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a cura di
CISP-MOVIMONDO

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Editoriale

Maura Viezzoli

Il tema affrontato in questo settimo numero di Forum Valutazione - il monitoraggio e la valutazione dei progetti di emergenza e di assistenza umanitaria - fa riferimento a due grandi categorie di fenomeni apparentemente abbastanza diversi tra loro. Da una parte, le azioni di soccorso che la comunità internazionale, i governi, le ONG realizzano in risposta a situazioni in cui siano avvenuti dei disastri naturali, in paesi che non hanno le risorse per fare fronte alle conseguenze della calamità; dall'altra, tutti quegli interventi e le azioni che nascono per affrontare delle "emergenze complesse" cioè collocate all'interno di situazioni di conflitto. I recenti avvenimenti della ex Jugoslavia, della Somalia, del Rwanda ne costituiscono chiari esempi.

Non ci soffermiamo a identificare elementi di comparabilità tra le due situazioni, né sulla necessità, qualora si affronti l'impegno di un approccio regionale al problema delle emergenze, di correlare in una analisi multidisciplinare le diverse concause che portano al deteriorarsi di un sistema socio-economico, ecologico, politico. All'interno di questa materia molto complessa, il nostro intento è limitarci a proporre un approccio che suggerisca la necessità di interrogarsi sui risultati delle azioni finalizzate a portare aiuto "urgente" alle popolazioni, nonché a sottoporre all'attenzione del lettore alcune riflessioni e alcuni esempi relativi a interventi in cui si sia tentato di sperimentare sistemi di monitoraggio e valutazione.

La rilevanza del tema è resa evidente dalla crescente dimensione quantitativa di tali interventi di emergenza, così come dal peso che la questione sempre più assume nei consessi internazionali.

A Yokohama, in Giappone, nel maggio 1994 si è tenuta la Conferenza Mondiale sulla Riduzione dei Disastri Naturali, nel quadro del decennio delle Nazioni Unite per la Riduzione dei Disastri Naturali 1990 - 2000. Durante il decennio indicato, i popoli delle Nazioni Unite dovranno tendere a individuare le azioni più opportune, concertate a livello internazionale, per ridurre le conseguenze dei disastri naturali sulle popolazioni e per prevenirli, laddove possibile. Particolare enfasi andrà posta sulla necessità di individuare delle linee di azione comuni

Maura Viezzoli, Direttore del CISP, è psicologa sociale

e programmi condivisi di assistenza umanitaria.

Il periodo in cui viviamo sembra inoltre essere caratterizzato da un esplodere di conflitti regionali, nazionali e internazionali. Nel nuovo paesaggio internazionale "post-guerra fredda" l'ONU viene improvvisamente caricato di responsabilità immense: regolamentare i conflitti, mantenere e talvolta imporre la pace, assistere le popolazioni in pericolo. Con la conseguenza che, talvolta, i mandati assegnatigli risultano tra loro contraddittori, come, ad esempio, l'imposizione dell'embargo all'Irak e nel contempo il portare aiuti alle popolazioni civili.

D'altra parte, i paesi del Sud e le organizzazioni non governative denunciano con dispiacere come l'attenzione e le risorse che la comunità internazionale, e l'ONU stesso, riserva alle zone del mondo in crisi dipendano spesso da motivazioni derivate dalla logica degli equilibri e degli interessi economici internazionali, dall'interesse che i media e, di conseguenza, l'opinione pubblica dedicano a una certa area del mondo piuttosto che a un'altra, invece che da un impegno articolato e serio per l'emergenza e di sostegno per la ricostruzione di questi paesi.

Possiamo menzionare almeno quattro ambiti in cui la comunità internazionale dovrebbe impegnarsi nel campo della gestione e della prevenzione delle emergenze. Il primo riguarda la continuità del flusso degli aiuti o, detto in altri termini, la capacità dei governi occidentali di assumersi degli impegni che siano in grado di portare a termine. Al di fuori di un quadro definito di finanziamenti, impegni politici e tempi certi, infatti, ogni volontà di intervento dei paesi occidentali in paesi in emergenza è velleitario e dannoso.

Il secondo riguarda la necessità che si migliorino i sistemi di comunicazione tra agenzie internazionali, ONG, realtà locali, creando dei sistemi di individuazione precoce di situazioni limite. Sono in corso studi sulla possibilità di individuare indicatori sintetici delle diverse situazioni di rischio.

Il terzo ambito di intervento riguarda l'impegno politico ed economico dei governi, occidentali e dei PVS, a non alimentare il mercato delle armi, riducendo la corsa agli armamenti e interrompendone la produzione e la vendita, favorendo laddove necessario la riconversione delle industrie.

Il quarto riguarda il rispetto degli impegni che i governi occidentali hanno preso nei consessi internazionali, di aumentare la percentuale del PIL dedicata all'APS almeno fino allo 0.7%. L'altro obiettivo che l'UNDP propone come centrale è il cosiddetto 20/20, cioè l'impegno dei governi occidentali e locali a devolvere almeno il 20% dell'APS a progetti sociali. Noi ONG proponiamo addirittura il 50%. Comunque sia, tale condizione evidenzia il legame imprescindibile che esiste tra lo scoppiare di situazioni di emergenza e la mancanza di prevenzione a livello internazionale e di impegno per lo sviluppo dei paesi poveri.

Il caso dell'Africa è emblematico a questo proposito. Senza negare alcune evoluzioni positive che sono accadute in questo continente negli ultimi anni, come ad esempio il cessare di conflitti armati in paesi come l'Etiopia e l'Eritrea, il Mozambico, gli anni '80 sono da considerarsi il decennio perduto per lo sviluppo dell'Africa. La situazione attuale nella maggior par-

te di questi paesi infatti è caratterizzata da enorme povertà e ineguaglianza, con condizioni di tipo politico, economico e culturale, sia sul versante nazionale che internazionale, che non ne consentono lo sviluppo, anzi ne rendono il futuro incerto. In questi paesi la precaria situazione sociale ed economica nasconde già i semi dell'emergere di situazioni di crisi che il contesto locale non sarà, in molti casi, in grado di gestire autonomamente.

La questione della risposta alle situazioni di emergenza nel mondo, e quindi della gestione degli aiuti umanitari, sta diventando sempre più rilevante sia in termini quantitativi che qualitativi. Qualche dato può dare l'idea della dimensione del problema di cui stiamo parlando. In dieci anni la percentuale dei fondi impegnati per assistenza umanitaria nei paesi dell'OCSE, riporta il DAC, è aumentato dal 2% del totale degli aiuti bilaterali (nel 1980) al 6,3% (nel 1992). Nel 1993 il budget delle Nazioni Unite per gli aiuti umanitari è stato di 170 MECU (contro 11 MECU del '90, 46 MECU del '91, e 112 MECU del '92), quello della Unione Europea attraverso le ONG nel '93 è stato di circa 214 MECU (contro 29 MECU nel '90, 87 MECU nel '91 e 111 MECU nel '92), entro la fine del '94 l'Unione Europea prevede di spendere circa 380 MECU (circa 780 miliardi).

Purtroppo anche le cifre relative ai conflitti in corso nel mondo, ci dicono di un contesto mondiale in cui una crescente instabilità in molte aree si esprime attraverso l'emergere di crisi umanitarie. Nel '94 l'UNDP ha identificato 13 situazioni di emergenza in un contesto politico complesso. Il crescente numero di tali situazioni si accompagna, come si è visto dai dati sopra riportati, a un progressivo crescere del coinvolgimento internazionale in termini sia politici che economici.

Cambia inoltre la natura dell'intervento internazionale, dal momento che il confine tra intervento umanitario e intervento armato è spesso labile. Il diritto di assistenza umanitaria è, infatti, un principio su cui in questi anni '90 si sta dibattendo molto, perché sembra dare un'ampia discrezionalità a quegli stati che fanno della "diplomazia umanitaria" la base della loro politica estera soprattutto nei paesi del Sud.

A questa tendenza all'aumento dei fondi per l'emergenza corrisponde, purtroppo, una diminuzione in quasi tutti i paesi europei delle risorse per la cooperazione allo sviluppo.

L'aumento della disponibilità di aiuti bilaterali per l'emergenza ha provocato una espansione delle agenzie delle Nazioni Unite con vocazione verso questo settore, e una parziale riconversione delle altre. Nel contempo è aumentata enormemente anche l'attività delle Ong verso la raccolta di fondi privati per rispondere alle situazioni di emergenza.

Le Agenzie internazionali e le organizzazioni non governative si interrogano su quali siano i parametri di efficacia e di efficienza degli interventi di assistenza umanitaria e, nel contempo, di quali saranno le implicazioni e le conseguenze della attuale drastica riduzione di aiuti allo sviluppo a lungo termine dei paesi del Sud del mondo. Per arriavre a concludere che sarebbe necessario un dibattito più approfondito sulla opportunità di promuovere una revisione dei modelli di assistenza internazionale, soprattutto in

situazioni di instabilità politica, sulla necessità di comprendere meglio le dinamiche dei disastri, e se sia vero, come taluni sostengono, che in molte aree del mondo bisognerebbe parlare di "condizioni di emergenze permanenti" piuttosto che temporanee.

È in corso, dunque, anche una revisione teorica del rapporto tra emergenza, riabilitazione e sviluppo.

Si rileva una crescente domanda di formazione in questo settore e di conseguenza stanno nascendo opportunità di addestramento e formazione in diversi settori (sanitario, logistico, gestione, ecc.) all'interno di pacchetti formativi messi a punto da consorzi formati da università (soprattutto europee e americane), organismi internazionali e ONG. È ormai diventato difficile anche per chi non è neofita orientarsi all'interno della letteratura disponibile, la quantità di seminari nazionali, regionali e internazionali, le reti telematiche esistenti e tutte le offerte disponibili per lo sviluppo e l'aggiornamento in questa complessa materia.

Certamente, però, molto poco è stato fatto per quanto riguarda la questione della messa a punto di metodi per la verifica dei risultati dei progetti di intervento, per la individuazione di indicatori attendibili di efficacia e di efficienza, per la individuazione di parametri di controllo e di analisi multidisciplinare dell'andamento e dell'impatto dei programmi di assistenza umanitaria. Stanno nascendo oggi i primi codici di condotta che mettono insieme parametri etici, metodologici, ad esempio quello recente della Croce Rossa Internazionale. Ma certamente sul piano strettamente metodologico e tecnico le proposte sono ancora scarse.

Per questo riteniamo di compiere un servizio utile nel presentare un dossier che include alcune interessanti esperienze di monitoraggio e valutazione, e di riflessone in termini metodologici su questo tipo di progetti.

Prefazione

Barbara Marziali

La scelta di pubblicare un numero monografico di Forum Valutazione sull'emergenza è dovuta più che alla triste attualità del tema, alla volontà di affrontare in modo appronfondito seppur non esaustivo- un argomento molto più complesso di quanto talvolta non lo si voglia far apparire.

Il termine emergenza è di per sé una definizione generale che afferisce a situazioni estremamente differenti quali una calamità naturale o un conflitto armato. L'emergenza può anche essere esaminata nelle sue varie sfaccettature: la drastica riduzione di risorse per la sopravvivenza, la disgregazione del tessuto sociale di un paese, le conseguenze psico-sociali sulla popolazione civile, etc. Inoltre, la concezione e gestione dei programmi umanitari in situazioni di emergenza possono essere considerate come primi anelli della catena emergenza-riabilitazione-sviluppo.

Sicuramente ciò non basta a spiegare perché una rivista dedicata alla valutazione, decide di occuparsi di un tema che a prima vista può apparire quasi inconciliabile con quest'ultima. Esiste, infatti, un luogo comune secondo il quale i programmi di emergenza non sono valutabili o non sia prioritario valutarli in quanto essi rispondono ad esigenze immediate ed inconfutabili. Gli autori che hanno contribuito a questo numero di Forum Valutazione dimostrano ampiamente l'infondatezza di tale convinzione comune e ancor più, sottolineano la necessità di comprendere le cause e le interrelazioni di questo fenomeno per meglio definire criteri e procedure valutative che favoriscano un impatto positivo delle azioni di aiuto umanitario.

È così che Borton e Shoham spiegano il recente sviluppo nell'utilizzo dei dati socio-economici nei programmi di emergenza. I vantaggi di questo tipo di informazione, infatti, sono ormai riconosciuti: migliore identificazione della popolazione beneficiaria, una più accurata valutazione dei bisogni di quest'ultima, maggiori informazioni per poter individuare e mettere in atto le strategie di lotta all'emergenza (*coping strategies*).

D'altra parte, questo tipo di informazione -raccolta per lo più dalle Organizzazioni Non Governative (ONG) sempre più presenti nel campo dell'emergenza- perde talvolta di valore, poiché utilizzandosi vari metodi di

Barbara Marziali è uno dei curatori e coordinatrice editoriale di Forum Valutazione

raccolta e di analisi, i dati risultano differenti per qualità e contenuto e quindi non sono comparabili. Ne consegue che gli organismi finanziatori ricevono un *feedback* informativo incongruente che rende, da un lato, più complessa l'attribuzione dei fondi di emergenza tra e all'interno dei vari paesi e dall'altro, più difficoltosa la valutazione dell'efficacia e dell'impatto dell'azione delle Ong.

Ma il problema metodologico non è l'unico ostacolo all'utilizzo dei dati socio-economici, infatti vengono illustrate anche altre difficoltà che afferiscono alle diverse tipologie dell'emergenza, agli atteggiamenti degli enti finanziatori, alla complessità del fenomeno, etc.

Lungi dal voler dissuadere chi opera sul campo dalla raccolta di dati socio-economici, di cui ribadiscono l'importanza, gli autori concludono l'articolo con una serie di suggerimenti agli organismi finanziatori e alle Ong per favorire l'inclusione di questa preziosa informazione nei programmi di emergenza.

Dello stesso parere sembra essere H.Young che parlando dei metodi di valutazione iniziale della situazione (*assessment*) e di risposta a situazioni di carenza di cibo e carestie, afferma l'importanza di acquisire informazione globale oltre a quella di tipo nutrizionale per meglio comprendere la realtà in cui si interviene.

Capire quali siano le cause alla base delle crisi di approvvigionamento alimentare aiuta, infatti, a pianificare le azioni più appropriate, a meglio identificare i beneficiari di tali azioni e stabilire quale sia il ruolo specifico che deve giocare l'organizzazione che opera sul campo. Ad esempio è fondamentale verificare se una emergenza alimentare è dovuta ad una riduzione generalizzata degli approvvigionamenti oppure ad un accesso limitato a tali risorse o ancora a problemi di distribuzione. Ciò implica una diversa identificazione dei beneficiari che possono essere contadini, pastori nomadi, fasce povere urbane, etc. Una elargizione generalizzata di aiuto non serve perché quasi mai rende possibile raggiungere i gruppi più vulnerabili.

L'*assessment* è quindi una fase particolarmente importante per poter prendere in seguito le giuste decisioni e nell'articolo vengono presentati alcuni metodi di raccolta dell'informazione, evidenziandone i vantaggi e gli svantaggi.

Considerata la velocità con cui, usualmente, si susseguono gli eventi usualmente nelle situazioni di emergenza, i metodi di analisi rapida (*rapid assessment*) ricoprono un ruolo rilevante e inoltre forniscono informazione aggiornata e complessiva - anche se non sistematica ed approfondita. Questi metodi solitamente molto efficaci perché permettono di acquisire conoscenza diretta della realtà, necessitano per di capacità e formazione specifiche.

Anche nell'articolo tratto dal manuale del Centro collaborativo per l'Emergenza OPS/OMS-DGCS si parla di analisi dei bisogni ma, questa volta, i protagonisti sono le popolazioni locali -di cui si riconosce il ruolo attivo in queste situazioni estreme- che si organizzano per far fronte ad una emergenza dovuta ad un disastro naturale.

Valutare la vulnerabilità sociale ed ambientale di una comunità è un

imperativo per poter procedere ad una pianificazione locale che sappia tenere in conto i vari aspetti della prevenzione, riabilitazione e sviluppo. In questo senso è fondamentale coinvolgere e coordinare tutti i servizi ed i settori che operano in una certa area secondo un "approccio territoriale".

Dare la possibilità alle comunità locali di stabilire i propri livelli di vulnerabilità, valutare i bisogni e contribuire alla definizione dei piani di emergenza è condizione necessaria ma non sufficiente per garantire il buon funzionamento dei programmi di prevenzione e risposta alle emergenze da calamità naturali. È altrettanto indispensabile assicurare l'inclusione di tali programmi nella pianificazione e gestione quotidiana.

Nell'articolo successivo viene analizzato, invece, il ruolo della riabilitazione, teorico *trait d'union* tra l'emergenza e lo sviluppo di lungo periodo. D'altronde, quasi mai il passaggio risulta lineare, soprattutto nel caso delle emergenze complesse dove appare particolarmente difficile definire i criteri secondo i quali si stabilisce che un paese si trova in una situazione postbellica.

I nuovi conflitti caratterizzati dall'emergere di economie parallele informali, di nuovi violenti meccanismi di sopravvivenza da parte di strutture di potere, dalla disgregazione dello Stato danno luogo a situazioni di emergenza in cui appare discutibile intervenire efficacemente con azioni umanitarie che mirano unicamente alla sopravvivenza fisica delle popolazioni e non intervengono sui fattori che le rendono socialmente, economicamente e politicamente vulnerabili.

Vari sono gli ostacoli che si contrappongono a che i programmi di riabilitazione contribuiscano come dovrebbero alla stabilità macro-economica e politica di un paese, uno dei principali è proprio l'attuale approccio all'emergenza da parte degli enti finanziatori ed organismi internazionali. La complessità dell'operare in emergenza nella prospettiva della riabilitazione viene ribadita nell'articolo seguente dove gli autori riportano alcune loro riflessioni in base alla esperienza maturata con la Ong a cui appartengono e che, presente in Somalia con un programma di sviluppo, si è impegnata - successivamente ai noti eventi politico militari- in programmi di emergenza.

È stata proprio questa peculiarità a permettere una rapida ed appropriata identificazione dei bisogni e delle priorità, ed un altrettanto veloce avvio delle operazioni di aiuto umanitario nel paese, un compito questo piuttosto arduo nelle emergenze complesse.

Nella prima parte dell'articolo vengono evidenziati alcuni punti nodali per chi opera nel campo delle emergenze complesse: tempi brevi per effettuare una analisi dei bisogni, la difficoltà nell'individuare i giusti interlocutori locali, la garanzia di misure di sicurezza per il personale sul campo, la continua mutevolezza della realtà in cui si opera.

Tutto ciò potrebbe fare apparire inconciliabile la valutazione con l'emergenza, al contrario, gli autori sottolineano l'importanza di valutare le azioni di aiuto umanitario e suggeriscono anche una serie di criteri guida per meglio analizzarne l'efficacia e l'impatto.

Un altro aspetto che viene molto spesso tralasciato è quello degli

effetti psico-sociali dei conflitti. Questo è un elemento caratterizzante delle emergenze complesse, fenomeno in continua crescita, dove si assiste alla sistematica distruzione del tessuto sociale e all'uso del terrore come mezzo di controllo sociale.

Ciò produce nelle popolazioni civili dei traumi collettivi che hanno conseguenze psico-sociali da cui non è possibile prescindere, quando si identificano le azioni da intraprendere nell'ambito di un intervento umanitario di questo tipo. Non bisogna, però, sottolinea l'autore, affrontare il problema della salute mentale secondo un approccio psicologico individuale. È importante considerare ed intervenire sulle dimensioni sociali del trauma ed è per questo che sostenere la ricostituzione del tessuto sociale, delle strutture economiche, la riappropriazione della propria identità culturale può essere il modo migliore per aiutare una popolazione a superare i danni psicologici provocati da una situazione di conflitto.

Anche nell'articolo conclusivo si illustra come il più delle volte, alla radice delle emergenze c'è un fenomeno di manipolazione delle risorse da parte delle classi politicamente forti. Ciò avviene attraverso un trasferimento locale di beni e proprietà, che si articola successivamente in una economia parallela regionale ben più ampia. Si viene così a creare il contesto adatto perché si sviluppi una situazione di emergenza permanente.

Attraverso gli esempi di emergenze in Sudan, nel sud dell'Etiopia e in Somalia, l'autore ci offre una analisi dei meccanismi di sopravvivenza delle strutture politiche. In questo senso non vengono risparmiate critiche all'aiuto umanitario che troppo spesso si inserisce in queste dinamiche a favore dei più forti.

Infatti, nonostante si siano sviluppati da tempo programmi e misure per sostenere le economie dei più deboli ed evitare così il crearsi di queste economie di trasferimento, i donatori e molte Ong che si trovano nella posizione di subappaltatori, non sembrano operare in controtendenza.

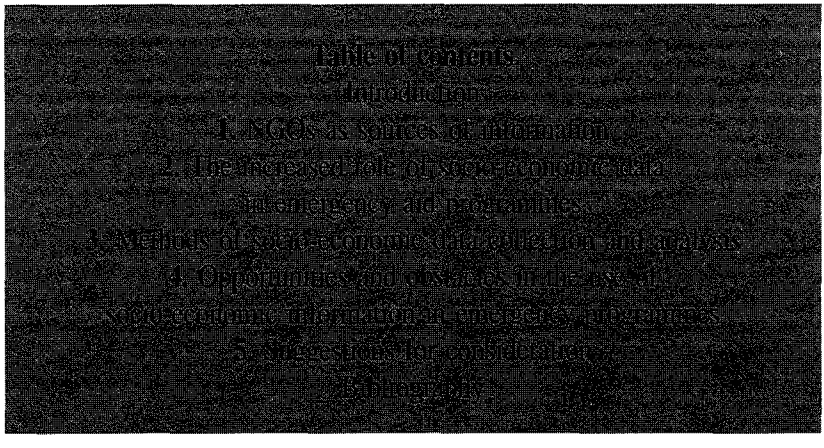
D'altra parte ciò è conseguenza di un modo contraddittorio ed inadeguato di concepire l'aiuto umanitario che lo rende oggetto di facile sfruttamento e di abusi. Anche Duffield auspica quindi una revisione del concetto e dell'organizzazione stessa degli aiuti per l'emergenza.

NUMERO MONOGRAFICO SULL'EMERGENZA

contributi di
J.Borton, J .Shoham, H. Young, Centro Collaborativo per l'Emergenza OPS/OMS-DGCS, J. Macrae, M.G. Dente, P.Dieci, D. Summerfield, M. Duffield

Issues in the collection and use of socio-economic information in humanitarian aid operations

J. Borton, J. Shoham



Il ruolo dei dati socio-economici nei programmi di emergenza è ormai riconosciuto come estremamente significativo, è perché permette una migliore identificazione della popolazione beneficiaria, una più accurata valutazione dei bisogni di quest'ultima, fornisce maggiori informazioni per individuare e mettere in atto le strategie di lotta all'emergenza (coping strategies). *Gli autori, dopo una breve rassegna dei vari metodi di raccolta ed analisi dei dati socio-economici, si soffermano sulle difficoltà che si presentano nell'utilizzo di tale informazione nei programmi di emergenza. L'articolo si conclude con una serie di suggerimenti indirizzati sia agli organismi finanziatori che alle Organizzazioni Non Governative (ONG) che operano nel campo dell'emergenza.*

John Borton, è coordinatore della Relief and Rehabilitation Network, Overseas Development Institute

Jeremy Shoham, è professore onorario al Centre for Human Nutrition, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Introduction

The last decade has seen a number of developments in relation to the way socio-economic information including that on coping strategies is collected and used in humanitarian aid operations. Of particular significance have been:

- the greatly enhanced role of NGOs as channels for bilateral donors' emergency aid and the consequent reduction in the role of agencies of the governments of developing countries;
- a greater understanding of the way in which populations are affected by, and try to cope with, the shocks and stresses induced by "natural" disasters and (to a lesser extent, conflict), though a clear conceptual framework for applying this knowledge has yet to be developed;
- much greater efforts by aid agencies to take account of the views of the intended beneficiaries of their activities and involve them in the formulation and design of projects and programmes, though such approaches are more commonly used in development programmes and are currently little used in humanitarian aid programmes.

The enhanced role of NGOs has had a particularly significant effect on the structure and routing of information flows to bilateral donors. Though the following account is oversimplified to the point of caricature it may assist in portraying the changes that have occurred. Until about a decade ago the bulk of humanitarian aid provided by bilateral donors was channelled through UN agencies and government agencies within the affected country and, by and large, the donors were dependent upon these same agencies to alert them to the severity of a particular situation and indicate the overall resource requirements. Such an approach was predicated on the belief that government agencies within the affected countries, assisted with technical support from UN agencies, understood which areas were worst affected and would allocate the assistance accordingly. Such respect for the abilities of government agencies was reinforced by the "absolutist" attitudes then prevailing in relation to sovereignty and the sensitivities of governments which had only attained Independence a few years before. Most of the assistance provided was unearmarked for any particular geographical area or target population - it effectively went into acentrally managed resource pool.

This situation may be contrasted with current relief operations, particularly in Africa, where a substantial proportion of bilateral donor assistance takes the form of funding provided to NGOs in response to requests/project proposals submitted by NGOs. Such proposals invariably relate only to the needs in geographically defined areas within the overall affected area. The overall area is often not evenly affected - some areas may require more and different types of assistance than other areas. Thus whilst in the 1970s the locus for targeting decisions essentially rested with the government controlling a centrally managed resource pool, in the 1990s the locus has shifted to

the Head Offices of donor organisations. Donor objectives in responding are, or at least ought to be, to concentrate its efforts where the needs are greatest and where the greatest impact can be obtained. Ideally therefore donors should be able to judge the severity of the situation in the area where different agencies are operating.

1.
NGOs as sources of information

Information provided by NGOs on the severity of the situation in different areas may reach bilateral donors directly or indirectly. In the case of the UK ODA, directly routed information is generally in the form of:

- situation reports prepared by agency personnel (or those of partner agencies) which are shared with the Embassies/High Commissions and/or ODA London to keep officials informed of the situation or alert them to a deterioration which may require an additional response;
- project proposals requesting funding for emergency interventions to be undertaken by the agency (or its local partner agencies) which include, as part of the justification for the proposal, an account of the severity of the situation in the area;
- monitoring and project completion reports submitted as part of the accounting requirements of ODA grants.

In terms of information on the socio-economic status of the (actual and potential) beneficiaries and their coping strategies, our experience is that there is considerable variation in the quality and content of the information conveyed. At one extreme some NGOs may include the results of carefully designed surveys whilst at the other some NGOs may rely largely on anecdotal information on the severity of the situation and how it is affecting the population.

Such variations reflect a number of factors including the specific context in which the information is being collected and the agency's understanding of what information the donor would like to receive and how it should be presented. To a significant degree though the variation in the quality and content also reflects the wide range of capacities and approaches within the NGO community as a whole.

Information on the severity of the situation in different areas also reaches the donor such as ODA from a number of other sources, the principal ones being:

- assessments by the Posts (UK Embassies/High Commissions);
- the output of (national/regional/global)early warning systems;

- needs assessment missions undertaken by the UN;
- assessments by government agencies which are checked and disseminated by the DHA and other UN agencies;
- coverage of the situation by the print, radio or television media.

Many of these sources make use of, and in many instances are heavily reliant upon, information provided by NGOs, often the very same NGOs which are providing information directly to the donors. For instance, many famine early warning systems rely on NGOs working in particular areas of the country for information on nutritional status and the types of coping mechanisms being employed in those areas. Similarly, WFP Food Aid Assessment Missions which play a crucial role in setting the overall food aid targets, often gain much of their information on the situation in the affected areas from international NGOs. The results of nutritional and socio-economic surveys undertaken by NGOs are frequently reproduced in Food Aid Assessment mission reports which are widely disseminated to donor organisations and in turn used by the global early warning systems(Buchanan-Smith et al. 1992)

Despite the significance of NGOs as direct and indirect information sources for bilateral donors, it remains the case that there is considerable variation between NGOs in the information they collect and in the way it is gathered. Some agencies rely heavily upon anthropometric surveys whilst others concentrate on the collection of socio-economic information. Within the latter there are agencies that rely upon Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) methods whilst others utilise a more quantitative approach, undertaking quite rigorous and extensive surveys of the population. As autonomous organisations it is hardly surprising that such differences exist between NGOs. In areas of developing and ongoing emergencies differences often exist between the NGOs present in terms of their scale of the operations, resource availability for surveys, knowledge and experience of the affected community, degree of operationality and relationship with government and partner agencies, sectoral focus, perspective of the appropriate balance between immediate relief and longer-term development, etc. Inevitably each NGO will separately develop its approach to information collection and analysis. Yet, a result of such variations is that the information provided to donors, early warning systems and UN assessment missions is often not comparable between agencies. Furthermore, it is frequently not clear whether the methods used for collecting specific types of socio-economic data are sufficiently rigorous and how such data should be interpreted and applied.

From the perspective of donor organisations the variable quality and content of information received present a number of problems:

- information from different sources that do not broadly correspond suggests a lack of agreement as to the severity of the situation and may result either in delays in response or inappropriate response levels;
- it makes it more difficult for bilateral donors to effectively target their assistance both between countries and within countries. In part, the donors'

reliance on receiving proposals from NGOs places the responsibility for effective targeting upon NGOs. Whilst NGOs may target effectively within their project areas, it may be the case that the geographical spread of proposals received does not correspond closely to the worst affected areas where donors would prefer to concentrate their assistance;

- where good baseline information is not available it increases the already substantially difficult task of attempts to objectively assess the effectiveness and impact of the response by the NGO and any evaluation that may be commissioned by the donor.

2.
The increased role of socio-economic data in emergency aid programmes

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s nutritional status and food availability data were the principal types of information used for the purposes of famine early warning, needs assessment and targeting, and also to inform the design of relief interventions. However, during the1980s there was a simultaneous increase in awareness of the limitations of such information and a re-examination of the causes and dynamics of famines stemming principally from the work of Amartya Sen. As a result a much greater use began to be made of socio-economic information during relief operations from the mid-1980s onwards.

A reliance on nutritional and food availability data were felt to be problematic for the following reasons:

- aggregate food supply failure said little about effective demand at local level and could easily exaggerate or underestimate need for assistance;
- by the time a deterioration in nutritional status has been demonstrated interventions were very late;
- nutritional status could be affected by many factors unrelated to access to food, e.g. disease, parental care, etc.;
- anthropometric surveys were costly, time-consuming for hard pressed skilled personnel, and often difficult to carry out satisfactorily.

The need to complement these types of information with socio-economic information was reinforced by a number of research studies and emergency programme evaluations. For instance, a study of the Kababish pastoralists in Kordofan, Sudan, elegantly showed how reliance on rainfall data triggering food aid responses was doomed to failure at least 50% of the time (Riely 1991). Repeated harvest failures between 1980-3 led to more desperate and unusual coping strategies being employed. From this information it was

obvious that should the rains fail again in 1984, there would be terminal migration and famine. Yet without an ability to predict rainfall, food aid could only be brought in pre-emptively, and therefore might go to waste should the rains be adequate. Alternatively, food could have been called forward following the rain failure, in which case it would have arrived too late. The implication for early warning systems was clear: coping strategy data needed to be collected and analysed in a way which triggered non-food aid responses before a crisis had developed.

A study of the targeting and needs assessment methods employed by 11 European NGOs during the African emergency between 1984-6 also demonstrated a significant role for socio-economic information(Shoham and Borton 1989). Important advantages of using socio-economic information for identifying the beneficiary population and assessing need were found to be that:

- socio-economic information can help quantify amount of food aid required in a way which anthropometric data cannot and thereby help ensure that the amount provided was appropriate and prevent oversupply and consequent disincentives to production;

- collection of information on the coping strategies being employed enables agencies to intervene so as to either support or discourage such activities where appropriate;

- unlike anthropometric or mortality surveys, rigorous sampling procedures may not be necessary for the collection of certain types of socio-economic information, eg. prices, consumption of wild foods, declining wage rates, etc. This may be a particularly important consideration in areas of insecurity where lack of freedom of movement effectively precludes random sampling procedures.

Many evaluations of emergency programmes have demonstrated how a failure to collect socio-economic information and solicit the views of the target population on their priority needs may, and often does, result in interventions which are inappropriately designed and therefore of less than optimal effectiveness. For instance:

- an emergency supplementary feeding programme in camps for the displaced in Kosti, Sudan, in 1991-92 failed to account for the assimilation of mothers into economic activities in Kosti town which prevented their full involvement in the on-site supplementary feeding programme and substantially reduced its effectiveness (Borton et al. 1992);

- in responding to the 1988 floods in Bangladesh many UK NGOs undertook house construction programmes that represented a significant resource transfer to beneficiaries. For most agencies there was a lead time of several months before construction began during which time consultation over design and cost could have taken place. An ODA evaluation subsequently found that, had they been given the choice, the majority of the beneficia-

ries interviewed would have preferred lower cost houses and the provision of livestock to replace the animals lost in the flood. None of the UK agencies included a livestock component in their response (Relief and Development Institute 1990);

- a drought relief programme in Southern Zambia in 1992-3 concentrated on the provision of maize and supplementary foods and health care whilst failing to address the severe water shortages even though this was a priority need (subsequently expressed) of the target population. Both here and in the Kosti case water carriage by women was taking up to 6-8 hours per day, drought-related diseases such as scabies and dysentery were endemic and large numbers of livestock were dying thereby undermining the longer-term viability of the communities. In many villages a greater impact on the increasing levels of malnutrition may have been achieved through a water intervention rather than through a supplementary feeding programme. Moreover such an intervention would probably have had a longer term impact on overall food and health security (Standen and Shoham 1994).

3.
Methods of socio-economic data collection and analysis

Both UNHCR and MSF-Holland are currently reviewing methods of needs assessment in emergencies. The initial findings of these reviews indicate that the literature is sparse in regard to the collection and utilisation of socio-economic information with little to inform the development of guidelines. Methods of socio-economic data collection and analysis over the past 12-15 years have varied enormously reflecting many factors such as: the severity and urgency of the situation; the experience of agency staff in the country and their knowledge of local conditions; the technical and professional skills of agency personnel; and agency philosophy regarding the appropriate balance between development and relief.

The principal methods may be summarised as follows:

- long term anthropological studies involving an anthropologist spending many months in the communities. Studies such as that undertaken by de Waal (1989) in Darfur have yielded invaluable insights into the dynamics of famines and the methods employed by communities and households to mitigate the impact of drought or conflict. However, by definition, such studies cannot easily fit into the decision making process in acute emergency situations;

- utilising local infrastructure to collect and interpret socio-economic data. Such infrastructure may include voluntary committees at the community

level, health centres, or a network of key informants. External agencies can provide support to these groups/individuals to improve the quality of data collection and analysis. In some of its project areas Action Aid has established Community Based Food Security Monitoring Systems which involve the community in the selection and analysis of a small number of indicators and, when it is agreed that a response is required, in determining the type of responses which the agency should undertake (Mitchell 1993). Between 1985 and 1990 the Sudanese Red Crescent operated a Drought Monitoring System in Darfur Province where its local committee structure was well developed. The system involved the regular completion of questionnaires by the village committees which were analysed centrally (Borton and Shoham 1989). In Mozambique in 1992 Médecins Sans Frontières established a system for monitoring food security and population movements which was based on NGOs operating in different districts providing monthly reports on indicators in their area. In grading districts according to four categories of need the system assisted the process of resource allocation at the national level (Dusauchoit 1994).

The two great strengths of systems based upon local infrastructure is that they can provide much greater insights into the local situation than more rapid or mechanistic methods and are usually comparatively inexpensive. By providing in-depth knowledge such systems can indicate more appropriate forms of response. Potentially also such systems can have good geographical coverage. However, they will often need to concentrate on a small number of indicators and those of a more qualitative than quantitative nature;

- setting up large scale standardised information systems. Examples of this approach are the household survey systems established in the 1985-86 period by SCF in Darfur, Oxfam in the Red Sea Province and MSF-Belgium in Chad (Shoham and Borton 1989). The first two systems were based on the collection of large amounts of quantitative socio-economic data and converting the information into quite specific estimates of village level food needs. Both systems were expensive and experienced difficulties in acquiring accurate data as a result of factors including respondent bias and cultural misunderstanding. The MSF system in Chad also systematically collected data although this was of a more qualitative/subjective form and was based on the considerable country experience in Chad of the MSF personnel involved. This system had the advantage of rapid collection and processing and was less expensive as rigorous sampling was not necessary. However, the results could not be easily compared with socio-economic data being generated by agencies working in other countries utilising different approaches and was consequently of limited value to donor organisations having to make inter-country resource allocation decisions;

- vulnerability mapping. This technique originated in Bangladesh to help rank the vulnerability to famine of different areas impacted by flooding and thus the approximate food aid requirements of particular areas. The tech-

nique was further developed by the USAID funded Famine Early Warning System (Downing 1991) and by WFP in a pilot study in the Sudan (Borton and Shoham 1991). Most recently SCF have been developing a computer-based model for mapping vulnerability in conjunction with both FAO and WFP. The approach used by SCF is based on information on the local food production and consumption systems for defined areas (equating approximately to districts) obtained through existing information systems complemented by information derived from key informants at the local level. The impact of particular shocks such as drought-induced crop and grazing failure, or conflict-related food insecurity are then modelled for specific types of food economy and the resulting food deficit defined in terms of vulnerability (SCF 1993). The system is currently being operated on a pilot basis in areas of Mali, Ethiopia, North Sudan and Mozambique and the agency intends to share the results of its work with other NGOs during 1994. Previous approaches to vulnerability mapping have all encountered substantial difficulties in incorporating knowledge of complex market behaviour and of classifying food availability which may vary within small population groups and over short periods of time. Potentially, vulnerability mapping offers governments and donors a mechanism for targeting their assistance on the areas of greatest need, though how it would operate in practice and how it might affect the operation of distribution programmes involving NGOs is unclear. It may well be that the model developed by SCF will become widely used and vulnerability mapping become a key targeting tool. However, it is unlikely that such a system will be able to cover all types of situation, e.g. displaced populations and war affected populations, and though an important tool, it will remain one amongst several;

- rapid needs assessment (RNA). This type of assessment is needed when a relief agency is thrust into a situation where it has not had an earlier presence and where emergency conditions are acute and speed is of the essence. Alternatively larger, more formal surveys may not be feasible due to political sensitivity (the authorities wish to play down the existence of a problem) or insecurity resulting from civil unrest or conflict. UN agencies such as WFP and UNHCR routinely undertake RNAs of two to three week durations. A rapid assessment implies lack of scientific sampling techniques and short-cuts to obtaining representative data. A variety of methods are now commonly used in RNAs. These include beneficiary interviews on perceptions of need often using samples which have been stratified, e.g. interviewing households from different economic groups, community group interviews (sometimes segregating by gender), obtaining information from key informants, (e.g. village heads), wealth ranking, and using proxy information, such as market information, to reflect coping strategies. There are numerous instances where these approaches have been employed in RNAs but very few are properly documented or evaluated and fewer find their way into the literature.

4.
Opportunities and obstacles in the use of socio-economic information in emergency programmes

Despite the recognition of the potential value of socio-economic information and its increased use in monitoring emergency-affected populations and in informing interventions, it is apparent that there are many obstacles to be overcome if such information is to be effectively integrated in the resource allocation and monitoring processes of bilateral donors. This section attempts to describe the principal obstacles drawing on the points made during the preliminary working meeting.

A theme common to many of the obstacles is the complexity of the phenomenon being described. Though responses to shocks and stress by individuals, households and communities tend to follow certain patterns there is substantial variation in the timing and type of response between different communities and in some cases even within the same community in different time periods. Such variations suggest that the search for a handful of indicators capable of accurately representing such complex reality is likely to be unrewarding and that as far as possible the selection and analysis of indicators should be decentralised. Such a conclusion would seem to be at odds with the needs of donors for information which may be compared not only with information from other areas within the same country but also with information from other countries as well.

Another factor contributing to the high degree of complexity are the profound differences which exist between conflict and non-conflict areas. Much of the literature on coping mechanisms and thus the use of socio-economic information has been developed in areas of Africa not directly affected by conflict, yet it is conflict-affected areas that have largely accounted for the recent dramatic growth in humanitarian aid expenditures by donors and in which NGOs involved in the provision of relief assistance are increasingly having to operate. The ability to undertake surveys of affected populations and areas is usually severely limited in conflict affected areas. The fast moving, often unpredictable nature of most conflicts greatly complicates attempts to identify commonalities in the responses by households and communities. In addition the options available in terms of the timing of relief interventions the type of intervention and the mode of delivery are considerably reduced in most conflict- affected areas.

As noted in Section 1 the large number of NGOs involved in many relief operations has the effect of increasing the complexity of the information generated as each tends to develop its own approach to the collection and use of socio-economic information. NGOs cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group. For instance the capacity of many indigenous NGOs to collect and analyse socio-economic information may be extremely limited and this in turn severely constrains the ability of their northern funding partners to pro-

vide donors with such information. Agencies which already have programmes in an area generally have a better understanding of the situation and how to interpret certain events and indicators than agencies which have had no prior involvement in an area. Similarly agencies which have close links with local communities are much better placed to consult those communities over the need for relief assistance and the design of programmes. However, it need not follow that such agencies will necessarily respond more appropriately and effectively than "new" agencies. A final problem is that the skills and backgrounds of most relief personnel tends to be in areas such as medical care and logistics. Economists and anthropologists tend to be few and far between. Consequently, the skills to ensure the effective collection and analysis of socio-economic information may be limited, even within the directly operational "northern" NGOs.

How donor organisations deal with and respond to socio-economic information also complicates the picture. Some NGOs perceive donors as being more responsive to certain types of indicator which, from an operational perspective, may not necessarily be the most useful indicators. Consequently some agencies distinguish between "advocacy indicators", such as mortality rates and malnutrition (wasting) rates among young children, and "planning indicators", with the former being used to mobilise donor interest and resources and the latter being used by the agency for the purposes of targeting and monitoring its assistance. Technical capacity to assess information is often limited within donor organisations. For instance within the UK ODA's Emergency Aid Department (EMAD) the lack of technical personnel within the Department has meant that those involved in reviewing emergency proposals have tended to rely on the EMAD's perceptions of the capability of the agencies submitting the proposals rather than on the technical appraisal of the proposals themselves (J. Douglas24:3:94). To strengthen the technical assessment capacity within EMAD it is planned to incorporate personnel from the Health and Population Division and the Economic and Social Development Division in the near future.

The realisation that household and community responses to shocks and stresses may begin months or even years before substantial increases in morbidity and mortality rates occur, raises the issue as to whether the preservation of livelihoods is, or should be, an objective of donor emergency assistance alongside the objective of saving life. Preserving livelihoods and preventing the disposal of key implies an earlier intervention than is normally the case in communities experiencing transitory food insecurity. Whilst earlier interventions may appear difficult to justify to officials used to responding to acute situations, enabling households to retain key assets should ensure a speedier recovery once the emergency is over and prevent longer term increases in vulnerability.

Such a long list of obstacles should not deter efforts to achieve a greater and more effective use of socio-economic information. Such information offers the potential of greatly improving the appropriateness, timeliness and effectiveness of emergency assistance and possibly also the level of

accountability to the affected population.

It is clear from the above that a fundamental need is for relief agencies and the donor organisations which support them to develop standardised methods for the collection and utilisation of socio-economic information and information on beneficiary perceptions. Currently decision-making based on such information is largely *ad hoc* and unsatisfactory. This is in contrast to anthropometric and mortality data which donors are usually able to compare so as to determine the severity of emergencies occurring simultaneously. At the very least there should be an agreed conceptual framework for the use of socio-economic data amongst relief agencies and donors if this situation is to improve. One consequence of the absence of conceptual framework is that agencies may expend considerable resources on the collection of socio-economic data yet utilise very little of the amassed information (Shoham and Borton 1989).

Despite the existence and use of many different procedures for collecting socio-economic information, it is very difficult to compare methods and to assess which are most appropriate and cost-effective. It is important therefore that agencies attempt to assess the effectiveness of survey methods and also to establish the costs of the methods they use so that attempts to assess the cost-effectiveness of particular methods.

In spite of decades of experience of anthropometric data collection and interpretation involving a small set of indicators, there are still major controversies and ambiguities regarding optimal survey design and interpretation of the results. Potentially there are many different types of socio-economic information and methods of collecting it so it is clear that a long process of review, research, and debate are required before standardised techniques of data collection and analysis can occur. It is therefore vital that agencies routinely evaluate and share their experiences in this area.

5.
Suggestions for consideration

In the light of the above we offer the following suggestions for consideration:

- donor organisations and the principal relief NGOs should attempt to jointly develop a conceptual framework and agree upon the most appropriate set of indicators possibly for different types of situation (eg. agricultural versus pastoral, drought versus civil conflict) that NGOs will be encouraged to monitor and include in their proposals and monitoring reports. Such a process would probably need to take the form of a Working Group meeting regularly. Any initiatives at a national level could be shared with the UN system and other donors as a possible model;

- more studies should be undertaken of "coping mechanisms" in conflict-affected areas in order to improve upon our understanding of how popula-

tion and human activity is affected by conflict in order to improve the design of humanitarian aid programmes in such situations;

- the views of the target population on programme design should routinely be solicited before, during and after the programme. Donors should encourage agencies to include the results of such surveys/consultations in project proposals and should require it in the monitoring and final project completion reports;

- donor organisations should clarify the position of livelihood preservation and the prevention of key asset sales within their objectives for the provision of emergency assistance;

- NGOs should routinely document and evaluate the uses of socio-economic information in their emergency programmes with a view to refining methods of data collection and the understanding how such data can be interpreted and applied. Donors should consider encouraging agencies to budget for such documentation and evaluation in the project proposals submitted to them.

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Food scarcity and famine: assessments and surveys(*)

Helen Young

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Nelle emergenze assume particolare rilievo la valutazione iniziale (assessment) *perché contribuisce, fornendo un quadro generale della situazione, alla identificazione delle azioni più appropriate da intraprendere. In questo senso è importante, per esempio, capire se una emergenza alimentare è dovuta ad una riduzione generalizzata degli approvvigionamenti oppure ad un accesso limitato a tali risorse o ancora a problemi di distribuzione. Poiché un aumento della quantità di cibo a disposizione di una popolazione non vuol dire necessariamente riuscire a sostenere i gruppi più vulnerabili, la giusta identificazione dei beneficiari e l'individuazione dei mezzi più appropriati per raggiungerli diventano elemento fondamentale. A tal fine si auspica l'utilizzo dei metodi di raccolta dati che vengono illustrati in questo articolo, evidenziandone i vantaggi e gli svantaggi. Si tratta di metodologie differenti che vanno dalla raccolta di informazione già esistente, ai metodi di analisi rapida* (rapid assessment) *fino alle indagini più approfondite.*

Helen Young, è esperta in scienze alimentari e nutrizione. Ha lavorato con Oxfam come *nutrition emergency support officer.*

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Introduction

The present article is an excerpt of a manual whose purpose is to give practical advice to staff of agencies, particularly non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who are faced with situations where food scarcity or famine have become a threat to people's livelihood and survival.

The advice in the manual is based on the experience of Oxfam and other similar agencies with relief programmes in North and East Africa. The manual aims to help field workers to make better assessments and so judge which types of interventions might be helpful. It is intended for nutritionists and non-nutritionists working in situations of food scarcity or famine. In the case of Oxfam, this might include local country representatives and their deputies, development project officers, health workers and relief staff.

The manual describes approaches to the assessment and response to a situation of food scarcity and famine and the various options involved. Assessment starts with a preliminary review of existing information, such as early warning reports or other reports from government and non-governmental agencies. This may be followed by field visits by people who know the area well and are able to make a rapid assessment. Meeting and talking with local people, both men and women, is vital in order to learn their views about the situation and also about possible interventions.

If the food crisis appears serious it may be necessary to undertake a nutrition survey to estimate the prevalence of malnutrition. Nutrition data can be very useful but, unless the survey is properly carried out, the data is likely to be unreliable. Thus, nutrition surveys should only be attempted if there is the necessary expertise available to design and carry out the survey, and if there are adequate resources and time available.

Information collected during the assessment is used to analyse the severity and nature of the situation: is it normal for the time of year, or is food scarcity threatening people's livelihoods? Are there epidemics and are more people dying than usual? Knowledge of the underlying causes of food scarcity and famine will help pin-point the appropriate actions, for example, famine-related interventions aimed at reducing excess mortality or strategies aimed at supporting people's livelihoods and avoiding epidemics by protecting health and nutrition.

Free food distribution is only one of several strategies that may be needed in response to food scarcity and famine. There are many practical difficulties to be addressed in food distribution, and in the past, food has at times failed to reach those who really needed it most. Targeting any type of programme requires information about who are most in need, where they are, and how their way of life affects efforts to reach them.

Food assistance should be considered in terms of its nutritional contribution to the diet and also its economic value to the household. This is important, especially when deciding what the composition of a food ration should be. Supplementary and therapeutic feeding are two direct nutrition

interventions intended to rehabilitate malnourished children by means of both feeding and health care.

This article reproduces almost entirely Part Two of the manual describing a variety of assessment methods, not all of which are normally associated with nutrition surveys, but important in learning about the wider 'livelihood' situation.

The obvious response to famine is food relief, but remember by itself food may not be enough to change the situation but without food other interventions might fail.

1.
Assessments and surveys

Making an assessment is the first step towards making better and more informed decisions. What you find out during your assessment will influence your decisions about appropriate actions or interventions. Decisions need to be made about three key areas:

- the appropriate response or actions, if any;
- targeting - ensuring that any intervention reaches the priority groups i.e. those people who need it most;
- the agency's role in any response.

Decisions in these three areas will depend on the findings of your assessment and the analyses of the situation. You will always be faced with some doubts and uncertainties because of the limits of your knowledge and understanding, and because the situation is likely to be constantly changing. But the understanding gained from a good assessment will give you confidence to make the right decisions.

The five main stages of making an assessment are as follows:

- deciding what information you need for decision making;
- choosing methods of collecting the information;
- planning your assessment and organising your team;
- analysing and interpreting your findings;
- presenting your findings.

In this essay, we will look at the first two stages in detail. Part 2. looks at the three main aspects of the situation that you need to find out about: how severe it is, what has caused it and who is most affected. Part 3. examines in detail the different methods available for collecting the information you need. Initial assessments, rapid assessments and nutrition surveys are fully described and evaluated.

2.
Deciding what information you need for decision making

In your assessment you need to find out:

- if there is a problem and how severe it is: is it a famine that is killing people or threatening to kill people? Or is it a situation of food scarcity that is damaging to people's livelihoods in the longer term? Has the situation been exaggerated and results only from expected seasonal fluctuations in the availability of food?
- the underlying causes of the problem: has the situation been caused principally by food shortages or failed entitlements or a combination of both? What are the underlying causes?
- the people who are most affected: how are different socio-economic groups affected and whose health and livelihood is most vulnerable?

In addition, during your assessment you will need to consider the long-term effects of interventions; the logistical and administrative constraints of any intervention; the response of government and other agencies; and how the agency can support people as they adapt to the situation.

Throughout the assessment there is one golden rule: remember to concentrate on the minimum information needs. Always ask yourself whether the information is needed for making decisions. Do not waste time and resources collecting data that is not immediately relevant.

2.1 Assessing the severity of the problem

Extreme food scarcity and famine eventually lead to increased malnutrition, infectious disease and death. Where these are found, emergency interventions are usually necessary.

The most dangerous situations are those where people in desperation have migrated from their homes and find themselves living in camps or squatting in urban areas in conditions that promote the spread of disease (overcrowded, insanitary, with limited or dirty water supply). The situation is often made worse by inadequate health-care facilities, or health services which are prohibitively expensive.

Information is needed about mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and the major threats to health, in order to assess how severe or life-threatening the situation is.

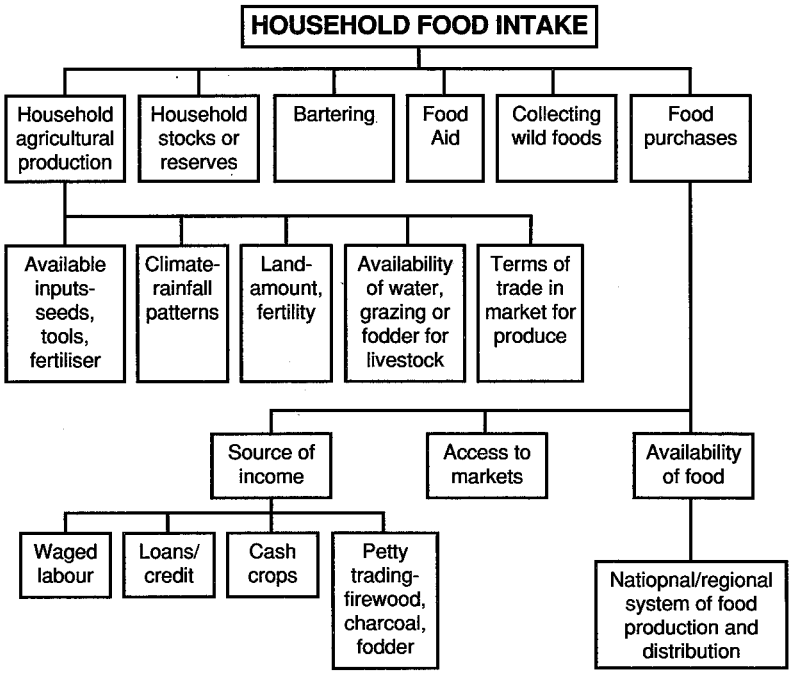
2.2 Assessing the underlying causes of the problems

The introduction explained that famines are not simply a result of food shortages, but can also occur because some groups of people are unable to obtain any of the available food. In other words, they have limited access or entitlements to what food there is. People's entitlements to food vary depending on their livelihoods and position in society. Increasing the general availability of food may not help the poorest members of society, whose entitlements are inadeguate.

In Africa there are many ways in which people obtain food. Figure 1 shows a flow diagram which illustrates how household food intake (entitlements) is the result of a range of possible activities, each of which is influenced by other factors. For example, household food purchases might be influenced by the source of household cash income, the availability of food in the market, the market price of foods, and how accessible the market is.

The factors shown in Figure 1 are not an exhaustive list and are only given as examples, and other activities are likely. Every situation is unique, and the interrelationship between the various factors will vary, and is likely to be complex. For example, climate and rainfall patterns affect general food availability, which will affect market prices.

Figure 1. Factors influencing the food available to the household



People's livelihoods influence the ways in which they obtain food; pastoralists depend mostly on sale or exchange of livestock, farmers on producing and selling crops, labourers on their income. Most people in Africa rely on a combination of activities to provide themselves with food. Those who are less vulnerable to the eftects of food scarcity have often developed several means of acquiring food, rather than depending on a single activity.

People's entitlements are strongly influenced by external events beyond their control, such as drought, war, seasonal effects of food scarcity, and government policies (market interventions, rationing, agricultural support).

People will try to diversify their means of obtaining food, or money to buy food. For example, they may seek loans or gifts, gather wild foods, sell their assets such as jewellery or furniture, or undertake menial, low-status jobs they would not normally want to do, such as collecting and selling firewood. Eventually, they may leave their homes to work in other areas, or go and stay with relatives. People often go hungry by missing meals, in order to save what little food they have. This may be reflected in increasing rates of malnutrition.

2.3 The people who are most affected

Food scarcity and famine are likely to affect everybody in some way. For example, harvest failures often result in increased market prices, which will affect all those using the market.

However, only some groups will be threatened by loss of livelihood and destitution. You should try to distinguish between the different social and occupational groups in order to understand how they may be affected differently by food scarcity and famine (see checklist).

Once the crisis is over some groups may be able to resume their previous way of life. Others may have lost the very basis of their livelihood and no longer be able to sustain a living. For example, nomads who have lost livestock, or farmers whose land is no longer productive, can no longer rely on their previous means of survival.

Rural people are adaptable and reisourceful; some resettle elsewhere, others change their farming practices or livestock holdings in order to become less vulnerable "next time round". Changes are taking place all the time. It is important to try and learn from rural people which strategies are most successful. In this way, you can identify what kind of support will be most complementary to their own initiatives. Food is not always the most useful support in situations of food scarcity. Emergency relief programmes are potentially very disruptive to normal life and may even undermine people's traditional means of coping with food scarcity.

Checklist of questions to be asked

What is the health and nutrition situation? Higher mortality than normal. Outbreaks of disease. Threats to health:
- increased exposure to infection: overcrowding, poor quality/lack of water, inadequate sanitary facilities;
- limited access to health care, low coverage of measles immunisation, limited provision of ORS, essential drugs, vitamin A supplementation;
- undernutrition: rates of acute malnutrition, prevalence of micro-nutrient deficiencies.

What are the causes of the problems?

How do people normally obtain their food? Buy from the market with cash from waged labour, loans/gifts, petty trading, sale of assets. Household agricultural produce: livestock, food crops, household stocks, food aid, Barter.

How have recent events (e.g. drought) unusually affected access to food? Markets: availability of food, prices (livestock, staple foods). Harvests. Condition of livestock, availability of water and pasture for animals.

How are people coping with or adapting to the problem of food scarcity? Sale of assets. Labour or distress migration. Loans. Support from relations or the community. Gathering wild foods. Increased dependence on petty trading, gathering wood or grass.

Who is most vulnerable/affected? Those who are displaced or destitute. Peasant farmers. Nomads and pastoralists. Urban poor. Landless labourers. Women-headed households. The elderly. Minority ethnic groups. People from remote areas.

How has food scarcity and famine affected people in the past?
- Previous droughts.
- Previous relief programmes? Lessons learnt.

How are the government, donors and other agencies responding? What are government policies?
Existing relief and development programmes.

What future events will influence the situation?
- Rains.
- Harvest.
- Peace agreements.
- Resettlement programmes.
- Development initiatives.

What is the agency's role?
- Support self-help initiatives and/or other organisations.
- Become operational.

3.
Choosing methods of collecting the information

The assessment methods available can be divided into three groups:

- initial assessments review existing information or knowledge;
- rapid assessments give a preliminary understanding of the situation after short visits to the area;
- surveys focus on more objective measurements, such as estimates of the rate of malnutrition, or quantitative household data.

Every situation is different and so there is no single right method. You must decide where the gaps in your knowledge are and whether you can fill them with existing information (initial assessments); quick qualitative information (rapid assessments); or slower to obtain quantitative data (surveys). You may need a combination of all three.

Ideally, you should always try and use several different ways of collecting information from a variety of sources to get different views of the same problem. This will increase the depth of your understanding and allow you to cross-check results.

Whatever methods you use, visit the area itself. There is no substitute for actual field visits and talking with the people who are directly affected by food scarcity .

The most important factors which will influence your choice of assessment methods are:

- the kind of information you need;
- how much time you have;
- people available to be on the assessment team, and their skills and experience;
- other resources you have available (people, vehicles, fuel, money, computing facilities).

We will now look in detail at the different kinds of assessment.

3.1 Initial assessments

The purpose of an initial assessment is to review and summarise all the existing information and knowledge about a situation - secondary data. An initial assessment does not therefore collect new information.

For carrying out initial assessments, the skills of literacy, numeracy and accuracy are important. You must be thorough and seek all potential

sources of information and summarise the relevant points in clear and concise notes.

The advantages of initial assessments are:

- they save you repeating work already done by other organisations;
- they may reveal gaps in existing knowledge, suggest what extra information is needed and stimulate ideas;
- they produce useful background information to complement your later findings;
- they suggest appropriate methods for further assessments.

The disadvantages of initial assessments are:

- they do not always include the views of those affected directly; there is a tendency to adopt a "top down" approach;
- because history does not always repeat itself, what happened in the past cannot necessarily be used to predict the future;
- the information is liable to be out of date.

3.1.1 Procedure for initial assessments

1. Find out about the local early warning system and the contingency relief plans of government and the UN if they exist (see Appendix 1: Early warning).
2. Read relevant documents and publications and talk with the "key" people in your own and other organisations and in relevant government departments. These are people who are most well-informed about the situation and likely to play an important role in subsequent relief operations.
3. Summarise your findings in the form of brief notes and tables to use for future reference. A set of questions should emerge, which may form the basis of the next stage of the assessment.
4. Be critical in your review of existing information. Figures and statistics may seem more "factual" than verbal reports, but beware: figures are just as liable to inaccuracies and bias as verbal descriptions, and their origin should be carefully examined;
5. Find out the names of local people in the area who may help you during the assessment. Letters of introduction to local people are usually very helpful.

The following organisations are a potential source of existing information:

Source	Type of information
Ministry of Health	Health Information System: annual mortality rates, coverage of health services, in particular, measles immunisation. Availability of essential drugs, ORS, personnel. Nutrition: results of previous nutrition surveys, common causes of malnutrition, food habits. Organisations working in nutrition or undertaking surveys. Recommended survey methods/emergency procedures. Treatment guidelines. Training capacity.
Ministry of Agriculture	Statistics: population, livestock and harvests. Farming systems, markets and trading.
The department responsible for early warning	Population statistics, changes in climate, farming systems, harvest projections, livestock holdings, coping mechanisms, markets. Contingency plans. Logistics.
The relief coordinating body	Current relief programmes: food-aid flows, logistics, major problems or constraints.
Other organisations	Their views of the situation. Logistics. Major problems or constraints.

3.2 Rapid assessments

Rapid assessment methods may be used to gather new information quickly during field visits. The purpose of a rapid assessment is to grasp the main points of the situation (how severe it is, the causes and who is most affected) quickly, without undertaking a full survey.

In assessments of food scarcity and famine these methods are rapid because fewer sites are visited than if a formal nutrition survey was undertaken.

Choose the sites for field visits carefully. They may be areas historically known to be the most affected by drought, or where destitute people are reportedly arriving and settling. Choose a variety of locations to allow comparison to be made.

Rapid assessments are largely based on qualitative information - views and opinions of the people you meet, and personal observation of conditions. Cross-checking your findings is essential because of the risk of misinformation. Use a range of rapid assessment methods to gather infor-

mation from several sources in order to cross-check your findings.

The advantages of rapid assessments are:

- you "learn as you go" rather than waiting to return to process your data;
- you find out about what local people think - a bottom-up approach;
- because they are quick, they save time and money;
- they often give unexpected information;
- they encourage the involvement of the community, who influence what you assess.
- they are less intrusive than formal interviews using questionnaires;
- there is no need for accurate population estimates.

The disadvantages of rapid assessments are:

- bias may creep into your results undetected and so give you a false picture of the situation;
- the results only apply to the communities visited;
- it is difficult for people outside the team to verify the results, because statistical methods are not used;
- direct observation limits you to what you see before you - there may be things you are not seeing.

3.2.1 Procedure for rapid assessments

Some of the different methods of gathering information during a rapid assessment are:

- semi-structured interviews: informal interviews with people in the community;
- direct observation: observing what is happening as a means of cross-checking findings or gathering new information;
- portraits and stories: studying individuals or families and finding out personal histories;
- diagrams: using drawings rather than words to record information (maps, seasonal calendars, history of events);
- ranking: using exercises such as wealth ranking to learn more about certain aspects of the community.

Although they are described individually, rapid assessment techniques are used in combination. Although designed to provide information quickly, rapid assessment techniques are neither simple nor quick to learn and to use well. Training and thorough preparation are essential (See Biblio-

graphy for some training manuals).

There are several skills needed for rapid assessment. An ability to learn as you go is essential. Getting on with people from a variety of backgrounds is important. Experience of working with rural communities is a good basis for this work. Interviewing skills are vital. If experience is lacking, training is essential. It takes time to learn how to look, listen and encourage others to speak.

Rapid assessment is a team effort, all members work together, contributing their skills, knowledge and understanding. A team leader is important to bring together the work of each team member and to give direction. Field workers should be prepared to stay away from home and should not mind simple living conditions.

We will now look at the individual methods in more detail.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviewing is a way of informally guiding a discussion to obtain information. The interviewer has a checklist of key areas they wish to learn about. The structure is flexible, to allow the interviewer to follow up points of interest (probe) and ask new questions that arise as the discussion continues.

The skill of semi-structured interviewing is being able to listen carefully, to learn from what is said and to ask new questions to build on what is already known.

Interviews may be with groups or individuals. For example, groups might include village committees (local leaders, Red Cross/Crescent), or particular social groups (farmers, nomads). This is often more useful than talking with a random cross-section of the community, as within such a group several different views may be represented but not all will be heard. Within any social group, make sure that women and men are equally represented. Because of their different roles and situations, women and men may give different information, and it is therefore important to have both represented fully, to give a comprehensive picture. It may be difficult to talk with women in some communities, and they often speak more freely in the absence of men and in the company of other women. Within groups of women, older women may be dominant, or younger women be more confident because they have had some formal education.

Individuals of interest are either people who have a special knowledge (key informants) or ordinary people chosen as they are typical of a certain group in the community (purposive sampling). Examples of key informants include local chiefs or elders, government representatives, health workers, head of farmers' cooperative, leader of local women's group or local storytellers.

The more "official" views of key informants are only one perspective of the situation and may differ from what other people think. It is easy

to assume that people of authority are speaking on behalf of everybody. Check how true this is by talking to others.

The most important people to seek out are those who are most vulnerable to food scarcity and famine and are likely to be the poorest and closest to destitution. Women-headed households are likely to be one of the poorest groups in any community. Perceptions of who these people are will vary and it may not be in the interests of the key informants for you to identify them. To find the poorest people, visit the outskirts of the village where any recent migrants or the destitute might be living. Find out what the low-status jobs are and interview people doing them. Visit the local market and talk with casual traders, like people selling firewood or grass for fodder that they have collected themselves. Get into the habit of finding people for yourself and do not always rely on the key informants taking you to them.

People tend to be more on their guard during interviews, so talk to people in less formal settings, such as in tea or coffee houses, or at meals. Special efforts may be needed to find opportunities of listening to and talking with women.

3.2.3 Direct observation

Direct observation is learning by looking and is one of the best ways to cross-check what people are telling you. For example, if stories of failed harvest and severe malnutrition are heard everywhere, have you seen them and if not why not? This may mean extra travelling and your hosts may feel offended and try to discourage you, but the object is to learn as much as you can about the whole situation.

If you see more than two or three extremely thin children in any single community, who seem subdued or miserable or have visibly protruding bones and loose skin, there is likely to be a serious nutrition problem. Severely malnourished children are obvious even to a layperson, but if there are only one or two, the malnutrition may be due to very poor individual circumstances and not a result of a more general decline. Moderately malnourished children are much more difficult to spot by eye.

Take advantage of household visits to look around you. Wealth or poverty are rarely obvious, so interpret what you see with caution.

Important sites that it may be worth visiting in each location include the market place, the health centre, the baker or mill and the water source.

3.2.4 Portraits and stories

Portraits and stories are a way of bringing to life the reality of people's lives their actual living conditions and the problems facing them. They are a good way of describing how food scarcity and famine are affecting particular groups of people and how they are coping.

3.2.5 Diagrams

Presenting information in the form of diagrams makes it clear and easy to understand. A lot of descriptive information may be summarised in a single diagram. Drawing diagrams is a way of thinking through and understanding your information. Written text can sometimes conceal muddled thinking, whereas it is obvious if diagrams are unclear.

Diagrams are useful as the focus for a discussion. For example, during an interview you could draw a diagram on a large sheet of paper or on the ground to show what you have learnt from the discussion. People can then discuss with you the gaps in your understanding.

Examples of useful diagrams are maps, historic profiles and seasonal calenders. Historic profiles show the nature and relative severity of recent events. Seasonal calenders summarise all the changes that occur throughout the year, including times of difficulty or stress.

3.2.6 Ranking

Ranking exercises are a way of finding out people's perceptions of the order of importance of things. For example, you could ask people to rank problems: "What is the most serious problem facing you at the moment?". Then go on to ask about the next most serious problem. Such questions must always be followed up (probed) by asking: "Why, and what will you be able to do about it?" Or questions might be about the future: "In six months' time or after the harvest, what problems will you face? "

Ranking could be used to construct a seasonal calender. You ask people: "Which month do you have most food to eat?" and continue until you have an idea of seasonal availability of food. Labour patterns can be drawn up by asking people: "Which month do you have the most work to do?" followed by questions about the type of work. As the person is talking to you, draw a diagram showing the distribution of labour over the year to see if you have understood correctly.

Wealth ranking is a way of learning about and understanding people's perceptions of the differences in wealth between households in the community. Applied with care, it can give a lot of relevant information quickly. Wealth ranking can provide useful information that complements nutrition status data. Recently, Oxfam has used wealth ranking as part of nutrition surveys. The families of those children who were found to be malnourished in nutrition surveys were ranked by people in the community according to their wealth.

3.3 Nutrition surveys

Surveys provide quantitative information about the population. For example,

a nutrition survey estimates the rate or prevalence of malnutrition in the population. Other quantitative household information may also be collected during a nutrition survey.

Anthropometric (body) measurements of children are used to estimate the rate of malnutrition. The prevalence of malnutrition among children in a whole population is estimated from the results of measuring a sample of children. The accuracy of these statistical estimates depends on correct sampling methods and careful measurements.

The prevalence of malnutrition in the sample is expressed as a single figure, known as the point prevalence; for example, 14.3 per cent of the children in the sample are malnourished. This refers only to the sample, and not to the whole population from which the sample was taken. The results from the sample can then be used to estimate the prevalence of malnutrition in the whole population. This estimate is expressed as a range of values known as confidence limits (rather than a single figure like the point prevalence). For example, the rate of malnutrition in the population might be estimated to be between 12.3 and 21.0 per cent. The confidence limits are 12.3 and 21.0 and the confidence interval is 8.7.

Because the rates of malnutrition for a population are estimates, based on samples, there is a chance that they may be inaccurate, that is, that the true rate of malnutrition in the population lies outside the confidence limits. We can express this in terms of probability. A 95 per cent confidence interval means that it is 95 per cent certain that the rate for the population is within the confidence limits, but that there is a 5 per cent, or one in twenty, chance that the estimate is incorrect.

You can link quantitative and qualitative data by using the results of the initial assessment and the rapid assessment to interpret the meaning of the quantitative data from a formal survey.

Planning and carrying out a formal survey requires knowledge and experience of survey design, sampling and statistics. Measuring children requires literacy, numeracy and accuracy. Experience of rural field conditions is also important, otherwise your proposed sampling methods may be impossible to apply in practice. If you do not have these skills, think seriously before you start a survey because wrong information is even worse than no information!

The advantages of formal surveys are that:

- they can be used to measure changes in the nutritional status of a population over time;
- they allow comparisons to be made between different groups in the survey or with the results of other surveys which used similar methods;
- the accuracy of results may be verified by checking the methods and statistics that were used;
- several different locations are visited, and team members have direct contact with people in their own homes;

- objective measures of malnutrition are useful for monitoring the impact of a relief programme.

The disadvantages of formal surveys are that:

- they may take several weeks to complete;
- considerable resources are needed (personnel, vehicles, fuel) to carry them out;
- field workers may be withdrawn from other vital work in order to carry out a survey;
- measuring children can be intrusive and inconvenient. Non-cooperation may be a problem and could lead to unreliable results;
- surveys are often planned and results analysed far from the survey sites, with little or no involvement of people from the community;
- working from an inflexible questionnaire hinders a relaxed discussion with the person being interviewed;
- the overall rate of malnutrition for the population may not be disaggregated for smaller groups within the population, so that differential rates of malnutrition of groups within the surveyed population will not be shown up.

3.3.1 Procedure for carrying out surveys

You first need to make some decisions about what to measure and whom to leasure. Nutrition indices are body measurements related to age or height, and re used to estimate malnutrition by comparing the individuals with the healthy reference population.

An inadequate diet and/or infection may lead to weight loss. In the short term, a child suffering weight loss becomes thin or wasted. This is known as acute malnutrition, and is reflected by the nutrition indices weight for height or length (WFH/L) and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC).

Thinness can develop very rapidly and may occur seasonally, during the 'hungry season' which is often just before the harvest. The prevalence of thinness is greatest between 12 and 24 months of age, which is when infants are often weaned. During this time dietary deficiencies are common and diarrhoeal diseases frequent. Under favourable conditions weight can be restored rapidly.

A poor diet over a longer period may cause growth failure so the child may be short for their age or stunted. This is reflected by the height for age (HFA) index. Unlike weight loss, growth failure is not necessarily reversible.

As far as adults are concerned, there are large variations in their height and body composition throughout the world and therefore it is harder to interpret the body measurements of adults in terms of nutritional status. The body mass index (BMI) is used in industrialised countries to establish levels

of risk. BMI is a numerical index which does not itself relate to any reference population.

$$BMI = \text{Weight in kg} / (\text{Height in m})^2$$

Because there is little information about risks attached to low levels of BMI, is only useful for monitoring purposes.

3.3.2 Sampling

Having decided what to measure, you now have to decide who to measure. It is rarely possible to include everybody in the population in a survey, so to save time and money a limited number of people are chosen. The choice of people is known as sampling and the people chosen are the sample. The characteristics of the sample should be similar to the characteristics of the total population. This is what is meant by "a representative sample". A sample that does not represent the population is said to be biased. For example, if mothers volunteer to have their children measured, rather than being randomly selected, this would result in a biased sample. When the total population is included in the survey, for example, when all the children in a community are measured, it is known as a census, and is no longer a sample survey. The results of a census only apply to the population measured.

Simple random sampling is where every individual or household has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample. For example, picking names out of a hat, or at random from a list. Simple random sampling is appropriate where lists of all individuals or households are available and the people chosen are easy to find.

In the interval sampling, people are selected from the population at equal intervals, for example, every fiftieth person on a list. The first person is selected by choosing a number at random between 1 and 50, using random number tables. If this number is 31, the next will be 81 (31+50), followed by 131 (81+50) and so on.

In cluster sampling, instead of selecting people individually, as with the previous sampling methods, groups of people are chosen. Each group is known as a cluster. The results for all the individual clusters are combined to give an estimate for the whole population.

Most nutrition surveys use cluster sampling to select the children to be measured. It is easier to apply in practice than simple random sampling because it is not necessary to have a complete list of all children in the total population; and fewer places are visited, which saves time (the number visited corresponds to the number of clusters).

Samples for cluster surveys must be double the size of an equivalent simple random sample because estimates based on clusters are less accurate than ones obtained from sampling selected individuals. A cluster survey gives a single estimate of malnutrition, which is an average of all the clusters looked at and should not be divided further. The results from a few clu-

sters should not be used to give estimates of malnutrition for a small area within the cluster survey, because they would not give a sufficiently accurate estimate.

The sample size in a cluster survey is equal to the number of clusters multiplied by the number of children measured in each cluster. Statisticians recommend at least 24 clusters, and preferably 30 clusters, for estimating the rate of malnutrition in a population. Less than 24 clusters are likely to give misleading results.

Cluster sampling can be used if you wish to look for differences between population groups or geographical areas. You will need to select 24 to 30 clusters to survey from each area or group of interest.

In a single camp or large village, cluster surveys may take only a few days and so it is possible to survey several different camps. It will be much more difficult to make comparisons between home-based populations living in different regions, as each survey in a single region may take two to three weeks due to the distances that must be travelled.

In each cluster between 10 and 30 children should be measured. Any more than 30 children will be time-consuming and allow little time for other activities such as interviewing. It is better to have more clusters with fewer children in each than to have fewer clusters with more children in each.

In the past some surveys have measured all children present in a village rather than a fixed number of children. Sometimes it can be difficult to select children at random from a community. By measuring all children present your results will show the rate of malnutrition for that community. However, there are disadvantages in measuring all children present. If the number of children is large, it may take longer than one day to measure them all, leaving little time for meeting and talking with people. In any case, it is likely that some children will be absent, and this could bias your results.

3.3.3 The area covered by a survey

The area which a survey should cover depends partly on the variation in rates of malnutrition which you expect to find within the area you wish to survey.

The cluster method assumes that the rate of malnutrition is similar throughout the area to be surveyed. This may be true in normal times, but in times of food scarcity, pockets of malnutrition often develop within a region. These pockets will not necessarily be detected by a cluster survey of the entire region as only the average rate of malnutrition for the region will be known.

It may therefore be more useful to make separate surveys of individual villages, which are chosen to represent different types of village, such as the most affected (from anecdotal evidence or local knowledge), the better off, those with important markets, those frequented by nomads, etc. Rates of malnutrition may then be estimated for each village, but it will not be statistically valid to use the figures obtained to make estimates for the area as a whole.

Before deciding to embark on a formal survey, you need to ask yourself whether or not a survey is practical in your situation.

Where people are home-based over a large geographical region, it is sometimes difficult to apply cluster survey methods correctly because of field constraints which make these methods impractical. You should consider whether any of the following constraints apply to your situation.

3.3.4 Common survey constraints and ways of overcoming them

Problem: solution

Scattered population over a large area: allow more time for travelling between sites and select a small number of children per cluster to ensure that the same number is found in each site.

Limited access to some areas because of insecurity or inadeguate roads: if access is impossible, then a random sample of the area cannot be taken. The alternative is to select a sample of people who have recently left the area, for example, to attend a food distribution or health clinic, or on market day. This will give you a biased (unrepresentative) sample, and only a very rough indication of the true picture. If roads are inadeguate, try alternative means of transport such as walking, mules or camels.

Limited time: this is often the greatest constraint. There are no short cuts to getting accurate estimates of malnutrition. The only alternative is to reduce the size of the area surveyed. For example, instead of undertaking a cluster survey of a large area, make a survey in each of several small villages. Either measure all children in each village or, if the villages are large, randomly select 24 to 30 clusters from each. Villages may be chosen randomly or it may be more useful to sample them purposively, for example:

- the worst or least affected;
- where destitute people are to be found;
- those villages receiving food aid.

Variation in the rate of malnutrition is suspected: a cluster survey of the entire region will give you a single estimate of the rate of malnutrition and will not show differences within that region. Divide the area into smaller sections, according to where you think the differences are, and select between 24 and 30 clusters from each.

No reliable data on population size: use as many sources of information as possible to list all known villages in the area to be surveyed. Estimate the relative size, based on local knowledge, and assign a relative score to each location (very big = 5, big = 4, medium = 3. small = 2 and very small = 1). Use these estimates of size to select the required number of villages randomly.

Cluster surveys of nomads: the whereabouts of nomads is hard to predict and so it is difficult to make a reliable list of all nomad camps to

select clusters from. To include nomads in the survey you will have to be determined and allow extra time for travelling. Two options are to list sites where nomads are known to gather, such as watering points or markets and then to choose a number of these at random; or visit randomly selected villages and ask the whereabouts of the nearest nomadic group, then use these groups in your sample. Reduce the cluster size, as nomadic groups are often small and have few children.

Remember that inappropriate changes to survey methods are liable to give misleading results.

APPENDIX 1

EARLY WARNING

Early warning systems aim to give prior warning of forthcoming food shortages that may adversely affect people. Information is brought together from a variety of sources and regular updates on the situation are produced. Most sustainable early warning systems are based on existing information networks.

The role of agencies

The regular contact which agencies have with project partners and local communities can serve as a "grassroots" early warning system. People in rural areas often know in advance if food scarcity is going to be more severe than usual, and close contact with them may confirm the predictions of the institutional early warning system.

The use of nutrition data for early warning

Measures of nutrition status such as "weight for height" and "weight for age" have been used as part of early warning systems in Africa.

Interpretation: Interpreting the implication of nutrition figures is not easy. Rates of malnutrition are better understood if compared with previous seasonal patterns in the same area (as long as the same methods were used for collecting data). Other information about the influences on nutrition should be looked at to help explain why the figures have changed or stayed the same.

Prediction: in normal years it may be possible to predict patterns of malnutrition according to the season, for example, malnutrition may increase during the "hungry season" just before the harvest. Departures from this normal seasonal pattern may be used to confirm the effects of unusual events, such as drought and failed harvest.

Planning: specific rates of malnutrition should not be used as automatic "triggers" for relief programmes, such as supplementary feeding programmes. The best use of nutrition data is to confirm other findings. Estimates of malnutrition looked at in isolation from other information may not mean very much.

Cost of collecting data: a nutrition surveillance system based on regular surveys is expensive to set up and maintain. This cost may be reduced including nutritional surveillance as part of existing programmes e.g. mother and child health care. However, in many Sahelian countries these types of programmes are not well developed or only reach a proportion of the population, and so would tend to bias the results.

Despite these problems, there are positive points about collecting nutritional data. Nutritional status is one of the few indicators of the health and well-being of the community that is relatively easy to measure. Also, the collection of nutrition data brings the survey team into direct contact with local people, sometimes in their own homes. This is a valuable opportunity to gain an understanding of people's perceptions of their situation.

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L'organizzazione locale nelle situazioni di emergenza(*)

Centro collaborativo per l'emergenza
OPS-OMS/DGCS Roma

Indice

Introduzione
1. La comunità si organizza prima dell'emergenza
2. La comunità risponde alla emergenza
3. La valutazione delle necessità nelle prime 72 ore

Il manuale da cui è tratto il presente articolo è il prodotto dell'analisi delle esperienze che i paesi centroamericani hanno vissuto dal '91 al '93. Il manuale si propone quale strumento di facile utilizzo per le municipalità a partire dal fatto che si riconosce -come principio base- il ruolo attivo delle comunità locali di fronte all'emergenza. In questo articolo ci si sofferma in particolare sull'organizzazione delle comunità locali in previsione di eventi catastrofici, sottolineando la necessità di operare attraverso programmi che si sviluppano nel quotidiano e di coordinare tutti i servizi e settori presenti in una determinata zona. Viene altresì evidenziata l'importanza dell'organizzazione comunitaria locale per migliorare la capacità di risposta all'emergenza, superando così la falsa alternativa tra prevenzione e risposta, considerate imprescindibilmente due facce della stessa medaglia.

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Introduzione

I fenomeni naturali che danno origine ai disastri esistono da sempre e le devastazioni che ne conseguono sono in continuo aumento a causa dell'incremento demografico e del crescente squilibrio esistente tra l'uomo e l'ambiente.

Gli effetti devastanti delle calamità naturali vanno ad aggiungersi alla situazione di crisi economica che oggi colpisce la maggior parte dei paesi del CentroAmerica, ritardando così brutalmente il processo di sviluppo economico e sociale delle comunità colpite. Al contempo, seppur sia vero che un disastro naturale abbia un impatto su tutta la popolazione, è certo che gli strati poveri di quest'ultima sono i più colpiti. Questi vivono in luoghi precari, soggetti a diversi rischi e con servizi pubblici insufficienti. Quando ha luogo un disastro, le famiglie possono perdere la totalità delle proprie risorse materiali, mentre i servizi a loro disposizione rimangono interrotti, talvolta per mesi o addirittura per anni. In questo senso, i disastri sono a loro volta rivelatori, conseguenza e causa del sottosviluppo.

Le comunità possono rispondere agli effetti di tali eventi attraverso attività permanenti mirate a diminuire la loro vulnerabilità e ad aumentare la propria capacità di risposta. Suddette attività implicano, anche a livello dei servizi pubblici di ogni comunità, la organizzazione di strutture di coordinamento che coinvolgano tutti i settori, le istituzioni e le persone-chiave, al fine di analizzare congiuntamente i fattori di vulnerabilità e le misure da prendere prima, durante e successivamente all'emergenza.

Il manuale da cui è tratto il presente articolo è diretto ai pianificatori e formatori locali, ai tecnici dei diversi servizi governativi e non governativi allo scopo di dar luogo ad un unico piano locale che integri i compiti e le responsabilità dei diversi settori di fronte a scenari di rischio comuni a tutta la popolazione.

Tale prospettiva risulta totalmente opposta alla visione tradizionale della emergenza, secondo la quale le comunità non possono far fronte alla natura e in seguito ad un evento catastrofico, dipendono unicamente dall'aiuto di organismi specializzati -generalmente stranieri- che dispongono di equipaggiamenti ultramoderni.

I programmi di risposta alle emergenze non devono essere concepiti in maniera verticale ed isolata dal contesto, al contrario devono essere considerati un aspetto delle funzioni quotidiane di tutte le istituzioni e servizi. Per questo motivo, gli sforzi afferenti alla prevenzione e alla preparazione (*preparedness*), costituiscono un elemento indispensabile della pianificazione delle municipalità e delle comunità, attraverso approcci multidisciplinari e dinamici di identificazione e soluzione di problemi, per la maggior parte comuni alle situazioni di emergenza e sottosviluppo.

Il manuale vuole essere un contributo, attraverso l'apporto di elementi tecnici e metodologici necessari per i servizi locali e le comunità dei paesi del CentroAmerica, per organizzarsi e far fronte alle emergenze, progettando la fase di prevenzione e preparazione nell'ambito della realtà quotidiana.

Gli stralci del manuale proposti in questo articolo propongono, al di là dei concetti, certamente più approfonditi ed elaborati in altri testi, la pratica pedagocica e organizzativa della prevenzione e pianificazione. Si vuole suggerire una metodologia partecipativa per realizzare una pianificazione in base alle necessità individuate, cioè partendo dall'analisi dei bisogni del gruppo.

Le attività e le iniziative di pianificazione non vengono definite in modo specifico poiché queste non possono essere stabilite a priori, essendo diverse per ogni luogo, e sono originate dalla analisi dei bisogni.

Per questo motivo ci si sofferma maggiormente sullo strumento organizzativo per determinare suddette attività più che sui contenuti specifici prestabiliti. Gli strumenti della pianificazione locale, applicati ai diversi contesti e realtà, costituiscono un primo passo per trasformare la lista delle necessità in "Piani di emergenza" complementari ai "Piani di sviluppo locale".

Sebbene sia giusto porre l'enfasi sulla prevenzione e preparazione alla emergenza, sarebbe un grave errore sminuire la importanza della organizzazione delle comunità per migliorare la capacità di risposta nella fase immediatamente successiva alla catastrofe.

Come sottolineato nel manuale, questa è una fase fondamentale che può essere razionalizzata e migliorata grazie ad una corretta informazione e organizzazione della popolazione e dei servizi locali.

D'altro canto, disquisire se sia più importante la prevenzione o la capacità di risposta è un falso problema, poiché l'uno senza l'altro non hanno logica di fronte alla realtà della emergenza.

1.
La comunità si organizza prima dell'emergenza

Molti paesi si sono dotati di una struttura nazionale per rispondere alle situazioni di emergenza, organizzando sistemi nazionali che si occupano di programmi di prevenzione, preparazione e soccorso. Il proposito è quello di coordinare il lavoro dei diversi settori che operano prima, durante e dopo la emergenza, in modo che il paese sia pronto a far fronte al disastro, avvii programmi di prevenzione, risponda in forma appropriata ed opportuna al momento del disastro, prenda le giuste decisioni per riabilitare i servizi danneggiati e intraprenda la ricostruzione nel quadro del concetto di sviluppo integrale.

L'organizzazione e le finalità di tali sistemi sono similari e praticamente tutti prevedono aspetti di coordinamento anche se si utilizzano nomi diversi: protezione civile, difesa civile, comitato di emergenza nazionale, comitato permanente di emergenza nazionale, comitato nazionale di emergenza, commissione nazionale di emergenza, etc.

L'esperienza ha dimostrato che organizzare una struttura senza relazionarla con i programmi e le attività ordinarie, aumenta il deficit preventivo del paese e produce risultati negativi per il cattivo utilizzo delle risorse

umane, per lo sperpero di apparecchiature costose e per la limitata fiducia della popolazione in una organizzazione sconosciuta. Inoltre, non produce alcun miglioramento della qualità e della copertura dei servizi offerti nel quotidiano.

A fronte di quanto sopra specificato, si raccomanda un coordinamento delle diverse entità al fine di:

- identificare anticipatamente situazioni e scenari di rischio;
- realizzare programmi intersettoriali di risposta, tenendo in considerazione il comportamento e le necessità della popolazione;
- organizzare la risposta utilizzando le strutture, gli strumenti e il personale necessario.

1.1 La struttura: rete territoriale

È necessario pensare ad una rete territoriale basata sulla organizzazione propria della comunità (colonie, quartieri, scuole, luoghi di lavoro), poiché è localmente che si producono le situazioni di emergenza che moltiplicano gli effetti di un disastro e inoltre, nelle prime 72 ore, la organizzazione è la risorsa principale che possiede la popolazione per ridurre le conseguenze dell'evento catastrofico.

La conoscenza da parte della popolazione delle caratteristiche del territorio e delle risorse esistenti è fondamentale per la realizzazione di piani locali, in particolare nelle città e nei quartieri dove i servizi pubblici sono insufficienti.

Le comunità che vogliono elaborare un piano di emergenza, devono sollecitare la cooperazione del comitato di emergenza municipale per poter ottenere la necessaria omogeneità e congruenza nell'azione.

Il comitato di emergenza municipale è la espressione più periferica del Sistema Nazionale di Emergenza di un paese, che generalmente si articola a tre livelli: nazionale, regionale e municipale.

La popolazione, tuttavia, potrà sviluppare differenti livelli di organizzazione quali:

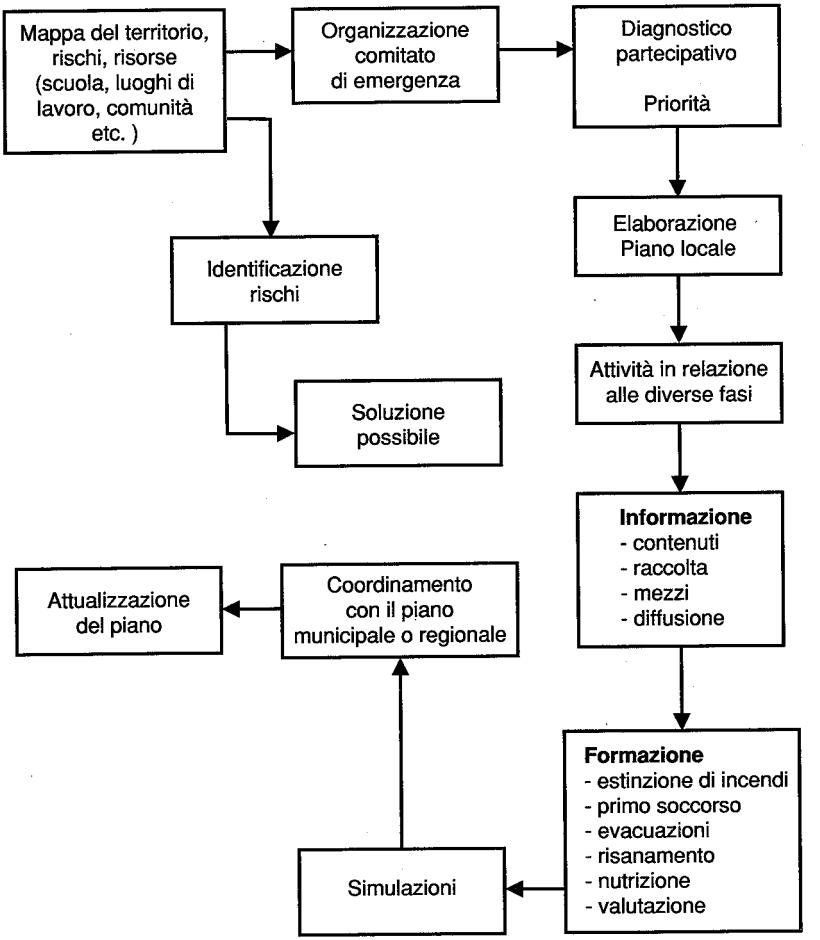
- i comitati di emergenza di quartiere;
- i comitati di emergenza comunitari;
- i comitati di emergenza a livello di scuole;
- i comitati di emergenza sui posti di lavoro.

I suddetti comitati saranno in stretta coordinazione con il Comitato di Emergenza Municipale (CEM) e conseguentemente con il Comitato di Emergenza Regionale (CER) e il Comitato di Emergenza Nazionale (CEN).

Il comitato comunitario e il comitato municipale operano, condividendo le responsabilità, secondo quattro livelli:

Figura 1

Piano di emergenza locale



- l'informazione, che rappresenta il momento della classificazione dei dati raccolti;

- la decisione, che viene presa dal responsabile in base all'analisi della informazione e in collaborazione con la maggior parte dei comitati della rete territoriale;

- l'azione, che è la fase in cui si organizzano le attività nei quartieri, nelle comunità, nelle scuole, etc.;

- la valutazione, che permette di verificare i risultati confrontando gli obiettivi prefissati ed i risultati ottenuti sulla base di schede elaborate previamente.

1.2 Il piano locale di emergenza

Il piano locale di emergenza è responsabilità della amministrazione locale e deve essere il prodotto della organizzazione comunale, includendo i servizi sanitari, scolastici e gli altri servizi esistenti.

La programmazione delle attività delle differenti fasi del piano di emergenza, deve basarsi su una analisi di vulnerabilità che, a livello locale, la popolazione può effettuare collettivamente attraverso la elaborazione di mappe di rischio, di risorse e delle caratteristiche del territorio.

Sovrapponendo le mappe, si identificano -definendo anche le priorità i rischi, le risposte possibili e le risorse necessarie.

1.3 Gli strumenti di pianificazione locale

Il Piano Locale di Emergenza non è una semplice lista di necessità o di problemi. Per giungere al risultato auspicato si propongono alcuni strumenti di pianificazione che possano essere utilizzati a livello locale.

Generalmente non esiste molta esperienza di pianificazione a livello locale, sebbene in quasi tutti i paesi esistano politiche di decentralizzazione.

Gli strumenti sono:

- le mappe di rischio e delle risorse, che permettono di realizzare il diagnostico locale e favoriscono al contempo la coscienza della popolazione circa i fattori di rischio esistenti;

- la cartografia, che fornisce una rappresentazione visiva del territorio e permette di utilizzare rapidamente tutta l'informazione che normalmente resta sconosciuta o inutilizzata;

- la scheda familiare, che è una raccolta quantitativa di dati attraverso cui è possibile quantificare risposte adeguate a quanto priorizzato per i programmi locali;

- lo studio socio-economico del territorio, che fornisce una base di infor-

mazione globale del territorio nel quale si intende operare.

1.3.1 La mappa del territorio, di rishio e delle risorse

La mappa di rischio, che si realizza con il personale locale dei diversi servizi, offre un diagnostico completo e integrale dei rischi esistenti e di come vengono percepiti dalla comunità. La mappa è uno strumento particolarmente utile in tutti i programmi di partecipazione comunitaria per il miglioramento delle condizioni di vita e non soltanto nell'emergenza.

L'analisi di vulnerabilità realizzata dalla stessa comunità non sostituisce quanto prodotto dai tecnici di altri settori, ne costituisce il complemento.

È una dinamica questa che permette la conoscenza collettiva dei rischi esistenti e la eliminazione degli stessi, tanto nella pianificazione quanto nella esecuzione, priorizzando l'uso delle risorse locali.

La partecipazione della comunità nei programmi formali costituisce la base principale per la organizzazione della stessa. La organizzazione della comunità oltre a permettere la soluzione di vari problemi che normalmente colpiscono la popolazione, rappresenta la prima risorsa in situazioni di emergenza, quando -nelle prime 72 ore- i servizi pubblici sono disorganizzati e si registra un aumento nella domanda. La autogestione comunitaria in queste prime 72 ore è possibile unicamente se in tempi normali si sono sviluppati piani di emergenza basati sulla informazione, formazione e preparazione.

1.3.2 Gli attori della partecipazione comunitaria

I gruppi omogenei sono i gruppi di persone che hanno come denominatore comune il fatto che vivono gli stessi rischi sociali o ambientali, condividono le stesse difficoltà, gli stessi luoghi e la conoscenza del territorio in cui si trovano.

Il comitato direttivo rappresenta il primo interlocutore in quanto, normalmente, è formato da *leader* riconosciuti dalla comunità e che hanno il potere di convocare assemblee.

Il *leader* comunitario aiuta il gruppo ad identificare gli interlocutori responsabili e le entità competenti per una effettiva collaborazione.

I tecnici che operano in contatto diretto con la comunità sono i più indicati ad orientarla nella elaborazione della mappa di rischio, per esempio i maestri, gli infermieri, gli ispettori di risanamento ambientale, vigili del fuoco, tecnici agronomi.

È altrettanto importante la partecipazione di coloro che non sono direttamente coinvolti nelle attività di risposta, poiché non ci si limita alla sola fase di soccorso. È importante quindi garantire la partecipazione di persone quali meteorologi, nutrizionisti, sociologi, ambientalisti, etc.

1.3.3 Le fasi della mappatura

Le fasi da prevedere nella elaborazione della mappa sono le seguenti:

a) analisi della esperienza passata;

b) indagine sul campo ed elaborazione della mappa;

c) discussione circa i rischi e le risorse individuati;

d) ricerca di soluzioni con i servizi locali;

e) creazione di commissioni e operativizzazione della risposta.

a) La esperienza passata costituisce un fatto comune che coinvolge emotivamente tutti e la sua analisi permette di elaborare una lista di problemi, vissuti realmente, che riflette le caratteristiche, gli interessi, oltre al livello di informazione e capacità critica della comunità.

Successivamente il *leader* comunitario o il tecnico di un servizio o di un organismo, sollecita i partecipanti ad esprimersi sui rischi ambientali e sociali esistenti nella vita quotidiana della loro comunità.

Il confronto tra la esperienza passata e la situazione attuale permette la identificazione dei rischi con cui si convive giornalmente, integrando settori diversi quali:

- risanamento ambientale;
- carenza di servizi basici;
- rischi sociali.

Oltre ai rischi, possono essere prese in considerazione varie caratteristiche del territorio, come l'uso preferenziale di:

- passaggi, strade e vie di maggiore circolazione;
- luoghi di divertimento;
- luoghi di produzione;
- fermate degli autobus;
- punti telefonici.

L'analisi della esperienza passata è una attività importante perché in questa attività avviene uno scambio di informazione tra i vari partecipanti in un clima di spontaneità. Il *leader* ha la funzione di facilitare la partecipazione attiva di tutti e allo stesso tempo di stimolare la discussione. In questi incontri è necessario che i *leader* sappiano utilizzare una gran qualità: quella di sapere ascoltare.

È altrettanto importante identificare le risorse. Limitarsi ad enumerare i soli rischi contribuisce a generare nella comunità un sentimento di impotenza. Al contrario, conoscere e prendere in considerazione le risorse esistenti (scuole, attività preventive, vigili del fuoco, etc.) rafforza un sentimento positivo e attivo, e permetterà successivamente una programma-

zione congruente delle risorse nel piano di emergenza.

Si elaborerà, quindi, una lista di rischi e di risorse che rappresenta una analisi di vulnerabilità della comunità.

b)In seguito il gruppo si organizza per effettuare una indagine sul campo. Ciascun gruppo avrà una mappa della comunità dove rappresenterà, con simboli, i rischi, le risorse e le caratteristiche dell'area.

Per ottenere una maggiore partecipazione è meglio organizzare i partecipanti in piccoli gruppi di 6/7 persone. Alcuni problemi saranno identificati durante il percorso, altri attraverso interviste porta a porta conversando con le famiglie.

La osservazione diretta e la localizzazione geografica dei fattori di rischio, oltre a rappresentare un atto concreto di prevenzione per i partecipanti, stimola la curiosità della gente che può essere così informata e coinvolta nel lavoro.

c)La discussione sui rischi e le risorse identificati ha luogo uno o due giorno dopo la seconda fase e serve per integrare le mappe parziali in una mappa unica e completa che sarà collocata in un luogo pubblico e visibile da tutta la comunità. Per tale discussione, il comitato direttivo ed il comitato di emergenza inviteranno i tecnici del maggior numero possibile di servizi che normalmente svolgono attività nella comunità.

Il diagnostico partecipativo è il risultato dell'analisi dei problemi incontrati, delle soluzioni discusse e delle risorse disponibili a livello comunitario ed istituzionale.

Diagnostico partecipativo

Problemi	**Necessità**	**Possibili soluzioni**	**Obiettivo**	**Risorse**
traffico congestionato	strade	decongestionare la strada	riattivare economicamente il municipio	municipio
imbottigliamento	mercato Municipale	ampliare la pavimentazione	proteggere la vita degli abitanti della zona	MOP
mancanza di mercati	impianto di trattamento delle acque	migliorare il passaggio di accesso		ONG
diminuzione della produzione	asistenza odontoiatrica permanente	trasferire il mercato nel nuovo insediamento		impresa privata
disoccupazione				

Il diagnostico partecipativo sarà la base per trasformare la lista dei bisogni in un "piano di area", permettendo inoltre alla comunità di formulare una richiesta di servizi in modo preciso e specifico. La strategia di avvicinamento con la comunità e la promozione di attività collettive di autoidentificazione delle necessità, possono essere proposte a tutte le entità che sviluppano programmi di sviluppo locale.

d)Come conseguenza, si formeranno tra i partecipanti "nuovi gruppi attivi" in relazione alle priorità discusse. La discussione con gli interlocutori tecnici permette di migliorare l'interazione tra comunità e servizi. I tecnici identificheranno, tra i problemi priorizzati, quelli a cui il servizio da essi rappresentato può dare una risposta, sotto forma di azione diretta o in termini di programmazione.

Attraverso la interazione con il CEM, è possibile coordinarsi con varie entità pubbliche o private per la soluzione dei problemi identificati che non sono di competenza diretta di un solo settore.

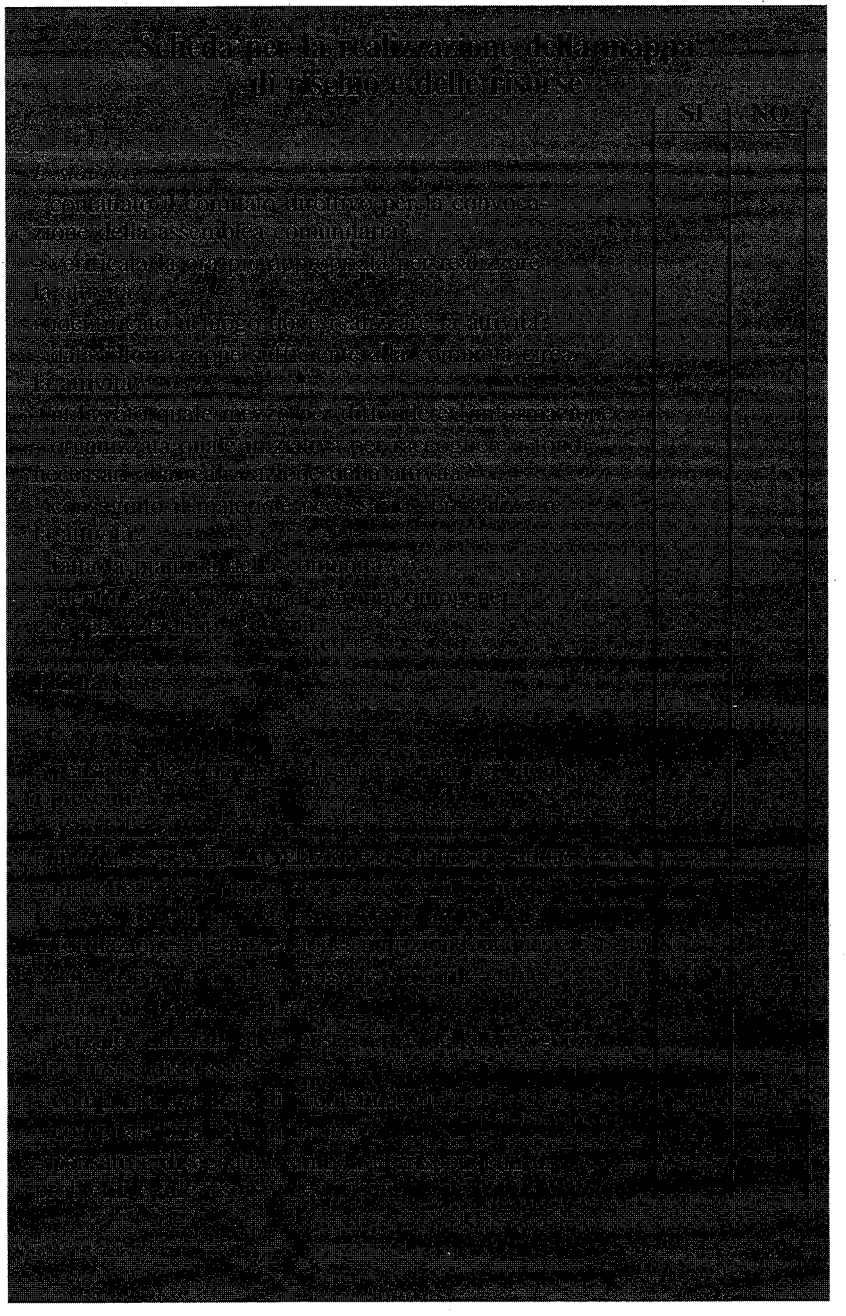
Con la integrazione si possono mobilitare le risorse della comunità che altrimenti rimarrebbero passive ed inutilizzate.

1.3.4 Criteri di valutazione

La mappa di rischio deve essere oggetto di una valutazione per verificare che le indicazioni e il prodotto della attività abbiano un impatto concreto e positivo.

In tale valutazione si potranno considerare i seguenti aspetti:

- moltiplicazione delle esperienze collettive e numero delle mappe di rischio realizzate;
- numero di persone coinvolte in un momento dato, permettendo così di quantificare la loro efficacia in termini economici, di tempo e di risorse;
- eterogeneità tra i gruppi;
- organizzazione di nuovi gruppi;
- numero di azioni comunitarie realizzate per ridurre la vulnerabilità della stessa;
- aumento dell'utilizzo dei servizi e della capacità di richiedere servizi sanitari, di formazione, di risanamento ambientale. Ciò permetterà di valutare la integrazione tra comunità ed istituzioni.



Scheda per la realizzazione della mappa degli assetti e delle risorse

	SI	NO
Certificare il contatto diretto per la convocazione della assemblea comunitaria		
Verificare la presenza di persone per strutturare la giornata		
Individuare un luogo dove realizzare la mappa		
Individuare una persona che possa facilitare la costruzione della mappa		
Verificare la disponibilità di materiale per la costruzione della mappa		
Assicurarsi che ci sia un luogo dove appendere la mappa		

Scheda per la realizzazione della mappa di rischio e delle risorse

	SI	NO
Seconda fase		
Si è svolto:		
- creati piccoli gruppi in relazione al numero dei partecipanti?		
- designato un responsabile per ogni gruppo?		
- elaborato in ogni gruppo una piantina da esaminare?		
- annotate le caratteristiche del territorio assegnato?		
Come, per esempio:		
luoghi di gioco		
industrie		
zone con flusso elevato di persone		
negozi utili		
centri ricreativi		
centri sportivi		
centri religiosi		
zone maleodoranti		
zone rumorose		
zone pericolose		
mercato		
- indicati nella mappa i rischi incontrati?		
sociali ambientali culturali		
- conversato con le famiglie tramite visite porta a porta?		
- annotati nella mappa anche quei rischi ai quali la comunità è abituata?		
- annotate tutte le risorse esistenti?		
- conversato con i tecnici delle risorse identificate?		
Terza fase		
Si è svolto:		
- unite tutte le mappe parziali in una mappa unica e completa con i simboli corrispondenti?		
- invitato alla riunione il numero più ampio di persone?		
- invitato all'riunione i rappresentanti delle istituzioni e dei servizi pubblici e privati?		

Scheda per la realizzazione della mappa di rischio e delle risorse

	SI	NO
– sanità		
– istruzione		
– municipalità		
– elettricità		
– esercito		
– vulcanologi, geologi		
– servizi di approvvigionamento idrico		
– opere pubbliche		
– servizi di smaltimento dei rifiuti urbani		
– agricoltura		
– università		
– radioamatori		
– compagnia telefonica		
– Croce Rossa		
– organismi internazionali		
– responsabilizzato un rappresentante del comitato di emergenza con la funzione di relatore della riunione?		
– preparato uno schema di "diagnostico partecipativo"?		
– identificate tra i partecipanti le persone interessate a far parte dei comitati?		
– stabiliti i comitati con i dati completi delle persone che ne fanno parte?		
– stabilita la data della riunione del comitato?		
– fatta una valutazione delle attività?		

2.
La comunità risponde alla emergenza: monitoraggio e sistema di allerta

Il monitoraggio è una attività continua che deve svilupparsi in tempi normali per poter osservare situazioni di rischio e che può essere rafforzata in situazioni di emergenza.

Il sistema di allerta utilizza l'informazione del monitoraggio per definire secondo le varie categorie le azioni da intraprendere di fronte ad una minaccia di un fenomeno naturale o artificiale; tale sistema indica i diversi passi da seguire, a seconda della imminenza della emergenza e può utilizzare differenti tipi di allarme secondo le risorse disponibili e le caratteristiche della popolazione. Tale sistema permette inoltre:

- la possibile evoluzione di una situazione di rischio;
- la localizzazione e la estensione della zona interessata;
- la previsione di un fenomeno;
- il successo dell'evento.

Tra gli eventi di origine naturale che possono colpire una popolazione e i suoi beni in una determinata regione, alcuni possono essere previsti indicando esattamente dove e quando potranno aver luogo, come nel caso di un uragano. In altri casi potrà essere identificata una zona, in cui, per le sue caratteristiche geologiche, si prevede la possibilità di una calamità, per es. un terremoto, senza però sapere quando e dove.

Le possibilità di previsione si basano sulla osservazione e documentazione attenta delle modificazioni nella natura e delle caratteristiche della popolazione.

La previsione è uno degli obiettivi principali della attività di monitoraggio. Il monitoraggio registra, analizza e confronta le variazioni dei fenomeni naturali con dati di riferimento misurati convenzionalmente o in base a esperienze passate, per indicare quando una situazione di rischio inizia a diventare pericolosa o molto pericolosa.

Due sono i fattori che concorrono al verificarsi di una catastrofe e che devono essere analizzati:

- i pericoli di origine naturale o provocati dall'uomo;
- le condizioni di vulnerabilità della popolazione.

Oltre ai pericoli di origine naturale che devono essere oggetto di monitoraggio (attività sismica, attività vulcanica, crescita dei fiumi in caso di inondazioni, etc.), ci sono anche altri elementi che devono essere monitorati e che possono produrre disastri di lenta evoluzione come:

- la qualità dell'acqua;

- la qualità dell'aria in relazione a gas;
- la contaminazione del terreno dovuta alla presenza di insetticidi, fertilizzanti, radioattività;
- la deforestazione.

Il secondo fattore responsabile di un disastro è la vulnerabilità che è stata precedentemente descritta e questa può essere valutata utilizzando diversi parametri. Inoltre, può essere ridotta con programmi di investimento nello sviluppo sociale ed economico.

2.1 Il sistema comunitario di monitoraggio

Ogni livello di organizzazione possiede il suo sistema di monitoraggio.

A livello locale, di distretto, di comunità, si deve poter contare su una rete di monitoraggio del territorio per conoscere e controllare il ciclo ordinario dei cambiamenti dei fiumi, dei vulcani e delle caratteristiche della popolazione. Ciò sarà utile per identificare situazioni di rischio e monitorare la loro evoluzione, permettendo così di prendere in anticipo le misure necessarie.

Il monitoraggio della qualità dell'acqua di un unico pozzo dopo la crescita di un fiume, utilizzando un unico campione, anche se importante ed utile, ci da solo un quadro parziale della situazione di potabilità in una zona deteriorata.

La rete di monitoraggio è l'insieme delle varie stazioni di osservazione collocate in una zona determinata, tramite strumenti o tramite la osservazione umana, e che permettono di raccogliere dati e informazioni che possono presentarsi in un quadro attendibile in relazione ad una situazione di rischio in un territorio deteriorato.

Per poter stabilire una rete bisogna:

- stabilire i diversi punti da monitorare;
- identificare i responsabili formati;
- selezionare gli strumenti per registrare e trasmettere i dati alla centrale locale, collegato con una rete, regionale e nazionale, secondo il tipo di organizzazione del paese.

Attraverso una serie di misure è possibile anche monitorare lo stato nutrizionale, lo stato delle abitazioni, dell'acqua, etc.

Scheda per la valutazione del monitoraggio e dei sistemi di allerta

	SI	NO
- Tra i rischi identificati, quali possono essere oggetto di monitoraggio?		
- Esistono nella comunità stazioni di monitoraggio?		
- Quali?		
- Si è discusso con i tecnici circa la utilità di una rete di monitoraggio?		
- È necessario installare una rete di monitoraggio o una stazione nella comunità?		
- per controllare i cambiamenti di un fiume;		
- per controllare il funzionamento del sistema fognario;		
- per controllare le condizioni delle abitazioni;		
- per controllare la qualità dell'acqua.		
- Si è svolto un corso di formazione in tecniche di monitoraggio con i tecnici delle diverse entità?		

3.
La valutazione delle necessità

Si tratta di una attività di raccolta ed analisi di dati sufficientemente rappresentativi, esatti e rapidi.

Gli elementi per realizzare una buona valutazione sono:

- avere una chiara idea circa le finalità della valutazione e le misure necessarie per ottenerla;
- avere una conoscenza aggiornata e reale delle risorse disponibili di fronte al disastro.

Generalmente la valutazione dovrebbe mirare a:

- scoprire quali necessità si sono presentate;
- calcolare e stimare la domanda di aiuto di emergenza;
- contribuire a prendere decisioni circa la composizione quali-quantitativa dei servizi sociali e sanitari da fornire alla popolazione colpita;
- determinare le priorità.

Il metodo deve essere semplice, rapido, completo per soddisfare le necessità basilari che si presentano nelle prime 72 ore.

La prima valutazione si realizza nella fase immediatamente successiva all'evento catastrofico e serve a determinare:

- il numero di feriti, scomparsi, la zona colpita, le necessità basilari, il numero di morti, il numero di disastrati.

La seconda valutazione si effettua al secondo o terzo giorno dalla catastrofe e serve a determinare:

- la zona geografica colpita, il calcolo della popolazione e la sua ubicazione nella zona del disastro, la situazione dei trasporti e dei mezzi di comunicazione, la disponibilità di acqua potabile, riserve alimentari. Centri di salute e grado di funzionalità, numero di feriti, numero e ubicazione dei disastrati.

A tale scopo vengono utilizzate schede previamente discusse ed accettate dalla comunità e dai differenti tecnici, relativamente a:

- coperte e indumenti;
- soccorso;
- cibo;
- medicine;
- alloggio;
- sussidi;
- acqua.

Aiding recovery? A preliminary assessment of the role of international aid in post-conflict situations(*)

Joanna Macrae

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Il crescente numero di emergenze complesse ha portato ad una maggiore attribuzione di risorse finanziarie agli interventi di aiuto umanitario a scapito dello sviluppo di lungo periodo. Questo fenomeno ha suscitato grossa preoccupazione nell'ambito delle agenzie internazionali. Teoricamente i programmi di riabilitazione dovrebbero costituire il legame tra le azioni di aiuto umanitario e quelle di sviluppo ma quasi mai il passaggio risulta lineare, soprattutto nel caso delle emergenze complesse. Partendo da questo presupposto l'autore illustra il posto innegabilmente ambiguo occupato dalla "riabilitazione" nelle politiche di aiuto internazionale ed auspica una redifinizione del ruolo di quest'ultimo nelle situazioni di instabilità.

Joanna Macrae, lavora presso la Health Policy Unit della London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

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Introduction

War is at the top of the international aid agenda. This is a recent phenomenon. During the Cold War, the superpowers were also the main aid donors: discussion of the impact of their military assistance on the development programmes they financed remained therefore relatively limited, relegated to the margins of "mainstream" aid debates.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall brought unprecedented optimism for peace, which has largely failed to materialise. With increased international consensus in the Security Council, it has also brought new Pandora's box of international action in response to conflict in the Third World and former Eastern bloc.

This brief paper explores one aspect of international responses to instability: the challenge of post-conflict rehabilitation. It draws on a recent study commissioned by the UK Overseas Development Administration which reviewed major trends in international policy responses to situations of post-conflict transition. The research combined interviews with policy-makers in the United Nations specialist agencies, the European Commission and bilateral agencies, with desk reviews of case study material from Palestine, Cambodia, and drew on previous and on-going research conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in Uganda, El Salvador and Ethiopia. It concludes that strenthening international aid responses to situations of post-conflict transition will require improving understanding of the nature of contemporary conflict, and profound reformulation of the aims and strategies of development assistance.

1.
Momentum for war, momentum for peace

Since the 1950s, the number of countries affected by war has increased. According to Wallensteen and Axell (1994), 90 armed conflicts[1] took place during the five years 1989-1993, in 61 locations around the world, involving at least 60 governments, about one third of the member states of the United Nations. In 1993 alone, 47 of these conflicts were active. The number of conflicts has, in the last few years, been declining in Africa and the Americas, relatively stable in the Middle East and Asia, and increasing in Europe; these aggregate figures do not reveal the intensity of conflict, which has been most pronounced in Angola, Iraq, Rwanda, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.

The persistence of conflict in the post-Cold War era has prompted a reappraisal of its causes. Until the late 1980s, explanations of conflict in the Third World largely focused upon the role of international factors, examining the roles of the United States, former Soviet Union, and, in Southern

Africa, South Africa in promoting conflict. During this period, much less attention was placed upon understanding the national and local factors which maintained the dynamics of conflict (Stockton, 1989).

The withdrawal of the superpowers from the proxy battlefields of the South has revealed the internal dynamics of conflict. Declining economic and environmental resource bases have placed acute pressures on populations as they seek to maintain their livelihoods. As competition has intensified, so the potential for political manipulation of resources, often along ethnic or national lines, has increased.

The declining capacity of formal economic and political systems to sustain and protect livelihoods in many countries has encouraged alternative mechanisms of survival to emerge. The development of parallel economies which rely upon high levels of violence to extract resources represents one crucial aspect of this process of adjustment to the conditions of acute political, economic and environmental stress. Keen (1991) and Duffield (1994a) have recorded extensive examples from Sudan, Angola and Bosnia which demonstrate the linkages between the maintenance or acquisition of political power and economic survival.

In these contexts, conflict is linked less to the process of state formation, the common theme of an earlier generation of ideologically-motivated nationalist and revolutionary struggles; rather, conflict is increasingly associated with a process of state disintegration, where the quest for power is linked to the economic and political ambitions of armed groups, not to the achievement of a clearly articulated socio-political agenda (Surhke, 1994, quoted in Duffield, 1994a; Duffield, 1994a). In situations such as Somalia and Liberia the dividing line between political violence and crime is becoming increasingly fine (Kaplan, 1994).

2.
Defining post-conflicts situations

While number of conflicts is increasingly globally, a significant number of others are making the precarious transition associated with peace-building and political transformation (see Table 1). Defining when wars are "over" is a hazardous undertaking. Four characteristics of post-conflict situations can, however, be identified:

- the signing of a formal peace agreement;
- a process of political transition, by elections, a negotiated transfer of power, military coups, or secession;
- decreased levels of military activity by the main warring parties;
- perception among national and international actors that there is an opportunity for peace and recovery.

Not all of these factors may be present simultaneously. For example, where there is a military take-over of power there may be no formal peace agreement, as was the case in Ethiopia in 1991 or in Uganda in 1986.

It is important to emphasize that the process of post-conflict transition is higly unstable. Neither the signing of peace accords nor changes in the system of governance guarantee the permanence of peace. Indeed, this process of political transition may bring with it new threats to stability. For example, in Afghanistan, the withdrawal of the Soviet army paved the way for an intensification of the struggle between the different factions of the Mujahadeen. In Cambodia, the Paris agreement and the UN-sponsored elections have not brought an end to the insurgency led by the Khmer Rouge. In Angola, despite UN-supervised elections in 1992, UNITA was responsible for plunging the country into a devastating civil war after it became apparent it had lost.

Equally, political settlements may themselves be an incremental process: in Palestine, for example, the status of the West Bank and Jerusalem has yet to be agreed between the Israelis and Palestinians. Peace is therefore not an absolute phenomenon, but often an incremental and often transitory process. As international factors promoting conflict decline, internal conflict may increase as national and local political and military groups strive to consolidate new political opportunities (Utting, 1994).

Similarly, peace is often geographically diffuse: certain areas of a particular country may be relatively secure, while others are the centre for widespread military action. This suggests that rehabilitation will be an incremental, and necessarily flexible, process, requiring interventions in pockets of peace. This may include working within rebel-held areas which are relatively stable, as for example in large areas of Tigray and Eritrea held by the TPLF and EPLF in the late 1980s (Hendrie, 1994), or, as in Angola at present, working within the relatively small government-controlled areas which are more secure (Seaman, 1994).

It is important to recognise that different actors may differ in the criteria they use to define when a conflict is "over". For the international community, for example, the key criterion may be the holding of elections, while for displaced communities wishing to return to their homes, perceptions of prevailing political and security conditions may be more important. Governments and rebel groups may have different opinions as to when peace is declared.

Thus, the key challenge for those concerned with post-conflict rehabilitation will be to find ways of consolidating the peace and preventing a slippage back into violence and humanitarian crisis (United Nations, 1994, p.6).

3.
Conflict: challenging paradigms of relief and development

The context of growing instability has resulted in an increase in the number of humanitarian crises around the globe. These are increasingly described as complex political emergencies (Duffield, 1994a).

By 1994, the United Nations identified 13 complex political emergencies (UNDP, 1994a). The growing number of such situations has been accompanied by an increase in international involvement in the provision of humanitarian aid, often combined with some form of military intervention. This has resulted in significant shifts in the patterns of expenditure of official development assistance. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, reports that bilateral emergency assistance amounted to US$ 353 million, 2% of total bilateral aid in 1980 (DAC, 1994). By 1992 this had risen to US$ 2,578 million or 6.3% of total bilateral aid.

The experience of the UK Overseas Development Administration reflects this trend: in the early 1980s total emergency aid expenditures (including emergency food aid and the UK contribution to the then European Community's emergency aid programme) accounted for 2-3% of the aid programme. By 1991/2 this had increased to 11% (Borton, 1994).

The increased availability of bilateral funds for relief assistance has resulted in expanded emergency assistance activities by multilateral agencies and NGOs. The DAC (1994) reports that the specialist relief agencies of the UN, UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR, have grown much faster in recent years than agencies such as the development banks and UNDP (ibid). It also suggests that NGO expenditures on humanitarian assistance is likely to have risen even more substantially than bilateral funding as they are able, in addition, to draw on private funds.

The DAC (1994) suggests that the "conflict share" of this expenditure has "undoubtedly risen substantially" (p4). Randel (1994) points out the predominance of relief spending in conflict-situations, noting that in 1993 only 7% of the European Commission's relief funds were spent in natural disasters (p338). In the context of stagnating, or in some cases declining, overseas development assistance (oda), the dramatic increase in relief expenditure has resulted in a concomitant fall in development assistance (Duffield, 1994a).

This has prompted concern within international agencies regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of relief aid and the implications of declining resources for long-term development (Stiefel, 1994). It is important to recognise, however, that despite the increase in relief aid, this has not kept pace with the rise in the numbers of people rendered acutely vulnerable by disasters (Duffield, 1994a). There is growing recognition, therefore, that it is no longer sufficient to debate simply the distribution of oda between relief

and development budgets: there is a need to promote more fundamental review of the role of international assistance in situations of instability.

4.
Redefining relief and development

Inspired by the modernisation theorists of the 1950s, development has been seen traditionally as a linear, necessarily progressive process, defined primarily in terms of economic growth (Duffield, 1994b). Disasters, including those related to conflict, have been conceived as temporary interruptions to this process, and it has been assumed that once a hazard has passed "normal" development can be resumed (ibid; Borton pers. comm.).

Models of relief have enforced the view that disasters are essentially temporary phenomena. Drawing largely on experience of drought and other natural disasters, relief operations have largely concentrated on the delivery of material inputs, such as food and medicines, to enable physical survival during periods of crisis.

The 1980s brought important developments in the understanding of the dynamics of disasters, particularly of famine. The work of Amrtya Sen (1986) and Alex de Waal (1989), for example, highlighted the need to support people's entitlement to food supply both by protecting incomes and supporting existing coping strategies.

While important in informing approaches to natural and sudden-onset disasters, these theoretical and operational shifts have not been able to accomodate the chronic and complex nature of political disasters for three key reasons:

- underlying existing approaches to relief is the assumption that the crisis is primarily material and that emergency aid is politically neutral. In complex political disasters, it is important to recognise that the primary factor limiting access to basic resources is political and that within these contexts relief is a political resource. This suggests that there is a need to link the delivery of relief aid with a wider process of conflict resolution, and to ensure that the way in which relief is organised does not strenghten oppressive and violent political institutions;

- models of relief continue to be designed to respond to acute, sudden on-set disasters of the kind precipitated by natural shocks. These assume that once the hazard has passed, people will be able to resume their usual economic and social activities. The nature and duration of complex political disasters critically reduces the economic, human and institutional resource base which is required to provide financial and social security. This suggests that even once the hazard (conflict) has passed, conflict-affected communities will remain extremely vulnerable and require substantial assistance to facilitate recovery;

- given that conflict is an expression of the failure of previously existing political and economic structures to provide for the protection of all citizens, there will be a need to redefine, not simply resume, previous development models.

The nature of existing international approaches to relief and development have important implications for the design of rehabilitation interventions in conflict-affected societies, which inevitably undermine their effectiveness in the long-term.

First, rehabilitation is conceptualised as the link between relief and development. This assumes that the content and strategies of relief and development are sufficiently compatible to enable tham to be linked. This assumption is problematic. The criteria applied to planning relief operations are primarily concerned with the physical survival of individuals; development activities are planned with respect to the sustainability and appropriateness of social and economic systems. These two different aims cannot easily be reconciled by the concept of "rehabilitation".

Second, there is a risk of assuming a line at and progressive movement from relief to rehabilitation and on to development. The chronic and persistent nature of instability in many countries, and its complex geography where different parts of a country may be affected by conflict differently over time, makes it difficult to determine whether an overall country strategy should be concerned with relief, rehabilitation or development. The existing distinctions between relief, rehabilitation and development may, in fact, rather reflect the institutional organisation and concepts of international agencies, and may fail to capture the more complex and volatile reality of conflict-affected populations (Davies, 1994).

The limitations of current distinctions between relief, rehabilitation and development in conceptual, organisational, and operational terms have been highlighted by the increased prevalence and visibility of complex political disasters. There is now increased awareness of the need to link these different dimensions of international assistance in order to enhance the capacity for disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery.

5.
Post-conflict rehabilitation: the twilight zone of aid policy

Rehabilitation occupies a strange place in international aid policy and organisation. It is frequently described as metaphorically paving the way from relief to development, but that path is currently poorly marked.

The aims of rehabilitation assistance are frequently stated in terms of contributing to macro-economic and political stability (see, for example

UN, 1994; European Commission, 1993). At present actual responses tend to reflect a more decentralized, micro-level approach which resembles the strategies of relief more than those of development. For example, it is NGOs and the specialist UN relief agencies, such as UNHCR, which tend to predominate rehabilitation interventions; not the conventional instruments of development - bilateral and international development banks. Similarly the time-frame of rehabilitation projects tends to be limited to one year, not the three to five years characteristic of development programmes. Finally, there is a tendency for rehabilitation programmes to focus on the provision of material goods and the repair of infrastructure, not on the institutional and structural issues common to the development agenda.

Such strategies will not necessarily lay the foundation for the achievement of longer-term development objectives, and may indeed conflict with them. In Cambodia, for example, NGOs have been the primary channel for the rehabilitation of the health system. Working within short project cycles, they have been responsible for rehabilitation of the health infrastructure, maintaining the supply of essential drugs and paying health workers. A number of concerns arise from this choice of strategy. First, without mechanisms for coordination it is extremely difficult to monitor the diverse activities of different NGOs, particularly since even donors themselves often lack a clear set of criteria to guide their activities within a particular country or sector. Such coordination is important both to maintain accountability, but also to ensure the sustainability and appropriateness of rehabilitation interventions. For example, it is important to decide in advance of rehabilitating a health facility how the recurrent costs of provision will be met in the medium-term. Second, reliance on a heavily decentralized, private sector strategy may not contribute to the development of capacity within the public sector at central and district level for future management of the health system. Yet the presence of such capacity is a necessary if, the national government is to become the primary partner for future development assistance.

6.
Obstacles to a "developmental" approach to rehabilitation

There are a number of constraints to improving the sustainability of rehabilitation interventions. These are both inherent in the context of post-conflict transition and in the organisation of international aid itself. Space permits that only a few of these can be discussed here.

A central dilemma for international donors in situations of post-conflict transition is identifying a central authority which is perceived nationally and internationally as a legitimate and competent partner for rehabilitation. Existing organisation of development assistance is contingent, at least

in theory, upon the presence of a government partner which has the authority to sign agreements, identify policy priorities and administer implementation. In situations of instability and of transition, where elections have yet to take place or a clear authority has yet to emerge, direct engagement with national authorities, both political and administrative remains a politically precarious undertaking. This is one of the most significant factors promoting interventions which are implemented through NGOs or parallel supra-national bodies, such as the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. Yet, unless national capacity for decision-making and implementation is enhanced during this critical time of transition, there is a risk that rehabilitation interventions will not contribute to the process of recentralization of policy-making and authority necessary to the reformation of a strong and stable state. This begs the question of whether the recreation of strong states is either necessarily feasible or desirable. If not, the major donors will have to identify alternative mechanisms for the delivery of international aid which are able to maintain accountability and plan for sustainability and ensure policy coherence (Meier, 1993).

A second major set of factors limiting a more "developmental" approach to rehabilitation assistance is the organisation of international aid itself. Historically, aid administrations have become bipolar structures -one of which is responsible for "relief", the other for "development"- each of which have different procedures for allocating and monitoring assistance. This is reflected internal organisation of donor agencies, and the development of specialist relief and development implementing agencies. Such structures have difficulty in accomodating the half-way house of rehabilitation, as neither have a clear mandate or procedures to deal with the demands of rehabilitation. Where special funds for rehabilitation have been developed, as for example in the European Commission with the Special Rehabilitation Programme for Africa and in USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, these too have tended to rely significantly on NGOs for their implementation because of the slow pace and complexity of conventional development programming.

7.
Issues and Implications

Situations of post-conflict transition represent a sub-set of a wider group of unstable situations, which include situations of on-going or potential violent conflict and situations of democratic and economic transition. The extent of instability constitutes a major challenge for the organisation of international aid. Development policy has been premised upon the presence of a stable and secure environment, managed by a strong state. In the absence of these conditions the conceptual and institutional basis for international aid has retreated to relief mode. At best, current modes of relief enable survival of

conflict-affected populations, but they cannot and do not address the factors promoting their vulnerability to extreme social, economic and political stress. In the highly unstable contexts of post-conflict transition, consolidating the peace is the priority. International aid can only play a small part in such a process, but it is a critical one. Ensuring its success will require significant resources over a prolonged period of time. But perhaps more importantly, rehabilitation assistance must tackle more than the visible legacies of war - the damaged buildings, the looted equipment; if peace is to be any more than a transitory phenomenon, it will be important to ensure that rehabilitation interventions begin to address the factors underlying conflict. Achieving this objective will require that understanding conflict remains at the top of the development agenda, and does not become once again marginalised.

Tab.1 Countries in a period of post-conflict transition (1994)

Cambodia	Eritrea	Palestine
El Salvador	Mozambique	North West Somalia
Ethiopia	Nicaragua	(Somaliland)
		South Africa

NOTE

1. Defined here as armed contested incompatibilities which concern government and/or territory, where the use of armed force by two parties, of which at least one is the government of state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths (Wallensteen and Axell, 1994).

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Alcune riflessioni sulle problematiche valutative nei programmi di emergenza: l'esperienza di CISP-Movimondo in Somalia

M. G. Dente, P. Dieci

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Introduzione
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2. Operare nella prospettiva della riabilitazione
3. Alcune riflessioni sui criteri valutativi dei programmi di emergenza

L'esperienza descritta in questo articolo deve la sua particolarità al fatto che la organizzazione non governativa impegnata in programmi di emergenza in Somalia, era presente nel paese già da diversi anni con programmi di sviluppo. Ciò ha sicuramente permesso una rapida ed appropriata identificazione dei bisogni e delle priorità, ed un altrettanto veloce avvio del programma, un compito questo piuttosto arduo nelle emergenze complesse.
Gli autori illustrano, a partire dalla loro esperienza, alcuni punti nodali da cui non è possibile prescindere: tempi ristretti, la difficile scelta degli interlocutori locali più appropriati, una situazione in continuo mutamento, etc.
Le peculiarità di un intervento di aiuto umanitario e gli svariati ostacoli che si incontrano in questo settore possono scoraggiare ad impegnarsi nella valutazione di questo tipo di programmi, ma nulla sarebbe più sbagliato se si vuole favorire il successo di tali azioni. In questo senso gli autori suggeriscono alcuni criteri guida per la valutazione dei programmi di emergenza che servano non soltanto a misurarne la efficacia ed efficienza, ma anche l'impatto nel medio-lungo periodo..

Maria Grazia Dente, ha lavorato come *programme officer* nel settore socio-sanitario di CISP-Movimondo
Paolo Dieci è responsabile dei programmi in Africa di CISP-Movimondo

Introduzione

In Somalia CISP-Movimondo ha realizzato programmi di cooperazione dal 1984. Nel periodo 1984-1990 l'associazione ha condotto un programma di Primary Health Care nel Distretto di Jilib, nel sud del paese.

La permanenza continuativa nel Paese per un periodo di sette anni ha consentito a CISP-Movimondo di:

- conoscere la realtà locale in modo estramamente approfondito, (incluse tematiche e dinamiche sociali e politiche assai complesse in un paese come la Somalia);
- costruire e rafforzare una rete di contatti di lavoro e non ;
- poter acquisire capacità di rilevare cambiamenti in atto, priorità emergenti, interessi locali non sempre espressi, ecc.

In seguito ai noti eventi politico-militari, il programma viene interrotto nel dicembre del 1990 e, dopo pochi mesi, CISP-Movimondo avvia nel Paese programmi di emergenza, alcuni dei quali tuttora in corso.

Attualmente l'azione in Somalia comprende interventi in tre diverse aree del paese: Mogadiscio, la Regione del Galgaduud e la Regione del Mudug. A Mogadiscio l'associazione sta gestendo 7 centri di salute materno-infantile ed altrettanti ambulatori, oltre a sostenere la ripresa delle attività scolastiche in 9 scuole primarie.

Nelle regioni centrali del Galgaduud e del Mudug, invece, sono in corso programmi multisettoriali nei settori sanitario (riabilitazione di centri sanitari, posti di salute e centri materno-infantile, inclusa la fornitura di farmaci e materiali di base), idrico (ripristino di punti d'acqua, costruzione di nuovi pozzi) e veterinario (formazione di personale locale, sostegno alle attività di esportazione del bestiame, assistenza tecnica).

A partire dal 1991, quindi, CISP-Movimondo inizia a maturare una conoscenza diretta sulla realizzazione di programmi umanitari in aree di conflitto, che è alla base delle considerazioni qui di seguito esposte.

1.
Alcuni argomenti prioritari

Vorremmo innanzitutto sottolineare, in accordo con molti altri che operano in questo settore, che le fasi preliminari, (individuazione dell'intervento ed avvio) di un programma di emergenza - soprattutto se in un'area di conflitto - sono particolarmente delicate e determinanti al fine di garantire un prosieguo gestibile ed efficace delle attività identificate e intraprese. Una strategia di valutazione che si confronti con problematiche di emergenza in zone di conflitto dovrebbe di conseguenza tenere in particolare conto i criteri e le modalità con

i quali i programmi sono stati identificati e concepiti.

In generale, si può prevedere il consenso della gran parte delle oganizzazioni impegnate in programmi di aiuto in zone di conflitto sulle seguenti affermazioni:

- la situazione di emergenza impone di intervenire immediatamente e ciò riduce i "normali" tempi a disposizione per l'individuazione delle priorità, per le scelte operative adeguate, per la definizione di sistemi di monitoraggio e valutazione, inclusa la scelta degli indicatori da utilizzare; la presenza di CISP-Movimondo in Somalia, anteriore di anni allo scoppio del conflitto, ha consentito che le fasi di individuazione ed avvio del programma fossero celeri e allo stesso tempo "consapevoli" delle problematiche sopra evidenziate;

- l'instabilità sociale e politica impone il rispetto di misure di sicurezza atte a salvaguardare l'incolumità delle persone operanti da cui è impossibile prescindere nell'organizzazione tecnico-logistica dell'intervento;

- è assolutamente prioritario e denso di implicazioni sia politiche che tecniche il compito di individuare e relazionarsi localmente con gli interlocutori più appropriati, con i quali condurre gli interventi.

Un'analoga considerazione si impone a proposito del personale espatriato. A questo riguardo è opportuno sottolineare due punti:

- coerentemente con l'obiettivo di non cronicizzare l'emergenza e non creare una dipendenza eccessiva dall'esterno, occorre evitare di affidare esclusivamente o prevalentemente ad operatori esterni il compito di gestire le attività programmate. Un'eccessiva presenza di tecnici e operatori stranieri rischia di penalizzare il pieno utilizzo di risorse umane disponibili;

- il personale espatriato, soprattutto quello preposto a funzioni direttive deve essere selezionato dando particolare importanza ai parametri della stabilità emotiva e della conoscenza del contesto nel quale andrà ad operare, includendo quella circa la genesi e le ragioni del conflitto oltrechè delle sue manifestazioni;

- la situazione è normalmente in continua e rapida evoluzione, sia da un punto di vista politico che "umanitario", includendo in questo caso variazioni della situazione nutrizionale, epidemiologica, dell'igiene-ambientale, ecc.. Si impone così la necessità di mettere a punto fin dalle prime fasi del programma una struttura operativa altamente sensibile e flessibile (capace cioè di rilevare qualsiasi cambiamento in atto e di adattarvisi prontamente);

- infine, ma non per questo di minor importanza, bisogna tener presente il tessuto sociale e lavorativo e il sistema sanitario e sociale pre-esistenti il conflitto.

2.
Operare nella prospettiva della riabilitazione

Quest'ultima affermazione richiama direttamente al nesso emergenza-riabilitazione, attualmente al centro del dibattito sia tra gli organismi di cooperazione che tra le agenzie donatrici e il sistema delle Nazioni Unite.

La gestione dei programmi di emergenza dovrebbe essere orientata a porre le basi per futuri piani di riabilitazione; se così non fosse, il rischio sarebbe quello di cronicizzare l'emergenza stessa, generando, anche sul piano psicologico, una dipendenza strutturale e "a tempo indeterminato" dagli aiuti esterni.

Ai fini della riabilitazione, è evidentemente di grande importanza la conoscenza e il confronto con i sistemi sanitari ed istituzionali pre-esistenti le distruzioni indotte dal conflitto. Ad esempio, se da una parte è accettabile un aumento dei servizi sanitari a fronte della moltiplicazione delle domande di assistenze, in fase di prima emergenza, dall'altra, quando si inizia ad affrontare il tema della riabilitazione del sistema sanitario, occorre tenere conto del numero, della tipologia e della dislocazione dei servizi originari.

Riteniamo al tempo stesso che quanto appena sostenuto vada integrato da due considerazioni generali:

- il sistema -in questo caso sanitario, ma l'esempio potrebbe estendersi ad altri settori- precedente l'esplosione del conflitto potrebbe in alcuni casi avere alcune macroscopiche lacune e manchevolezze. In questo caso, un processo di ricostruzione che tendesse a replicarle non avrebbe ovviamente senso e, con il supporto tecnico e teorico di personale locale, la ricostruzione dovrebbe orientarsi anche a colmare i vuoti del precedente sistema;
- in alcuni casi la situazione di conflitto incide tanto negativamente sulla realtà economica dell'area e, prevedibilmente, per un periodo tanto lungo, da determinare la non sostenibilità del sistema precedente, imponendo riaggiustamenti e riorganizzazioni. In questi casi, di conseguenza, è particolarmente necessario che un eventuale processo di riabilitazione venga preceduto ed accompagnato da una rigorosa analisi delle priorità. Questo anche in considerazione del fatto che le priorità, anche nel medio e lungo periodo, possono essere state sostanzialmente mutate dal conflitto. A titolo di esempio, si può citare il caso della salute mentale, che in talune situazioni post-belliche continua ad essere una priorità emergente in maniera assai più pronunciata che prima dell'esplosione del conflitto.

3.
Alcune riflessioni sui criteri valutativi dei programmi di emergenza

Un'altra riflessione che è emersa con la prosecuzione delle attività dopo le fasi di avvio, è quella relativa alla necessità di analizzare attentamente le interrelazioni esistenti tra gli interventi e il contesto nel quale si realizzano, di cui è parte integrante il conflitto stesso.

Possono infatti verificarsi situazioni nelle quali gli interventi sono fonti di ulteriori tensioni tra la popolazione o, al contrario, possono generare opportunità di riconciliazione, quantomeno a livello di base, cioè tra la gente.

Inoltre, in situazioni - come quella somala - dominate da una vera e propria economia di guerra, gli apparati logistici funzionali agli interventi umanitari, con i relativi costi di affitti, personale, acquisti, possono - anche contro ogni intenzione di chi utilizza tali apparati - finire con il servire anche allo scopo di sostenere economicamente operazioni militari, il che potrebbe avere effetti ben più negativi dei benefici indotti dagli interventi. In altre parole, il rischio che si corre è di favorire economicamente, attraverso pagamenti di servizi e di mezzi necessari agli interventi, ambienti locali direttamente coinvolti nei conflitti. È anche per questo motivo che in zone di guerra, le stesse operazioni logistiche vanno concepite non solo in base a parametri di economicità ed efficacia ma anche tenendo conto delle loro potenziali implicazioni politiche.

Un ulteriore criterio-guida per la corretta gestione di interventi di emergenza deve riguardare l'intensità e la qualità del coordinamento tecnico, logistico e politico con altri organismi umanitari presenti, internazionali e non. Tale criterio appare addirittura vincolante in una situazione quale quella somala nella quale sono venute drammaticamente meno le istituzioni nazionali e locali, normalmente preposte, nei programmi di cooperazione, a favorire tale coordinamento.

La situazione di emergenza in cui si opera, sembra favorire l'abbandono di qualsiasi criterio valutativo, eccezion fatta per quelli di carattere più squisitamente organizzativo, o che si riferiscono alla quantità e qualità degli *item* forniti o dei servizi resi.

Ciononostante, riteniamo che uno sforzo ulteriore andrebbe fatto al fine di considerare anche altri aspetti degli interventi condotti in situazioni di emergenza.

Ad esempio, il numero e la tipologia del personale locale impiegato per la gestione degli interventi costituiscono informazioni preziose atte a valutare l'ampiezza con la quale si sono sapute valorizzare le risorse locali.

È al proposito raccomandabile definire anche con precisione i ruoli ricoperti da tale personale (direttivo, tecnico, amministrativo, logistico, ecc.). Difficilmente valutabile, invece, può risultare - sempre in riferimento alla pro-

blematica dei collaboratori locali - il tema della scelta e della selezione degli interlocutori che, come si è cercato di spiegare, si presenta particolarmente complesso. In questo caso, probabilmente, più che l'utilizzo di veri e propri indicatori può risultare preziosa un'attenta, rigorosa e trasparente analisi della realtà e della sua evoluzione. Un'associazione non governativa in un'area di conflitto, ad esempio, che un programma si propone all'inizio di valorizzare e sostenere, può alla lunga rivelarsi un'efficace e seria organizzazione umanitaria o, al contrario, un'istituzione tecnicamente e politicamente non credibile. Vale la pena di sottolineare che questo è vero ovunque, in ogni continente; la ragione per la quale tale questione assume un'importanza affatto peculiare in aree di conflitto è che l'obiettivo di fondo degli interventi umanitari in tali aree - sostenere la pacificazione - può venire totalmente distorto se i soggetti locali sui quali si fà perno agiscono secondo una logica inversa rispetto a quella della pacificazione.

Inoltre, andrebbe tenuto in estrema considerazione il contributo dato dagli interventi alla ricostituzione del tessuto sociale. A titolo esemplificativo, si può citare il caso delle scuole che vengono riaperte. La frequenza scolastica, il numero di maestri che volontariamente (cioè senza un compenso da parte dell'organismo) riprendono le attività, il livello di partecipazione comunitaria - ad esempio tramite la prestazione gratuita di mano d'opera per i lavori di ristrutturazione degli edifici - al processo di riabilitazione delle classi sono possibili indicatori da utilizzare.

La quantità e la tipologia delle scelte operative e strategiche assunte assieme ad altri enti attivi in loco e da questi condivisi per i loro interventi vanno analizzate al fine di ricostruire con rigore l'estensione e la qualità del coordinamento al quale gli interventi hanno fatto riferimento.

È infine da sottolineare che se da una parte è necessario assicurare la massima efficacia possibile ad interventi in aree di conflitto, dall'altra occorre anche tenere presente la centralità dell'azione politica e diplomatica, interna ed internazionale, finalizzata alla cessazione del conflitto stesso.

In questo quadro, un ONG può assumersi il compito di stimolare l'attivazione di strategie atte a sostenere processi di pacificazione, fornendo anche alla loro elaborazione il proprio contributo di conoscenza della realtà locale.

Anche questo lavoro di "lobby" ed elaborazione può e deve essere sottoposto ad un'attenta valutazione, preferibilmente a partire dall'individuazione di sedi di confronto ed elaborazione congiunta potenzialmente aperte al contributo di tutti gli operatori umanitari attivi in una stessa area.

The psycho-social effects of conflicts on civilian populations

Derek Summerfield

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Le emergenze in situazioni di conflitto sono un fenomeno in continua crescita e le popolazioni civili ne sono la vittima principale. Tali conflitti sono caratterizzati da un elemento comune: il tentativo di distruggere il tessuto sociale e interrelazionale, l'uso del terrore come mezzo di controllo sociale. Le popolazioni vivono così traumi collettivi che hanno conseguenze psico-sociali da cui non è possibile prescindere, quando si vuole intervenire in situazioni di emergenze "complesse". L'autore, però, mette in guardia da un approccio alla salute mentale esclusivamente psicologico, tipico del pensiero occidentale. Spesso al contrario, sostenere la ricostituzione del tessuto sociale, delle strutture economiche, la riappropriazione della propria identità culturale costituisce il modo migliore per aiutare una popolazione vittima di un conflitto.

Derek Summerfield, è *principal psychiatrist* alla Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture di Londra.

1.
An epidemiology of conflict

There have been an estimated 160 wars and armed conflicts in the Third World since 1945, with 22 million deaths and 3 times as many injured (Zwi & Ugalde, 1989). There were on average 9 wars active in any year during the 1950s, 11 during the 1960s, 14 during the 1970s, and at least 50 currently. Torture is routine in over 90 countries. 5% of all casualties in World War I were civilians, 50% in World War II, over 80% in the US war in Vietnam, and currently over 90% (UNICEF, 1986). At present the United Nations High Commission for Refugees counts 18 million refugees who have fled across an international border, a sixfold increase on 1970, but as many again are internally displaced and often no less destitute. This totals one person in 125 of the entire world population. 80% of all war refugees are in Third World countries, many amongst the poorest on earth.

During the 1980s and 1990s there was serious conflict in Mozambique, Angola, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, South Africa, Peru, Colombia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Algeria, Liberia, Zaire, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Israeli Occupied Territories, Indian Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Indonesian East Timor, China, former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland, amongst others. More of these involved oppressive regimes at war with sectors of their own society than wars between sovereign states. In the first 5 countries mentioned above, a powerful neighbour played an important role in propagating violent conflict by proxy for its own geopolitical advantage.

A key element of modern political violence is the creation of states of terror to penetrate the entire fabric of grassroots social relations, as well as subjective mental life, as a means of social control. It is to these ends that most acts of torture are directed, rather than to the extracting of information. Not only is there little recognition of the distinction between combatant and civilian, or of any obligation to spare women, children and the elderly, but the valued institutions and way of life of a whole population can be targeted. It is depressingly clear that such strategies are highly effective. What in the 1980s was often called "low intensity" war, frequently played out on a terrain of subsistence economies, invariably had high intensity consequences for its victims.

I will use Mozambique as an example of some of the patterns commonly recurring in other conflict zones worldwide. Renamo guerillas, sponsored by white South Africa, have wrought between 1981 and the present time what a US Under Secretary of State has called "one of the most brutal holocausts against the human condition since World War II". As many as 150,000 rural peasants have been murdered in cold blood, 3 million others displaced, 200,000 children orphaned or separated from their parents, and the social fabric of large areas of the country left in tatters. Children as young as 8 were forcibly recruited into Renamo ranks and made to kill. Systema-

tic use was made of public torture, often involving grotesque mutilations, and execution. Family members were forced to kill each other in turn, slowly, and usually for no clear reason. Women were made to kill, maim or even eat their own infants, with witnesses generally left to tell the tale. Exemplary violence, in this case with a ritualistic element, can be paralysing, even mesmerising, and makes political persuasion redundant. In a hungry country the public destruction of foodstuffs by Renamo was also symbolically significant. The bodies of victims were thrown down wells to contaminate the drinking water supply. 1113 primary health centres, 48% of the national total, were destroyed and looted, leaving 2 million people without access to health care of any kind. Mines were laid around hospitals and in the massacre of 494 people at Homoine in 1987, pregnant women were bayonetted in the maternity unit and other patients kidnapped. 45% of all primary schools were forced to close. In 1987 UNICEF estimated that Mozambique had the highest infant mortality rate in the world, with 320,000 children dying between 1981 and 1986 as a result of the war. There was general hunger, epidemics of measles (400 times more lethal in malnourished children), cholera, malaria and diarrhoea. Widespread rape and social breakdown is likely to have hastened the spread of AIDS. The damage to the national economy, already stretched by the structural adjustment policies of the World Bank, is scarcely calculable; at least US $ 1-2 billion would be needed to reestablish the basic infrastructure (Cliff & Noormahomed, 1988).

In Nicaragua 60,000 civilians (1.5% of the total population, equivalent to 800,000 in Britain) were murdered, injured or abducted by US sponsored Contra guerillas during the 1980s. In El Salvador at least 70,000 rural peasants died at the hands of the army and its death squads during the same period. In 1982 Americas Watch pointed to the importance of mutilation killings in El Salvador, particularly decapitation of children, as mechanisms of social terror - as in Mozambique. In his Christmas 1983 address Rosa Chavez, the Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador, said: "*It is a rare thing to die a natural death in this country. It is almost a miracle*". Extrajudicial executions, "disappearances" and torture were equally institutionalised in neighbouring Guatemala, which was often said to have no political prisoners because they were all dead. In South Africa 24,000 children as young as 12 were detained in 1985-9 without access to parents or lawyers, and many were tortured. In 1990, 450 street children were killed by death squads in the Brazilian cities of Sao Paulo, Rio and Recife alone (Logie, 1992). Children volunteered, or were coerced, into an active role in armed movements in at least 20 conflicts worldwide.

Sexual violation is an endemic yet poorly visible facet of violent conflict (Swiss & Giller, 1993). In Mozambique and elsewhere women have been abducted and effectively enslaved in large numbers. In Iran detained teenagers executed for political reasons have first been raped, denying them the automatic entry to heaven granted virgins. Cambodian and Somali women have faced sexual violation before and during flight, and in refugee camps in Thailand and Kenya respectively, sometimes by camp authorities or local

police. The knowledge that rape is a powerful way to violate a culture, and to weaken community morale, seems to have been utilised by Serb militias against Bosnian Muslim women in the last 2 years. Underreporting of rape by victims is probably universal because of the associated stigma, perhaps most pervasive in societies (as in Asia) in which virginity is regarded as a woman's single most important asset in securing happiness.

As in Mozambique, violations of medical neutrality are a consistent feature worldwide. In Nicaragua destruction of rural health clinics and targeting of their staff by Contra guerillas was meant to demonstrate that central government could not protect what was valued by its citizens. 300,000 (15% of the rural population) were left without any health care (Garfield & Williams, 1989). In El Salvador surgeons were assassinated in mid operation by death squads who suspected that they were prepared to treat wounded activists. In Philippines 102 health workers were subjected to extrajudicial killing or arbitrary detention in 1987-9 by the army or government agents. Nurses in rural areas faced death threats, sometimes broadcast on local radio stations; these were intended to "politicise" the clinics they ran and make local people afraid to attend (Summerfield, 1992). Hospitals in Croatia and Bosnia have been repeatedly mortared by Serb forces and patients killed. In the Occupied Territories the Israeli army has fired into hospitals and arrested patients, refused to allow seriously ill Palestinians to reach hospitals during curfews, has assaulted, detained and tortured health workers and obstructed delivery of key medicines (Physicians for Human Rights, 1993).

Another key dimension is the crushing of the social and cultural institutions which connect a particular people to their history, identity and lived values. Middle East Watch et al (1993) documents that the Iraqi government campaign against their Kurdish population in the 1980s amounted to genocide within the meaning of the Genocide Convention of 1951. In all 182,000 Iraqi Kurds have disappeared after mass removals in the style of Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia; most are believed dead. Their villages, with every building razed by explosives, have ceased to exist. Since their invasion in 1977 the Indonesian authorities have murdered an estimated 200,000 East Timorese, an ethnically distinct people. This is nearly one third of the total population. The Pol Pot regime in Cambodia murdered between 1.5 and 3 million people, 20-40% of the total population, in only 4 years from 1975. In a deeply religious land, Buddhist monks were singled out for execution and more than 90% succumbed. So too was anyone found to speak French or even those wearing spectacles, since these were considered marks of the educated and modern. In Guatemala 440 Indian villages were wiped from the map during the 1980s, regarded by this victimised population as part of a 500 year old attack on their Mayan culture. The Serbs did not invent ethnic cleansing! At least 1.5 million people died in the Sudanese civil war during the 1980s; repeated large massacres of Dinka civilians were poorly reported in the outside world. The reported deaths of 200-500,000 civilians, almost all of the minority tribe, the Tutsis, in Rwanda so far in 1994 might also qualify as an attempt at genocide. In Turkey the Kurdish culture and

language has long been suppressed and children must speak Turkish in school, a persecution which has fostered violent revolt by Kurdish activists. It was protest against Afrikaans as the medium of education, regarded as the language of the oppressor, which sparked the Soweto riots of 1976 in which around 500 black children were shot dead by the authorities. In Iraq Saddam Hussein also targeted Shia cultural institutions and the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. In Bosnia hundreds of mosques have been intentionally destroyed. There are accounts of Serb militias targeting for execution the educated amongst Bosnian Muslim prisoners; in Rwanda Hutu death squads serving the government have acted similarly.

2.
Individual effects

Relatively little has been documented of the overwhelming majority of survivors who, as in Mozambique, must survive and endure in or near a war devastated social setting. War, drawing in male combatants and disrupting agriculture and other forms of economic life, brings harsh pressures to bear upon women. In parts of Central America, 50% of households are headed by a woman and are much more likely to be poor. In some areas of the militarised countryside in Guatemala up to 80% of children are reported to have some degree of malnutrition. In Africa war and famine formed a malignant combination during the 1980s.

Mortality rates during the acute phase of displacement by war are up to 60 times expected rates. 60% of refugees in Africa get no assistance, but even those who reach official refugee camps may not escape daily physical hardship or violence. Despite the presence of aid agencies in camps in the Horn of Africa, there have been mass outbreaks of vitamin deficiency diseases - pellagra, scurvy and beri-beri - and thousands of children can die in a measles epidemic in a single camp in a year.

Mollica et al (1993) reports that around 80% of Cambodian refugees who have been in Thai border camps for more than a decade rated their health as poor or only fair, felt depressed and had somatic complaints despite access to medical care. The violence and chronic insecurity in these camps has reinforced the *kiing moong* or "dummy" personality, forged during the genocidal years of 1975-9. In order to survive under the Khmer Rouge, individuals had to act as if they were deaf, dumb, foolish and confused.

It is clear that presentations in a somatic idiom are central to the subjective experience and communication of the distress wrought by war and its upheavals worldwide. Some researchers see somatic complaints as stress-driven physiological responses; others emphasise the communicational element, that they are the only available expressions of the collective distress of powerless and persecuted peoples denied a social validation of their suf-

fering and humanity (Farias, 1991).

The standard literature has described war refugees in terms of vulnerability to depression, anxiety, marital and intergenerational tension, antisocial behaviour, including violence against women, alcohol abuse and paranoid psychosis. Those at extra risk are households headed by an unprotected woman, often widowed; those without a community or marginalised in an alien culture; serious socioeconomic disadvantage or frank poverty; poor physical health or disability.

An important group in this last category comprises those mutilated by the mines which have been methodically sown in many recent wars. In Angola at least half of the 15,000 amputees are women and children. Cambodia's 30,000 amputees amounts to 1 in every 240 persons, the highest proportion in the world. Afghanistan is said to be the most heavily mined of all: some estimates put the death toll at 200,000 so far, with 400,000 wounded (Arms Project et al, 1993).

A body of literature, starting with the classic study of Freud and Burlingham (1943), attests to the positive effects of family attachment in buffering the influence of war, threat and disruption on children. The emotional well-being of children remains reasonably intact for as long as their parents, or other significant figures, can absorb the continuing pressures of the situation. Once they can no longer do so, day to day care breaks down, child well-being deteriorates rapidly and infant mortality rates rise (Richman, 1993). Clearly, orphaned or otherwise unprotected children face significant extra risks.

The elderly are also probably an at risk group, though they have been little studied. The upheavals of war expose their relative physical frailty, diminished capacity for work and vulnerability to loss of social status. In a rare study of older adults displaced by war and famine in Ethiopia, over half of those over 60 years of age had to be left behind by their families, mostly to die (Godfrey & Kalache, 1989).

The recent trauma literature is mostly based on the tiny minority of survivors, particularly from Indo-China and Latin America, who reach North America or Western Europe. Western diagnostic classifications designed to classify diseases rather than people, and which ignore social and cultural context, are problematic when applied to these diverse non-Western survivor populations. Underlying this is the assumption that the essence of human responses to war and atrocity can be captured by negative psychological effects elicited in individual victims by Western professionals. The view of trauma as an individual-centred event bound to soma or psyche is in line with the tradition in this century for both Western biomedicine (and psychoanalysis) to regard the singular human being as the basic unit of study. At source is the Western scientific approach to knowledge, positivist and empiricist: facts are unearthed rather than constructed.

However, it is simplistic to regard victims as mere passive receptacles of psychopathological phenomena which can be adjudged "present" or "absent". Whether in clinic or population studies, a checklist of mental state features cannot provide a rigorous distinction between subjective distress

and objective disorder. Much of the distress experienced and communicated by victims of extreme trauma is normal, even adaptive, and will be coloured by their own active interpretations and choices. It is a mistake to assume that because signs and symptoms can be regularly identified in different social settings, they mean the same thing in those settings. This is what Kleinman (1987) calls a category fallacy.

3.
Trauma as collective experience

If we are to be accurately empathic with survivors, we must take account of the subjective meaning of events for them, and that they may be wrestling as much with collective horrors and losses as with private ones. As the psychologist Martin Baro wrote of his own country, what was left traumatised were not just Salvadoran individuals, but Salvadoran society. The pivotal element in human processing of atrocious experience is the struggle to understand, and thus to make it controllable by incorporating it where possible into what is already known. Generating these meanings is an activity which is culturally, politically and socially framed, and is played out in public. It is these meanings, subject to shift or elaboration over time, which count rather than diagnoses.

Western debate about experiences like torture or rape has focused on the psychological effects of what is seen as an extreme violation of individual integrity and identity. This is in line with the Western view of the individual as the basic and autonomous - unit of society, and that our psychological nature is closer to our essence than our social or religious ones. But non-Western peoples have different notions of the self in relation to others and the maintenance of harmonious relations within a family and community is generally given more significance than an individual's own thoughts, emotions and aspirations. The cultural emphasis is on dependency and interdependency rather than the autonomy and individuation on which many Western ideas about mental injury are predicated. When conflict so routinely involves the terrorisation or destruction of whole communities, even survivors of individual acts of brutality are likely to register their wounds as social rather than psychological.

In the Sudanese civil war, disruption of the traditional cycle of animal husbandry has brought social breakdown to the pastoralist Southerners. Cattle are crucial to them, being a form of currency not just in trading but in rituals and disputes. Tribal marriages can no longer be arranged because of dislocation and lack of cattle (the only traditional dowry) and women are driven to prostitution in the towns, something previously unheard of. Because of the endemic killings and rape in the countryside, security conditions have become prime determinants of social behaviour, to the extent that fami-

lies with noisy children are pushed out. Half this population has been forced to abandon villages regarded as ancestral places, seeking precarious safety in urban areas where their traditional skills are worthless. One study of teenagers displaced to Juba showed the resulting cultural estrangement and loss of social identity: none could write a history of their clan and many did not even know the names of their grandparents or the village their clan came from. Not one could name any traditional social ceremonies (Panos Institute, 1988).

Guatemalan Indians, hunted by "low intensity" warfare, feel that their collective body has been wounded, one which includes, the ants, trees, earth, domestic animals and human beings gathered across generations. To them the burning of crops by the army is not just an attack on their physical resources, but on the symbol which most fully represents the Mayan collective identity, the people of corn (Lykes, 1993). In Philippines women raped by soldiers during "low intensity" offensives end up as prostitutes in Manila. The definitive injury rape has inflicted on them, a catastrophic one, is social, because there is now no place for them in their rural communities. Some torture survivors say that this is not the worst thing that has happened to them. They cite other experiences, like the ominous disappearance of a brother, witnessing the gruesome death of people they valued, the crushing of their community or cause, as having affected them more.

Suffering is at the centre of the social order and in this sense is "normal". Violent conflict is part of social experience and memory (Davis, 1992). We should not assume that the stresses of war are necessarily discontinuous with those arising from other sources of social destabilisation. All over the world, for instance, Westernisation benefiting only an economic and military elite, unbridled exploitation of natural resources, chaotic urbanisation and the plight of impoverished, landless peasants is linked to the withering away of many traditional self-sufficient ways of life. There are 150 million children under 5 in the world with chronic proteincalorie malnutrition: the suffering of unremitting hunger is not necessarily less "violent" than that of war. But there may be something distinct about the suffering of victimised social groups who find what has happened to them incomprehensible and their traditional recipes for handling crisis useless. Meaninglessness leaves people feeling helpless and uncertain what to do. Frequently at stake are the cultural and social forms which for a particular people define the known world and its values. In Africa, Asia and Latin America there are subsistence peoples who may not be able to imagine personal survival if their way of life does not survive. Indeed there are no socially defined ways of mourning a lost way of life. When all the important structures are targeted - community organisations, trade unions, health and educational institutions, religious leadership - the social fabric may no longer be able to perform its customary role. We must attend closely to experiences of suffering which must be borne in contexts where socialisation, socially managed mourning and adaptation, is difficult or impossible.

These effects are a part of psychological warfare. Many targeted communities must contend with the subjective experience of terror on a daily basis and yet maintain silence as an essential survival mode. In El Salvador or Guatemala, terror was intended to be felt but not named. To give voice to it, to say what had happened, to name the victims or even to be related to them, was to be regarded as subversive and a target for more. Even public utterance of terms like "health" or "organisation" was dangerous because the military regarded these as code words for resistance. People were forced to deny their own reality, to swallow their own words. In El Salvador the collective memory of the massacre of 30,000 peasants in 1932 was effective in suppressing even verbal dissent for over a generation: as late as 1978 whenever peasants began to talk about their social grievances, others brought up 1932 again. These forces make it impossible to properly mourn and honour the murdered and disappeared, reinforces everyone's sense of isolation and mistrust, and interferes with long-held Mayan forms of organising. These include story telling which is a traditional psychological resource for them. In Mozambique Renamo terrorism seems intended to instill an incapacitating fear into the population by conjuring up a vision of inhumanity and maniacal devotion to the infliction of suffering which sets them beyond comprehension, outside the realm of social beings and hence beyond social control or even resistance (Wilson, 1992).

In Mozambique fleeing survivors are haunted by the spirits of their dead relatives, for whom the traditionally prescribed burial rituals have not been enacted (HarrellBond & Wilson, 1990). In Vietnam the 300,000 still missing 19 years after the war with the USA ended are considered wandering souls for the same reason. Eisenbruch (1991) has described what he calls culturally bereaved Cambodians in the USA, who continue to feel guilty about abandoning homeland and their unfulfilled obligations to the dead, are haunted by painful memories and unable to concentrate on the tasks facing them in an alien society. He pointed out that Cambodian adolescents in Australia, where there was less pressure to conform and where they were able to practise some traditional ceremonies, did better than those in the USA.

An overview of this kind must take account of the diverse ideologies and identities worldwide which govern the repertoire of explanations available to a particular people. These include Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Marxism, and for the Guatemalan Indians a choice of three: Animism, Catholicism and the politics of oppression. In Cambodia the word torture derives from the Buddhist term for karma, an individual's thoughts and actions (often bad) in a prior existence which affect life in the present. Thus survivors can feel somehow responsible for their suffering (Mollica & Caspi-Yavin, 1992). In Mozambique both the Renamo guerillas and government forces sought to heighten the impact of their military efforts by incorporating traditional sources of ritual power - ancestors' spirits and myths of male invincibility, including ceremonies conferring "vaccination" against bullets. The rural peasantry did the same thing to bolster their capacity to resist Renamo violence. Thus a war driven by South Africa's destabilisation policies has been imbued

by local understandings and world views, becoming in part a "war of the spirits" . This spiritual vivification and other cultural shifts may outlast the war, with as yet unknown effects upon the social order.

This capacity for fluidity in the understandings and attachments drawn on in a conflict situation extends even to concepts generally thought of as relatively fixed, like ethnic identity. The collective arousal of a political crisis within a society, where one man's opportunity is another's danger, can make for rapid shifts and polarisations which confound what has gone before. During the years of the the then Yugoslavia, its citizens did not routinely feel that their bottom line identification was as "Serb" or "Croat" or "Bosnian Muslim". There would have been other identities, based on occupation or political affiliation or other role, which were more relevant to daily life than ethnicity. A man might have seen himself as much as "carpenter" or "communist" as he did "Catholic Croat", yet it was this last which came to define him after the civil war started, whether he liked it or not. In South Africa Zulu identity, which had never before been an issue in the antiapartheid struggle, was manipulated by Zulu politicians and by elements of the White political and military establishment; both parties feared a loss of influence in the transition to black democratic, and non-tribal, rule. Between 1990-94 14,000 died in the massacres that ensued. In Somalia the dictator Siad Barre cemented his 22 year rule, which ended only in 1991, by playing on clan differences. The aftermath has been of Somalian sovereignty and society pulled apart by centrifugal forces, perhaps permanently.

Thus it is simplistic to see those exposed to political violence as merely helpless victims, unable to act on their environment. Violent crises constitute positive challenges for some, even if they expect to suffer. Children, too, are not just "innocent" and passive victims, but also active citizens with values and causes. In Gaza strong identification with the aspirations of Palestinian nationhood seems to offer psychological protection to children facing high levels of violence from the Israeli army. The more they were exposed to political hardship, the more they deployed active and courageous coping modes (Punamaki & Suleiman, 1990). This did not mean they did not also have fear, grief, nightmares and bed wetting. Similar observations have been made in South Africa about young black activists

(Dawes, 1990). In Nicaragua war-maimed young men were fortified by the belief that they had made a worthwhile sacrifice for the social values at stake in the war and were recognised as such by their society. But such beliefs, and the strength people draw from them in adversity, may change as circumstances change: some of these same men had later been sufficiently disappointed by post-war events to abandon the sense of having suffered in a good cause. They now feared it had all been in vain and for a second time were having to come to terms, different terms, with their physical disability and other losses. On the other hand, it may become relevant to the grief of the mother of a 12 year old boy shot dead on the streets of Soweto by a South African policeman that his cause has had a positive outcome in a more egalitarian society, and if there is public acknowledgement

of what this struggle cost. This is a key theme, the societal validation on offer for those who have suffered.

4.
Some implications for interventions

Analysis of human agency in the context of violence, terror and social upheaval is complex and psychological insights in one setting will not necessarily carry over to another. From one culture to another, local traditions and points of view give rise to psychological knowledge and the paradigms guiding the interpretation and collection of psychological material: there is more than one true description of the world. Western psychological concepts and techniques have accompanied the global diffusion of Western culture and increasingly present as the psychology. There is a danger that this dominance will perpetuate the colonial status of the Third World mind (Berry et al, 1992).

I have stressed the centrality of socially constructed meaning in determining how individuals register, elaborate and communicate traumatic events, and what they do about it. It is important that health workers do not just see trauma as a static circumscribable entity lodged within the psychology of each victimised individual, but also conceptualise it in terms of a dynamic two-way interaction between that individual and the social setting. Psychological trauma is not like physical trauma: people do not passively register the impact of external forces (unlike, say, a leg hit by a bullet), but engage with them in a social and problem-solving way. The role of social forces in shaping individual outcomes, for good or ill, is a theme of this paper.

Civilian survivors are effectively separable into two groups. The first is of the minority who reach Western countries as refugees. Researchers and practitioners are tending to focus on their discrete experiences of trauma, with some risk of decontextualisation (Ager, 1993).

Clinic treatment, and the use of Western psychotherapeutic techniques with predominantly non-Western refugees, obviously raises cross-cultural questions. White & Marsella (1982) note that the use of "talk therapy" is firmly rooted in a Western conception of a person as a distinct and independent individual capable of self transformation in relative isolation from social context. The idea that traumatic experience is better dealt with if thoughts and feelings associated with it are ventilated, often in a professional setting, is being reified in the West, but many non-Western peoples have little place for the revelation of intimate material outside a close family circle.

The second group represents the millions who remain in or near the war torn areas of their country, the overwhelming majority. We have only sketchy knowledge of baseline prevalence of mental disorders in Third World societies, let alone during turmoil. We need to know more about traditional coping patterns mobilised at a time of crisis in a particular society, and what

ensues when these too are engulfed by the conflict on the ground. The narratives of survivors can give a graphic illustration of their experiences, and also insight into the psychological processes brought to bear on them. A body of indigenous writings about these questions does exist, but is rarely translated into Western languages and published in major journals (Baker, 1992). The central question is perhaps not so much how or why individuals become psychosocial casualties, but how or why the vast majority do not. This is what might be called a survivorological enquiry, in contrast to the victimological framework familiar to health professionals. The knowledge accumulated by practitioners and researchers in the field that could better inform interventions for war-affected peoples, and prevent some of the negative consequences for their psychological well-being, is not yet being reflected in programme and policy initiatives (McCallin, 1993).

Arguably, the most resonant question of all is whether the exposure of millions to war, atrocity and social upheaval will have longterm traceable consequences. Research into longterm effects must take account of the way the social constructions of trauma change over time, and from one setting to another. It may be that a sociological framework will yield more generalisable insights than that of individual psychology. The effects of holocaustic experiences might usefully be traced through in shifts of the collective world view and group identity of survivors and their children, and in the social and political institutions which represent these. Oral histories and other ethnographic material would also assist. From the human rights point of view, the moral outrage that legitimately attaches to such events pushes us, rightly, to recognise victims. However, without knowing more it would be an affront to the uncounted millions who do reassemble their lives afterwards to assume that they are intrinsically damaged human beings who cannot but hand this on to their children. Nor can we assume that the first hand experiences of children in Mozambique or Cambodia or Iraqi Kurdistan have inevitably damaged or brutalised them, or that they will constitute some kind of lost generation, as some suggest. The question of long term and transgenerational effects in survivor populations remains open. Closer working alliances between the mental health field and other disciplines anthropologists, sociologists, historians and political economists - would afford the best chance of a more richly textured understanding of the range of human responses to extreme violence and their determinants.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) stresses that in the Third World mental health must be viewed as an integral part of public health and social welfare programmes, not merely addressed via a specialised set of skills and knowledge. Individual approaches can have only a small part to play, even if education of primary health workers, often the only network available, can allow for greater recognition and sympathetic handling of the most overt casualties. In some places, notably Latin America, there has been training of "barefoot" psychologists, called mental health promoters. Such workers should concentrate on capacity to function, rather than mental state features or symptoms, to distinguish between those who need more attention

and those who do not.

Mental health is not generally a thing apart and therapeutic interventions do not necessarily have to be "psychological". War affected peoples make determined efforts to preserve what they can of their culture and way of life, since these embody what it means to be human and civilised. Collective recovery overtime will be fundamentally linked to the bolstering or rebuilding of social and economic networks and ways of life: herein lie the sources of resilience for adults and children alike. Interventions should be directed to the damaged social fabric, guided by the expressed priorities of the communities in each case. These will include health and education services. In part through the use of tracing schemes, the mass orphanhood in Mozambique has almost all been absorbed by extended families and members of former communities or tribal groups. There has also been work with teachers on the management of war-affected children in the classroom. In Zimbabwe and Cambodia, for example, traditional healers have helped survivors to lay the war to rest and their capacities are being recognised by the WHO (Reynolds, 1990). We should give material support to indigenous organisations operating at the grassroots to enable victims to rebuild their lives in these ways. Refugee camps, with their emphasis on confinement, control and minimal involvement of residents in decision making, too often breach basic psychological principles. There are possibilities for collaboration with international aid and development organisations, like Oxfam or Save the Children Fund, who shoulder some of this social reconstruction and development, and who are responsive to well grounded contributions from the mental health field (Summerfield 1991).

Post-war reconstruction must also tackle the vital question of uncleared mines: 9 million each in Angola and Afghanistan, 5-10 million in Iraq, 4-7 million in Cambodia, 2 million in Mozambique. Resumption of agriculture-based rural life is impossible in huge swathes of territory and recruitment to veritable armies of rural peasant amputees (in Cambodia 6,000 more in 1990 alone) will continue indefinitely without ambitious clearing projects. Amputees are in a particular plight in societies where almost everyone must earn a living by manual labour.

5.
Human rights and social justice: the role of advocacy

Some victims of political violence seek psychological help but all of them want justice. History has shown that social reform is the best medicine: can health professionals go beyond the "binding of wounds" to promote the wider rights of victimised and persecuted groups? It is an ethical imperative that a human rights framework informs the way those in the trauma field address their patients, colleagues and the wider public. It may be no coincidence that the most trenchant criticism of medical models has come from professionals in oppressive societies, notably in Latin America, where work with traumatised victims is unavoidably also human rights work. They charge that the narrow application of the scientific method can amount to reductionist medicalising, with health and illness being separated from their social roots. Post-traumatic symptoms are not just a private and individual problem, but also an indictment of the social context which produced them. There are too few studies which "bridge" individual psychological responses and the sociopolitical dynamics of marginalisation and persecution which are the traditional lot of so many.

If prevention is to be as important as cure, there must be as much rigour in the analysis of the causes of massive trauma as of its effects. Much political violence in the Third World is rooted in gross social inequities. Extrajudicial execution and torture are the most eloquent expressions of the refusal or incapacity of those in power to fulfill the basic needs and aspirations of all of their citizens. Most victims are the poor and those who speak for them, or members of persecuted ethnic minorities with few advocates in the West. Grossly inequitable patterns of land ownership (e.g. in Guatemala 75% of all land is owned by 2% of landowners) is almost invariable in violent societies, particularly in Latin America. The Western multinational economy has an implicit investment in Third World workforces which are leaderless, fragmented and cowed, and thus docile and cheap. Western governments tacitly insist that human rights considerations should not significantly influence the alliances they choose in the Third World.

Relatively empowered and unpersecuted Western professionals are in a position to publicise the human costs of these philosophies. Local human rights organisations in the Third World need to be helped to publish their findings in the West. Such solidarity makes it harder for authoritarian regimes to silence courageous activists, often health professionals, and their work. The testimonies they collect can provide for a more complete counting of the human costs of exposure to extreme violence. It is significant that in El Salvador people- are worried that they have begun to forget all the names of those murdered by the military in the 1980s. The collated testimonies of survivors represent part of a grass roots history, a counter to the offi-

cial versions generated by those with power to abuse, and thus a prompt towards public validation of their suffering. As Primo Levi, a survivor of the Jewish Holocaust, wrote of what he had witnessed: "*If understanding is impossible, knowing is imperative.*"

Allied to this is the vital question of official reparation for human rights crimes. Victims may better become survivors if some part of the legacy of the past can be addressed; better still if this takes an official form, like a war crimes tribunal or financial compensation. We should not underestimate the power of denial, even of what seems undeniable. In recent years, ostensibly democratising civilian governments have replaced brutal military regimes in Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, and, most recently, El Salvador, and yet have been reluctant to allow full investigation into past human rights offences or have given retrospective amnesty to the perpetrators. A government which refuses to own up to atrocious acts committed by agents in its name seems still to insist that the extrajudicially executed, tortured and "disappeared" are the guilty ones and denies their relatives the public acknowledgement and validation they need to make proper sense of their losses. These decisions need to be highlighted and resisted. Justice, even if long delayed, is reparative.

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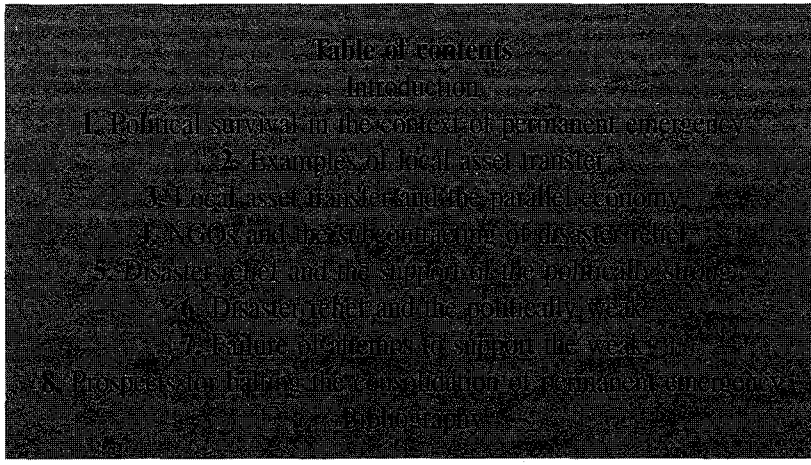
NGOs, disaster relief and asset transfer in the Horn: political survival in a permanent emergency(*)

Mark Duffield



Con questo articolo vuole denunciare il fatto che troppo spesso si è ignorato che le carestie possono essere il risultato di un consapevole esercizio di potere alla ricerca di guadagni e vantaggi da parte delle classi politicamente forti. Ciò avviene attraverso un trasferimento locale di beni e proprietà, che si articola poi in una economia parallela regionale ben più ampia. Ad una analisi del ruolo dei donatori e delle Ong nell'ambito degli aiuti umanitari, sembra che -nonostante si siano sviluppati programmi e misure per proteggere beni e proprietà per evitare il crearsi di questa economia di trasferimento- l'azione dei primi si sia rivolta a favore dei più forti nell'ambito di questi paesi mentre la posizione delle Ong appare più contraddittoria.

Mark Duffield, è stato Oxfam Country Representative per il Sudan dal 1986 al 1989. Attualmente lavora presso il Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B152TT

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Introduction

Since the 1980s, an important aspect of the new global interdependence that is emerging has been the increasing frequency of large-scale, complex disasters (Childers and Urquhart, 1991). In parts of Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia and, especially, Africa, the lives of millions of people are now regularly and variously affected by a number of disaster agents. Two defining features of the complexity of these emergencies are that they are often highly politicized and that attempts to relieve suffering are increasingly highlighting the inadequacies of the present international humanitarian system (Rees, 1991).

Not all Southern governments have welcomed international emergency intervention. Sudan is a case in point. Since the mid-1980s, successive regimes have denied or minimized the humanitarian crisis (Cater, 1986) and, in various ways, have attempted to constrain the unbroken line of emergency operations that now span nearly a decade (Africa Watch, 1990a, 1990c). A common strand in this resistance has been contention over who controls non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and their resources. In the article, the Development Impact of NGOs Activities in the Red Sea Provincee of Sudan Abdel Ati, although commenting on NGO activity in Red Sea Province, provides a good example of a wider political consensus over this period. Briefly, rather than supporting under-resourced government structures, international NGOs are seen as establishing an exclusive parallel system which has had undesirable consequences. These include acting to separate government and citizens, creating a reliance on external resources within government departments and squeezing out national NGOs. In other words, indigenous structures have been weakened rather than strengthened. NGO relief programmes, moreover, are said to have created a dependency on food aid, disrupting established economic activities and, insofar as they have attempted to conserve semi-subsistence economies, have ignored the modernizing trends of sedentarization and urbanization that are at work.

Such views are now common in many African countries and, in relation to NGO humanitarian involvement in conflict situations, they have often received a more acute expression including, as in Sudan, the expulsion of agency staff and the confiscation of communications equipment. Rather than looking at this clash in its local setting (for which, see Duffield, 1991b), this article will examine such antagonism as part of a new and emerging form of political survival.

1.
Political survival in the context of permanent emergency

The present transition period has highlighted the inadequacy of conventional analysis and terminology. In the case of Sudan, for example, outsiders could be forgiven for having difficulty in understanding how governance has survived over the past decade. Since the early 1980s, successive famines have impoverished the north; civil war and famine have devastated the south; violence and instability have become widespread; prices for its staple exports have fallen; official debt has burgeoned; and, in recent years, there has been a growing antipathy on the part of northern donors. In many respects, Sudan appears to have entered a stage of "permanent emergency". Belying this impression, however, it is also true that since the fundamentalist backed coup of June 1989, the government has not only strengthened its political and economic base; it has regained military momentum in the south, survived the negative consequences of its support for Iraq in the Gulf War and, allegedly, has sufficient confidence to involve itself in the internal politics of several of its neighbours (Jamal, 1991). Rather than collapse, in many respects, a form of "development" or consolidation has taken place.

The phenomenon of political survival in the context of permanent emergency is poorly understood. Somalia is another good example. It suggests the emergence of a new and radical form of economy which can be understood only partially, if at all, through conventional forms of analysis (Brown, 1992). As complex disasters continue to develop, uncovering this economy will become increasingly important during the course of the 1990s.

1.1 Limitations of conventional analysis

A key proposition in the analysis of political survival is that disasters have winners as well as losers. The analysis of famine in Africa has, with obvious justification, tended to concentrate on the losers. Since the mid-1980s, for example, a growing body of literature has drawn attention to how vulnerable groups attempt to survive growing environmental and economic stress (Longhurst, 1986; de Garine and Harrison, 1988; Swift, 1989). Apart from reducing food consumption, the coping strategies involved can include such things as labour migration, petty trading activities, gathering wild foodstuffs and, usually as a last resort, the sale of assets such as livestock or jewellery. Livestock prices in the Sahel, for example, are sensitive to the availability of food and fall at times of scarcity as more animals chase less grain.

During the latter part of the 1980s, policy debate was informed by such observations. Within a framework in which famine was usually con-

ceived as a transitory and largely natural phenomenon, measures have been suggested to strengthen the coping strategies of the losers. In addition, various managerial solutions have been developed to deal with such temporary emergencies. There have been attempts, for example, to establish famine early warning systems which would monitor livestock prices and trigger various market and nutrional support mechanisms as necessary. The role of NGOs and the state has been understood in relation to this conventional support and managerial model (IDS, 1988).

It should be clearly stated that the basic principle behind the work on coping strategies is of vital importance. That is, people are not passive victims but take a pro-active response to crisis. Nevertheless, it can be argued to represent only one side of a wider political equation. Coping strategies, especially in more extreme circumstances, involve the transfer of assets away from those in distress. Previously, this aspect has often been neglected. As Keen (1991) has argued, what has been overlooked is the fact that local merchants and middlemen, for example, stand to make significant gains in such circumstances. Moreover, such people are often powerful local actors capable, through neglect or even design, of moulding market conditions to their advantage. As the merchants of Mogadishu have shown, winners can be as pro-active as losers.

1.2 Toward a political economy of permanent emergency

The conventional approach neglects the question of power and whether famine can be the result of its conscious exercise in pursuit of gain or advantage. It is this political as opposed to economic construction of African famine which has been argued to limit the usefulness of Sen's (1981) entitlement analysis (de Waal, 1990; Keen, 1991). From a political perspective, not only is it unnecessary for famine to be natural or the result of market failure, it need not even be temporary if its continuation is advantageous to the powerful.

Prompted by the continuation of internal conflict in many parts of Africa, such criticism has begun to take shape as a new analysis of the situation. This approach argues that complex disasters, such as modern famine, have distinct political economies structured by relations of power and gender (Downs et al., 1991). Within this framework, famine can be regarded as an outcome of a process of impoverishment resulting from the transfer of assets from the weak to the politically strong. Moreover, it allows for the sectarian activities of the latter in support of this process. The increasing transparency of such activities is a major factor in the deepening crisis within the international humanitarian system.

Using this approach, this article will analyse the phenomenon of political survival in a permanent emergency by examining whether the actions of the state and its internal clients, together with those of external donors and NGOs, support the weak or the strong in the process of asset

transfer. First, however, it is necessary to briefly describe some of the characteristics of a permanent emergency.

2.
Examples of local asset transfer

Evidence suggests that during the 1980s, as the formal economy and hence the opportunities for legitimate wealth creation declined, the local transfer of assets from weak to politically strong ethnic groups began to gather momentum. This development marks a major, yet little understood transformation in the regional economy. In the light of the available evidence, the outline of this change can be most clearly discerned in Sudan. Asset transfer, as a growing practice, can be contrasted with the 1960s and early 1970s, when agriculture, linked to the growth of the internal market, reached the peak of its development (O'Brien, 1985).[1]

In north Sudan, at least initially, asset transfer occurred through the manipulation of the market. In the south, and more recently in the north, the restriction of food aid has been followed by the increasing use of violence as a means of direct appropriation. Using the neighbouring Baggara and Dinka populations in southwest Sudan as a detailed case study, Keen (1991) has demonstrated that the terrible 1988 famine amongst the Dinka of Bahr al Ghazal was not a result of their poverty but—on the contrary—of their natural wealth in cattle. This position of relative wealth had been highlighted by the impoverishment of their Baggara neighbours to the north through enviro-economic decline, including the loss of rangelands as a result of the mechanization of agriculture. Keen has pointed out an essential aspect of asset transfer without which the violent appropriation of Dinka cattle during the mid-1980s could not have taken place: the long-term process of political marginalization and the stripping from the Dinka of all legitimation. In the eyes of the Baggara raiders, the Dinka were not fit to hold such wealth. This is a crucial observation since it makes a direct link between famine and the political process.

In north Sudan, the forms of legitimation which have accompanied the emergence of the transfer economy have been the steady re-Islamization of the state and the resurgence of civil war. In the case of the Baggara, enviro-economic decline meant that they became ready tools in the government's strategy of arming irregular militias, a strategy associated with the Umma Party which has traditionally drawn its strength from the Arabs of west Sudan. Since decimating northern Bahr al Ghazal, the Baggara militias (Murahaleen), in conjunction with Zaghawa raiders had, by the late 1980s, begun to put growing pressure on the Fur in central Darfur (Africa Watch, 1990b). More recently, the Murahaleen have also been increasingly active against the Nuba in the Nuba Mountains (Africa Watch, 1991b). The militia

strategy, established in the mid-1980s and consolidated by the present fundamentalist regime, thus satisfies both the local economic needs of clients and the wider political aims of the state in opening southwest Sudan to Arab settlement.

Asset transfer in the north also has an urban dimension. Since 1990, helped by new legislation which gives sweeping powers to the state, over 500,000 of the mainly western and southern squatters and displaced persons living in Khartoum have been forced to relocate to agricultural "productive areas" or badly resourced "peace cities" located some distance away. Despite official resistance, many squatters had managed to secure basic amenities in the areas in which they lived. Given Khartoum's growing urbanization, this land became an increasingly valuable asset. As in the past, forced relocation, often carried out with the wilful destruction of shelter and belongings, has been accompanied by casting the victims as criminals and a political fifth column. A new development, however, has been the pledging of the confiscated land and buildings to neighbouring Arab residents, or client members of the civil service, police or militias (Africa Watch, 1992b).

In south Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has used different forms of legitimation to underpin local asset transfer in securing its own physical survival. During the latter part of the 1980s, its alliance with the Ethiopian Dergue allowed it to use local opposition to the resettlement and villagization programme in southeast Ethiopia as a pretext to loot, especially in Illubabot Province (Africa Watch, 1991a). More widely, however, it has relied upon the manipulation of traditional enmities between local ethnic groups through a process of selective arming with modern weapons. In southeast Ethiopia, for example, it has played on the traditional hostility between the two linguistically related branches of the Nilo Saharans: the Chai and Mursi on one side, and the Nyangatom, Toposa and Turkana on the other (Alvarsson, 1989). In south Sudan, in order to secure a base and provisions near the Uganda border, the SPLA made use of the long-standing hostility between the Acholi and the Madi (Allen, 1989). Since the mid-1980s, this process of selective arming, also engaged in by the Sudanese Army, has produced great instability along Sudan's borders with Uganda and Kenya. Local food wars have developed as losers have attempted to make good their loss.

3.
Local asset transfer and the parallel economy

One need not labour the point that the emergence of an asset transfer economy is extremely destructive, contravenes humanitarian law and creates an ever-deepening pool of destitution and misery. Moreover, since subsistence assets are a finite resource, once such an economy is established it demands

fresh inputs as the wealth of different groups is exhausted. Asset transfer becomes a "movable feast" on the ethnic landscape.

Since the 1980s, many social groups in Sudan have, in the sense of being distinct socio-economic entities, been badly crippled or killed off altogether. Although systematic evidence is in short supply (Ryle, 1989), one could cite the Maban, Uduk (James, 1988) and Anuak (Duku, 1988) in Upper Nile, the Chai (Africa Watch, 1991a), and Mursi (Turton, 1989) in southeast Ethiopia, and the Mundari in Equatoria, as well as those ethnic groups mentioned above. The current military offensive in south Sudan is expected to unleash a further wave of asset stripping and displacement (de Waal, 1992).

It would be a mistake to regard local asset transfer as an anarchic process, however. The issue of local conflict in relation to the wider alliances of internal warfare has been explored elsewhere (Duffield, 1991a): what should be emphasized here is that at many points local asset transfer is integrated with a parallel economy controlled at the highest political level. The connection between the militia strategy and the wider aims of the Sudanese state has already been mentioned. The following section will show how the regional circuit of parallel exchange also articulates with the logic of permanent emergency.

3.1 An example of regional parallel exchange

It should be emphasized that asset transfer is not bound by nationstates but is regional in character. An arc of instability and fragmentation now runs from Sudan, through southern Ethiopia to Somalia (Bowden, 1992). It is an area greater in size than Western Europe yet, apart from sporadic disaster reporting, it receives scant media attention and even less systematic analysis.

During the latter part of the 1980s, some of the illegal dollar remittances of Sudanese workers in the Middle East were being exchanged, via hidden trade links across the war zone of south Sudan, on the coast-to-coast parallel exchange networks of northern Uganda and Zaire. The emergence of a hidden foreign exchange market is a crucial aspect of the parallel economy in Sudan. It has been estimated that between 1978 and 1987 capital flight from Sudan amounted to $11 billion dollars or roughly the equivalent of Sudan's entire foreign debt (Brown, 1992). Access to such significant amounts of hard currency has increasingly shaped the antagonistic relations at the centre of northern Sudanese politics (Jamal, 1991). The illegal dollar trade has traditionally been in the hands of a few powerful Khatmiyya merchants; the Democratic Unionist Party is linked with the Khatmiyya and, towards the end of the 1980s, was also in a fractious coalition with the Umma Party and the fundamentalist National Islamic Front. Since the fundamentalist coup of June 1989, the internal struggle to control the parallel currency market has become increasingly bitter.

The involvement of army officers in trade within the war zone is

widespread (Africa Watch, 1990a). Most of this trade exploits the shortage of food and basic commodities amongst war-affected populations by using the army's ability to prevent population movement and its monopoly of transport. At best, it is asset transfer through barter, the terms of which are heavily loaded to the advantage of the merchant-officer.[2] In the late 1980s, one point of entry into the parallel economy for illegal dollars exploited the links of the DUP/Khatmiyya with the army. The dollar trade went through Juba, the capital of south Sudan. Having cut the overland routes and deterred civilian airlines from landing, the SPLA blockade meant that, apart from military transport, the only way anything got in or out of Juba was by periodic donor/NGO airlifts of relief food or by the irregular convoys, organized and guarded by the army, to and from the Ugandan border.

The hard currency flown into Juba by the military was taken by armed convoy to the Ugandan border[3] Within northern Uganda, Sudanese merchants traded these dollars on the Uganda/Zaire parallel market. In a detailed account, Meagher (1990) describes this network as linking Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Zaire, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Somalia. In the late 1980s, the chief players were Zairois with gold wanting imported goods, food and fuel; Sudanese with dollars wanting food, clothing and, especially, coffee; and Ugandans with imported goods wanting gold and dollars for Kampala's parallel market. This was not barter trade but took place in hard currency and convertible commodities and was sensitive to international exchange rates.

From Uganda, coffee and other merchant goods were transported, again in convoy, back to Juba; from there the coffee was flown by military transport to Khartoum where it was traded on the national and international market.[4] It should be noted that the public reason for these convoys from Uganda was to carry donor food aid which had been brought to the border: however, the convoy system proved extremely unreliable in this respect. Toward the end of the 1980s, not only was the route becoming increasingly insecure, but merchant supplies would invariably be substituted for relief food. This is also true of military convoys in other areas of south Sudan (Africa Watch, 1990a). In Juba, substitution had several implications. Due to the growing SPLA blockade, the price of foodstuffs had begun to climb steeply leaving many of the town's residents worse off than the displaced population (Graham and Borton, 1992). Merchant goods imported under army auspices were therefore at a premium and could be used to commercial advantage. From the point of view of emergency relief, however, the unreliability of the convoy system and insecurity of the overland routes forced the donor/NGO safety net to rely increasingly on expensive, stop-gap airlifts of emergency supplies.

3.2 Some internal aspects of political survival

Within this arc of instability in the Horn of Africa, then, a shrinking resource base and decline in formal economic opportunity has seen an increasing transfer of assets from the weak to the politically strong. This local transfer is integrated with a regional parallel economy. In the case of Sudan, different aspects of this economy come together in the state where they are controlled and contested by sectarian political interests. It is an inherently authoritarian, violent and disaster producing structure. In relation to Somalia, where the growth of parallel activity was prophesied more than a decade ago as leading to breakdown (Miller, 1981; also see Jamal, 1988), it is possible to interpret the present situation as a division of the country along clan lines, each controlling different aspects of the parallel economy (Africa Watch, 1992a). This is, however, only a partial description of the power relations involved in the structure of permanent emergency: the disaster relief response of the international community also has a role. Moreover, aspects of this intervention also connect with the parallel economy.

4.
NGOs and the subcontracting of disaster relief

Africa became the world's largest regional recipient of food aid and humanitarian assistance in the later years of the 1980s. As this concentration grew, NGOs became increasingly important in the management and targeting of aid (Borton and Shoham, 1989). This trend, encouraged by increasing donor willingness to direct official aid away from Southern states and through NGOs (Clark, 1991), has also seen the growth in their budgets and organizational capacity. In net terms, NGOs now collectively transfer more resources to the South than the World Bank.

In Africa, northern intervention has encouraged the emergence of a neo-liberal, two-tier system of public welfare. From the end of the 1970s, IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes have been attempting, with highly debatable consequences, to stimulate market reform and encourage producers. For those people unable to benefit from these measures, a welfare "safety net" has emerged since the mid-1980s, largely as a result of NGO activity. IMF/World Bank programmes are currently in operation in thirty African countries and welfare safety nets, particularly associated with disaster relief, are found in about a dozen. These two measures, currently being modified in relation to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, can be argued to have coalesced during the 1980s into the North's regional policy for Africa.

The safety net system in Africa can be divided into compensatory or development programmes, and targeted relief operations. Typical relief

programmes involve a contractual relation between an international donor and an NGO, whereby the latter acts as an implementing agent for the former in an agreed programme of assistance. If present at all, African governments usually play a symbolic role. The growth of official funding channelled through NGOs, reinforced by the high cost of relief work, has given donors a significant measure of influence over welfare priorities as the safety net system has spread. This trend, which is not without its NGO critics (Borton and Shoham, 1989), has changed many NGOs from relatively independent bodies into implementers of donor policy. As a style of work, which can include development as well as relief goals, it is sometimes known as "public service contracting" (Korten, 1990).

Relief operations have drawn many types of NGO, including African agencies, into subcontracting relations. Typical forms of organization have involved consortia of agencies, in some cases around a dozen NGOS, operating in different relief theatres. Such consortia, usually supported by several donors, are often shaped around a division of labour based either on geographical area or on function, such as transport, food distribution, medical services, nutritional surveillance and so on (Duffield, 1990).[5]

5.
Disaster relief and the support of the politically strong

In the 1980s, aid to Africa usually followed a Cold War logic. Regimes inclined to the West received help whilst those still pursuing a planned alternative were less favourably treated. Significant changes, however, were under way. In 1977, the Carter Administration made the receipt of American development aid, although not emergency assistance, conditional on the respect of human rights (Tomaseveski, 1989). Whilst never rigorously applied by the Americans, and virtually ignored by the main European donors in the Horn, this distinction between development and emergency assistance, which appears to raise humanitarian relief above politics, created a political space which allowed Western donors to intervene in an emergency capacity in socialist Ethiopia.

Despite the directing of donor assistance away from governments and toward NGOs, Western emergency assistance itself became increasingly important as a means of state support as development aid began to decline toward the end of the 1980s. It should be emphasized, however, that much of this help is an indirect consequence of the manner in which disaster relief is organized: essentially, one is dealing with a contradictory and inadequate form of assistance which is open to exploitation and abuse.

5.1 Government finance

Government finance has been a major beneficiary of international relief operations. In Ethiopia and Sudan, this has been facilitated by the pegging of official exchange rates at artificially low levels. In the late 1980s, for example, foreign relief assistance was being exchanged in Ethiopia at 2.07 Birr to the dollar. This was two or three times lower than the market rate and, in effect, represented a 100-150 per cent relief tax (in addition to import duties, port charges, licence fees, etc.) on the emergency programme (Africa Watch, 1991a). Given that the total disaster budget topped a billion dollars in 1989, it can be appreciated that the relief tax was an important source of foreign exchange and treasury support. The pegging of exchange rates in this manner has made relief operations in the Horn amongst the most expensive in the world.

5.2 Diversion of food aid

In a sectarian, asset transfer economy, the control of food aid is of vital strategic importance. In the Horn, the diversion of food aid to feed troops and militias at the same time as denying relief to contested areas has been widespread. In Somalia, the diversion of refugee food was already an established parallel activity in the 1970s (Miller, 1981; Jamal, 1988). In Ethiopia, relief food was regularly used to feed government troops and, especially, its unpaid peasant militia. Similar diversions have occurred on both sides in south Sudan. It is important to note that in a large-scale relief operation, such as that in Ethiopia, a diversion rate of around 5 per cent (usually regarded by donors as an acceptable level of leakage) could be sufficient to feed considerable numbers. In the case of Ethiopia, 5 per cent would have fed 300,000 to 400,000 people in the latter part of the 1980s, or an equivalent of the entire armed forces (Africa Watch, 1991a). Diversions of strategic import do not therefore require the disappearance of large proportions of incoming aid.

Another aspect of the diversion of food aid concerns the cooption of NGO subcontractors. In a situation of internal war or divided governance, especially, it is almost inevitable that NGO relief operations, lacking an international mandate or externally guaranteed access, will be co-opted by one side or another. "Might" is usually "right" in such circumstances. It has been estimated, for example, that more than 90 per cent of all international relief assistance was distributed in areas controlled by the Ethiopian Dergue (Africa Watch, 1991a). North Sudan has similarly monopolized the international relief programme.

5.3 Tacit donor support and the denial of food aid

In Sudan, the denial of international food aid to contested areas has been accomplished by a variety of means including an official reluctance to acknowledge emergency conditions; assurances to donors that relief supplies were reaching south Sudan; claiming insurmountable security and logistical problems to account for interminable delays; denying access for assessment purposes; and plain obstruction. Food denial in the Horn (an important aspect of asset transfer), whilst not encouraged by Northern donors, did receive tacit donor support in terms of their failure to effectively challenge government policy and, even when evidence of abuse existed, their reluctance to insist on an accountable relief programme (Cutler, 1988; Africa Watch, 1990a, 1991a; Keen, 1991). In the last analysis, it was donor emergency aid, supplied by Northern taxpayers, which was being denied or diverted.

5.4 Grain speculation

The delays between assessment and the delivery of emergency food aid, together with the increasing demand on the world's emergency stock, has meant that stated emergency requirements have seldom been met in full or on time (Keen, 1992). This has necessitated various stop-gap measures which have, in turn, created opportunities for speculative activity.

Local purchase and swap arrangements are two of the main measures. The mechanized production of sorghum in northern Sudan, at a time when the world price for coarse grain is depressed, has been assisted by recurrent famine. The need for local purchase, in particular, has provided a source of speculative earnings (Cutler and Keen, 1989). Swap arrangements usually involve the securing of local grain against food normally imported on a commercial basis for the urban market. In Sudan, these swaps are notorious for their delays and speculative rates of exchange. The Islamic Banks have a history of such speculation, having been accused of hoarding during the 1984-5 famine (Cater, 1986). Since being made responsible for managing Sudan's strategic food reserve following the 1989 coup, similar controversy surrounds the export of Sudan's strategic reserve, despite evidence of returning famine conditions during 1989-90 (Africa Watch, 1990c).

6.
Disaster relief and the politically weak

Given the indirect and appropriated benefits that disaster relief can impart to the politically strong, it is legitimate to ask what the losers, the object of the disaster intervention, actually receive. Where estimates have been made, the

answer is, broadly speaking, very little. In Darfur during 1984-5, in relatively good operational conditions, it has been suggested that the international relief programme supplied no more than 12 per cent of required assistance (de Waal,1988). In Ethiopia, a figure of 10 per cent has been suggested (Africa Watch, 1991a). The other 90 per cent or so has been supplied through people's own coping strategies including, of course, the transfer of assets to more fortunate and powerful groups. Despite the growth of NGOs and their frequent cooperation in consortia, the sheer scale of impoverishment means that NGOs are over-stretched, under-resourced and, even aside from political obstacles, frequently face major logistical constraints. Subcontracting from individual donors, moreover, makes for fragmentation and poor overall coordination. In almost every respect, the donor/NGO safety net is an inadequate response.

For donors, the basic principle of African relief operations is to define, usually according to nutritional status, the most vulnerable groups within a population and to target them with the minimum necessary food, water and shelter to sustain life (Borton and Shoham, 1989). The problem here is that one is not dealing with a temporary emergency involving a normally robust and selfsustaining population which can eventually resume its former life. A process of sustained asset transfer is synonymous with the spread of mass impoverishment. Relief operations may, to varying degrees, help keep people alive but, at best, this is all they do. The way such programmes are conceived and resourced means they are usually unable to tackle the process of resource depletion which is equated with famine.

Despite the limitations of international intervention, often under impossible conditions, many NGOs are trying to support the weak. The donor/NGO relationship is, itself, potentially antagonistic. Not all NGOs involved in relief work have uncritically embraced a subcontracting role. This conflict, and the manner in which agencies have attempted to align themselves either to the weak or, by default, to the strong in the process of asset transfer, has effected a rough division between "progressive" and "conservative" NGOs. Such distinctions, operating within the logic of subcontracting, are more important than any cultural difference between international and national NGOs. Progressive NGO relief policy can be considered at two levels: firstly, at a programme level where measures are taken to protect assets; and secondly, at a strategic level where NGO activity exposes the disjuncture between the norms of international relations and the actual process of political survival in a permanent emergency.

6.1 The protection of livestock in Sudan

The fall in the price of livestock compared to grain during periods of food shortage has already been mentioned. In south and north Sudan, some NGOs have attempted to use food aid to support the pastoralist economy. During

the mid- 1980s, for example, before the effects of the war made conditions impossible, Oxfam's relief strategy in Equatoria was to lobby for relief food as a means of stabilizing the meat/grain exchange rate and so prevent stress sales to Juba-based merchants (Stockton, 1986). This strategy was underpinned by an understanding that the anthropometric measurement of children as a guide to nutritional status was not a reliable measure of crisis amongst pastoralists (Daniell, 1985). Child nutrition is directly related to the possession of cattle within the extended family. A better gauge of stress would therefore be an assessment of herd condition and the immanence, due to market collapse or insecurity, of its loss. Once pastoralist children register as malnourished, the socio-economic integrity of the group has usually been damaged beyond repair.

The arid Red Sea Province in east Sudan was the site of a different application of this strategy. Here, Oxfam lobbied donors for a "food for recovery" programme. Its rationale was that, having lost most of their goats through drought, the continuing pressure on the Beja pastoralists to sell animals in order to obtain grain meant that herds would never recover. Eventually, the herders would gravitate to the slums of Port Sudan. Long-term food aid, monitored by Oxfam, was therefore argued to be necessary to restore the pastoralist economy (Walker, 1987).

It should be noted that the above strategy, as well as containing many unanswered questions, demands a different and more liberal approach to food aid. Rather than nutritional support, it represents a form of economic redistribution to the weak. As such, this type of programme has had great difficulty in attracting donor support, especially over the long term, and has frequently aroused local opposition from politicians, merchants or landowners who have felt their advantage to be threatened. This opposition has frequently cited as criticism the "dependency" which food aid is alleged to create amongst its recipients.

6.2 Opposing the abuse of sovereignty

During the Biafran civil war, when French medical workers chose to speak out, the tradition of silence on human rights abuse as represented by the International Committee of the Red Cross was broken (Weiss and Campbell, 1991). Since that time, and especially following the Gulf War, some NGOs have increasingly questioned the use of sovereignty as a cover for human rights violation (Oxfam, 1991b; Save the Children Fund, 1991).

African relief operations have been formative in the development of this position. There are a number of examples of NGO consortia having emerged in the Horn as a result of the contradictions between sovereignty and humanitarian assistance. The Khartoum-based Emergency Relief Desk, for example, backed by a number of European Protestant NGOs, was reorganized in the mid- 1980s to channel cross-border relief into Eritrea and

Tigray (Hendrie, 1990). ERD played a significant role in countering the food denial policy of the Ethiopian Dergue. Several other NGO consortia have supported relief work in Eritrea and Tigray.

6.3 The issue of neutrality in south Sudan

In response to the growing effects of the war in Equatoria, the Combined Agency Relief Team (CART) was established in April 1986, in Juba, by a combination of national church-based agencies and international NGOs as a relief transport consortium (Graham and Borton, 1992). The formation of CART coincided with elections held in north Sudan which, amidst high hopes for a negotiated end to war, returned Sadiq El Mahdi to office. Both CART and the elections were seen by donors, including the EC, as a potential for unblocking the obstacles for relief in south Sudan and, at least initially, CART attracted EC funding. The NGOs also realized the potential of the situation and in June issued a joint public statement which detailed the destruction of "the very fabric of community and village life" in south Sudan and called on both sides in the conflict to establish an urgent food truce ('Churches', 1986).

During the following months, however, instead of moving towards peace, a deepening political polarization occurred with both sides increasingly determined to prevent food aid reaching south Sudan. In this situation, establishing the neutrality of CART became an operational necessity (Stockton, 1986). In July, after vigorous lobbying by CART, the UN was persuaded to provide a diplomatic umbrella in an attempt to guarantee CART's neutrality to outside parties (UNEOS, 1986). The situation, however, continued to deteriorate. In September, the government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), which was also being supported by the EC, began to allege that CART was feeding the SPLA. Throughout the autumn, the northern press carried xenophobic and increasingly anti-NGO stories. By this time, the donor's public support for neutrality had begun to wane. In December, several agency staff were expelled from Juba; at the same time the RRC was making a determined effort to gain control of the south Sudan relief operation. Having a foot in both camps, the EC's response to the crisis was to limit the possibility of political damage to itself by summarily withdrawing funding from CART (Duffield, 1986).

At this point, the struggle for neutrality was lost. With the exception of Juba, where CART was compelled to reorganize, the RRC now controlled relief operations in south Sudan and the resulting denial of food aid during 1987 was a contributory factor to the famine of 1988.

7.
Failure of attempts to support the weak

We can now return to the issue of political survival in a permanent emergency. This can be seen as a complex structure involving, at one level, the disaster-producing articulation of local asset transfer with a wider parallel economy. International emergency intervention, rather than eradicating the disaster situation, appears in many respects to strengthen it. By its nature, especially its lack of political will to enforce an accountable system, international intervention opens new avenues for the politically strong in terms of state financial support, legitimation, access to strategic resources and speculative profit. Unwittingly, it has become an integral part of an established political economy which, pathologically, is geared to the spread of absolute poverty and human degradation. Whilst there have been some exceptions, attempts by international NGOs to support the weak have generally failed. In a few places a partial or temporary respite, at best, may have been achieved. This failure is not due to the reluctance of NGOs to "speak out" (Bonner, 1989) but has much deeper origins:

- relief supplies have never been adequate and have often arrived late.[6] Moreover, there has been a reluctance by donors to move beyond the fragmented and minimalist targeting of inputs, towards measures which restore assets;
- with the limited exception of America, there has been a tendency for donors to tacitly support policies which further asset transfer. This has left NGO subcontractors in a weak position;
- the UN Charter, the mandates of the UN specialist agencies and the Geneva Conventions—in other words, the foundations of the international political system—do not adequately cover the realities of political survival in the context of permanent emergency. Not only have donors left NGOs in a weak position, NGOs have had to operate in a legal vacuum with no humanitarian mandate or right of access;

The ending of the Cold War has accelerated the emergence of a new global strategic balance. In order to judge how this may affect the situation in the Horn, we will briefly review recent developments in the areas of failure listed above.

7.1 Stagnation and redirection of aid flow

With the collapse of superpower confrontation, the political rationale for aid to Africa has disappeared (Griffin, 1991). Evidence would suggest that since 1990 overall aid flow to Africa has been stagnating.

Food aid

Between 1989 and 1991, food aid receipts have continued to rise but they have not kept pace with demand. At a time when the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) is critically low, this situation has been complicated by increasing competition from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (EE/FSU). From nothing in 1989, food aid receipts in these regions reached 9.6 per cent of the world total by 1991. Whilst the volume of food aid has been maintained in Africa, there have been a number of significant internal shifts, especially by the EC. In 1991, the EC supplied 52 per cent of all the food aid going to EE/FSU; this constitutes 36 per cent of its global allocation as compared to 32 per cent to Africa (Benson and Clay, 1992). This redirection is, as yet, unmatched by other food aid donors.[7] If competition increases, matters could be further complicated by current demands for trade liberalization: it has been argued that such measures will reduce global agricultural stocks and increase the cost of food aid (Taylor, 1992).

Although food aid receipts to Africa have been maintained, it has been as a consequence of unparalleled NGO and UN lobbying. During 1990, the increase in food aid to Africa was regarded by NGOs as inadequate. The following year, an unprecedented joint agency "Don't Forget Africa" campaign was launched in Britain (Oxfam, 1991a). Given flagging donor interest in African famine (Hertsgaard, 1992), this campaign found it necessary to focus on food insecurity on a continent-wide, single issue basis so as to have maximum impact with donors. Until 1991, food aid lobbying had been done on a country or, occasionally, a regional basis. One can expect the continuation of desperate NGO campaigns during the 1990s (Simmons, 1992).

UN funding

Nor has UN funding kept pace with the growth of complex disasters, a problem exacerbated by the ending of the Cold War. Between 1945 and 1987, the UN was called upon to undertake thirteen peacekeeping missions. It has completed thirteen others since then. By 1992 the unpaid arrears on the UN's aggregate costs had reached 10 per cent with the expectation that this would increase during the 1990s (Boutrous-Ghali, 1992). The decline in funding is clearly evinced in relation to UNHCR: a global nutritional crisis now exists amongst the world's growing refugee population following a real cut in finance (Keen, 1992). American spending on refugees, for example, dropped from US$20 to US$10 per head between 1985 and 1990. At a time of increasing dislocation, UNHCR's General Programme for Africa was cut from US$168 to US$152m in 1990. Apart from a growing nutritional crisis, this has resulted in cuts in programmes, especially social and rehabilitation work, and the growth of stop-gap food aid measures. UNICEF's Africa programmes have also been affected (Brittain, 1991).

The emergence of political conditionality

The ending of the Cold War has given the North a greater degree of political flexibility in its relations with the South. European governments, for example, are now increasingly willing to link the receipt of aid with good governance and human rights (Pick, 1991b; van de Sand and Mohs, 1992). The new attitude is that donors have a right to decide how their money is spent (Benton, 1991). If this approach represented a genuine wish to tackle the issue of human rights abuse, it could be cautiously welcomed. Since it now also extends to humanitarian assistance, however, as shown in the 1990 donor brinkmanship in Sudan (Africa Watch, 1990c) and the current shameful neglect of Somalia, a different interpretation is possible.

In the present recessionary climate, public pressure has been the main reason for maintaining aid flow to Africa, albeit at an increasingly inadequate level. Rather than a real attempt to improve the situation, the rhetoric of political conditionality appears more like an excuse for doing less (Brauer, 1991). One aspect of aid which does appear to have transferred to EE/FSU is the human skill and expertise factor previously concentrated in Africa (Benson and Clay, 1992). Old "Africa hands" are increasingly turning up in the aid delegations now flooding into EE/FSU. Post-Cold War disaster relief in Africa will increasingly be left to NGOs and an impoverished UN to administer.

7.2 The reform of the UN

By the end of the 1980s, a renewed interest in UN reform had begun to focus on areas of North/South political interdependence as reflected in complex disasters, narcotics, the transmission of disease and the environment (Gott, 1991). A "political" and a "pragmatic" approach to reform can be discerned (Rees, 1991). The political approach has highlighted the problem of human rights abuse associated with unlimited sovereignty. Concerned NGOs have usually followed this line and have called for such things as an international mandate for relief operations with guaranteed access to disaster victims (Oxfam, 1991 b; Save the Children Fund, 1991). The radical change in the UN Charter that this would entail, however, together with the certain opposition of many Southern governments, are important reasons why the pragmatic approach has carried the day.

The basis of the pragmatic approach is an incremental introduction of organizational change which does not directly challenge the political underpinning of the UN Charter (Childers and Urquhart, 1991). Some changes in the mandates of the specialist agencies have already taken place. UNHCR, for example, has broadened its definition of a refugee so that it reflects more adequately African conditions (Keen, 1992). The main impetus for pragmatic change, however, has been the Gulf War. The allied intervention on behalf of the Kurds has been widely interpreted as a victory for

the suspension of sovereignty in the interests of protecting minorities. In fact, the Gulf War represented a unique constellation of circumstances (Hampson, 1992). The resulting pressure placed upon the UN by the Northern allies to improve its disaster relief capability (G7, 1991) arose not from a new-found humanitarian agenda but from the fact that the inadequacies of the UN specialist agencies, especially the inability of the UNHCR to cope with the resulting refugee crisis, threatened the wider military and strategic aims of the war (Pick, 1991a).

The result of this pressure, also supported by NGOs, was the appointment in early 1992 of a high level relief supremo within the UN charged with coordinating all aspects of major disaster relief. This move has accompanied other attempts at organizational change. In an Agenda for Peace (Boutrous-Ghali, 1992), the UN Secretary General sees an emerging division of labour between the UN and regional organizations which would leave the UN free to concentrate on the global issues of interdependence and, with a military capacity supplied by member nations, to act as a means of last resort in situations requiring intervention. Welcome as many of the organizational recommendations are, they do not tackle the issue of the severe constraints placed by the UN Charter on the guarantee and protection of human rights. Despite references to the era of "absolute and exclusive sovereignty" having passed, the principle of sovereignty is still firmly embedded in the envisaged reform programme.

With regard to the Horn, the current direction of UN reform does not look promising. Whilst the call for the greater involvement of regional organizations can, after a fashion, be pursued in Europe, this is not so readily the case in Africa. The OAU, for example, has made no discernible attempt to intervene in Ethiopia, Sudan or Somalia. Since the start of increased involvement in the Horn, moreover, the UN has never been able to grasp the political dimensions of the situation. In Somalia, its conduct raises many serious questions (Africa Watch, 1992a) whilst in Sudan, it is the UN alone, out of all major donors including the World Bank, which is still supporting the government's dubious urban relocation programme (Africa Watch, 1992b).

8.
Prospects for halting the consolidation of permanent emergency

With the possible exception of Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, a review of current trends would suggest that the prospects for confronting the further consolidation of an asset transfer economy across much of the Horn of Africa appears negligible. The possibility of developing an asset protection economy is even more remote. NGOs and an increasingly financially and politically marginalized UN will be left to pick up those human pieces to which they

are allowed access. The under-resourcing of disaster relief, together with the disarray and lack of political will within the international community on the question of guaranteeing humanitarian aid, play into the hands of those in the region who stand to gain from permanent emergency; for them, the future looks good.

NOTES

1. In terms of using legal means to politically marginalize migrant labour however, there are also continuities with the present (Duffield, 1988).

2. In 1988, when travelling with Sudan's Prime Minister, Sadiq El Mahdi, I returned to Khartoum on a military transport from the besieged and starving town of Wau. The hold was filled with locally made furniture and wood crafts.

3. That the amounts conveyed were significant can be judged from the fact that the exchange rate on the Ugandan parallel currency market fluctuated according to the timing of the Juba convoy (Meagher, 1990).

4. The disruption of the coffee growing areas of southern Ethiopia underpinned the viability of this trade.

5. Although by the late 1980s about a hundred of these consortia existed on paper as operating in Sudan, only around twenty were actively involved in the safety net system which covered, in one way or another, several million people.

6. The celebrated 1989 UN Operation Life Line into south Sudan, for example should have taken place at least two years earlier. By the time it did start, mortality had already peaked.

7 During the 1984-5 famine in the Horn, the World Bank augmented the position of WFP out of its own income. This income has now been used to establish the Bank's Trust Fund for the Former Soviet Union.

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Il CISP, insieme ad altre due organizzazioni non governative, il CTM (Controinformazione Terzo Mondo), e il MOLISV (Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo), ha costituito l'associazione MOVIMONDO.

MOVIMONDO nasce dalla convinzione che l'unione delle forze e delle professionalità dei singoli organismi permette un'azione più efficace e significativa sia negli interventi di sviluppo per il Sud che nella sensibilizzazione dell'opinione pubblica del Nord.

L'impegno comune dei tre organismi permette a MOVIMONDO di essere presente in ben 25 paesi del Sud del mondo, con programmi in vari settori che vanno dall'assistenza sanitaria, all'idrogeologia, alla formazione professionale, ai diritti umani.

In Italia MOVIMONDO svolge attività finalizzate a promuovere un più forte ed esteso coinvolgimento della società civile attraverso attività di informazione, divulgazione e raccolta fondi.

L'associazione sostiene, inoltre, il lavoro delle cooperative del Sud del mondo anche attraverso il commercio equo e solidale dei prodotti locali, il cui ricavato viene reinvestito nei progetti di cooperazione.

AGENDA FORUM

CONVEGNI INIZIATIVE INCONTRI ESPERIENZE RECENSIONI ATTIVITÀ INFORMAZIONI

War and hunger: rethinking international responses to complex emergencies

Joann Macrae, Anthony Zwi
with *Mark Duffield e Hugo Slim*
ZED books, dicembre 1994

Informiamo i nostri lettori dell'imminente uscita (dicembre 1994) di una interessante pubblicazione sulle emergenze complesse, cioè quelle emergenze caratterizzate dalla presenza di situazioni di conflitto. Come sottolineato da uno dei due autori in un articolo che pubblichiamo su questo stesso numero di Forum Valutazione, le emergenze complesse sono in continua crescita; risulta, quindi, fondamentale comprendere le cause che sono alla radice di tale fenomeno, analizzarne la genesi e lo sviluppo, soprattutto per chi opera nell'ambito dell'aiuto umanitario.
Dopo una prima parte introduttiva in cui si esaminano le varie interrelazioni di questo tipo di emergenza con le politiche di aiuto internazionale, con le economie di potere interne, con le problematiche dei diritti umani,gli autori ci presentano cinque studi di caso (Angola, Sudan, Etiopia, Somalia, Eritrea) tutti afferenti al continente africano.
Vengono inoltre affrontati, nel capitolo conclusivo, aspetti cruciali come quello della dimensione di genere delle emergenze complesse e quello della riforma delle Nazioni Unite.
L'indagine approfondita svolta su questo fenomeno, purtroppo così attuale, ci porta a comprendere la necessità di elaborare una strategia politica chiara e visibile da portare avanti insieme agli interventi di aiuto umanitario e di sviluppo.

Dérives humanitaires
Etats d'urgence et droit d'ingerence

Nouveaux Cahiers de l'IUED, PUF, aprile 1994

L'IUED ha deciso di inaugurare la nuova collana Les nouveaux cahiers de l'IUED con un numero dedicato all'ingerenza umanitaria. Sebbene il tema sia stato ampiamente dibattuto in varie sedi, tuttavia non si è cercato - così si sostiene nella introduzione- di trarre dalle tre più recenti esperienze di ingerenza umanitaria (Irak, Somalia, ex-Yugoslavia) alcuna lezione utile.
Se molto spesso ci si è interrogati sul "come" affrontare le emergenze, sostenere le popolazioni colpite, mobilitare l'opinione pubblica e così via, quasi mai -però- ci si è chiesti "perché" l'ingerenza umanitaria si sia imposta tanto facilmente.
Forse perché il Nuovo Ordine Umanitario serve a far dimenticare che "l'ordine internazionale" è ingiusto ed inaccettabile?

Percorsi per un'azione di sviluppo: dall'identificazione alla valutazione

E. Beaudoux, G. De Chrombrugghe, F. Douxchamps, M.C. Guéneau, M. Nieuwerk

E.M.I.-Collana "Lo sviluppo degli altri", giugno 1994

A due anni dalla pubblicazione del libro *Cheminements d'une action de developpement*, giunge la traduzione in italiano del prezioso testo. Un pubblico più vasto potrà così leggere questa opera che, come già affermato in un numero precedente della nostra rivista (vedi Forum Valutazione n.4, novembre '92), fornisce importanti indicazioni metodologiche per aiutare le ONG nella attuazione delle loro azioni sul campo.
Ricordiamo che il lavoro è stato realizzato nell'ambito di uno studio sulle organizzazioni non governative intrapreso dalla Commissione Europea e il cui coordinamento è stato curato dal COTA (Collettivo di Scambi per la Tecnologia Appropriata) e dall'ILARM (Istituto di Ricerche e Applicazioni dei Metodi di sviluppo).

La Redazione di Forum Valutazione

SOMMARI

EDITORIAL

The issue examined in this number of Forum Valutazione (monitoring and evaluating emergency and humanitarian aid projects) relates to two major categories of phenomena which, on the surface, appear to differ widely. On the one hand, the aid work performed by the international community, governments and NGOs in order to respond to situations that arise when natural disasters strike countries with no resources of their own to be able to cope with the aftermath; and on the other, all the work and actions deployed to deal with "complex emergencies", namely, those which form part of a complex situation. The recent events in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda are evident examples of this.

We will not dwell on identifying the comparative features of these two situations or the need to conduct an interdisciplinary analysis in order to correlate the concomitant causes of the deterioration of a particular socio-economic, ecological and political system, when undertaking a regional approach to the emergency problem. Our intention in this highly complex area is merely to offer an approach which suggests the need to ask questions about the results of actions designed to bring "urgent" aid to the people, and to draw the reader's attention to a number of ideas and examples regarding interventions in which a system of monitoring and evaluation has been tried out.

The importance of this issue has become evident as the result of the increasing numbers of such emergency aid ventures, and also because of the increasing attention being devoted to it in international fora. In May 1994, at Yokahama, Japan, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Limitation was held in the framework of the United Nations Decade for the Reduction of Natural Disasters 1990 - 2000. During this decade, the member countries of the United Nations will try to identify the most appropriate actions, backed by international concerted effort, to reduce the consequences of natural disasters on the population and wherever possible to pre-empt them. Strong emphasis will be placed on the need to identify common lines of action and shared programmes of humanitarian assistance.

The period through which we are living seems, moreover, to be characterised by an explosion of regional, national and international conflicts. In the new "post-cold war" international scenario, the United Nations is being unexpectedly burdened down with enormous responsibilities: conflict management, peace-keeping and sometimes peace-making, and assisting threatened populations. The result is that sometimes contradictory mandates are being given to it, such as imposing an embargo on Iraq while at the same time seeking to bring relief to the civilian population.

Furthermore, the countries in the South and the non-governmental organisations are sadly denouncing the way in which the attention and resources of the international community and of the United Nations itself in areas of the world suffering

from crisis often depend on motivations stemming from the rationale of balancing international economic interests, and the interest shown by the mass media and hence public opinion in some particular part of the world rather than another, instead of forming part of a serious and comprehensive commitment to deal with emergencies and provide support for the reconstruction of these countries.

We might mention at least four areas in which the international community should be committed to crisis management and prevention. The first is ensuring continuity of aid, namely, the capacity of the Western governments to undertake commitments which they are able to carry through. For unless there is a well defined financing framework, political commitment and established deadlines any desire on the part of the Western countries to intervene in emergency situations will be damaging and doomed to failure.

The second relates to the need to improve the system of communications between international agencies, NGOs, and situation in the field, by setting up early warning systems to detect emergencies promptly. At the present time studies are being undertaken into the possibility of drawing up synthetic indicators for the various risk situations.The third area of intervention relates to the political and economic commitment of Western governments and the developing countries not to fuel the arms market, slowing down the arms race and stopping the production and sale of weapons, and where necessary encouraging the re-conversion of the arms industry.

The fourth relates to respecting commitments which the Western governments have undertaken in international fora to increase the percentage of the GDP devoted to overseas aid to at least 0.7%. The other aim which the UNDP proposes as essential is the so-called 20/20 target, namely, the commitment of Western and local governments to earmark at least 20 cent of their overseas aid to social projects. We NGOs are proposing that this should be as high as 50%. But whatever it is, this fact highlights the inseparable linkage that exists between the flare-up of emergency situations, the lack of prevention at the international level and the lack of any real commitment to the development of the poor countries.

The case of Africa is emblematic here. Without denying that positive developments have occurred there in recent years, such as the cessation of armed conflict in such countries as Ethiopia, Eritrea and Mozambique, the Eighties must be considered a lost decade for the development of Africa. Most of the countries there are living with terrible poverty and equality, and the political, economic and cultural conditions both at the national and the international levels, not only make it impossible for them to develop but actually make their future even more uncertain still. In these countries, the precarious social and economic situation is already paving the way for crisis situations to break out which, in many cases, it will be impossible to deal with locally without outside help.

Responding to emergency situations throughout the world, and hence managing humanitarian aid, is becoming an increasingly important issue both qualitatively and qualitatively. A few figures provide some idea of the magnitude of the problem we are faced with. Over a period of 10 years, the percentage of funds allocated to humanitarian aid in the OECD countries, according to the DAC, rose from 2% of all bilateral aid (in 1980) to 6.3% (in 1992). In 1993, the United Nations budget for humanitarian aid was 170 million ECU (compared with 11 million ECU in 1990, 46 million ECU in 1991 and 112 million ECU in 1992), while the budget of the European Union for the same purpose operating through the NGOs was around 214 million ECU in 1993, compared with 29 million ECU in 1990, 87 million ECU in 1991 and 111 million ECU in 1992), and by the end of 1994 the European Union expects to spend about 380 million ECU (about Lire 780 billion) in humanitarian aid.

Unfortunately, though, there are also figures for the conflicts now taking place in the world in which the increasingly unstable international situation is giving

rise to humanitarian crises. In 1994 the UNDP identified 13 situations in a complex political context. The increasing number of such situations is accompanied, as we saw from the data given above, by an increasing international involvement in both political and economic terms.

The very nature of international action is also changing, because the borderline between humanitarian intervention and armed intervention is often blurred. The right to humanitarian assistance is a principle around which much debate is focused in the Nineties, because it seems to give wide discretionary powers to those countries that make "humanitarian diplomacy" the basis of their foreign policy, particularly in the countries of the South.

This tendency for emergency funds to increase is unfortunately offset by a reduction in almost every European country of the resources earmarked for development co-operation.

Increased availability of bilateral aid for emergencies has led to an expansion of the United Nations agencies working in this sector, and a partial reconversion of others. Meanwhile, the NGOs have enormously stepped up their private fund-raising activities in order to meet emergency situations.

The international agencies and non-governmental organisations are wondering about the parameters for gauging the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid, and at the same time they are concerned about the implications and consequences of the present drastic cuts in long term development aid to the Southern countries. They have reached the conclusion that it is necessary to hold a much more wide-ranging debate on the advisability of revising international aid models, particularly in a situation of political instability, on the need to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of disasters and, whether it is true as some people maintain that in many areas of the world we should be talking about "permanent emergency conditions" rather than temporary ones.

This shows that there is a theoretical revision of the relationship that exists between emergency aid, rehabilitation and development.

Lastly, there is a growing demand for training in this sector, and opportunities are accordingly being created for providing training in different sectors (health care, logistics, management, etc.) as part of educational packages designed by consortia of Universities (particularly European and American), international organisations and NGOs. It has now become difficult, even for "old hands", to navigate their way through all the literature available, the large numbers of national, regional and international workshops and seminars, the remote computing networks that now exist and everything that is currently available for development and updating in this highly complex field.

But very little has been done with regard to designing methods to check out the results of projects, to identify reliable indicators of effectiveness and efficiency, to identify parameters for controlling and conducting a multidisciplinary analysis of progress with, and the impact of, humanitarian aid programmes. Today the first codes of conduct are now being drawn up combining ethical and methodological parameters, such as the recent one published by the International Red Cross. However, there are still very few proposals in strictly methodological and technical terms.

This is why we believe that we are performing a useful service by offering a dossier that includes a number of interesting monitoring and evaluation experiences, and some of the ideas currently being debated on the methodological aspects of this type of project.



FOREWORD

B.Marziali

The decision to publish a special monographic issue of Forum Valutazione on emergency aid is not so much due to the fact that, sadly, it is one of the burning issues on agenda today, but out of a desire to deal -albeit not exhaustively- with a matter that is far more complex than some would have us believe.

"Emergency" is a term that covers vastly differing situations, ranging from natural disasters to armed conflict. An emergency may also be examined in terms of each its facets: the drastic reduction in resources available for survival, the breakdown of a country's social fabric, the psychological and social repercussions on the civilian population, etc. The identification and management of emergency programmes can also be viewed in dynamic terms, and hence become the first link in the emergency -rehabilitation -development chain.

This in itself is certainly not sufficient to explain why a journal dedicated to evaluation has decided to deal with an issue that at first glance might seem to be almost irreconcilable with evaluation.

But the authors who have contributed to this issue of Forum Valutazione clearly demonstrate that there are no grounds for this commonly-held conviction, and moreover they emphasize the need to understand the causes and the interrelations of this phenomenon in order to better define the criteria and procedures for evaluation that will enhance the positive impact of humanitarian aid work.

Borton and Shoham, for example, explain the recent increase in the use of socio-economic data in emergency programmes. The advantages of this type of information is now an acknowledged fact: a better focused identification of the target population, a more accurate assessment of their needs, and more complete information for identifying and implementing coping strategies.

Furthermore, the value of this type of information -mostly collected by NGOs which are playing an ever-increasing role in emergency efforts- is sometimes impaired because, having by using many different methods to gather and analyse it, there are discrepancies in the quality and content that make easy comparisons impossible. Funding agencies tharefore receive inconsistent data feedback that complicates the allocation of emergency aid resources among and within the various countries while, at the same time, making it more difficult to fully appreciate the effectiveness and impact of the work performed by the NGOs.

But the methodological problem is not the only obstacle to using socio-economic data. There are other difficulties relating to the different types of emergencies, the attitudes of financing agencies, the complexity of the emergency, etc.

Far from wishing to dishearten those who work in the field of socio-economic data collection, whose importance is reiterated in the paper, the authors conclude the article with a number of suggestions for donor agencies and NGOs to encourage the incorporation of this valuable information in emergency programmes.

H.Young also seems to share this view in her article on methods for initial assessment and for response to food-shortages and famine situations, emphasising the importance of collecting information which is not exclusively nutritional data.

Once the causes underlying food supply crises are understood it becomes easier to plan more appropriate actions, to identify more clearly the beneficiaries of such actions and to establish the specific role which the organisation operating in the

field should be playing.

Assessment is therefore a particularly important phase in order to be able, subsequently, to take the right decisions, and this article discusses a number of methods for gathering information, showing the advantages and the drawbacks.

Considering the speed with which events usually develop in emergency situations, rapid assessment methods play a major part and provide updated and comprehensive information -even if it is not systematic or thoroughly researched. These methods are usually very effective, because they make it possible to become directly familiar with the local situation, but they require specific skills and training.

In the article taken from the manual published by the Emergency Collaborating Centre PAHO/WHO-DGCS, the author deals with needs analysis. But this time the protagonists are the local populations themselves, who are given an active role in the emergency situations as they organise themselves in order to deal with an emergency caused by some natural disaster.

Assessing the social and environmental vulnerability of a community is vital before proceeding with local planning that takes account of the various aspects of prevention, rehabilitation and development. For this reason it is vital to involve and co-ordinate all the services and sectors which operate in a particular area, taking a "territorial approach".

Giving the local communities the chance to establish their own vulnerability levels, assess their own needs and help draw up emergency plans is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to guarantee the sound implementation of prevention and natural disaster relief programmes. It is equally indispensable to ensure that these programmes are included in day-to-day planning and management.

In the next article, the role of rehabilitation is analysed, as the theoretical linkage between emergency and long term development. For the transition is virtually never linear, particularly with complex emergencies when it is very difficult to define the criteria for establishing whether a country is in post-conflict situation.

New conflicts characterised by the emergence of informal parallel economies and new violent survival mechanisms by the power structures, and by the break-up of the state, create emergency situations in which it is a matter of doubt whether humanitarian work can be effective if it is merely designed to ensure the physical survival of the people socially, economically and politically vulnerable.

There are a variety of obstacles that prevent rehabilitation programmes from making their full contribution to the macroeconomic and political stability of a country. One of the main difficulties is the present approach to emergencies taken by donor agencies and international organisations.

The complexity of operating in emergency situations in order to implement a rehabilitation operation is reiterated in the next article, which contains a number of the authors'own ideas based on their experience acquired with their own NGO which is working in Somalia with a development programme and, following the well-known political/military troubles, is now working on emergency aid programmes.

It is precisely this specific feature which makes it possible to rapidly and accurately identify needs and priorities, and equally rapidly set humanitarian aid operations working in the country, which is no easy matter in complex emergencies.

In the first part of the article a number of key points are brought out for those working in complex emergencies: the short time available for analysing needs, the difficulty of identifying the right local partners, guaranteeing security for the field workers, against the background of a constantly changing local situation.

All of this might seem to make evaluation irreconcilable with the emergency situation. Yet the authors emphasise the importance of evaluating humanitarian aid actions and suggest a number of the criteria for improving the analysis of their effectiveness and impact.

Another aspect which is very often ignored is the question of the psychological and social effects of conflicts. This is a typical feature of complex emergencies, which are constantly increasing today, with the systematic destruction of the social fabric and the use of terror as form of social control.

This creates collective traumas among the people with psychological and social consequences which cannot be ignored when identifying the actions needed in humanitarian interventions of this kind.

But the author emphasises the importance of taking an individual psychological approach to the problem of mental health. It is important to consider and act on the social dimensions of the trauma, and it is for this reason that perhaps the best way of helping a population to overcome the psychological damage caused by a war situation is to sustain the reconstitution of the social fabric, the economic structures, and the reappropriation of their own cultural identity.

The final article also shows how, more often than not, emergency situations are the result of a manipulation of resources by the politically powerful classes. This occurs through a local transfer of goods and property, which subsequently gives rise to a regional parallel economy which is much broader in its scope. In this way a suitable environment is created in which to develop a state of permanent emergency.

Through the examples of emergencies in Sudan, Southern Ethiopia, and Somalia, the author offers an analysis of the survival mechanisms of political structures. He does not spare criticism of the humanitarian aid which too often only goes to help the strongest.

Despite the fact that programmes and measures to sustain the weaker economies, and thereby prevent the creation of these transfer economies, were developed a long time ago, donors and many NGOs today in the position of subcontractors do not seem to be countering this.

This is also the consequence of a contradictory and inadequate conception of humanitarian aid, which is exposed to easy exploitation and abuse. Duffield, therefoer, advocates a review of the whole concept and organisation of emergency aid.



La raccolta ed uso dell'informazione socio-economica nelle operazioni di aiuto umanitario

J.Borton, J.Shoham

Negli ultimi dieci anni si è registrato un certo sviluppo nell'utilizzo dei dati socio-economici nell'ambito delle operazioni di aiuto umanitario. I vantaggi di questo tipo di informazione, infatti, si sono rivelati importanti per una migliore identificazione e realizzazione dei programmi di emergenza. Questo fenomeno ha coinciso con il crescente ruolo giocato dalle organizzazioni non governative (Ong) nell'ambito dei programmi di aiuto umanitario.

Queste ultime sono le fonti principali di tale informazione che spesso, però, risulta disomogenea per qualità e contenuto. Ne consegue che gli organismi finanziatori ricevono un *feedback* informativo incongruente che rende, da un lato, più complessa l'attribuzione dei fondi di emergenza tra e all'interno dei vari paesi e dall'altro, più difficoltosa la valutazione dell'efficacia e dell'impatto dell'azione delle Ong.

Al di là di questo problema metodologico, esistono altri ostacoli all'utilizzo dei dati socio-economici relativi alle diverse tipologie dell'emergenza, agli atteggiamenti degli enti finanziatori, alla complessità del fenomeno, etc.

Lungi dal voler dissuadere chi opera sul campo dalla raccolta di dati socio-economici, gli autori forniscono-a conclusione dell'articolo- una serie di suggerimenti agli organismi finanziatori e alle Ong per favorire l'inclusione di questa preziosa informazione nei programmi di emergenza.



Carenza di cibo e carestia: valutazioni iniziali e indagini sul campo

H. Young

Nelle emergenze assume particolare rilievo la valutazione iniziale (*assessment*) perché contribuisce a capire quali siano le cause alla base delle crisi di approvvigionamento alimentare e quindi a pianificare le azioni più appropriate, a meglio identificare i beneficiari di tali azioni e stabilire quale sia il ruolo specifico che deve giocare l'organizzazione che opera sul campo.

I dati che vengono raccolti per l'*assessment* forniranno indicazioni sulla gravità della situazione, sulla natura dell'emergenza, sulle caratteristiche dei beneficiari, sul modo migliore per raggiungerli, etc.

In tale prospettiva diventa importante, nelle emergenze alimentari, non limitarsi ad una raccolta di dati che sia esclusivamente di tipo nutrizionale.

Nell'articolo vengono presentati alcuni metodi di raccolta dell'informazione, tra questi le analisi rapide (*rapid assessment*) sembrano essere le più adatte per l'emergenza considerata soprattutto la continua mutevolezza della realtà in queste situazioni estreme. Tale metodo, solitamente molto efficace perché permette di acquisire direttamente un'informazione aggiornata e globale, necessita però di capacità e formazione specifiche.



The organization of local communities in emergency situations

Emergency Collaborating Centre PAHO/WHO-DGCS

This article is an excerpt from the handbook *Organización local para situaciones de emergencia* published in December 1992 and based on the analysis of the experiences occurred to the Central America countries during the last years.

The handbook proposes a "territorial approach" that considers the necessity to coordinate all the services and sectors operating in a certain area; the importance to assess the social and environmental vulnerability of the community; the capability of local planning as common denominator between prevention, rehabilitation and development.

The first part of the article illustrates a teaching method to organize the community in the phase of prevention and preparedness, while in the second part the attention is focused on the role of the community in the response to the emergency.

The handbook was conceived as a simple tool for the municipalities since the inclusion of prevention programmes in the daily planning and management is a precondition for their success.



Aiutare la ripresa? Una analisi preliminare del ruolo dell'aiuto internazionale nelle situazioni post-belliche

Joanna Macrae

Definire quando un paese si trova in una situazione post-bellica è compito piuttosto arduo sopratutto se si considera la particolare natura dei conflitti che oggi affliggono il mondo. Le superpotenze, ritirandosi dai campi di battaglia del Sud, hanno lasciato dietro di sé strutture economiche e risorse disastrate, aumentando così la pressione sulle popolazioni sempre più in lotta per la sopravvivenza. Ciò ha favorito l'emergere di nuovi meccanismi di sopravvivenza, lo sviluppo di vere e proprie economie parallele che trovano nella violenza un modo per acquisire risorse.

In questo contesto il concetto di emergenza complessa si associa inevitabilmente a quello di disgregazione di uno Stato. Di conseguenza risulta discutibile l'efficacia di azioni umanitarie che mirino unicamente alla sopravvivenza fisica delle popolazioni senza intervenire sui fattori che rendono queste ultime socialmente, economicamente e politicamente vulnerabili.

È proprio l'attuale approccio all'emergenza uno dei principali ostacoli alla sostenibilità dei programmi di riabilitazione. Secondo quanto affermato dalle Nazioni Unite e dalla Commissione Europea, la riabilitazione dovrebbe contribuire alla stabilità macro-economica e politica di un paese ma i termini di riferimento ed i criteri imposti dai donatori per questo tipo di intervento la rendono uno strumento di intervento ad un livello micro.



Some reflections on evaluation issues in emergency relief programmes: the experience of CISP-Movimondo in Somalia

M.G.Dente, P.Dieci

An Italian Non Governmental Organization (NGO) working in Somalia through a Primary Health Care programme, owing to the well-known political-military events, starts emergency relief programmes. The multiannual presence and the consequent knowledge of the country allows the NGO to quickly identify the priorities and to start up the relief operations, usually a hard task in "complex emergencies".

In the first part of the article the authors underline some points that have to be taken into account when operating in emergency relief: a very short time to execute a needs assessment, the selection of the right local interlocutors with whom to relate, the awareness of working in a continuously changing situation, etc.

Even though it might seem, and be indeed, particularly difficult to carry out an evaluation of an emergency relief programme, the authors stress the importance of assessing the efficacy, efficiency and impact of such an action and therefore suggest a few criteria as a basis to realize a good analysis of what has been done and what still needs to be done.



Gli effetti psico-sociali dei conflitti sulle popolzioni civili

Derek Summerfield

Una delle caratteristiche dei conflitti attuali è che il 90% delle vittime sono civili e che l'arma del terrore è rivolta principalmente al controllo sociale. Le vittime di queste guerre assistono alla distruzione del loro mondo economico, sociale e culturale.

L'approccio occidentale alla cura di questo tipo di traumi spesso non riesce a catturare il complesso interrelazionarsi di individui, comunità e intere società, né a comprendere il loro modo di gestire e vivere collettivamente paure e sofferenze.

Queste esperienze traumatiche devono essere intese in termini di rapporto tra individuo e società.

Per intervenire in questi casi in modo più efficace, bisognerebbe associare il campo della salute mentale con altre discipline ed orientarsi verso attività di recupero "collettivo", cioè azioni che tendano a ricostituire il tessuto sociale e le basi culturali di una popolazione.

ONG, aiuto umanitario ed economie parallele nel Corno d'Africa: meccanismi di sopravvivenza politica nelle emergenze permanenti

Mark Duffield

Troppo spesso si è ignorato che le carestie possono essere il risultato di un consapvole esercizio di potere alla ricerca di guadagni e vantaggi da parte delle classi politicamente forti. Ciò avviene attraverso un trasferimento locale di beni e proprietà, che si articola successivamente in una ben più ampia economia parallela. Si tratta di una vera e propria manipolazione delle risorse da parte e a vantaggio dei gruppi sociali politicamente più potenti che genera il più delle volte situazioni di emergenza permanente.

L'analisi dell'autore si sposta poi sul ruolo dell'aiuto umanitario in queste dinamiche locali ed evidenzia come donatori e Ong tendano spesso con le loro azioni a consolidare -anche se talvolta involontariamente-queste strutture di potere.

Ciò è diretta conseguenza di un modo contraddittorio ed inadeguato di concepire l'aiuto umanitario che lo rende oggetto di facile sfruttamento e di abusi. Sarebbe quindi necessaria una revisione del concetto e dell'organizzazione stessa degli aiuti per l'emergenza.

In questo numero vari autori affrontano il tema dell'emergenza da varie angolazioni, offrendo interessanti spunti di riflessione e sfatando a volte alcuni luoghi comuni. Leggiamo così che le popolazioni locali, lungi dall'essere vittime passive, rivestono un ruolo importantissimo nella prevenzione e risposta ai disastri naturali o che l'emergenza in situazioni di conflitto ha conseguenze psico-sociali gravi quanto la fame o le malattie, su cui bisogna intervenire come per tutto il resto in una prospettiva di riabilitazione e ricostituzione del tessuto sociale. Ed è proprio il legame tra emergenza e sviluppo che viene approfondito in un articolo sull'aiuto internazionale nelle situazioni di post-conflitto dove si evidenziano le difficoltà a rendere effettiva tale transizione. Qualche indicazione e suggerimento viene fornito, invece, da alcuni autori che a fronte della loro pluriennale esperienza in programmi di emergenza illustrano metodologie di valutazione dei bisogni, metodi di raccolta ed uso dei dati socio-economici e una serie di punti nodali da cui non è possibile prescindere nella identificazione e realizzazione di interventi di emergenza.
È ai donatori e alle Ong che, nell'articolo conclusivo, si rivolge un'analisi critica del ruolo dell'aiuto umanitario nel consolidare strutture economiche e di potere che portano ad uno stato di emergenza permanente.

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