

FOCUS:
Linking Relief,
Rehabilitation
and Development
(LRRD)

From the VOICE Secretariat

Much focus was put on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) and the so-called grey zone in the '90s in the aftermath of the Balkan wars. Many NGOs continued to use the LRRD approach in the field.

Recent disasters such as the tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake enhanced the need for disaster preparedness, while conflict situations called for more conflict prevention and peace building. Humanitarian aid is closely linked to these trends. Therefore, the LRRD approach is again becoming prominent.

Many member organisations of the VOICE network share the view that emergency interventions need to be designed in the light of future sustainable recovery and development, and the vast majority of them are engaged simultaneously in relief, rehabilitation and development activities.

In this edition of VOICE OUT LOUD, they share their views on LRRD and their experience in putting this complex concept into practise. Different aspects of LRRD are being touched upon, such as food aid, education, the role of the local communities, disaster risk reduction, and exit strategies.

VOICE OUT LOUD is intended to contribute to the understanding of the professional reality of humanitarian NGOs. It is addressed to the European decision makers and other stakeholders of the humanitarian community, while giving an insight into relevant humanitarian issues, relying upon the experience and input of VOICE members.

VOICE

VOICE stands for Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies. It is a network representing some 90 European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide. Seeking to involve its members in information, training, advocacy and lobbying, VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness. As a European network, it represents and promotes the values and specificities of humanitarian NGOs, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors. Based in Brussels, VOICE has been active since 1992.

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SECURITY OF HUMANITARIAN AID WORKERS: TAKING A CONSISTENT, PRINCIPLED APPROACH.

EDITORIAL



The security of aid workers is a recurrent issue, but events such as the killing of Action contre la Faim staff in Muttur (Sri Lanka) or the enormous security challenge of aid delivery in Darfur push the issue once again to the foreground.

Humanitarian NGOs are responsible for the security of their personnel, in particular the nationals of host countries who make up two third of the victims of incidents against aid workers. Security management is complex. It requires appropriate budgetary means, specific expertise, the drafting of guidelines and extensive training. In fact, all emergency relief NGOs active in conflict settings should have a security department, and smaller organisations should get the support from larger organisations.

Efforts to put security high on the managerial agenda of NGOs and subsequent organisational initiatives are much needed. But the fact remains that one key to genuine security is local acceptance by all parties involved in the conflict. Parties - independently of their ideological or political positions - should be duly informed about the NGOs and their *modus operandi*, and have an understanding of the activities which aid organisations intend to carry out. This implies that humanitarians should not be perceived by any party as a threat nor as a benefit.

Correct local perception of what humanitarian NGOs are about takes place in the field. Contacts have to be established with all sides and at all levels of power, from the hierarchy, top down, to the field level. Meeting with regional and local decision makers, including warlords, "commanders" and other heads of (para-)military units, is crucial. Among western actors, NGOs - more than any other - have privileged access to such groups through their local staff, their presence in the country, sometimes through local partners.

This can work provided a coherent introduction of warring parties to humanitarian aid. The larger security framework therefore needs to have one common foundation: the humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality. These principles are a fundamental starting point and should be kept in mind at all times where security is concerned.

Humanitarian aid is being provided without favouring any political party (neutrality). It is based exclusively on the assessment of needs of populations affected by the conflict (impartiality). And it has no political agenda (independence). A strict application of these three principles can at times convince combatants and their leaders that humanitarian operations do not constitute a threat to themselves or an advantage for their opponents. In contrast, any integrated approach whereby humanitarian, military and political means are being combined will create confusion as to the motives and associations of all actors and contribute to insecurity, as clearly demonstrated with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan.


This principles based approach to security should be supported with a thorough analysis of risks and threats, whether potential or real. When it comes to avoiding incidents such as "being at the wrong place at the wrong time", prevention is first of all a question of careful implementation of humanitarian operations. Things become much more delicate if the NGO turns into a potential deliberate target. When the will to harm humanitarian workers is based on reasons linked to the local context only, identifying the potential attackers is usually possible provided a good understanding of the context. Risk reduction becomes even more complex, when the threat is caused by external factors due to the international environment.

Once again, NGOs can implement their security policy, train their field staff and prepare them to avoid potential dangers and face these dangers when they appear. But whatever the nature of the threat, keeping firm to impartiality, independence and neutrality is one of the most crucial elements to support security of relief workers in complex emergencies. This needs to be done by the NGOs themselves of course, but also be truly integrated in the approach of international donors, military actors and the UN in providing relief.

Paul Grossrieder
President of VOICE

LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TODAY?

THE ISSUE - LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

 **The idea of linking relief and development is not recent. The wording can be traced back in the international policy-related literature more than 20 years ago. But what does Linking Relief to Rehabilitation and Development mean today and how can this concept be implemented when the world is faced with complex crises?**

Linking relief and development - under various forms - was an important issue which came out of the analysis of the food crisis in Africa in the eighties.


In 1987, LRRD was adopted as a central "pillar" in the national disaster prevention and preparedness strategy, which the Ethiopian government subsequently ratified. It is worth noting that, for a long time, the name of the public body in charge for the victims of famine in that country was the "Relief and Rehabilitation Commission".

The "jargon" of external aid is filled with a variety of words and concepts which result from both practical field experiences and analytical exercises. The LRRD, or Linking Relief to Rehabilitation and Development, is one of these concepts and is very familiar within the international aid community. "(...) *The basic idea is simple and sensible*", states the Food Security Unit of the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University. According to the Institute's 1993-94 Annual Report, "*emergencies are costly in terms of life and resources. They are disruptive of development. They demand a long period of rehabilitation and they have spawned bureaucratic structures, lines of communication and organizational cultures, which duplicate development institutions and sometimes cut across them. By the same token, development policy and administration are often insensitive to the risk of drought and to the importance of protecting vulnerable households against risk*", the Report continues. For the Institute, the LRRD concept is very operational: "*If relief and development can be "linked", these deficiencies can be overcome. Better "development" can reduce the need for emergency relief, better "relief" can contribute to development, and better "rehabilitation" can ease any remaining transition between the two*", concludes the Report.

Over the years, international non governmental organizations (NGOs), aid agencies and main

donors have been categorizing aid interventions into two main areas: emergency relief and development. It is a fact that these two kinds of intervention often require specific skills, approaches and, most of all, specific timings. Saving the lives of people exposed to immediate risks due to natural or man made disasters is the ultimate goal of any relief intervention. Development strategies aim at introducing structural changes in a given context. Their objective is to strengthen livelihood security and to reduce vulnerability. In principle, the distinction between relief and development aid - each with its own logic - is clear but it does not stand against the variety of contexts where aid is needed. This explains why the LRRD concept has become increasingly "popular" over the last decade.

CONCRETE EXAMPLES

 In geographical areas repeatedly threatened by famine, aid agencies frequently intervene by providing food aid. In many circumstances, such aid appears to be the only kind of intervention able to meet the risk of massive starvation. At the same time, both local governments and aid agencies are aware that a long term solution to famine can only be overcome by reducing the dependency to rain fed agriculture (for instance by increasing the use of irrigation and the diversification of local rural economy). In other words, the ultimate answer to food emergencies is development. In this perspective, LRRD is more than a "fashionable" academic concept; it is an effort to reduce the distance between external aid and the field reality.

Except for very few cases, areas in need of aid can not be described as "100% relief" or "100% development" areas. Some contexts are subject to frequent emergencies due to the lack of development. This demands immediate relief action, as well as long term development strategies. This is easier said than done. The challenge is how to define effective relief interventions which benefit the victims of an emergency crisis but do not jeopardize development strategies. There is a risk that relief generates a dependency "syndrome" within the affected population; if prolonged over the years, relief interventions tend to be perceived by the beneficiaries as a structural solution to their problems. In some cases, food aid can create such a risk.

The tricky coexistence of the two types of aid has been kept in mind by the aid community.

'(...) LRRD is more than a "fashionable" academic concept; it is an effort to provide the most appropriate external aid in regards to the situation in the field.'

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Over the last ten years, LRRD has been envisaged not only diachronically (first relief, then rehabilitation and finally development) but also synchronically. In other words, it has been recognized that relief plans need to use typical development methodologies in order to be effectively "development oriented". Concretely, this approach may include enhancing local human resources and institutions, the role of local actors and a participatory approach in the identification of priorities and strategies.

Aid agencies and NGOs - both international and local ones - have elaborated relevant and concrete sets of indicators to assess how far relief interventions are conducive to development and how far development plans have contributed to reduce the risk of emergencies or to strengthen the local capacity to cope with these emergencies. LRRD can now be assumed as a criterion in project appraisals. On the other hand, should the above concepts be translated into concrete action, LRRD has to be fully incorporated in the various steps of the Project Cycle Management, in particular in the identification phase and in the formulation of the project.

WHAT IS
REHABILITATION?



If LRRD is considered in its synchronic dimension, rehabilitation is not simply the "ring" linking relief and development. It is primarily a strategy which is owned by local actors and supported with external aid.

According to the European Commission, rehabilitation may be defined as "(...) an overall, dynamic and intermediate strategy of institutional reform and reinforcement, of reconstruction and improvement of infrastructure and services, supporting the initiatives and actions of the populations concerned, in the political, economic and social domains, and aimed towards the resumption of sustainable development".

Others sources give different definitions of the concept of rehabilitation. A recent paper produced by the Overseas Development Institute gives account of various definitions, but which have one common element: the focus on the strategic dimension of rehabilitation. This means that rehabilitation is a strategy which deserves the attention of a variety of actors with different mandates but who share the will to integrate their respective efforts.

Many of today's main humanitarian emergencies find their roots in the lack of political stability and in armed conflicts. Looking at contexts such as Somalia, Iraq, Palestine or Afghanistan, it is clear that rehabilitation represents a dramatically difficult and uncertain challenge. It is also quite obvious that, in these areas, a rehabilitation strategy requires the combination of different types of intervention (humanitarian, political and economic) to overcome the problems which are at the basis of war, instability and insecurity.

The question is then: what impact can external aid alone have in such circumstances? Aid can certainly alleviate suffering. This is not an easy task and demands sustained and extended efforts. At the same time, a real, sustainable and acceptable rehabilitation process clearly requires other means and efforts.

At the end of the day, the European Union is facing a major challenge: strengthening its capacity to propose integrated and coherent answers to the main world crises, through an effective coordination between the European institutions and an alliance with the European civil society organizations and NGOs.


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*'(...) rehabilitation
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FOOD AID IN LONG TERM ASSISTANCE APPROACHES

THE ISSUE - LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

 NGOs like German Agro Action (GAA) are engaged in many (post-) conflict regions, such as Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Sudan and Sierra Leone. GAA basically supports activities that enable people to secure their livelihoods. Food aid is being provided only when living conditions deny people to maintain themselves. Sustainable development demands a long term perspective. Hence it is important to link emergency aid (food and temporary shelter) immediately with reconstruction and capacity building measures.

'(...) the transition from emergency aid to rehabilitation and development programmes is a dynamic process.'

The concept of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) has been developed as a result of acknowledging the frequent gap between emergency aid and development assistance. The increasing number of humanitarian crisis has fuelled the debate on how to implement coherent strategies of coordinated aid and this amongst the different stakeholders. GAA is convinced that only a holistic perception of the situation on the ground comprises the chance to be successful. Former post-conflict situations like in Angola immediately after the peace agreement in 2002 illustrate this. While food aid had still to be delivered to refugees in one "pocket" area of the country, other regions were infested with landmines. In a third location, micro credit schemes, the construction of new schools and agricultural extension programmes provided adequate assistance to local communities.

Reality shows that needs can differ a lot, even within a single region. Therefore, the transition from emergency aid to rehabilitation and development programmes is a dynamic process. This requires all actors involved to work on an interdisciplinary basis.

In practice, connecting short-term relief measures with long-term development programmes is not easy. The integration has a higher chance of success if emergency aid supports survival strategies of the affected population and attempts to recover their economic basis. Protracted armed conflicts raised specific problems. In these cases, failed emergency aid has sometimes undermined local agricultural production or even contributed - unintentionally and unwillingly - to the conflict as a means of providing resources to armed factions.

Food aid in general is a highly problematic form of assistance. Although only 10 % of the overall

food aid is given within emergencies or to refugees, the objective of GAA is to phase out as soon as possible. In 1996, GAA reorganized its restructures and adapted its Projects Department to the requirements of the LRRD approach. The previously independent units for humanitarian aid and development cooperation have been dissolved and regrouped according to sub-regions and countries, in order to be more efficient.

IMPLEMENTING LRRD IN SIERRA LEONE

Years of civil war - from 1991 to 2002 - have devastated Sierra Leone. This West African country witnessed fighting between an increasingly unstable government and rebel groups supported by neighboring Liberia. At least 75,000 of the country's five million inhabitants died; 5,000 children were actively involved in the hostilities; some 50,000 women and girls were raped or abducted for slavery. This extremely brutal war waged between the rebel organization, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the Sierra Leonean army, and was financed by the diamond trade. A peace treaty was signed only after Sierra Leone and the United Nations came to an agreement in 2002 and the establishment of a Special Court for the country was endorsed. Peacekeeping forces were withdrawn from Sierra Leone in 2005.

The war devastated most of the country's infrastructure. By the end of the fighting, trade and production (particularly in the agricultural sector) had grinded to a halt. The Gross National Product fell by half in the '90s and, by the year 2000, had reached a low point of USD 142 per capita. Since then, there have been signs of recovery from the years of economic decline during the civil war. Nevertheless, Sierra Leone is still the penultimate country on the list of 177 countries in the UN's Human Development Index in 2006¹ with a life expectancy at birth of 41 years.

A new basis for life had to be created for some 1,5 million refugees returning from neighboring countries or displaced from other parts of Sierra Leone, as well as for 75,000 former soldiers of the rebel army. While the peace was still fragile, political, economic and national security related measures have to be closely tied in with development policy. One priority is to improve considerably the living conditions of the population hit by poverty and to encourage them to play an active role in the process.

1. In 2004, Sierra Leone was the last country on that list.

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'Food aid in general is a highly problematic form of assistance.'

Food security is at the top of the government's agenda. In May 2002, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah declared that he would do everything in his power to make sure that, within five years, no one in Sierra Leone would have to go to bed hungry.

GAA had already been active in Sierra Leone in the period between 1983 and 1997, particularly in the farming sector. Unfortunately, this work had to be stopped after a military coup which brought the country into chaos. In 2004, GAA was the first German relief organisation to return in the country, as the security situation had more or less stabilised. Soon after the end of the war, GAA was able to end emergency relief - such as food supply, and introduce concrete programmes for the sustainable development of the country. Its activities in Sierra Leone focus on a close linkage of emergency relief, reconstruction and long-term development co-operation.

 THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

GAA's LRRD-project in Sierra Leone is entitled "Boku yam yam fo tumara", which means "plenty of food for tomorrow". Its aim is to achieve food security. Financed by the European Commission and private funds from GAA, it is located in the south-eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. Due to the vicinity to Liberia and to large gold and diamond resources, these provinces served as home base for the rebels and have been the most affected by civil war. About 72 % of the villages, as well as most roads, bridges and water supply facilities were destroyed. The National Recovery Committee estimates that about 16.500 former inhabitants returned to their homelands since the end of the war. They had taken refuge particularly in Liberia and Guinea. Additionally, 5.500 former fighters participated in reintegration measures. Last but not least, about 55.000 Liberian refugees are still accommodated in UN-HCR camps set in the region.

Though having been the "rice chamber" of the country before the war, today farmers in the districts suffer periodically from hunger. Main agricultural activities include lowland farming, such as rice cultivation in swamps, and upland farming characterised by the traditional slash-and-burn rotation scheme. The project is being implemented in Liberian refugee camps, which are inhabited with some 28.000 people (at the beginning of the project). The project also

concerns 48 neighboring host communities in a radius of about five kilometers around the camps.

The objective of the project is to enhance the living conditions of Liberian refugees in camps and of their host communities by both improving the agricultural production and applying an environmentally sound approach. The increased agricultural production is meant to contribute both to the food security and the income situation of the rural population. The project further aims to support communities in their re-organisation process.

At the beginning of the project, a comprehensive participatory assessment was carried out in the host communities. The project activities in the refugee camps are characterised by shifts in the support strategy, depending on the repatriation process of the Liberians. Activities were first implemented both in the camps and in the surrounding villages. According to the political stabilisation in Liberia, the project subsequently lowered agricultural inputs for refugees and shifted its support to incentives for the ones willing to return to Liberia.

Locally, GAA coordinates its work with all relevant stakeholders, is in regular contact with the UNHCR and the EC Delegation in Freetown and participates to relevant meetings.

 PERSPECTIVE


The funding mechanisms still put severe constraints on LRRD. Some financing organisations, like the EC, started to set up special programmes for the promotion of LRRD. However, donors generally continue to finance humanitarian aid and development aid programmes separately. In practice, this can lead to financing gaps and interruption of activities. Responsibilities are divided among several organisations or units. Many donors have created budget lines to address the financial gap between relief and development programmes but these financial resources tend to be generally small. Organisations therefore should consider either to start a restructuring process or to mainstream LRRD throughout their different departments.

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EDUCATION FOR CHILD SURVIVAL: A KEY PART OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

THE ISSUE - LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

 **World-wide 115 million children are missing out on education. Research by Save the Children has revealed that 43 million - 1 in 3 - of these children live in countries affected by conflict. Amongst these 43 million are children living in protracted crises whose whole childhood is spent living in emergency conditions without an education. In addition, millions more children are affected by natural disasters and unable to access an education for significant periods. Taken as a whole, the number of children missing out on an education because their communities are affected by emergencies (either chronic complex or acute) is unacceptably high. One of the main challenges for these children's prospects for schooling is the perception that education is not considered part of first phase humanitarian response.**

Children in conflicts and disasters are denied their rights on a regular basis, including all too frequently even their right to life, whether through chronic poverty or direct violence. Education is overlooked because it is not widely acknowledged that education can save lives. However, it is known that quality education can protect children immediately from death or bodily harm. For example, lessons in landmine awareness and the dangers of unexploded ordnance, HIV and AIDS information, health and hygiene promotion can all transmit crucial life-skills that have been proven to save lives.

Areas for safe play and temporary learning centres can provide an effective way to identify and reunite separated children with their families; this is critical as children without the protection of their families will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation through, for example, forced prostitution and trafficking. Children who attend school are less vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups, to abusive work, and to being trafficked. Save the Children's research in West Africa found that keeping schools open as long as possible supported children in resisting recruitment into armed fighting.

Education is also life-sustaining in the longer term. For example, providing children in emergencies with an education now may also save lives in the future; infant mortality is twice as high for children of mothers with no education as opposed to children of other mothers. This is particularly important when people are in situations where health systems

are failing and disease conditions are dire, as is the case in many cases of displaced populations.

In addition, it must be acknowledged that the international community's response to humanitarian crises is now more sophisticated than just a few years ago. The humanitarian community now accepts as mainstream the need to look at the economic impact of conflict and displacement on the individual, family and community. Work such as mitigating people's lack of access to markets, food insecurity, and other aspects of addressing problems with livelihoods is now part of this more sophisticated analysis of humanitarian relief.

Education could arguably be the most important economic survival strategy for children in conflict and in countries coming out of conflict. As the average civil war lasts for seven years, and the average duration of displacement lasts for about 10 years, this is critical. Many conflicts last even longer. It is clear that if children in conflict-affected countries have to wait until peace they could pass their entire childhood without access to education, and without these key survival skills.

Save the Children believes that children caught up in emergencies are entitled to a full and comprehensive response, responding to a range of their needs and rights - including their right to education. Children's opportunities should not be limited to the traditional emergency response services such as water, sanitation, food and shelter, even though these are also important. Even in the most acute crisis children should be able to access opportunities that directly support their learning and development - this is education.

At Save the Children, we have demonstrated that developmental activities that enable children to see how their lives might get better, and how their nations may develop, are both essential and possible in some of the world's most difficult contexts, including in emergencies. In addition, education can be a very effective vehicle for disaster preparedness and community disaster response.

THE JAVA EARTHQUAKE

The earthquake in Java, Indonesia, this year dramatically affected the lives of more than 100,000 children. Included in the widespread destruction were schools and other government buildings.

'(...) children in conflict-affected countries (...) could pass their entire childhood without access to education (...)'

'(...) children caught up in emergencies are entitled to a full and comprehensive response, responding to a range of their needs and rights (...)'

With children and teachers experiencing high levels of stress, emergency workshops were conducted to enhance the schools' capacity to provide a more supportive environment and promote emotional stability and recovery. Workshops also aimed to strengthen the capacity of children, teachers, school committees and other education personnel in various aspects of emergency planning and response - with particular emphasis on life-saving knowledge and behaviour during earthquakes.

Emergency school shelters also facilitated the return to school. Initially, tents were erected to provide children with immediate protection from the sun. More recently, durable temporary school shelters were built from local materials, providing more suitable protection from the monsoon rains. These have enabled children to access school while the government manages the construction of permanent school buildings. Aspects of hygiene within the emergency setting were also included in workshops while partner agencies ensured that all children in school had immediate access to water and sanitation facilities.

Although there was some degree of emergency preparedness as a result of the close proximity and anticipated volcanic eruption of Mount Merrapi, the affected population was generally unprepared for an earthquake of such a scale. Teacher training sessions during post-emergency also included aspects of emergency preparedness. Since then, the Ministry of Education in Java has agreed to embed important aspects of emergency education into the national curriculum. With child participation an underlying principle of the Child Rights Convention, Save the Children has promoted children's involvement in the processes that are leading to the strengthening of schools' capacity to protect and thus they play an integral role in emergency preparedness.



EMERGENCY COORDINATION

Since the end of 2005, there has been an effort to increase co-ordination of responses in emergencies through the introduction of the UN cluster system. The Cluster approach to emergency co-ordination was initiated to redress critical systemic gaps and strengthen leadership and accountability in humanitarian response. The goals of the cluster approach include mapping gaps in humanitarian response, improved interagency planning, and

stronger accountability to deliver services. Although a cluster approach to education is only now being formally discussed (it was not initially envisioned as part of the UN humanitarian reform), several education sub-clusters have been set up as a de facto response to emergencies.


Pakistan was one of the first countries to trial the Cluster approach. While supporting primary and secondary school children and teachers, the education intervention also extended to support communities in caring for younger children, through the development of pre-school centres. In addition to devising a common strategy and setting standards for quality assurance, the Cluster also helped organisations and others responding to prevent gaps in the sector response.

Waiting for the emergency phase to end and the development phase to begin before providing children with an education is too late and no longer justifiable. The divide between humanitarian interventions and development work is often an unhelpful chasm where education and other services fall through at the expense of a child's well being. Children cannot wait. Quality education can save lives, facilitate children's recovery and their reintegration into their society. It can also help re-establish normal life patterns and offer hope for the future.

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ASSISTANCE IN COMPLEX EMERGENCIES

THE ISSUE - LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

 **When should humanitarian organisations exit from an emergency and how should they develop, resource and implement an exit strategy? This is an important discussion that has been ongoing for years, reflecting perhaps that it has yet to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Nevertheless, many humanitarian agencies and donors - including DG ECHO - have made progress in developing a more refined approach to the whole issue of LRRD.**

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) welcomes this development and advocates for such commitment from the humanitarian donors. It is also stressing that this commitment should go well beyond situations of acute crisis in order not to leave communities fragile and people affected by conflict unable to care for themselves. Thus, it is important to recognise that this is not simply a question of bridging the gap between relief and development and of defining the right strategy for exiting once the emergency operation is over. Humanitarian actors have to remain in place until affected societies have been stabilised and are able to stand on their own feet once again.

This point is closely linked to the overall observation that strategies, which assume a linear relationship between relief and development, often fail to capture the dynamics of conflict and transition. Instead, the parallel implementation of complementary relief, rehabilitation and development assistance is often called for:

- by the coexistence of emergency and non-emergency situations within the same country and region;
- by the fact that conflicts typically fluctuate over time - between periods of relative peace on the one hand and outbreaks of violent conflict on the other;
- and by the fact that various individuals and groups within the same area may well be affected by conflict in very different ways at the same time - for reasons related to ethnicity, religion, political allegiances, proximity to conflict zones, etc.

The examples are numerous. In Sri Lanka, the focus has recently turned away from development efforts in support of the return and reintegration of displaced communities. Now, relief efforts are again taking the centre stage in some parts of the island, while rehabilitation and other livelihood-focused activities are continuing in other areas.

Another example is Afghanistan. This country is not only affected by fluctuating conflicts for the past three decades, but also hit by natural disasters.

Six years ago, major parts of the assistance community re-directed their efforts from long-term rehabilitation towards concrete life-saving activities in support of a population that was seriously affected by drought. The key to the success of this assistance was the fact that relief activities were undertaken by the very same agencies that for many years had been involved in rural development activities.

These agencies were able to use their close relationship with local communities. They could apply strategies that had a longer-term perspective and, at the same time, could meet the immediate needs of affected population groups. This also ensured a foundation for the resumption of longer-term developmental efforts, once the drought was over. The fact that this was subsequently challenged by other events is a different story altogether - but one that re-confirms the validity of the above argument. Thus, while the current emphasis is put on the capacity of the central government and, to some extent, on rural development, emergency relief is being provided to victims affected by the ongoing conflict in some parts of the country and by drought in other parts.

In this context, DRC stresses the importance of aid actors being able to deliver several types of assistance simultaneously. Emergency relief is needed to save lives and alleviate suffering. This kind of assistance should be combined with and gradually replaced by livelihoods assistance, focused on protecting and developing the self-reliance capacity of affected communities.


Nonetheless, increasing efforts should be concurrently invested in building domestic values, policies and capacities required to respond to current needs in society, as well as in preventing similar needs of developing in the future. This is about building civil society as well as state capacity. When these values, policies and capacities are in place - possibly with the long-term support of mandated international organisations -, only then should the humanitarian community consider leaving the country. DRC strongly believes that this principled approach should be recognised by humanitarian donors.

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'Humanitarian actors have to remain in place until affected societies have been stabilised (...)'

STRONG COMMUNITIES SURVIVE IN EMERGENCIES, RECOVER AND TAKE OFF FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE ISSUE - LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

 Each year, thousands of people and communities struggle for survival in natural disaster situations: floodings, hurricanes, droughts or earthquakes. As a result of wars and other types of armed conflicts, thousands of families have to flee into temporary settlements for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). For NGOs engaged in both relief and development activities, one key to survival is the existence of strong and active local communities.

FinnChurchAid (FCA) has been witnessing this phenomenon over the past decades. As a NGO concentrating on both emergency and development aid, FCA works in a network of church-related aid organizations. In its 2005-2008 strategy, FCA is strongly committed to the principle of linking relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development (LRRD). In practice, FCA has followed this principle for a long time. After relief programmes, FCA tries to secure funding for reconstruction and for long-term development in the same area, in order to guarantee sustainable results and a good impact. Disaster preparedness in all development programmes implemented in areas prone to natural or other types of catastrophes is being envisaged. Combining this with the participative approach, FCA aims at strengthening the capacities of local people and communities.

FROM SURVIVAL TO RECONSTRUCTION

In order to survive in a disaster prone area, a local community should be prepared as much as possible, identify possible disasters, plan a response and operations in case of an emergency situation, and coordinate the plans with the authorities and other relevant actors. It is also crucial for a community to be organised, e.g. by organizing committees, collecting aid items, and identifying sites for evacuation. Vulnerability can be further reduced by storing food and cultivating a sufficient variety of grain and vegetables, or building houses in safe locations.

When and if a disaster happens, a well prepared community will save a lot of lives and reduce the damage. From the first moments of a disaster onwards, affected communities can assess their needs, provide first aid and help in evacuation when necessary - sometimes days before any international aid. Once the acute phase is over, camp settled communities should be empowered in activities, such as the building of shelters, the distribution of relief and others camp management tasks.

Camp population should have the opportunity to earn their own living, send their children to school and learn new skills. They should also be aware of their rights. Life in temporary conditions may be prone to assaults and violence. Careful procedures and awareness raising are needed to protect from violence and exploitation those who are most vulnerable, like children and women. Furthermore, procedures supporting dispute settlement should be organised, so that the conflicts in the area are not being "imported" in temporary settlements.

Experience shows the fact that there may be nothing left from the home town or village does not impend return. "We want to repair our own homes and cultivate our own lands", a woman from Lofa County, Liberia, told to an FCA visitor in the Jahtondo IDP camp near Monrovia in 2004. "Home is always home", she said.

OBSTACLES TO LRRD

Out of the many lessons learned during FCA's 60 years of experience, the foremost one is that a participatory and community based approach is the starting point of LRRD. Local people and communities should be empowered to participate in their recovery and efforts for a better future. This should not just be a principle, but also be put into practice. There, one should not underestimate the huge humanitarian needs, nor some of the severe obstacles which arise before the acute emergency, during the emergency and in the process of recovery: under funding, the collapse of State structures in the affected country, and "donor fatigue" when the crisis lasts over a long period of time.

As humanitarians, we are committed to LRRD. But conditions should be created to ensure a proper implementation of the LRRD process. There needs to be sufficient funding available for reconstruction. NGOs specialised in acute relief delivery should be able to implement a proper exit plan. At "bureaucratic" level, the limiting fact that relief and reconstruction are being taken care by two separate departments and financed by two different budget lines should be re-examined.

At FCA, after we have been providing support through the hardest times, we appreciate it when partner communities say "we did it ourselves", because then we know that LRRD has been implemented.

Helena Manninen-Visuri,
Head of Humanitarian Unit &
Merja Luukkanen, Programme Coordinator
FinnChurchAid
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*'When and if
a disaster happens,
a well prepared
community will save
a lot of lives and
reduce the damage.'*




TRANSFORMING THE COMMITMENT INTO ACTION: EU PROGRESS WITH MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

THE ISSUE - LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'Disaster risk reduction is a prerequisite of sustainable development in hazard-prone environments.'

'The challenge ahead is to transform this commitment [the Hyogo Framework] into action in developing countries where it is needed most. We must do more to reduce the burden of disasters on the poor and most vulnerable.'

EU statement at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly New York, November 2005

 **The number and frequency of disasters is growing. Climate change is increasing the frequency of weather-related disasters. The poorest are worst affected and suffer the most. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) should be a key element of sustainable development, and in fact is a prerequisite of sustainable development in hazard-prone environments.**

The steps taken by the EU over the past year in transforming commitments into action, particularly in its humanitarian programmes, are welcome. However donors are under-investing in disaster risk reduction. The EU is the world's largest donor of development aid and one of the main donors of humanitarian assistance. It is therefore crucial that it has a clear, comprehensive and time-bound strategy for integrating disaster risk reduction into its relief and development policy and practice.

Better preparedness against floods in Tajikistan

Mission East has been working in Tajikistan, especially in eastern Khatlon, since 1997. Villages in the Yokshu River area have experienced 13 floods of increasing frequency between 1992 and 2005 as ageing soviet infrastructure deteriorates and is not maintained. Helping the local population towards better preparedness in a disaster-prone environment is seen as vital to sustainable development. Flood-related DRR programming is designed to work on several levels: small-scale mitigation works to reduce physical vulnerability of villages and agricultural land; early warning systems and evacuation routes established to minimise potential loss of life; village emergency committees established to raise awareness and so increase community preparedness; and government institutions supported in risk assessment and flood management planning. Key learning for follow-on programmes from initial flood DRR programmes includes that vulnerable populations have difficulty affording mitigation measures; and that required physical mitigation measures (such as flood barriers) are often beyond the scope of the programme. Therefore emphasis in small-scale mitigation needs to be laid on building and strengthening local capacity.

The expression 'disaster risk reduction' (DRR) is now widely used as a term that encompasses the two aspects of a disaster reduction strategy: mitigation and preparedness. Mitigation can be defined as the measures that can be undertaken to minimise the impact of hazards and thus lessen the magnitude of a disaster. Preparedness can be defined as all measures undertaken before a hazard to ensure that communities are aware of hazards and are able to take precautionary measures in advance, and respond to their impact. This may include an organisation's delivery of timely and effective rescue, relief and other post-disaster assistance. Mainstreaming means expanding and enhancing disaster risk reduction so that it becomes normal practice, fully institutionalised within an agency's relief and development agenda.

EXPERIENCE OF GRASSROOTS DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Two brief case studies (see boxes) present the experience of two members of the EU-CORD network¹ working with funding from DIPECHO (see below). In addition, based on their experience, Tearfund has also produced a tool to help development organisations measure and monitor progress with mainstreaming DRR into their relief and development work. Performance targets and indicators have been developed to assist development organisations 'mainstream' risk reduction into relief and development planning and programming.

THE EU AND DRR MAINSTREAMING

Tearfund produced a study on EU progress with mainstreaming DRR in March 2006. The report called on the EC to produce a clear strategy and action plan for their disaster risk reduction work, and to mainstream DRR into their development programmes, particularly in disaster-prone countries. The EU refers to DRR as disaster preparedness and prevention (DPP). The study found that European Commission statements contain a commitment to support DPP and to develop a strategy to address the needs of vulnerable countries including some indication of what elements of that strategy might include. However, to date there has not been a comprehensive statement of what the strategy will involve, or an Action Plan to 'transform the commitment into action'. In July 2005, the Council of Ministers asked for more complete proposals as soon as possible. The study concluded that the EU needs to make

1. EU-CORD is a European network of Christian Relief and Development NGOs. The network currently has 13 members from 8 EU member states, and is a member of VOICE.

'Vulnerable populations have difficulty affording mitigation measures.'

Disaster preparedness in North-Western Cambodia

The vast majority of families in the north-western province Oddar Meanchey depend on subsistence rain fed rice farming. Over the past decade rainfall has become increasingly erratic resulting in dry spells during the rice farming season. Coping mechanisms have broken down and families have become increasingly vulnerable to the impact of drought.

ZOA Refugee Care, in cooperation with DIPECHO, has sought to mitigate the impact of drought by strengthening coping mechanisms. Community Based Disaster Risk Management committees have been established and situational risk analyses carried out. As a result, small-scale village irrigation systems were installed and a provincial drought early warning system established. At the commune and provincial level Disaster Risk Management committees were revived and linked with the National Committee for Disaster Management. As a result of all these actions 20 of the most vulnerable villages are much more resilient against droughts as they have better access to water during dry periods, use improved farming methods and are able to respond appropriately to other hazardous threats.

significantly more progress with systematically integrating - or 'mainstreaming' - DPP into its development policy and programming.

The study made a number of recommendations for the EU. DG ECHO needs to free up time for more leadership on DPP, with dedicated, well-resourced staff to ensure internal coordination, undertake advocacy and manage relations with other Commission services.

The Commission should have a clear strategy and action plan setting out how all the different services will work in a coordinated way on DPP. As an initial confidence-building step, the Commission should ensure that each relevant service has a focal point for DPP with a functioning cross-service working group. It should also ensure that the relevant services (DG DEV, DG RELEX) have a commitment to include DPP in Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), Regional Strategy Papers (RSPs) and National Indicative Programmes (NIPs), in disaster prone-countries. DPP can then be integrated into longer term external aid programmes with clear leadership, additional capacity and support to enhance skills, knowledge and understanding. Where recipient governments in disaster-prone countries do not view DPP as a priority, the EC should engage in non-coercive dialogue with them. Finally, the Commission must ensure that the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Facility does

not become a distraction from ensuring the integration of DPP into CSPs and RSPs.

EU STEPS AND WAYS FORWARD

The EU has taken a number of steps over the past year in transforming commitments into action. In 2006, DG ECHO created a new Unit responsible for 'Food Aid and Disaster Preparedness'. DIPECHO has proposed a budget increase to €19.5 million for 2007, and an increase in the number of eligible countries.

DPP has been integrated into the objectives of a number of ECHO programmes, for example in the Caribbean. New ECHO drought preparedness programmes are also proposed for Africa, including €25 million in 2007 for a Sahel plan (covering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) focusing on reducing vulnerability to acute malnutrition and infant mortality resulting from drought.

The 2006 DG ECHO strategy announced that mainstreaming of DPP will be further promoted in its humanitarian aid relief responses. Commission guidelines to EC Delegations contained instructions for DRR to be mainstreamed into all CSPs with apparent success for some West African and South Asian countries. DRR is now part of the 10th EDF programming guidelines.

These steps taken by the EU, particularly in its humanitarian programmes, are welcome. However donors are under-investing in disaster risk reduction. Tearfund is currently carrying out a review of the progress of ten donors, including the EU, with mainstreaming DRR. This review report will be launched in June 2007. In 2007, EU-CORD plans to co-host a conference in Brussels to discuss the report findings and to help inspire and challenge donors on mainstreaming DRR.

'The challenge ahead is to ensure that risk reduction becomes an integral part of sustainable development policy. All parties concerned - governments, communities, partners and donors - have an interest in working together to achieve this common goal.'

DIPECHO website,
accessed 16 November 2006.


Richard Weaver
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EU-CORD
www.eu-cord.org

FURTHER READING:

- *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: a tool for development organizations*, Davis, I. and La Trobe S., 01/2005. (<http://tilz.tearfund.org/Research/Climate+change+and+disasters+policy/>)
- Mission East (2006) DRR programme in Tajikistan (<http://www.miseast.org/sw1298.asp>)
- *Tearfund Disaster Risk Reduction Briefing Paper 1, Transforming the Commitment into Action: EU progress with mainstreaming disaster risk reduction*, Taylor, N. and La Trobe, S. 03/2006. (<http://tilz.tearfund.org/Research/Climate+change+and+disasters+policy/>)

FUNDING FOR HUMANITARIAN AID: HAS THE EU ENOUGH MEANS TO MEET HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES?

A VIEW ON THE EU

 In May 2006, the European Parliament concluded its Budget discussions, which put an end to a protracted and difficult process within the EU's new multi-annual Financial Framework for the period 2007-2013. What is the state of play on the 2007-2013 financial perspectives and the emergency reserve concerning EU humanitarian aid?

'With two exceptions (...), all consolidated and flash appeals for emergencies in 2006 show chronically unmet financial requirements.'

Humanitarian aid has been set at €732 million for 2007 with a further increase of 3 % for the following years, including Food Aid. However the new budget does not represent any real increase and basically maintains the budget at its present level. The European Commission did not succeed in convincing the Parliament to increase Humanitarian Aid by 20% as it initially requested, but it was successful in avoiding some of the deep cuts recommended in some circles, particularly in the European Council.

Many of the last minute discussions focused on the Emergency Aid Reserve. Its purpose is to provide a rapid response to the specific aid requirements of non-member countries following unforeseeable events - first and foremost for humanitarian operations - but also for civil crisis management and protection where circumstances require. Its annual amount is fixed at €221 million for the duration of the financial framework. When the Commission wants to use the Reserve, it presents a request to the budgetary authority, namely the Council and Parliament, for a transfer from this Reserve to the corresponding budget lines.

The Reserve is an important financial instrument and humanitarian organisations remain concerned that it will not be enough. As 2006 shows, humanitarian crises were far worse than expected and the Reserve - €229 million at the start of the year - has now been reduced to just €49 million. In the event of any humanitarian disaster before the end of 2006, the European Commission would be forced to call on the European Parliament and Member States to endorse an additional special budget, something that has never been done previously.

This situation must however be placed within the wider context of humanitarian funding. With two exceptions (Timor Leste and Lebanon), all consolidated and flash appeals for emergencies in 2006 show chronically unmet financial requirements. The Horn of Africa and the DR Congo with only 34% and 47% respectively of financial needs covered are just two examples. In total, the financial shortfall in humanitarian aid

for 2006 is roughly estimated at €1.5 billion.¹

Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, observed that a global increase of 30% in humanitarian funding could close this gap in addition to increasing aid effectiveness and improving response capacity and risk reduction/preparedness. He rightly insists that donors should provide funding for all emergencies, independent of political agendas and media attention. Unfortunately, this has become increasingly unrealistic. Apart from the media appeal of some emergencies (such as the tsunami in 2004) as opposed to "forgotten crisis" such as Niger, the growing "politicised" use of aid seriously concerns an increasing number of NGOs.

Some donor governments, including EU Member States, see their foreign aid as an additional foreign policy tool, an idea which is strongly opposed by humanitarian NGOs which adhere strictly to the fundamental principles of impartiality, non-discrimination, independence and neutrality. These principles are reflected by the 1996 ECHO Regulation which clearly states that the EU's humanitarian aid is non-political in character, based on need only, in accordance with international humanitarian law. The Regulation further states that political and military objectives must stay distinct from humanitarian interventions.

While ECHO retains the first priority in drawing down from the Emergency Reserve, it does not have exclusive use and the Reserve can be accessed by the Commission via the Directorates General for External Relations and for Environment for conflict prevention, crisis management and civil protection actions. Given the EU's developing role as a security actor, NGOs are concerned that the Reserve may no longer be exclusively allocated to a humanitarian response, instead being used to finance the EU's nascent security agenda.


So unless some governmental donors fundamentally change their humanitarian approach, it is vital that the EU fills the funding gap that has been created and ensures that humanitarian aid, including the reserve, remains in the hands of ECHO, dedicated to humanitarian purposes and implemented by its professional partners.

Denis Caillaux
Secretary General
CARE International
www.careinternational.org

1. Consolidated and Flash Appeals 2006, Summary of Requirements and Pledges/Contributions as of 13 November 2006, compiled by OCHA.

IRAQ: THE HIDDEN CRISIS

FIELD FOCUS

 **Première Urgence has been implementing projects in Iraq since 1997. It now bears witness to the most critical humanitarian crisis ever. The situation is such that, as reported by Première Urgence staff, "the distinguishable stench of decomposing corpses can be detected as far as two kilometres from the overflowing Baghdad morgue".**

Since the invasion in 2003, the humanitarian situation in Iraq has been deteriorating gradually. The attack of 22 February 2006 on the Holy shi'a Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra set the country on the edge of civil war. These dramatic events triggered acts of sectarian violence and worsened the already critical living conditions of the Iraqi population. Killings, kidnappings and suicide bombings take place on a daily basis.

Over 230,000 Iraqis have been internally displaced since February 2006. The majority of those displaced are moving in with friends and family, placing new burdens on their host communities. Others are moving into abandoned buildings, such as factories, schools, and unoccupied military facilities or into camps set up by either the Iraqi Minister of Migration and Displacement or the Iraqi Red Crescent Society. Over 3,000 people are fleeing the country each day. More than one million refugees are already in Jordan, Syria and other Arab countries, where they live in precarious living conditions.

Chaos and insecurity put a heavy toll on the economy. In August 2006, unemployment reached an all-time height of 70%¹. Moreover, the 76% inflation rate² has a direct impact on the living conditions of the population, affecting mainly the most vulnerable. 20% of children are underweight and one third is chronically malnourished.³ According to the Iraqi Ministry of Labour, "5.6 million Iraqis live now below the poverty line, 40% of them (2.2 million persons) are living in utterly atrocious conditions."

DEGRADATION OF HEALTH CONDITIONS

Jihadist attacks, nationalist insurgency, local conflicts and militia rivalries lead to the collapse of most social services.

Within the framework of its assistance programmes to health structures, Première Urgence is confronted on a daily basis with the dramatic security and sanitary conditions of hospitals and Primary Health Care Centres

located in Central and Southern Iraq. 90% of the country's 180 hospitals are lacking resources⁴.

The Yarmouk Hospital - which Première Urgence is supporting since 1998 - is facing serious insecurity. Policemen, military personnel and militiamen regularly storm into the emergency rooms seeking treatment for their comrades, intimidating patients and threatening the medical staff with fire shots. This situation can be seen in mostly all city hospitals. The Iraqi Medical Association states that, as a result, half all doctors registered in 2003 have left the country, in fear for their life.

Sectarian violence also impacts directly on other health services. For instance, Sunni Arabs are concerned about going to the central morgue of Baghdad to look for their dead relatives because they fear to become targets for Shia gunmen. Due to the lack of equipment and training, emergency services are in disarray. As a consequence, wounded often die before reaching the hospital.

Every day, emergency departments receive some 20 to 40 victims of car bombing, mortar or gun shoots. The Iraqi Ministry of Health being unable to cover the needs, emergency departments turn to NGOs to get emergency supplies of consumables and drugs. Today, in a country which the quality of its health services was once renowned, these medical departments have nothing more to offer to patients than beds, fluid suckers and oxygen bottles.

Thierry Mauricet
General Director
Première Urgence

www.premiere-urgence.org

Call for EU humanitarian response

Some 12 VOICE member NGOs - along with other humanitarian NGOs working in Iraq - call on DG ECHO to provide adequate funding for humanitarian aid in Iraq. In a statement issued in November 2006, the NGOs say that they are alarmed by the deterioration of the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people: "The humanitarian needs are more acute than ever, but the increasing scarcity of funding is making it harder for NGOs to support the population". As a consequence of the growing insecurity, the majority of international staff has withdrawn from the country. However, international NGOs are able to work in Iraq on a so called remote-control basis (e.g. from Jordan) and therefore call on DG ECHO to make funds available and consider a similar remote-control approach.

'Jihadist attacks, nationalist insurgency, local conflicts and militia rivalries lead to the collapse of most social services.'

1. Source: Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
2. Source: Iraqi Ministry of Finance (period August 2005 to August 2006)
3. Source: Appeal n° 05 EA 026, International Federation of the Red Cross, 20/10/2006.
4. Source: IRIN, 7/11/2006

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AT EU LEVEL

VOICE AT WORK

- ★ **Dialogue with the European Institutions.** In September, VOICE met with the Standing Rapporteur on Humanitarian Aid, French MEP Thierry Cornillet, right after his appointment. The network stressed the importance of the EU upholding humanitarian principles in order to ensure access to vulnerable populations, its concern in relation to the future level of EC funding for humanitarian aid and the deteriorating security situation in many countries. VOICE also drew the attention to the need to clarify the mandates of the different EU actors involved in humanitarian aid, in order to maintain EC humanitarian assistance based on needs and implemented with professionalism. Mr. Cornillet is the first rapporteur on Humanitarian aid, appointed by the Development Committee of the European Parliament. His main tasks will be to raise the profile of EC Humanitarian Aid through preparing a report later in 2007 as well as acting as an interface between the humanitarian actors and the Parliament.
- ★ **Promoting professionalism and expertise of humanitarian aid workers.** In 2005, a working group of VOICE members gave considerable input to a study commissioned by DG ECHO on the feasibility of the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC). VOICE had stressed that experience and professionalism are necessary in order to work in the increasingly complex and dangerous environment in which humanitarian aid is being delivered and that the positive effects of involving young volunteers in international work could be better achieved in the long-term development sector. VOICE therefore welcomes the conclusions of the study -recently completed - that "overall, the EVHAC initiative as formulated in the Constitution appears as a well intentioned idea", but more political (or supply) driven than field driven. The study recommends that no EVHAC should be set up.
- ★ **Input in EU policy debates.** Over the last six months, VOICE has been actively involved in a range of high level EU events. In September, VOICE met with the German humanitarian NGOs and the relevant Ministries in order to present the latest developments in relation to EU humanitarian aid; it stressed the need to raise the issue of humanitarian aid during the (upcoming) German EU Presidency. VOICE will follow this up together with the German NGOs. VOICE is supporting the idea of an EU Policy Statement on Humanitarian Aid and is planning to get involved in the matter. The network was also invited to the informal meeting of the Humanitarian Aid Committee organised under the Finnish Presidency. During the meeting, the director of VOICE presented the NGO experience with the UN humanitarian reform measures so far and the position of the network concerning EC contribution to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). This position was made public through a VOICE briefing note published last May, in which VOICE stress that only new funds should be allocated to the CERF. Allocations should under no circumstances be to the detriment of existing funds available for EU humanitarian aid - including the Emergency Reserve - and for European humanitarian NGOs. Commissioner Louis Michel replied to VOICE, stating that he shares the network's position.
- ★ **Following the global humanitarian reforms.** VOICE is closely following up the ongoing process aiming to improve the humanitarian response system. VOICE President Paul Grossrieder participated in the Dialogue meeting between UN and non-UN organisations which launched the Global Humanitarian Forum. VOICE now follows the process and is present in the various steering committees. When UN-OCHA together with the Norwegian Government launched the updated Oslo Guidelines, VOICE presented the NGO perspective on civil-military relations in disasters.



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VOICE out loud

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