone’s taste. However, it refers to an area which could provide the humanitarian sector with some very useful tools. The word comes from a combination of “geography” and “informatique” (the French term for “information technology”). It refers to the techniques, tools and methods which make it possible to represent, analyse and integrate geographical data. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing (the acquisition and analysis of satellite images) and GPS are geomatic tools. Though these tools were developed in the fields of environmental studies and defence in the 70s, other fields quickly began to use them, such as spatial planning, rural development, urbanism, logistics, marketing and, of course, the humanitarian sector.

The history of geomatics used in the humanitarian sector

In the humanitarian sector, a large number of projects involving thematic mapping, satellite image maps and geographic data bases have been developed in the last 20 years (OCHA, ICRC, UNOSAT...). Nevertheless, most of these projects remain local and focus solely on mapping. They are developed for a particular region or country and are often used by only one organisation. The majority of these projects have provided the information needed and have therefore successfully achieved what they set out to do. However, on the basis of what was said at the GeOnG conference last September, which brought together around fifteen UN agencies and NGOs, there is demand for GIS to be used more, for data to be standardised and for collectively used geographic data bases. Why do these demands exist and what is currently missing from the geomatic field?

Geomatics is still a specialist area

Despite the fact that so many projects have already been carried out using geomatic techniques, it seems that the field of GISs remains a specialist area. If you use the term “Pcode” (Populated Place code) in a meeting, not many humanitarians will know what it means. Many spreadsheets which are destined, among other things, to be used for maps do not have codes which allow them to be linked to geometry. The use of maps and basic GIS techniques has not yet become standard practice in the humanitarian sector.

How useful would this be? What makes geographic information so essential nowadays? Humanitarian organisations need tools to help them make decisions, which provide them with the spatial representation of a large amount of data (roads, water points, hospitals, location of IDPs, etc.) and tools which allow them to acquire data easily.

In the case of displaced persons camps, a GIS makes it possible to monitor the different phases of a camp’s existence - to plan its design, to calculate the dimensions of facilities, to monitor its progress from when the camp is built to when it is dismantled and to evaluate its environmental impact (see the work done in Kenya by the IRD). A GIS provides a rapid, cartographic overview, which allows the user to assess a situation.

More generally, GIS technology and data bases are information management tools. As such they help to avoid the systematic repetition of a task, which, at least in part, has already been carried out previously.

In recent years, technical progress has meant that it is easier to supply these systems with power. The recent development of open “tag” systems has allowed information to be marked by non-specialists using OSM and Google Map maker for example. This allows basic geographical information to be entered into
the GIS without any specialist knowledge on the part of the field operator. As a greater quantity, and in some cases quality, of data is available, this can be entered allowing more comprehensive analysis to be carried out.

The needs of humanitarian workers

Humanitarian workers need to be able to visualise and localise projects. They need to be able to monitor different events and phenomena over time (refugees, incidents, illnesses, etc.). To do this they need a “framework” which can be filled in with tools available on the internet (Google Earth). Data can come from collecting GPS points but also from Humanitarian Information Centers (setting up HICs is one of OCHA’s roles. They make it possible, among other things, to create “who does what and where?” maps and to share evaluation reports). They then need tools which help to make decisions on the basis of this data, thus allowing projects to be launched in the most rational way possible. For the time being, apart from a number of “pilot” projects, GIS technology is mostly used as a representation tool, but in the future, it could take on another dimension altogether.

Geomatics have a bright future

It is difficult to compare the use of GIS technology in other sectors like spatial planning or the environment with its use in the humanitarian sector. The areas where humanitarian operations take place are always very unstable and it is therefore more difficult to set up a GIS which systematically enters reliable and comprehensive data. Rather, work methods could be harmonised in order to make the GIS tool more accessible. Theme-based databases could be established which any actor could use to gather geographic data. The UNHCR has already begun to work this way with the Spatial Data Infrastructure for Transport SDI-T 4, which is an example of standard data with collectively defined information fields.

These databases could then be put online on data servers like WMS 5 (image) WFS 6 (vector) which could redistribute the data to different users. Servers work in such a way that you always obtain updated data. Whether the data is exhaustive or not, users are always sure that they are working with the most recent data.

In recent years, there have been a great deal of changes regarding the use of geographic information in the humanitarian sector. Improved data transfer rates and the development of free platforms like Open Street Map and data servers like WMS and WFS mean that it is now possible to change approach, even though there remains the obstacle of political will concerning the sharing of information.

The sharing of information is possible in many cases

Each organisation works with its own data, and it is sometimes difficult to share this, particularly due to questions of confidentiality. For example, data about an individual can only be accessed by those who are accredited, which seems completely justified. However, when it comes to the location of infrastructure, confidentiality should not be an issue. Using internet approaches and secure servers (access administrator, user, contributor…) it is possible to know the name of the person or the structure which added the data and to run a quality control. What is more, it is possible to limit access to the data. For example, only accredited people can work on SGBV data bases.

Difficulties can arise in relation to the « classic » use of maps in the field. Using a paper map, importing and working with GPS points and using embedded maps can create problems in certain countries. This has happened in Myanmar and Sudan where maps are politically sensitive. As a result, even the source of the data is difficult to obtain. Working with maps can appear suspicious. In post-crisis situations, certain governments hold up the development of geographical information on purpose. This has happened, for example, in northern Uganda, where the availability of road maps has been limited because the information that they contain could facilitate the return of the LRA 7.

Even though there seem to be a certain number of obstacles to the sharing of information, many NGOs are interested and want to use geomatic tools.

In September 2008, CartONG organised GeOnG 8, the first ever event dedicated to geomatics and humanitarianism. UN agencies and NGOs were present, showing that there is growing interest within the humanitarian sector for these techniques. Different themes covered were the collection and quality of data, sharing information, mutualisation and standardisation. The discussions allowed needs to be defined, which is already a major step forward.

Large-scale projects now need to be put in place to see how these new techniques can be integrated into
existing practices. The will is there throughout the sector, because everyone can now see how relevant such projects would be.

Wilfried Tissot
Yann Rebois
CartOng

Links to explore this subject further:
- [http://www.unjlc.org/mapcenter/unsdi/unsdi-v2](http://www.unjlc.org/mapcenter/unsdi/unsdi-v2)
- [http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/)
- [www.CartONG.org](http://www.cartong.org)
- [http://planetevivante.wordpress.com/2008/05/11/google-earth-la-cartographie-au-service-de-laide-humanitaire/](http://planetevivante.wordpress.com/2008/05/11/google-earth-la-cartographie-au-service-de-laide-humanitaire/)
- [http://www.tacticaltech.org/mapsforadvocacy](http://www.tacticaltech.org/mapsforadvocacy)
- [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc100?OpenForm](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc100?OpenForm)

2 Open Street Map. [www.openstreetmap.org](http://www.openstreetmap.org)
3 [www.googlemapmaker.com](http://www.googlemapmaker.com)
7 Lord’s Resistance Army.
8 [http://geong.cartong.org](http://geong.cartong.org)
The new humanitarian donors

. The emergence of the new donors

Courrier de la planète n°84, april-june 2007
International Relations: The age of emerging countries

Dossier: Official development assistance: The new donors
- China: Unconditional Aid P. 28
- China/Africa: Towards improved debt sustainability? P.31
- China/Mali Deployment with no apparent strategy P.35
- China/Africa: South-South cooperation P.38
- South Africa: Continental mission P.40
- India: Re-emerging donor P.42
- Brazil: Objectives P.43

http://www.courrierdelaplanete.org/84/CDP84EN.pdf

The future of aid
ODI, 2008. 2 P.

In the last 25 years, the quantity of aid and the number of donors has soared with the arrival of new countries such as China, Cyprus, Egypt, Latvia and Lithuania as well as private donors, foundations, etc. The system is chaotic, and what is more, it is under-delivering. There is already a worrying lack of coherence between the signatory nations of the Paris Declaration, so will it be possible to establish an even broader consensus on aid effectiveness? And will the aid sector be able to remain committed to the country-led approach to development?


Diversity in donorship: Field lessons
ODI, dec. 2007. 23 P.

More and more donors are involved in humanitarian aid and the new donors show a preference for bilateral aid or channel assistance through national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies. The new donors do not have the same definition of the term ‘humanitarian’ as DAC donors and are under-represented in international bodies. There is growing interest on the part of countries such as the Gulf States and Turkey in the multilateral system. Meanwhile, there are growing divides between those who adhere to the ‘development consensus’, and those states, particularly China, following a different model of economic and political engagement. States such as India and South Africa remain ambivalent about the idea of becoming donor nations.


Emerging donors in international development assistance: a synthesis report
PBDD/ CRDI, january 2008. 22 P.

The emergence of new donors has created new perspectives for development aid, which, until now, has been managed by traditional donors. As China, India, Brazil and South Africa seek greater international legitimacy, they may also strive to adhere more closely to the norms traditional donors have established. At the same time, their size will enable them to help shape these norms to reflect the unique insights and perspectives they have acquired as a result of their own development assistance experiences.

Saudi Arabia has one of the biggest humanitarian aid budgets in the world. Saudi aid is distributed by a variety of private and public actors. Until recently, despite the close relations that they had with the Saudi government, implementing organisations were free to manage their operations as they wanted, but the government has now limited their independence.

This article assesses the upheaval that this change has caused for aid organisations, focusing on the country’s two main aid organisations (IIRO and Haramain) and the role that the government now plays.


Saudi Arabia’s humanitarian aid: a political takeover?
HUMANITARIAN EXCHANGE MAGAZINE, issue 29, march 2005.

This article explains how the author’s research on Islamic humanitarianism began from a study of the semiotics of the red crescent as part of the International Red Cross and Red Cross Movement, which led him to explore much broader tensions in the world of Islamic charities as they relate to the general field of humanitarianism, while also identifying the family resemblances between them. Moreover, Islamic charities can be seen as part of a wider movement of ‘confessional’ NGOs. This in turn leads to a brief consideration of the relationship between International Humanitarian Law and human rights law, on the one hand, and Islamic legal tradition on the other. The whole argument is presented as a case study in the classic anthropological dialogue over universalism as opposed to relativism, Islamic doctrine being seen here not as a cultural exception but as an alternative universalism that enables us to see more clearly both the fragility of Western universalism and also the need to explore common intellectual ground.

http://www.conflits.org/index1928.html

L’humanitaire islamique
CULTURE ET CONFLIT n°60, 2005.

This book looks at the relationship between aid groups and governments in the Middle East between which there remain some differences linked to the philanthropic tradition and Islamic principles (who is supposed to benefit from charity? what are the priorities? etc.), and which sometimes are contrary to political interests.

The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World
I B TAURIS & Co Ltd, november 2008. 256 P.

This book looks at the relationship between aid groups and governments in the Middle East between which there remain some differences linked to the philanthropic tradition and Islamic principles (who is supposed to benefit from charity? what are the priorities? etc.), and which sometimes are contrary to political interests.

. South Africa

Emerging Donors in International Development Assistance: The South Africa Case
CRDI. January 2008. 29 P.

Due to its booming economy and its regional influence, South Africa has become the biggest African donor involved in development, rehabilitation and post-crisis aid on the African continent. It has chosen not to follow Western aid policy and prefers to establish partnerships with countries of the South.

India’s experience as a beneficiary has conditioned the way it thinks and acts as a donor. It has acquired technical experience in the management of catastrophes and population displacement. The Indian government is trying to change its aid policy to make it more transparent and improve its methodology. India has traditionally been involved in bilateral aid agreements, based on mutual interest, but this approach has been questioned since the 2004 tsunami. India now wants to invest itself in multilateral aid and interact with other donors.


India’s aid policy is being radically changed to strengthen its position in the international aid system. Despite some positive changes, it is still difficult to differentiate between the country’s development aid policy and its foreign economic policy, due to a lack of transparency, objectives and clarity.


Brazil attempts to secure energy supplies and runs operations in regions where it has influence traditionally (the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries): as such, it appears no different from ‘classic’ donors. Except that Brazil was a recipient of aid until the 1970s and is now actively seeking a seat as a permanent member of the future, reformed and expanded UN security council.


China has become a major source of foreign aid for Asia, Latin America and particularly Africa.


Consult the full bibliography on the Groupe URD website: www.urd.org/newsletter
“Mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian action – rising to the challenge”, Groupe URD headquarters, 22-24 September 2009

The 7th Autumn School on Humanitarian Aid, organised by Groupe URD, will focus on the issues and challenges involved in mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian action.

Humanitarian action always takes place in environments that have been weakened and often stretched beyond their capacity for resilience. Environmental considerations are extremely important as it is only in an environment that is sufficiently healthy and has enough resources that survivors will be able to rebuild their lives. It is only an environment of this kind that will allow the transition from relief to reconstruction to development.

As is being done in other sectors, it is time to take the environment into account in humanitarian practice. This raises a number of questions: What forms of environmental fragility exist in operational contexts and what effects do humanitarian programmes have on these? How can the environment be taken into account in the design and implementation of programmes? What methods and technical solutions exist?

For further information, please contact Jeanne Taisson: uah@urd.org
Tel: + 33 (0)4 75 28 29 35

Training of Trainers course on “Quality Management for Humanitarian Projects” in Madrid on 2-6 November 2009

Quality management is now recognised to be an essential skill for running projects and institutions. In addition to technical skills, it is necessary to be able to anticipate risks, understand and monitor needs, adapt activities and monitor and evaluate the quality of programmes. Groupe URD and IECAH (Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Accion Humanitaria) recently carried out a study which showed that there is growing interest at all levels within NGOs and public institutions in a variety of countries for training on this subject.

Groupe URD has been working on Quality in humanitarian action and how to improve practices in the sector since the end of the 90s. It has been running its training module on Quality management for 3 years, working in partnership with IECAH on courses in Spanish. The two organisations now wish to share the skills they have learned and train trainers who will then be able to run the course themselves.

The Training of Trainers course is part of the “CAP sur la Qualité” project, funded by the AECID (the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation) and the MAEE (the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The aim of this project is to create a series of three modules (Basic, Project Management and Training of Trainers) in three languages (English, Spanish and French).

To apply, please send a dossier including a CV and a letter explaining why you are interested in doing the course. Participants will be selected on the basis of this dossier as they will be expected to make a commitment to subsequently run the course themselves.

For any further information and applications, please contact sede@iecah.org

Future training courses at Groupe URD headquarters

Two training courses will be run at Groupe URD headquarters (Plaisians, Drôme provençale) during the autumn of 2009:

- Evaluating the quality of humanitarian projects, 12-16 October;

- Quality management in Humanitarian Action (Quality COMPAS© and Dynamic COMPAS®), 16-20 November 2009.

For more information, please contact Pierre Brunet
Tel + 33 (0)4 75 28 29 35
Symposium « Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) – Challenges for Victim Assistance » 4 November 2009, Berlin

Handicap International, in cooperation with Actiongroup Landmine.de, will organize a conference on 4th November of this year, in Berlin, entitled “Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) – Challenges for Victim Assistance”. Our goal is to bring together government, donor and civil society representatives to review the past years' projects on assistance to mine, cluster munitions and ERW victims.

It will review good practices in terms of rehabilitation, socioeconomic inclusion or psychological support, as well as necessary improvements regarding the funding and implementation of victim assistance projects. Participants will exchange on their different approaches in order to establish, for the coming years, harmonized and coordinated procedures, in the scope of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Mine Ban Treaty and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

For more information on participation, contact: Camille Gosselin; cgosselin@handicap-international.org
Tel 00 33 (1) 43 14 87 16

Conference “How can the mortality and morbidity rates of civilians in armed conflict situations be reduced?”, 19 November 2009, Paris

“Never again!” declared Henry Dunant as he saw the 40 000 injured strewn over the battlefield of Solferino. One hundred and fifty years later, it is the plight of civilians caught up in armed conflicts and their very high mortality and morbidity rates which make us repeat those same words.

As part of the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions in 1949, the Henry Dunant Association of France, in partnership with several organisations including Groupe URD, is organising a conference to discuss the question, “How can the mortality and morbidity rates of civilians in armed conflict situations be reduced?”

The conference will be held at the Académie nationale de Médecine in Paris on 19 November 2009, from 9am to 5pm.

For more information and to register, please contact ahd.spica.hd09@orange.fr

Work seminar to present work carried out by Groupe URD and the French Water Academy, 30 November 2009, at the French Development Agency headquarters, Paris

A work seminar on « Water, sanitation and humanitarian action », co-organised by the French Water Academy, Groupe URD and the French Development Agency, will take place on 30 November in Paris to present and discuss the results of research carried out for the EAU project. Groupe URD was commissioned by the Water Academy to gather information in order to share experiences relating to the provision of sanitation and potable water in crisis situations. The first phase of this work (the literature review) was presented during the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009. During the second phase, humanitarian organisations working in this sector and their Water and Sanitation experts were consulted.

This seminar is only open to the organisations who took part in the project. However, a project report will be made available on our website.

For more information, please contact Julie Patinet
Tel : + 33 (0)4 75 28 29 35
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Groupe URD

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

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

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

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