



In Collaboration With



Prague, 20-21 January 2009

An event for EU Humanitarian NGOs

Report

Day 1: Round Table 'Challenges for EU humanitarian NGOs'

Day 2: Training on the Project Cycle Management

Supported by the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission



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Main conclusions from the Event

This two day event includes a roundtable so called ‘Challenges for EU Humanitarian NGOs’ and a training on Project Cycle Management. It was received by organizers and participants as a positive and useful event. The results of the evaluations reflect the high level of satisfaction of the participants during the two days. 89% of the participants in the roundtable considered it to be very relevant and 96% from the training evaluated it as very satisfactory (Annexes 1 and 2).

The panel of speakers in the roundtable was pertinent as it gathers the Czech presidency, DG ECHO from the European Commission, and NGOs from all over Europe. This diversity of interventions offered the exchanges of different perspectives on the EU humanitarian scene. In the morning the audience got the opportunity to learn and exchange on policy development at EU level thanks to the interventions of Hana Ševčíková and Michael Curtis. Then the presentations from Kathrin Shick and Simon Panek focused on the role of the civil society and the situation and challenges for NGOs from New Member States. In the afternoon the debates turn around the NGOs reality and the need to be professional actors. Mr. Eberwein and Ingle recall on the humanitarian principles, the NGOs position among all humanitarian actors and the NGO added-value. Lisa Henry and Paul O’Brian made the link between quality and accountability to beneficiaries and the security of humanitarian workers. Finally Jean Saslwasky presented the major trends on funding issues in the non-profit sector.

The audience gathers around 40 people from the entire Europe. 12 NGOs from 7 countries in the New Members States were represented which create interesting sharing of experiences during the debates (annex 4: List of participants in the roundtable). Despite the common idea that NGOs from NMS are facing more or less the same difficulties, the interventions showed a wide diversity of situations in each NMS both regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the NGOs and their relations with their governments. It is agreed that compared to NGOs from the old Europe, NGOs from NMS need to gain in experiences and to be more involved in the EU humanitarian scene (both to be aware of and play a role in policy development and to access to EU funding).

Finally the roundtable and the training were considered as very relevant as each one find interesting opportunities for networking.

According to VOICE, the main messages that were brought up are the following:

➤ **NGOs from New Member States need Capacity Building Activities**

This event was considered by participants as an excellent capacity building activity and many participants asked for more opportunities of this kind.

During the roundtable it was also repeated that NGOs from NMS are eager to improve their internal functioning and their general understanding of the humanitarian sector but they need to get access to trainings, roundtables and seminars. The national platforms need to be reinforced and supported in order to be able to provide their members with relevant activities and information.

➤ **NGOs need to Cooperate and Coordinate**

As a consequence of this first message, NGOs need to cooperate more often and at different levels. Indeed the platforms and networks can only be efficient if the NGOs contribute in. Alliances or NGO families are considered as a good opportunity for NGOs to share good practices and to improve their way of working while saving time and money thanks for example to joint activities in the field.

➤ **NGOs Need to Communicate and Advocate**

One of the most important messages that were spread during the roundtable is that NGOs whatever their nationalities need to communicate both with the public and their government. Sensitizing the general opinion on the role of the NGOs and reinforcing the civil society influence through advocacy at national level are essential on medium and long term visions. As mentioned before NGOs do have an added value but they need to permanently communicate about it to ensure policies at national and European levels take this fact into account.

The Roundtable: 'Challenges for EU humanitarian NGOs'

The roundtable was introduced and chaired by Mr. Pavel Gruber, Director of the Humanitarian and Development Unit in Caritas CR (the Programme of the roundtable in Annex 3).

Hana Ševčíková (Director of the Department for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic)

Ms Ševčíková presented the **2009 Czech EU Presidency's objectives in relation to humanitarian aid**. Humanitarian crisis in Gaza is one of priority issues for the Presidency. She emphasized the need to access to the population and the importance of creating humanitarian space for NGOs and other humanitarian actors' successful operations. The Czech Presidency has been working in close cooperation with DG ECHO concerning the crisis in Gaza.

Regarding the **COHAF** (EU Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid), the Czech Presidency is the first to lead this new group. She briefed the audience on the purpose of the COHAF: it is a working party of the Council of the EU where Member States exchange views and debates on humanitarian aid. The group was created as a result of the establishment of the European consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Regarding the content of the meeting, the group will discuss specific humanitarian crisis, and cross cutting issues. This working group could also discuss new humanitarian issues, such as the specific situation of the NMS. The first meeting was held in January the 9th in Brussels and mainly discussed Gaza. The next one was held on February 13th and focused on Zimbabwe, Sudan, IHL and GHD¹.

Finally, Mrs Ševčíková gave a presentation of the Czech government's humanitarian policy. The plan is to allocate 20% of the humanitarian budget to long-lasting and forgotten crises,. These structural changes should help the NGOs to position themselves more strongly. Only

¹ The GHD initiative provides a forum for donors to discuss good practice in Humanitarian Financing and other shared concerns. By defining principles and standards it provides both a framework to guide official humanitarian aid and a mechanism for encouraging greater donor accountability.

<http://www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org/>

3% of ODA (of 4 million euros) is currently allocated to humanitarian aid, but this proportion might increase.

Michael Curtis (Head of Sector 01, DG ECHO, European Commission)

'EU Humanitarian Aid Policy– background to and main elements of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid'

The complete written speech of Michael Curtis is in Appendix 1.

Mr Curtis presented **the European Consensus of Humanitarian Aid**² ('the Consensus') and its Action Plan. The Consensus was signed in December 2007 by the EU Commission, the Parliament and the Council is a joint declaration and a political document that sets out a common vision and principles on humanitarian aid. It offers opportunities to create a more coordinated EU approach, reaffirms the basic humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality and clarifies the basic aims of humanitarian aid. Mr Curtis highlighted the strong involvement NGOs had in the consultation process.

The Consensus affirms that the Commission's partnership with a plurality of actors, including NGOs, is 'essential to the humanitarian response as they deliver the majority of international humanitarian aid due to their field presence and flexibility, often with a high degree of specialisation' (art 49).

The other main objectives of the Consensus include: improving practices in the delivery of humanitarian aid, working better with other actors in the emergency response, continuing work on disaster risk reduction and linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) and supporting reform of the international humanitarian system. Mr Curtis recalls that the use of Military Assets should be 'as a last resort under very specific conditions and in very limited circumstances'.

The **Consensus Action Plan** reinforces practical approaches to fulfilling the commitments in the Consensus and identifies some priority actions. Action 1 of the Action Plan was the organisation of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Conference on 16 September 2008 and follow-up actions are on going. Another concrete action was the first COHAFA meeting chaired by Hana Ševčíková in January.

²To download the Consensus and its Action Plan: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus_en.htm

Regarding sectoral policies, **priorities for 2009** include HIV/AIDS in emergencies, the use of cash and vouchers, protection strategies and a review of best practices in integration of the gender dimension in humanitarian aid. DG ECHO is also involved in the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative.

In terms of relations between **NMS and the European context**, Mr Curtis emphasized the importance of a twinning/job shadow programme. This complements the aim to reinforce the operational capacities of new Member states and civil society.

Kathrin Schick (Director, VOICE, Belgium)

'The Importance of a strong civil society in influencing EU policies'

Ms Schick began by **introducing VOICE**, its role as a network and its objectives as well as its capacity limits due to the secretariat's small team. In brief, VOICE promotes independent humanitarian actions and the humanitarian principles. It encourages collective action and influence through NGO working groups, and it is dedicated to improve quality and accountability in humanitarian aid delivery.

NGOs represent 60-70% of the humanitarian operations done in the world and as such **NGOs are essential partners**. NGOs have an added value, and they should not be considered 'only as contractors' since they work for social change.

Concerning **donors**, Ms Schick views DG ECHO as a good donor despite the European Commission's intricate procedures. Indeed on several occasions DG ECHO has given NGOs the opportunity to express their views and to have an influence in the EC policies and strategies.

VOICE was actively involved in the **DG ECHO consultation process** during the process of designing the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. 45 Members of the network replied to the questionnaire, and VOICE consolidated the answers and brought to DG ECHO a 50-page report representing the NGOs' expectations of the Consensus.

VOICE also advocates among other actors such as the **European Parliament**. It has emphasized three key messages on humanitarian principles, civilian professional actors and the added value of NGOs.

As a network, VOICE can play a role at the EU level, but this action is much more beneficial if **NGOs and other actors advocate at national level** on same issues. VOICE asks its members to coordinate at national level and to liaise with governments and other influential bodies.

Today, **NGOs need to reach their national representative who sits in the COHAFa** to ensure a regular dialogue between this representative and the NGO community. In this regard, the national platforms or the organizations of civil society should also receive support. Finally, the general public needs to be sensitized as it also plays a considerable role through votes and direct funding.

Simon Panek (Director, People in Need, Czech Republic)
'Humanitarian NGOs in New Member States: Role and Challenges in the EU'

Mr Panek began with a short introduction of communist history and its weight in today's life. **NGOs in post-communist societies** are marginalized and the public remains suspicious of NGOs. Mr Panek emphasized that it takes time to develop and to change the general opinion. NGOs need to trust their capacities and to dare to engage with their governments or even to criticize them.

Regarding humanitarian assistance, NGOs once worked without considering the **quality of the aid**. Even relatively recently, humanitarian organizations were delivering the items they had in stock and were not considering the needs of the beneficiaries at all. Mr. Panek strongly emphasized that our assistance should to be based on the beneficiaries' needs.

At the EU level, Simon Panek is thankful for developments such as the creation of the COHAFa and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. However, he is dubious about the results of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative.

Regarding **the humanitarian aid situation in NMS**, Simon Panek stated that, to his knowledge, only two or three NGOs are actively involved in humanitarian aid delivery and can compete with NGOs from the western Member States which have 20, 30 or even 40 years of experience. From this perspective, **NGOs need to remain patient** and understand that they have a lot of work and several challenges to face.

He hoped, however, that **the situation for NMS NGOs will change**. In NMS, the new generation is enthusiastic and is really interested in what's happening all over the world. Therefore western Member States should not expect NGOs from NMS to be working only in ex-communist countries. By accessing to more operational funding thanks to EU but also by investing in capacity building and networking, NGOs such as People in Need will soon be compared with NGOs from western Member States and not only NMS. Indeed, 'there is only one Europe'.

Lisa Henry (Relief Director, DanChurchAid, Denmark) and Paul O'Brien (Overseas Director, Concern Worldwide, Ireland)

'Professionalism: More than a trend, a necessity for NGOs'

The Power Point presentation is in Appendix 2.

Lisa Henry noted that the notions of transparency and accountability have become more increasingly important in the humanitarian sphere. Several tools exist and cover most of the areas in which NGOs need to show their level of professionalism.

First, the Code of Conduct³ was created in 1994 by the NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement. It 'seeks to safeguard high standards of behaviour and maintain independence and effectiveness in disaster relief.' This code can be used as a starting point for NGOs' internal evaluations.

The Sphere project⁴ remains the most famous tool for high-quality humanitarian aid delivery. Created by a group of NGOs, it defines minimum standards and indicators for responding to humanitarian crises. Others initiatives that seek to improve humanitarian NGOs' functioning include HAP⁵, which seeks to improve accountability, and the People in Aid⁶ manual, which provides guidelines for improving human resources management.

³To download the Code of Conduct: <http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/idrl/I259EN.pdf>

⁴ The Sphere Project aims at improving the quality of assistance to people affected by disaster and improving the accountability of states and humanitarian agencies to their constituents, donors and the affected populations.: www.sphereproject.org

⁵ HAP stands for Humanitarian Accountability Partnership. The mission of HAP International is to make humanitarian action accountable to its intended beneficiaries through self-regulation, compliance verification and quality assurance certification. www.hapinternational.org

⁶ People In Aid People In Aid is a global network who help organizations to enhance the impact they make through better management and support of staff and volunteers : www.peopleinaid.org

Lisa Henry also shared some experiences from DanChurchaid, such as its efforts to implement a policy of transparency. By being more transparent, NGOs are less vulnerable to corruption issues. By publishing their budgets and procurement contracts, reporting on corruption cases in the annual report, or implementing a complaint mechanism in each project, DanChurchAid feels it fights corruption and empowers beneficiaries.

Paul O'Brien complemented Lisa Henry's presentation by underscoring the need for NGOs to become more professional with regard to security issues. Indeed, the level of risk for humanitarian worker seems to have increased in the last decade. NGOs are often targeted, and security is an crucial issue for both expatriates and national staff.

Being accepted the local population is the best way to decrease this potential risk for NGO staff. He believes that the staff behavior is a key issue which is as important as the quality of the project. He describes the 'sanitization process,' meaning that NGOs should not announce their identity: no use of an NGO logo, a 4x4 vehicle, etc.

In term of programming, Concern Worldwide has adopted a strategy that encourages joint assessments, which are more efficient and cost effective for the NGOs. Evaluations should be considered as best time for learning. He is convinced that internal evaluations are more useful for making improvements than external one, which usually aim at fulfilling donor requirements. In this learning process, sharing experiences and best practices remain one of the best ways to improve. Within networks (VOICE, ALNAP⁷), NGO families or alliance members can benefit from one another's experience and expertise. Through peer reviews, joint evaluations or other common actions, each NGO benefits.

Jean Saslawsky (Responsible for Public and Institutional Funding, Medecins du Monde, France)
'Trends in Humanitarian aid funding: the EU'
The Power Point presentation is in Appendix 3.

Mr. Saslawsky began by discussing trends in humanitarian aid funding. The global level of funding for NGOs is significant, as they receive with 10 billion Euros. However, half of this amount is allocated to American NGOs. Within the EU, there is a huge variation from one

⁷ An international interagency forum working to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian action.
www.alnap.org

country to another. While the biggest UK NGOs have a budget of 660 million euros, the biggest NGO in Portugal has only 5 million euros.

Regarding the relations between NGOs and their national government, Mr Saslawsky used a study done by Edith Archampauld⁸ which defines three types of relationships:

- The German-Scandinavian model in which NGOs receive a great deal of funding and have positive and regular interactions with their government.
- The Anglo-Saxon model where NGOs are completely independent from their government which tends to use them as a political tool.
- The Mediterranean model in which NGOs don't receive sufficient funding and have no influence in policy development.

He then presented a table that gathers the level of funding that is allocated to NGOs (based on percentages, not volume)⁹.

⁸ More details in French about the study: <http://www.ceras-projet.com/index.php?id=1997>

⁹ More statistics and analysis on EU fundings from CoordinationSud report: www.coordinationsud.org/IMG/doc/Note_d_analyse_des_resultats_2004_de_la_21-02-03-Version4.doc

Perhaps surprisingly, Slovakia finances the highest percentage NGO projects, while France finances the least. In term of volume, France and Czech Republic are almost equal (France allocates 4.5 million euros, while the Czech Republic allocates 5 million euros).

Looking towards the future, Mr. Saslawsky presented some major trends and challenges that NGOs are likely to face, some of which are already taking place. Firstly, seeking out private funds remains necessary, as donors are increasingly requesting co-financing. Due to the financial crisis and the growing number of NGOs doing public fundraising, competition for funding will increase.

Secondly, NGOs will need to fundraise more from the UN agencies because the UN will receive more funds due to the UN reform¹⁰ and the cluster approach.

Finally, NGOs need to seek out planned giving (for example, individuals agree to give a certain amount per month). This allows less uncertainty in the running of the NGOs as compared to the ‘emotional donation’ which can be of a higher amount but which is not sustainable.

Wolf Dieter EBERWEIN (VOICE President)
‘Field Reality: How policy links with practice’

Mr. Eberwein’s presentation focused on **the importance of the humanitarian principles**. Because there is a tendency to use humanitarian agencies as a tool for peace building or conflict resolution, NGOs need to refer to the Humanitarian Principles or the Red Cross/ Red

| Country | % for NGOs |
|----------------|------------|
| Slovakia | 44.00% |
| Netherlands | 19.50% |
| Spain | 15.90% |
| Ireland | 15.70% |
| Czech Republic | 12.00% |
| Sweden | 11.90% |
| Belgium | 9.40% |
| United Kingdom | 7.50% |
| Germany | 7.40% |
| Luxemburg | 6.60% |
| Danemark | 6.50% |
| Austria | 4.10% |
| Finland | 3.80% |
| Greece | 3.10% |
| Portugal | 2.40% |
| Italy | 0.70% |
| France | 0.40% |
| Slovenia | 0.12% |

¹⁰ More about the UN reform from the UN perspective here: <http://www.un.org/reform/>

Crescent Code of Conduct, which form the frame of intervention for humanitarian civil actors.

The four common principles are Humanity, Independance, Impartiality and Neutrality. NGOs' work should be based only on need and should be completely detached from political objectives. At the same time, NGOs may face dilemmas due to those principles. For example when the North Korean government withdrew the right of NGOs to assess the humanitarian situation, NGOs had two solutions:

- they stay and help some Koreans but maybe not the most vulnerable
- they leave and advocate for the respect of independance but do not help.

Referring back to humanitarian principles is also essential when considering the emergence of new actors in the field of humanitarian aid. Indeed the military sector has had a tendency to enlarge its area of intervention, such as working in relief operations. But the main differences between militaries and NGOs are the principles that they follow.

Two major documents have been created to clarify civil-military relations and the scope of military interventions: the Military Civil Defense Assets¹¹ in the USA and the Oslo guidelines¹² in EU. Despite these official agreements, it is not so easy to draw the lines in practice.

Finally, when looking at the issue of security for humanitarian workers, one needs to recall the principle of neutrality. NGOs are no longer protected by their mandates. They always need to ask themselves how they are perceived, bearing in mind that the way that locals perceive NGOs is usually completely different. Depending on the country and the context in which they operate, they need to adapt and define a proper visibility strategy. Emergencies are increasingly complex, thus NGOs depend on the states and their willingness to enforce humanitarian principles .

¹¹ MCDA Guideline to download: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx?docID=4651&type=pdf

¹² Oslo Guideline to download: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-6VXJVG/\\$file/OCHA-Nov2006.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-6VXJVG/$file/OCHA-Nov2006.pdf?openelement)

Brian Ingle (Head of Emergencies, Plan International, United Kingdom)

'Diversity of humanitarian Actors: The added value of NGOs'

The Power Point presentation is in Appendix 4.

Mr Ingle presented the overall scene of humanitarian actors and explained the added value of NGOs.

One of the main actors in humanitarian aid delivery is the United Nations and its different sections (UNICEF, FAO, UNHCR, etc). The UN has a political dimension, which prevents them from being completely neutral and independent. Secondly, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement is an important actor. It aims at protecting and assisting victims of armed conflicts, while also having a very specific mandate given by the Geneva Convention of 1994¹³. Finally, NGOs play an important role. They are numerous and each has specific mandates.

While they all adhere to the same Code of Conduct and to the Humanitarian Principles, they differ from one to the other due to their own vision and mission.

The diversity of interests and of approaches among NGOs, along with their complete independence from politics, gives NGOs a strong advantage in humanitarian aid delivery.

And according to Mr. Ingle the main components which make NGOs added value are their:

- flexibility
- presence in local communities
- technical expertise
- independence from governments
- advocacy capacity thanks to their independence

It is important for each NGO to define its own added value in order to clarify its strategy and reinforce its strengths.

To do so one should follow the next steps:

- Articulate the NGO Vision and Mission
- Clarify operational focus and approach
- Identify means of support (public / donors)
- Participate in networks to learn in

¹³ More about the Geneva Convention and the IHL:
<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/genevaconventions>

- Join networks to gain influence
- Seek views of informed observers

Finally Mr Ingle encourages each NGO to take time to identify and acknowledge its successes.

Appendices of the presentations:

Appendix 1: Michael Curtis presentation (complete speech)



Michael Curtis.doc

Appendix 2: Lisa Henry and Paul O'Brien presentation (Power Point slides)



Lisa Henry and Paul
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Appendix 3: Jean Saslawsky presentation (Power point slides)



Jean Saslawsky.ppt

Appendix 4: Brian Ingle presentation (Power point slides)



Brian Ingle.ppt

- A. Presentation of the organizers
 - B. Background of the event
 - C. Running of the training
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- 1. Evaluation of the roundtable
 - 2. Evaluation of the training
 - 3. Programme of the roundtable
 - 4. Course summary
 - 5. List of participants in the roundtable
 - 6. List of participants in the training