Our analysis of the issues at stake

Today's crises are becoming more and more complex and access is becoming increasingly problematic, calling into question our operational methods. With the rise in nationalism and the decline in multilateralism, it is essential to take action to ensure that there is still a place for solidarity... which, in itself, is a political issue.

But there is a risk that the major upheavals to come are going to make the situation worse, and will make our mechanisms obsolete. Many scientists agree that humanity has entered a critical phase of its history. Climate change, biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems are making many people in already fragile countries increasingly vulnerable. These changes are also affecting western societies.

The aid sector sees the impact of this disorder, and plays an essential role in the response. But the structural causes of current and future, systemic and complex crises call into question current development models. The scale and nature of these crises are such that they question aid actors’ ways of doing and ways of being.

Lastly, societies in the ‘Global South’ are becoming more organised; they want more horizontal decision-making structures and they want to participate in the decisions that affect them. Local aid initiatives are emerging, and these need to be recognized and reinforced. The aid sector therefore needs to renew itself considerably in order to respond more appropriately to the growing vulnerability of the most fragile populations:

- policies and strategies should aim to reinforce the resilience of individuals, communities, territories and societies;
- risk prevention and disaster preparedness policies need to be equal to the task at hand;
- new local actors should be supported and mutual help networks should be reinforced.

Our role

Given the nature of crises today and the upheavals to come, our aim is to help aid actors adopt new forms of solidarity to support local actors and strengthen the resilience of communities and their territories.
GROUPE URD’S THEORY OF CHANGE

Given the nature of current crises and the upheavals to come

Helping aid organisations

Facilitating collective intelligence

Developing tools and methods

Strategic support

Evaluation

Organisational support

Training

Mobilising agents of change

Change management support

Changes sought

Adopt new forms of solidarity that support local organisations and strengthen the resilience of communities and their territories

Key activities

Studies and research

Organisations and the sector adapt their operational methods

Individuals are more professional and committed

Political decision-makers are aware of the impact of their choices

Donors participate in the changes sought

Founded in 1993, Groupe URD is an independent think tank that specialises in analysing practices and developing policies for the humanitarian sector. Our multi-disciplinary expertise, based on continual field visits to crisis and post-crisis contexts, provides us with insight into the functioning of the sector as a whole. We believe in sharing knowledge and collective learning, and we help aid actors to improve the quality of their programmes.
Our assets

• 25 years’ of experience analysing crisis contexts and aid practices;

• Our specific position as an independent think tank at the crossroads between operational and policy issues, between relief and development, and between action and reflection;

• Continual field visits to crisis and post-crisis contexts that feed into our multi-disciplinary expertise, based on our belief that it is crucial to compare viewpoints and to contextualize information in order to understand the complexity of situations;

• Our confidence in the power of collective intelligence - based on experience sharing, debate, and the exploration of alternatives – to stimulate and accompany necessary change;

• A team that brings together sector-based technical skills and knowledge of crisis contexts as well as expertise in change management.

Our 3 main strategic areas

REINFORCING OUR ABILITY TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

• Consolidating our capacity to analyse and to anticipate future developments

• Developing an influence strategy

• Measuring the impact of our activities

CONSOLIDATING OUR METHODS

• Establishing our role as a learning partner in the long term

• Developing our network of external consultants, particularly from the ‘Global South’

• Professionalizing our network facilitation role

• Reinforcing equality, diversity and inclusion in our practices and our work

TRANSFORMING OUR ORGANISATION

• Reducing our environmental footprint

• Consolidating our economic model

• Moving towards shared governance